

Thato's Diary - From maid to millionaire

Prologue

On average, four babies are born every second daily. Now we ask ourselves what happens to all those babies as some live, some die and some lose their way in the process. Ultimately, the naming ceremony of every child is a special one indeed.

I was named Thato, by my mother. I was the only child and she made sure that I always had what I needed in life. I went to the best schools and wore the best clothes, she would always protect me from her evil mother and sister, and I never lacked anything. She pushed me to be my best and my life was picture perfect until she died.

The first commandment in the Bible says "Honour thy mother and father", reason being they hold all

your blessings especially while they're still on earth. Once their gone, you're left on your own. Life without a parent is really hard and believe me when you have an evil family it's even harder. Unfortunately we don't get to choose our relations, which makes life even harder.

The one thing Mama taught me before she died was that one should never undermine people for you don't know how your fate will turn out. That taught me to remain humble and greed free.

Life is full of surprises though, if you keep your eyes open, have faith and remain faithful to God.

Jeremiah 1:5 says "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Jeremiah 29:11 says "For I Know The Plans I Have

For You' Declares the Lord, 'Plans to Prosper You and Not to Harm You, Plans to Give You Hope and a Future."

Take this journey with me and see how my life turns out.

Chapter One

Matthew 7:7 "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

It was my first day in Grade 12. I remember how excited I was to be in a new grade and one step closer to University. Mama was so proud of me since I passed all my subjects with distinctions. I do Physics, Mathematics and Accounting. I've always loved numbers, from when I was very young.

I've always been so intelligent, that Mama decided to enroll me in school very early. I'm 16, and by the time I finish Matric at the end of the year, I'll be 17. Mama would always say that I would be a doctor or something big. She says one should always speak positivity and blessings upon their children and it will become a reality.

I stayed with my Mom Petunia, my grandmother Maria, my aunt Sophie and her daughter Kagiso. We were a household of just females, and everyone on the outside thought we were a very happy family, run by our Matriarch, my grandmother. Little did they know that the walls of our house were very thick, so thick that they appeared to be masquerading the bitterness and evil that happened behind those walls.

My grandmother Maria is always at church, but her heart is very dark and full of evil and hatred. Kagiso can do nothing wrong in her eyes nor in her mother's

eyes, and I am the black sheep along with my mother. My mother is the breadwinner and works very hard to support the whole family. I feel so bad that she has to carry such a heavy burden and I even offered to do some piece jobs just so she could rest, but she blatantly refused. She told me straight that my job is to succeed and worrying is her job. While I was in the bathroom fixing my new dress, she called me from the bedroom.

Petunia: "Thato weh. Kopa o tle mo (Please come here)."

I hurried swiftly and found her in bed, which is highly unusual. Mama is very active and she's always out of bed by 5am.

Thato: "Mama?"

Petunia: (smiling) "Bona gore o pila bjang, ngwana

ka (Look how beautiful you look, my child).”

Thato: (smiling) “Kea leboga, Mama (Thank you, Mama).”

Petunia: “Bona geh (Look), I bought you something to celebrate your first day of Grade 12. This is a special grade and I want you to enjoy it and remember it forever.”

I smiled as she reached for her drawer and gave me a square box wrapped in gift paper. I opened it anxiously and found the most beautiful charm bracelet I had ever seen.

Thato: (smiling) “Mama! E pila bjang (It's so beautiful), thank you.”

I remember hugging her and she had a bit of tears in

her eyes. One would have thought those were tears of joy, but they were tainted with a bit of sadness.

Thato: (frowning) "Mama, o shap (are you okay)?"

Petunia: "Ska wara ka nna (Don't worry about me), my baby. I'm okay. Go on and have a great day akere (okay)?"

Thato: "Okay, then."

I kissed her goodbye and I walked out of her bedroom and found Sophie, my evil aunt watching tv.

Sophie: "Ja, so wena o decider go tsoga ka di nako (you decided to wake up on your own time) just because o le matric (you're in matric)? Matric ga e thome ka wena, sesi (You're not the first person to be in Matric, sis). Someone has to wash the dishes,

clean the stoep and sweep outside. So o nagana gore (you think) just because Kagiso ga a sa tsena skolo (is no longer in school) she must clean up after you?!"

She clicked her tongue and looked at me in disgust as usual. I don't even know why she hates my mother and I this much.

Thato: "Sorry, Mmane (aunty). Ke tla kolomaka ge ke bowa (I'll clean when I come back)."

Sophie: "La lapisa lena bana ba di Model C le bo mme ba ma Nurse (You Model C kids are annoying along with your Nurse mothers)!"

My aunt Sophie is one of those people who think that the world owes them and that it's everyone's fault she didn't finish school, along with her daughter Kg, who's 21 now and failed Grade 11 three times.

she never bothered to finish school and never even bothered to go to a TVET college or anything. She's unemployed, along with her mother and they depend on my granny's pension and have other ways and means of making money. I was about to say something, but Mama walked out of her bedroom door.

Petunia: "Sophie, nke o tlogele Thato a ye skolong (Leave Thato so that she can go to school). Ga o tlo roga ngwana wa ka so vroeg (You're not going to swear at my child so early in the morning)."

Sophie: "Mxm, wena (you) Thato, Mmao o tla swa a go shiya o le nosi mo (Your mom will die one day and leave you here alone). Re tla bona bo Model C bo tla fella kae (We'll see where the Model C behaviour will take you then)."

She clicked her tongue and left. I waved goodbye to Mama again and walked out. I walked to the bus

stop, where I usually meet Palesa, my best friend. I saw her appear and walk out of her father's BMW i8. Her parents are rich although some say they deal with drugs. But I don't normally listen to heresay.

Palesa: (smiling) "Yes, chomi (friend). Dintshang (What's cooking)?"

Thato: "Ah, nothing fela (really) and you?"

Palesa: "Ah waitse mos (you know), go jola le di school boys ke masepa (dating school boys is just shit). Can you believe Thabo didn't even have money to give me ya airtime fela (for airtime only). Nagana fela (Just imagine). A ke tlo mofa mahala fela (I can't just sleep with him for nothing)."

Most people ask themselves why I'm even friends with Palesa in the first place since we're really the exact opposites. She likes boys, booze, partying and

money and I don't like any of those. We get along just fine, although she's not as clever as one would think. Overall, she's a good friend to me and just misjudged.

Thato: "Ai, chomi (friend). Maybe you just need to date for love this time, you know."

Palesa: "Aowa, Thato. No wonder you don't have a boyfriend. Ko ja love nna (Is love going to feed me)?"

Thato: "Ai, you'll manage hey. But if you don't love him then let him go."

Palesa: "Eish, flopo (the problem is) He's got a bigger package than Socks, wa bona (you see)?"

Socks is her 25 year old boyfriend. It still baffles me

how a 25 year old man can sleep with an 18 year old, but what do I know? We continued our conversation on the bus ride to school.

Chapter Two

John 16:33 - "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Thato

Our first day was great, really. We had received work already, but I didn't complain. Palesa on the other hand complained all day in every period, literally.

Palesa: "Ah, chomi (friend), nna ke lapile mmereko o mo kana (I'm already tired, so much work)."

Thato: (smiling) "Ah we said we wanted to be in matric, friend, so this is it."

Palesa: "Anyway, Soks is hosting a braai at his place today. Want to join?"

Thato: "No, thanks. I'll pass."

Palesa: "Ah, chomi (friend), o stuif le wena (you're so stiff though)."

She always says that, but I pay no mind to her. Her boyfriend Soks came in his Mercedes Benz. Word is that he's a gangster, but like I said I don't listen to heresay. In his car, he was with his friend, Kgaugelo, who's been asking me out for quite a while, but I can't be distracted by boys, not right now.

Soks: "Sho sho, TT wa Kg."

He and Kg used to call me TT for whatever reason.

Thato: "Hi Soks."

Soks: "Hao, ao dumedisi (aren't you going to greet your man?"

Thato: "He's not my man. Hi, Kg."

Soks: "Ai, gape wa gana ka yona man (Tou really don't want to give it up, hey)."

Kg: (firmly) "Don't talk to her like that, man."

For some reason Kg is the total opposite of Soks. He is very respectful towards everyone, while Soks hardly respects anyone. I don't even know why they

were friends, but I guess it was the same situation with Palesa and I.

Soks: "Ah, askies geh (sorry then)."

Whenever someone says sorry with something else after it then it means they're genuinely not sorry.

Soks: "Pali a re vaye (let's go)."

Palesa: (getting into the car) "Chomi (friend) we'll talk later neh."

Thato: "Sharp."

I was about to walk home alone until Kg offered to walk me home. Ai, I hoped that my aunt or Kagiso didn't see me or else she'd have spread rumours and

lies to my mom.

Kg: "Entlek (Actually) Vayang, ke tla le kereya ko pele (Go, I'll meet you there)."

Soks: "Lwela mfanaka (Keep trying, dude). Maybe o tla winner ka jeno (Maybe you might win today)."

Soks drove off with Palesa, while Kg stayed behind. I wasn't into boys or anything, but Kg knew how to make me laugh. He was quite tall since I've always been short. He was tall, not very dark, chocolate coloured if I could say that and he had a great body. A lot of girls around our neighbourhood wanted him, but he wasn't one to roam around with just any girl. Come to think of it, I never saw him with a girl - ever, unlike Soks. Palesa was just one of his chicks, but I knew better than to tell her about Soks' wrong doings. He could do no wrong in her eyes.

Thato: "Kg, you really don't have to walk me home. I can walk on my own."

Kg: "Ah, come on, TT. This is Rockville and besides I like walking you home. I need to make sure no one hits on you, wa bona (you see)?"

Thato: (chuckling) "And so what if they do hit on me?"

Kg: (straight face) "Then ko bolaya motho (I'd kill them). O waka wena (You're mine), you just don't know it yet."

Kg was raised by well educated parents and he came from a well off family. I never understood why he used to hang with Soks at all. He liked the rough, gangster kind of kasi (Township) life, but he was so eloquently spoken, so well dressed and neat and smelled so good all the time. He had this really

respectful demeanour and people automatically respected him. He didn't take shit from anyone and apologized whenever he was wrong. He'd always ask me about school and would always ask me to show him my report at the end of every term. I took him as the brother I never had, but he kept saying I was his future wife.

Thato: (blushing) "Ai, Kg, wa lapisa waitse (you're tiring, you know)."

Kg: "Di tsamaya bjang ko sghela (How are things at school)?"

Thato: "School is so nice, hey. I'm enjoying every single minute of it. I can't wait to go to University."

Kg: (smiling) "I like smart girls. You're one of the most intelligent girls I've ever met, TT. Don't disappoint me. Ska fa di bhari asseblief (Don't give

it up to idiots, please).”

I just had to laugh, but he was so serious.

Kg: ”Anyway, let me go ka gore Kagiso ashuwe and wa mo itse gore o bjang jou cuzi (let me go because you know how Kagiso, your couson is).”

He was about to turn around and walk away, until Kagiso swiftly approached us and started vomiting shit as usual.

Kagiso: (fuming) ”Ja, ka jeno ke go kereile, sesi (today I caught you). O busy o re botsa gore o ya skolong, kgante o busy o nyoba ke magenza (You're busy telling us that you're going to school meanwhile you're getting fucked by gangsters).”

She shouldn't have said that to Kg. I was already

used to her shit, but Kg was not one to be told such. He turned around and gave her a very intimidating and irritated look on his face. He always had his hands in his pockets whenever he was displeased about something, from what I gathered.

Kg: "Eh, wena (Hey, you) Kagiso, o reng (what did you just say)?"

Kagiso could see Kg was angry, but she kept firing shots.

Kagiso: "O nkutlwile, wena Kg (You heard me). O le genza e bile gao na selo, o shiyana shiyana le bo Soks le nagana gore le tla reka difebe tse tsohle tse (You're a gangster and you're broke, you keep running after Soks and the both of you think you can buy all these bitches)!"

Kg: (staring at Kagiso) "Kagiso, wa ntebala ne (you

forget who I am). A ke thaka ya gao nna (I'm not your mate). Di thaka tsa gao di ya bereka e bile di go shile because ne o le busy o rekisa nyo (Your mates are busy working and they are ahead of you because you were too busy selling your pussy)."

Ouch, that must have hurt. I felt that too and it wasn't even directed at me. Kagiso had tears glistening in her eyes, and I could see she fought aimlessly to fight them back.

Kg: "Wa lebala gore o spinne di bhana tse kae wena (You forgot how many abortions you've had, hey). Ka mo o mpitsa le genza (And here you are calling me a ganster). Nkile wa mpona ke utswa, ke ya vaging nna (Have you ever seen me steal, going to a night job)? O re ke reka di febe, di febe tse feng (You said I buy whores, which whores)? Ka gore kana sfebe ke wena mo (Because the only whore here is you). Stop being so jealous of Thato and get a life, before you end up like your drunk, whoring mother.

You're old, used trash who gets fucked by tavern owners just for a mere two beers. Think before you spit out that shit at me next time. Eh, TT, I'll see you around.”

He walked away looking annoyed as fuck. I looked at Kagiso with pain in my eyes. I actually feel so bad for her, I mean no one deserves to get insulted like that.

Kagiso: "O lebeletse eng wena (What are you looking at)?!"

She clicked her tongue and walked away. Ai, I walked into the yard and greeted Koko Maria, and as usual she just gave me a faint hello. I went to my room and found Mama still in bed and in her pajamas. That was very unusual and I was very worried.

Thato: "Mama."

She woke up and gave me a faint greeting, but I could see she was in pain. She wanted to drink some water from her glass on her bedside, but she was too weak. I couldn't understand, Mama was a very active woman and now she was in bed probably all day and Koko wasn't bothered even. She sat outside reading her Bible, while Mama was bed ridden and clearly ill. I helped her up and she screamed out in pain. I gave her some water and she drank very slowly.

Thato: (worried) "Mama, keng (what is it)? Please tell me."

Petunia: "Eish, ngwanaka (my child). I wasn't planning on telling you, but it would be very selfish of me. I... I'm dying, Thato. I have cervical cancer."

And from that day on, my whole life became a nightmare.

Chapter Three

Psalm 146:8 - "The Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous."

Two months later

Thato

I was in such a huge state of shock, I wished that Mama would say it was a dream. Ever since she told me that she had cancer, I was in a constant state of tears and doom. I couldn't eat properly and my grades dropped massively. It was horrible, all I wanted to do was be with my mom. At times I would stay home and not go to school, but Mmane (Auntie) Sophie would always make sure I did some

chores.

Cancer is the devil, it ate my mother from within. She refused chemotherapy, and said that it was God's will for her to die. I would lie awake at night crying and asking God why he would choose to take her at a time like that, but Mama would always hear me since I slept with her from that day onwards. She would say, "Fear not, Thato ya ka (my love), for God is with you. I made sure I planned for this fay from the moment I had you."

It's funny how she would never say something like from the moment you were born, it would always be the moment I had you or the moment God gave me you. I saw her being eaten away by the evil disease. She would tell me beautiful stories about her when she was growing up, when my grandfather was alive. At times she was okay and the next she would be disoriented or in pain. All we could give her was morphine and just pump her up with pain killers. Of

course Mmane Sophie And Koko Maria never bothered to do anything for her. They would always demand money from me since I had Mama's bank card.

I remember the last day of my first term at school. My register teacher Mrs. Modikwe called me after she gave me my report. It was such a horrible report, even for Term 1.

Mrs. Modikwe: "Thato, I know this isn't you. I've been monitoring you and you don't come to school on some days and your marks have dropped massively. What's the problem?"

I didn't know how to tell her, but then who was I going to tell? Already people were spreading rumours around our area saying Mama had aids. Imagine. I was going through the toughest time in my life and people had the time to talk such shit. I felt like I had it all together for those few months,

until I just broke down.

Thato: (crying) "It's... My mother, ma'am. She's ill, she's dying."

I could see Mrs. Modikwe's tears stream down from her cheeks as she stood up and gave me a warm, tight hug.

Mrs. Modikwe: "Oh, Thato. Why didn't you tell me? I'll come by your house-"

I knew better than to let anyone come visit at home. Mrs. Modikwe didn't stay far from my house, but still my granny would have had a fit.

Thato: (dismissive) "No! I mean, my Granny doesn't like strangers coming to visit, ma'am. Please don't come, you'd only make matters worse for me."

My reaction gave her a reason to be suspicious.

Mrs. Modikwe: "Okay then. Thato, if you ever need anything, just please, call me or send me a please call me and I'll be there."

She wrote down her number on a piece of paper and put it in my bag.

Thato: "Thank you."

I walked out of there swiftly and headed to the bus stop. Upon entering, I saw Palesa waving at me from Sok's car.

Palesa: (shouting) "Chomi (friend), ke kereile lift (I got us a lift), let's go."

I was honestly not in the mood to listen to Soks make derogatory comments about women and their private parts, and luckily I saw Kg appear in his BMW.

Thato: "It's okay, ke tla tsamaya le KG (I'll go with Kg)."

Palesa: "Alright then. See you soon, bye!"

They left as I waved goodbye to them. Kg had a habit of following me around and begging me to take a lift with him back home, but I never agreed. He had been pestering me for my number, but I never gave in. That day, I was seriously not in the mood for all eyes to be on me in the bus, all the whispers and awkward stares of pity from fellow learners. I didn't hesitate as I got into Kg's car.

Kg:"Hao, ka jeno ga o gane go namela (today you're

not refusing to get in)?”

Thato: “Ah, I'm not in the mood for the stares and whispers.”

I felt so down that day, all day even. Mama's health had deteriorated rapidly and she couldn't even recognize me or any one of us anymore. I walked around the house like a zombie. I would change her diapers, try to feed her and I'd bathe her whenever I could. She was in constant pain and at times I would beg God to just take her from this world. For some reason, I felt like my soul was tainted and that a part of me died that day. Kg looked really weird too, like he just couldn't look me in the eye. He was even more quiet than usual. I figured I'd also keep quiet and anxiously looked at the road. Before we got to my street he stopped at a stop sign and I gave him a look.

Thato: “Kg, keng bjanong (what is it now)? Why o sa

tsamaye (aren't you moving)?"

He looked down, which made me worry.

Thato: "Kg?!"

He still said nothing.

Thato: (annoyed) "Mxm, fine. If you don't want to keep driving, I'll walk."

I was about to open the door and he stepped on the accelerator. When we got to mu gate I was met with horror, my greatest fear. I saw an ambulance right at the gate, but the paramedics went back into their ambulance with an empty bed. It was supposed to be a relief, but I just felt uneasy.

Kg: "Eish, Thato ema (wait)!"

I didn't even listen to him, instead I ran out of the car without my school bag and stopped one of the paramedics.

Thato: (frantic) "Askies abuti (Excuse me, brother). What's happening? Why were you here?"

Paramedic: "Eish, suster (Sis), askies (sorry), but I'm afraid we tried."

I felt like someone stabbed my heart with a huge panga and awaited my slow, painful death. A million thoughts were racing through my mind. I refused to believe it. I ran into the house and found Mmane (Aunt) Sophie already packing out my mom's clothes. I lost it right there.

Thato: (angry) "O dira eng ka diaparo tsa mama wa ka (What are you doing with my mother's clothes)?!"

Sophie: "Ke go boditse ka re Mmao o tlo go shiya o le one tsatsi le lengwe (I told you your mom would leave you alone one day)."

I felt like the panga was being pushed deeper into my heart. I ran frantically to Mama's bedroom, passing Koko Maria who was casually watching tv in the lounge. I opened the door and found Mama's lifeless body lying on her bed. I touched her and she was still warm, which meant she took her last breath without me near her.

Thato: (crying) "Mama?! Mama! Mama tsoga hle (please wake up)! I need you!"

She wasn't responding, yet I kept hoping and praying for a miracle. I let out a loud wail as I screamed with

my face buries on her lifeless chest. The chest that once had a very lively heartbeat, which I'd occasionally listen to whenever I was sad. She would put me on her lap and let me lay my head on her chest whenever I was sad. She would say "Can you hear that? Our hearts are beating simultaneously. Whenever you feel sad, just know that I'm always with you. I carry you in my heart always, my baby."

And just like that my precious mother left this earth. I would have to fend for myself from that day on. I learnt the true definition of it's a dog eat dog world the day my mother passed away.

Chapter Four

Psalm 27:4-5 - "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the

secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.”

Thato

I cried until I had no more tears left in me. My heart bled and mourned my mother's painful death. I sat in her bedroom and stared at her lifeless body for hours. I felt like I was in a trance, until Mmane (Aunt) Sophie came to her bedroom and shouted at me.

Sophie: (shouting) "Thato! Ga o wa ma thomo wa go hloko fallwa ke mme (You're not the first to lose a mother), man! Emella mowe o hlapise mmao, wa bona o ikaketse (Get up and bathe your mother, you can see she shit herself)!"

I felt so much pain, rage, confusion. I failed to understand what I did wrong to her for her to hate me so much. I bathed my mother's body in a very

sacred manner and dressed her in her favourite pajamas. The mortuary people came and took her away and I sat down in my chair in her bedroom again, staring at the empty bed. I won't be waking up to sweet kisses and hugs in the morning, I won't be hearing her voice anymore. I sat in silence until Sophie came again.

Sophie: "Heh banna (Goodness)! Thato! O nnetse eng o sa a pare (Why aren't you changing)?! Tshwanetse re yo claimer di policy wena (We have to go claim from her policies)! O nagana gore o tla boloka ke eng o phame (Who do you think will bury her when you're sitting on your ass)?!"

I got so angry I stormed out of the house and ran outside. I ran and ran until I couldn't run anymore. I found myself in the park and I cried. I cried and screamed until I felt like the pain inside of me has been taken out. I felt a soft hand touch my shoulders and I turned to see and it was Kg. He

didn't say anything and for once I didn't protest his touch. He held me gently in his arms as he gave me a tight hug. Before I knew it I had wet his tshirt with my coarse tears.

Thato: "I'm sorry for ruining your Tshirt like that."

Kg: "It's just a shirt, it can get replaced. How are you feeling?"

Thato: "Honestly, I don't know. I feel so empty. I can't cope with everything."

Kg: "It's okay, I know how you feel."

Thato: "How do you know? You've never lost a mother, Kg."

I snapped at him and he looked down.

Kg: "My mom died when I was 9 years old. The woman you know as my mother is my step mother. My father remarried a week after my mom died."

Shit, I felt so bad about snapping at him. Come to think of it I never even gave myself the chance to get to know Kg and ask about his life. There was sadness in his eyes, a sadness I had never seen before that day. We sat in the park for a while because I just didn't feel like going back home. My aunt kept calling and so did Kg until I switched off my phone. I really didn't want to go home yet and Kg understood gladly. He bought us some food at his chesa nyama while I sat in the car. I didn't want people to see me and gossip about me. They'd probably say I wasn't even planning on mourning my mother, and that I was busy galavanting in the street with boys. Kg came back with food and we sat in the car. We ate as I felt a bit better, but that

constant hole in my heart would remain forever.

Kg: "So, have you thought about when you'd like to have her buried?"

Thato: "Uhm, I'm thinking Sunday. She always said she wouldn't want to be held in the mortuary for too long."

Kg: "I see. Thato, please if you need anything, don't hesitate to call me. I know you don't want to give me your numbers, but please do take mine. This is not going to be an easy road for you, especially with people like your granny and aunt. You need to be careful of your aunt, she is not to be trusted and I'm sure she has made that pretty obvious."

Kg seemed like he knew more than he let on.

Thato: "Kg, is there something you're not telling me?"

Kg: (looking down) "It's not my place to tell you, but you'll find out soon. Just know that your mother did her best to raise you the way she did and you should never ever doubt her choices. Your aunt is evil."

He was really making me worry, I mean how could he just tell me that without telling me the whole truth.

Thato: "Why are you being so nice to me, Kg?"

Kg: "Because you're one of a kind, TT. You're special and because of that many people don't like you. They feel intimidated by you. You'll achieve great things and I only want the best for you."

I nodded and gave him my number. He dropped me off at the corner, as I walked into the yard, I found a

few cars parked outside. I was still in my uniform, emotionally, physically and spiritually drained. I walked into the house and found Koko, Kagiso, Mmane Sophie and even Mma Moruti (Pastor's wife), all seated in doeks and skirts even. I got annoyed immediately.

Sophie: "Hao, Thato, ngwanaka (my child), kgale re go emetse hle (we've been waiting on you). Please, come sit. Mma Moruti wants to know when you'd like your mom yo be buried."

I couldn't believe it. The pretense in her voice and actions was astonishing! Since when does she speak to me like this? I'm actually disgusted.

Koko: "Thato weh, nna ne ke nagana gore (I was thinking) the sooner the better. Mmago (your mom) suffered a lot and she wouldn't want you to be so sad."

What the actual fuck was happening?! I just lost it. I blew up right that second.

Thato: "Mma Moruti, apologies for wasting your time, but my aunt and grandmother failed to tell you that they have been abusing, insulting my mother and I for as long as I could remember. So, forgive me but I'm not interested in this meeting.

I can't have people who pretend to love me in front of the church, while they swear at me behind closed doors. I lost my mother earlier on and not even one of them came to hug me, or tell me that everything will be okay. Instead, I was told to bathe my mother because she shit herself. So, if you'll excuse me, I need to mourn in peace."

I left them sitting there in shock as I hurried to my mother's bedroom and locked the door. I was very

hurt, but Kg made things a bit better. He told me how his mother died, she just fell while he and his mom were eating breakfast. Apparently she died of food poisoning, but he and his mom were eating the same food. He never recovered from it, of which I understand.

Perhaps I'm selfish, I got the chance to know my mother, while he lost his at the tender age of 9. To make matters worse, his father married his stepmother a week after the burial of his mother. I thought they were the perfect family, but I guess it's true what they say - no one knows what the walls of each house is hiding.

Chapter Five

Ephesians 2:8 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."

Thato

I tossed and turned all night long. I truly wished that Mama would walk through her bedroom door and tell me that she was just pranking me. I went through her bedroom and realized a few of her clothes were missing, while some papers were missing too. I couldn't find her will for some odd reason, but I did find a few of her policies in a book she had kept safe for me.

It seems as if Sophie was searching through Mama's things and she had taken a few of them. I got up at 7am, since I had to start organizing the funeral. I wanted to have her buried the following day, which would be a Sunday. I didn't see the need for people to be visiting all week, eating and drinking our food. I heard Sophie knock on the bedroom door.

Sophie: "Thato, ngwanaka (my child). Ke Mmane wa gao (It's me, your aunt). Ke kgopela o mpulele, ke go

diretse dijo (Please open for me, I've made you some food).”

Hehe, I couldn't believe my ears. I opened the door just to see if she wasn't joking and indeed she had made me food. I wouldn't have eaten that food, not even if she forced me to. What if she was trying to poison me?

Thato: "A ka tshwara ke tlala (I'm not hungry).”

She had the fakest smile on her face and I knew then that the devil was working over time.

Sophie: "Okay, ne ke re hlapa ke go khape ko di office le ko bankeng o kgone go claimer (I was thinking you should take a bath so that I could accompany you to the burial offices and to the bank in order for you to claim).”

Ja neh, so that's why she was being nice to me. She wanted to see how much Mama had left for me. I wasn't about to bw that stupid. My birthday was coming up within the next week, so I was about to turn 17. I knew better than to trust Mmane Sophie after all she had done to me.

Thato: "Kea leboga (Thank you), but I'd rather go alone."

I could see a bit of disappointment slowly appear on her face.

Sophie: "Hao, Thato. Nka se go rope tshetele ya gao (I won't rob you of your money)."

And there she was, the real Sophie was slowly making an appearance once again.

Thato: "O nkutlwile ke bolela bjao, Mmane (Did you hear me say that, Auntie)?"

She suddenly regretted her reaction and played the fake serpent again.

Sophi: "Aowa (No), akere re batho ba le lapa so ne ke re re thusane (we are family, so I thought we should support one another)."

Thato: "Okay, ke tla go bona ge ke boa (I'll see you when I come back). And by the way, Mama is being buried tomorrow."

I could see she was really disappointed.

Sophie: "But, what about our family members who come from far? Ba bangwe ba tswa Bapong hle (Some of them come from Bapong though)."

I couldn't care less about them. Where were they when Mama was in pain and agony?

Thato: "That's what Mama wanted."

I went to the bathroom and left her standing there in defeat. To be honest I had no idea where to even start. I had my learner's license, but I couldn't risk driving Mama's car alone, especially with her recently deceased. I decided to take a taxi right after taking a bath. I went through my phone and saw tons of messages on my wall and on WhatsApp and even a few missed calls from Palesa. She's a real friend despite being crazy. As I was about to walk out of the house, Koko stopped me.

Koko: "Thato, o sure o tlo ba shap o le one (Are you sure you're going to be okay on your own)?"

Since when does she even talk to me?

Thato: "Ee (yes), Koko."

Koko: "Alright. O tsamaye pila (Go well). I'll start with the funeral arrangements and give you feedback for approval."

Ja neh, something was seriously fishy, I thought to myself. Upon exiting the yard, I found Kg around the corner. Oh, I totally forgot about him. I left his car in such a state that I didn't even say goodbye. I slowly walked up to him and he gave me a hug.

Kg: "Hi."

Thato: "Hi."

Kg: "O kae (How are you)?"

Thato: "Ke shap, wena (I'm fine and you)?"

Kg: "Ke shap (I'm okay)."

Thato: "About yesterday -"

Kg: (interrupting) "No need to apologize. I came to see if you're genuinely okay and to give you your school bag."

I had completely forgotten about that.

Thato: "Oh, thank you. Can I get it later if you don't mind? I have a few errands to run today."

Kg: "Cool. May I accompany you?"

I gave him a look.

Kg: "I promise I won't do anything to you. You really need a friend, a mobile one at that."

Thato: (chuckling) "Okay then."

He opened the car door for me as I entered and we drove off. I was actually glad to have Kg by my side because with all the errands I made that day, I don't think my feet would have managed. I had to go to Mama's workplace and fill in forms for her pension and thank goodness I was the sole beneficiary.

They gave me a copy of her will and I just put it in my bag to read later on. I had to claim at the different banks and insurance companies where she had funeral policies, apart from the one that was handling her burial. I even had to go to the bank to

stop everything and she even had a life cover from the bank. All in all, I had to claim at five places, the money amounted to a total of R150 000.

Kg advised me to save some of it and put it away, so I opened an investment account at the bank and put away R100 000. At her workplace, they at least gave me about R15 000 as part of the whole hospital collection. They were sad that I would be burying her so soon as they wanted to have a memorial for her. I asked them to do it at the funeral and luckily they agreed.

I headed back home at about 3pm and I was immediately annoyed. I found so many cars and a marquee already being set up outside the yard. Kg noticed the displeased look on my face.

Kg: "O shap (Are you okay)?"

Thato: (sigh) "I'll be okay. Thank you so much for today."

Kg: "Okay, call me if you need anything. I'm just a phone call away."

I nodded and hugged him. I walked in and I was greeted with a lot of people, already cooking. Some of them I had never even seen before. Upon entering the house, I found Koko having some tea with fellow church women. Kagiso was even helping along with Sophie. I saw so much food in the kitchen, and even more cookies and alcohol stashed in Mama's bedroom. A lot of alcohol. I was so confused because Sophie and Koko weren't working, so how did they afford all that? Perhaps Koko's burial society paid out and she used that money to buy all the food and all. I hired a catering company to do the cooking, though. They were going to arrive at 6pm, shortly after Mama's body arrived at home. I greeted everyone and headed to Mama's bedroom.

Koko followed me.

Koko: "Thato, ke tsere di loan ko mashonisa gore ke kgone go reka dijo tsa leso (I took out a loan at the local loan shark so that I could buy food for the funeral)."

My mother wasn't even buried yet and already she wanted money from me.

Thato: "How much?"

Koko: "Ke tsere (I took) R20 000. Ke rekile le kgomo tse pedi (I had to buy two cows too). Phela re boloka Nurse, batho tshwanetse ba bone gore ne a bereka (We're burying a whole Nurse, people have to see that she was employed)."

I couldn't believe my eyes and ears. Who on earth

takes out a loan of R20 000 from a loan shark for a funeral?

Thato: "Bathong (Goodness), Koko society sa gao ga sa go patela (didn't your society pay out)?"

Koko: "Aowa bathong (My word), Thato. Ne e le (It was only) R7000 fela. I mean le wena o humile nyana ka di policy so le nna tshwanetse ke sale ka change nyana (you also got some money from her policies, I also deserve a bit of change). I hired a mobile fridge, bought some drinks for everyone who's going to be here and hired a catering company for decor. You're even lucky that the loan shark doesn't want interest. Surely, you understand that I was only trying to give your mother a dignified funeral, my child."

I really was annoyed, hut had no strength in me to fight her. I gave her the money and she was all smiles. I didn't even get why she was smiling since

it was supposedly going to the loan shark, but anyway.

Koko: "Dankie (Thank you), sesi (sis). Robala nyana o tla tsoga ge setopo se tla (Sleep a bit, you'll wake up when your mother's body comes home)."

I just let her be as she walked out. I bought Mama a brand new Nurse uniform for her to wear in that white coffin of hers. I looked at Mama's picture and tears were flowing down my face. I've always heard a few learners at my school saying life is hard without a mom, but little did I know that it was going to be hard for me at that time. Most of us want our parents to live long enough to see us graduate and get married, but I guess such is life.

I took a bath and got changed into a decent outfit. At exactly 5pm, Mama's corpse was brought home. One of Koko's sisters, Rachel, who's our main elder, had to usher her in. She had to say a few clan

praises and pray for her before she entered the yard. I remember standing right outside the door and looking at her coffin. Death doesn't hit you until the coffin arrives home.

Rachel: "Re a go amogela mo gae (We welcome you home), Petunia. O seke wa belaela, ngwanake (Don't look back, my child). O tshireletse ngwanagao Thato, thato ya Modimo e phetagetse (Protect your daughter, Thato. God's will has been done). Re Bakone ba ntshi dikgolo, Bakone baila tlhantlhagane, bana ba thaba ya magosi, Bakone baila nonyane e podudu, Matlala sekgoba dinaga tsabo makgolo' a' gwe Mokone. Ke leditse molodi Setumong ke kwele ke Mmalebogo borwerwe, 'Mapela a ntheetsa aba a nkwa, Ke ngwana wa mma re agisane e bile re nyalelane, Ke batho ba bo Tau e tswago Sekgose, Lesogana la bopedi ba hlwa ba mosetse morago bare yena Malobane lefsega, O re o tshaba, o gadime morago. Mokone se letse molodi wa kwala o ka re biletswa go otlala kgwale e robetse, Dikgomo ga di kate marega di dusa gobane di ka re folotsa,

Bakone nkabe ba ipha sekgwari, mokokolome wa Motau badimo ba setumong gona ngwana ke stwanetse, Sekopa le matswaana. Banna ba moletsi le masaedi, lereng le rema morula o entswe? Le re dinonyana di tla kotama kae? Ke rile ke go kgalema wena mokopane wa ngangabala. Naa ditshosane tse khwibidu o diisa kae? Gosasa di tlo go tetemetsa (clan names). Lena di Tau (You Lions), Badimo ba ga Maake (The Maake ancestors), amogelang ngwana wa lena (welcome your Child)!”

She ululated as she chanted our clan praises. I could feel my heart beating too fast as the coffin approached us. The undertakers put it in the lounge and walked out. One of my uncles opened her coffin and Koko was the first to view Mama, she let out a loud wail and sobbed as she was taken away. Sophie was next and she stood there and started screaming.

Sophie: (screaming) ”Mara (But) why?! Gobaneng

Modimo (Why God)?! Why take away my only sibling?! Our breadwinner, yoh, Modimo (Oh, God)!”

It was my turn to see her. She looked so frail, lifeless and thin. I had just saw her the day before, but she was almost unrecognizable. She was wearing her beautiful white uniform with her favourite purple Rosary around her neck. She never took it off and I had asked the undertakers not to take it off her. I froze as I looked at her and I cried. I cried so much I didn't even see or feel myself faint.

Chapter Six

Matthew 23:12 - "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Thato

I woke up on my bed with a very bad headache. I

must have fainted after seeing Mama in that coffin, that vision haunted me for quite some time. My vision was a bit blurry, but as soon as I opened my eyes, I saw Kagiso holding my bag.

Thato: "Wetsang (What are you doing)?"

Kagiso: (startled) "Ah, sorry Thato. Ne ke re ke paka dilo tsa gao pila, wa bona (I just thought I'd pack all your stuff properly, you see.)"

She was very edgy and jumpy. I quickly got off the bed and went through my bag. I immediately saw a few notes missing from the envelope I received from Mama's colleagues. This bitch stole from me.

Thato: (shouting) "O nkutsweditse (You stole from me), Kagiso! Wa gafa (Are you crazy)?! How can you steal my mother's money?!"

I got so mad I jumped on her and put my hands on her throat. I was so furious, I didn't even register what I was doing. Kagiso is a bit thin, while I'm slightly bigger than her, but at that moment, I wanted to strangle the life out of her. Aunt Rachel walked in and started shouting.

Rachel: "What's happening here?! Thato! Mo tlogele (Leave her)! Kao kopa (Please)!"

I was bewildered, my brain told me to stop, but my body refused to co-operate. While Rachel was shouting and begging me, Sophie stormed in and started cursing.

Sophie: "Hey, wena (you), Serathane ke wena (You Orphan)! Tlogela ngwana wa ka (Leave my child)! It's bad enough you were adopted and now we have to take care of your motherless ass!"

I quickly let go of Kagiso's throat and she gasped for air. I looked at Sophie who looked like she let the cat out of the bag, but with no remorse at all. I knew her being nice to me was all fake.

Thato: (shocked) "Wa reng (What did you just say)?!"

Rachel: "Ai, wa bona le wena (you see now) Sophie. You can never keep your mouth shut."

Wait, so I'm adopted and everyone knew about it all along but didn't tell me?

Sophie: (angry) "Gwa tshwana (It's pointless), man! The truth is out so why should we act like we don't know? Yes, your barren mother adopted you. Actually she found you in a nearby dumpster ko parkeng (at the park). Your biological mother didn't even want you in the first place so she tried to set you alight and when that didn't work, she left you for

dead in a bin. Where did you think you got that hideous scar on your back?"

Oh, my God! I've had a big scar on my left lower back that ran all the way to my bum, but Mama would tell me that it was caused by an accident when I was a baby. Why would Sophie choose to tell me such a painful thing at a time like this?

Rachel: "Sophie, stop it!"

Sophie: "Ag, man, Mamogolo (Aunt). Ke lapisitse ke go pretender (I'm tired of pretending). Thato acts like she's better than all of us yet she doesn't even have any of our blood flowing through our veins. O serathane (You're an orphan), sesi (sis). And you're going to end up like your stupid mother!"

I got so angry that I acted out of impulse. Before I knew it, my fist landed on Sophie's face as she

stumbled back. She was bleeding from her nose and her cheek swelled instantly. Everything makes sense now, I'm the only light one, while Joko, Kagiso and Sophie are all dark. Mama was beautiful and light, but I'm lighter, very very light. A lot of people at school even thought I was coloured. My hair isn't even coarse at all. I've always had black, curly hair and she would just tell me I got it from one of the great grandmothers. None of my features matched theirs or even Mama's but I never took much note of it.

Rachel took Sophie and Kagiso out of the bedroom and she came back.

Rachel: "Thato, ke maswabi hle (I'm so sorry). You weren't supposed to find out like this."

I was so confused.

Rachel: "She was going to tell you in her own way. She told me she wrote a letter to you just before she died."

I didn't see any letter. That explains all the missing papers from Mama's drawer on the day she passed on. So Sophie took some of Mama's papers. Wow, just wow. I really need to get hold of it.

Rachel: "This changes nothing about you, Thato. You'll always be a member of this family and believe me no one has the right to chase you away. This house belongs to you. Your mother left it to you."

I don't get it. How come I don't know about all of this? Rachel could see how puzzled I was.

Rachel: "Didn't you see her will? She left everything to you."

Oh, snap. I must have forgotten to read the will.

Thato: "I forgot about that. I took it from her workplace and thought I'd read it later."

Rachel: "Do everything in your own time. If you ever need anything, just know that I'm always available. Finish school and then you can kick them out. You're still a minor and they could claim to be your guardians. I'll try and look out for you the best way I can. I don't trust my sister. Maria ke moloi (is a witch)."

She wasn't wrong about that last part.

Thato: "Ma, who is my real mother?"

Rachel: "That I don't know, my baby. Petunia couldn't have kids of her own and just when she had

accepted her fate, she heard you crying in the bin and you were badly burnt. She fell in love with you instantly and adopted you. That's all she knew about you. All she was told was that your biological mother was someone from Rockville too, but she was never traced. I hope you do find her one day so you could ask her all you need, but in all honesty, you turned out way better than you could have. All Petunia was ever guilty of was loving you.”

She was right about that. Mama loved me with everything in her and I never felt like I wasn't even hers. This doesn't change how I feel about her at all, and I'm thankful for the life she gave me. I could have died or ended up in the system as a foster child.

Rachel: “Never forget to pray, my child. You are destined for greatness. Petunia did her best to activate that.”

She hugged me and left. I tossed and turned all

night and could barely sleep. I made sure to lock the door before sleeping. I don't trust anyone in this house. I had counted the money in my purse and indeed I was R5000 short. I know Kagiso would never admit to taking the money even though I caught her red handed. I need to save the rest of this money in my bank account before they steal the rest of it.

The morning came and I got up early and took a bath before everyone else. I needed to since everyone wanted to take a bath. I went to the bedroom again and decided to read Mama's will before heading out to the church service.

"This is the last will and testament of Petunia Gadifele Maake. I leave the property I solely own in Rockville, Soweto to my only daughter Thato Maake. I also leave my car, a Mazda 3 to Thato Maake. I also leave all my policies, pension and life cover worth R1 million rand to Thato Maake. Thato Maake

is to remain the sole beneficiary of all my assets.”

That was rather short and sweet. I don't know why Sophie would steal the other copy of the will Mama had in here when Mama had the original at work. At least I'm safe and I know that my future will be sorted with that money. I knelt down and prayed before exiting the bedroom. I asked God and Mama for guidance.

I hope she'll be here with me throughout this day. I just don't see myself going through it all alone. I walked out and made double sure I took my bag and money with, along with the will just in case. I also locked the door and headed out. I found Sophie outside with a blue eye and bruised cheek, while Kagiso wore a scarf to hide the finger marks I left on her throat.

Serves them both right. I got into one of the family cars with Mamogolo (Aunt) Rachel and we drove off

to church. I couldn't believe my eyes as we entered the church, it was filled with flower decorations everywhere and the whole left side was filled with Nurses, dressed in their beautiful uniform. Tears steamed down my face as I walked in with Mamogolo Rachel holding my hand.

I saw Mama's coffin draped in her beautiful blanket which I bought her yesterday. In black culture we believe that we have to put a blanket over the deceased's coffin so that they don't get cold while in the grave. The Nurses started singing as soon as they saw me walk in. They sang the famous song "Yawah le mbewu (The seed has fallen)."

I felt myself cry as I heard that song. A few songs just have that thing. They always make you cry as soon as you hear them. Moruti and Mma Moruti walked out along with the Ushers. They sat in their seats while Moruti (Pastor) walked up to the podium and signaled silence to the crowd.

Moruti: "Amen bagaestho (Amen, my congregation)."

Crowd: "Amen."

Moruti: "Today is a very sad day for all of us, we are saying our final goodbyes to one of our own, a loving and well trusted member of this church. Petunia was one of the most loved women in the neighbourhood, she was not only a nurse at work, but she would assist a whole lot of people in the neighbourhood for free.

Pregnant women, injured people and sickly people would knock on her door in the middle of the night and she would always be of assistance. She never had even the faintest cross on her face, she was ever smiling and forever laughing.

John 11:25-26 says "Jesus said to her, "I am the

resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Jesus is telling us that those who believe in Him shall live and as we all knew and remember Petunia, she knew the word of God and for that, we shall see her again one day.

Romans 14:8 says: "If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." We may say that our beloved Petunia died before her time at the tender age of 50, but it is better to live for the Lord for when you die, you shall die an honourable death and be reunited with your maker.

Thato, my child, I leave you with this Revelation 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

God shall wipe away your tears, whenever in doubt, pray. Whenever you miss your mother, pray and whenever things don't make sense -PRAY.”

I felt like he was speaking directly at me. Moruti always has the best verses and most comforting words. The crowd sang another song again. The service was short and sweet, with her closest colleagues and best friend Marcia who made a speeches. I refused to let Koko or Sophie make a speech. It's bad enough they have ruined my whole life.

We proceeded to the burial site to say our final goodbyes. I'll never forget the painful moment of seeing her coffin go down into that hole. Mamogolo Rachel was with me every step of the way, holding my hand and even giving me juice to calm down. The nurses ushered us all the way through. Mama was buried like a true soldier, a warrior of note. Rest in Peace Petunia Gadifele Maake.

Chapter Seven

Isaiah 41:10 - "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Thato

Funerals are just always too much work when you're the one who's in mourning. After the wedding I had to greet people and thank them for coming, while Sophie and Kagiso were busy dishing out drinks like it was a whole party. There was even a dj hired by Sophie, I mean really. People have no respect for the dead whatsoever.

Mama's best friend Marcia told me that all is well and that if I ever needed her I should contact her. She lives in Jo'burg though. She also gave me some

money as a form of condolence, about R1000. Black people always give you the most money during funerals, I guess it's a thing. She handed it to me in an envelope and I put it in my bag and thanked her.

Kagiso was having the time of her life, buying everyone alcohol. She should enjoy it while it lasts because that money she stole from me will be finished by tomorrow. Koko on the other hand kept sending my uncles for alcohol and food. She even wanted them to drive Mama's car, but I took the keys. Palesa came to the funeral to support me and all, along with her mom and creepy dad.

He's creepy because he just always looks at me funny, in a very uncomfortable way. Palesa herself hates talking about her dad. She changes the subject very quickly whenever asked about her dad. She hates it when he holds her hand. From as long as I've known Palesa, her dad has always been very touchy but I guess that's how parents are, but he's

one of the very few people that just make her uncomfortable for some reason.

I once asked her long ago back in Primary school what her dad was doing in her room in the middle of the night while I was sleeping over, but she just said he used to sleep walk. She dismissed the topic very quickly and when I told Mama about her dad just walking into Palesa's room in the middle of the night, she told me never to sleep over there again. I was basically banned from sleeping there ever again and that was it.

They couldn't stay long, although Palesa was enjoying the after tears with Soks. Kg had his eyes on me the whole time. I'm tired, and drained and really all I feel like doing is sleeping. Imagine it's my mother's funeral and instead of resting comfortably in the house she left me, here I am trying so hard not to fall asleep just so that no one breaks down the house or steals anything.

I was about to take a seat next to Palesa along with Kg and Soks, when Koko told me that the neighbourhood ladies who assisted in washing the dishes and cleaning up were calling me. As soon as I walked up to one of them, I got a huge shock. All of them suddenly ran up to me and started making their demands.

Woman1: "Nna ke nwa (I drink) Brutal Fruit."

Woman2: "Nna ke nwa (I drink) Four cousins, Rose."

Woman 3: "Nna ke nwa (I drink) Hunters Dry."

I had never seen anything like that before. A funeral in the township is always full of ladies and males who assist in cooking and washing the dishes, but none of them should actually demand alcohol from you as thanksgiving. I didn't want to be the talk of

the town, so I grabbed a piece of paper and a pen from the house and jotted down everything they wanted me to buy. Yes, Koko probably told them that I'm loaded so I can afford it. I was going to ask Palesa to ask Soks to accompany me, but Kg was already waiting for me at the gate.

Kg: "A re ye ke go khape (Let's go, I'll accompany you)."

I smiled at him briefly as he opened the car door for me. Everyone was so busy enjoying the after tears, having fun and even church ladies were drinking, that they completely forgot about me and didn't even notice me getting into Kg's car. The ride was so peaceful and it felt so good to be away from that scene at home. I felt a bit relieved, a lot actually.

Kg: "O jele (Did you eat)?"

I only ate a little bit since everyone demanded my attention.

Thato: "Yes, only a bit."

Kg: "You don't have to do this, you know. Buy them alcohol and all."

He's right, I don't have to, but to just avoid drama, I did it anyway. Kg didn't complain about carrying all that alcohol. I didn't buy ice for them, they can do it themselves. In total I spent about R800 on alcohol for all those people on my list. My mother would have a fit seeing me do this, she didn't raise a weakling, but try standing up to your grandmother in front of the whole neighbourhood.

I headed back and gave everyone their drinks. As tired as I was, I saw a few other ladies who rushed to me and told me that they also assisted in washing

the dishes last night and yet I didn't buy then anything. I just gave them each R50 and walked out. I feel so overwhelmed, none of these people know how I feel nor do they even bother to know. Instead, they are demanding money from me like I'm just a cash cow. I headed straight to Kg who was having a smoke alongside his car.

Thato: "Please take me away from here."

He nodded as he opened the car door for me. I got inside and didn't even care about everyone else. I saw Kagiso running towards the car, trying to signal something to me. Kg gave her a nasty look as she humbled her drunken self before uttering a word.

Kagiso: "Uhm, hi Kg."

He just ignored her.

Kagiso: "Thato, ga o na R100 mowe ke tla gofa (Don't you have R100 there I'll give you)?"

Kg: "Mxm."

I didn't even respond. The nerve of this girl. Kg just stepped on the accelerator and drove off, leaving her standing there. It's amazing how people choose to be slaves of alcohol when they can't even afford it. Kg passed by McDonald's and we headed to his house. I honestly don't care what people think at this moment. All I want is to just have a few minutes away from home, away from all the drama.

Kg opened his gate using his remote. He's one of the rich kids of the neighbourhood. Of course, rumour has it that his dad is one of the biggest drug dealers in Rockville, and that Soks actually works for him but like I said it's just hearsay. I've never actually seen it so I can't confirm it.

They live in the biggest mansion in Rockville, but Kg has his own bachelor pad outside, just next to the garage. It's sort of a mini mansion if I could say that, with a chill area at the bottom and his bedroom with en-suite bathroom on top and a balcony. He even has a jacuzzi in there. Talk about living life large, no wonder why everyone wants to be his girlfriend around here. We walked in and he looked a bit nervous for some reason. I don't even know why, I mean this is one of the nicest places I've ever been to. And believe me, I never visit anyone.

Kg: (nervously) "It's not much, but this is my humble abode."

Thato: (chuckling) "Bathong (Goodness), Kg. Why o kare o tshogile so (do you look so worried)?"

Kg: (scratching head) "Thing is, I've never brought

any girl here. I don't just bring any girl here.”

Thato: (surprised) “Eh (wow), so if you want to, you know, where do you do it?”

Kg: (laughing) “When I want to 'you know'? Ai, ja neh. Well, if you must know if I really want to do 'you know', I take them somewhere else, like at a friend's place or at one of my dad's guest houses.”

Yep, his dad is one of the richest guys around ekasi (the township) if I can say so. At least he's starting to be at ease. I don't get this whole thing of him not bringing any of the girls he sleeps with to his place. I mean, isn't it what all guys do? Take girls to their place when it's time for sex? I wouldn't know since I've never had a boyfriend and I've never had sex, but anyway.

Thato: “Hmm, I see.”

Kg: "For a virgin you sure ask a lot of questions about my private life."

I felt a bit embarrassed at his statement and I could feel my cheeks become hot.

Thato: (shyly) "How do you know that?"

Kg: "Know what?"

Thato: "That I'm a virgin."

Kg: (chuckling) "I just know, for instance, you blush and your cheeks become red as soon as you hear the word sex. I bet you even bury your face in your hands as soon as you see a sex scene on tv."

I couldn't help but laugh shyly.

Kg: "It's a good thing, though. Not a lot of girls around here your age are virgins. You shouldn't just give it to any one."

I looked down shyly.

Kg: "Anyway, enough about that. Come sit, let's eat and watch some tv. You really do look like you could use some shut eye."

He's absolutely right. I hardly slept at all and I really am tired. We ate our food and he put on some Netflix. I couldn't even remember dozing off. That's how tired I was. I got woken up by his sliding door being closed as he walked back in.

Kg: "I didn't mean to wake you. Sorry."

I looked outside and didn't see any brightness and I started panicking.

Thato: "What time is it?"

Kg: "Ke (It's) 8."

Yoh, my grandmother is probably going to tell me all kinds of nonsense not to mention Sophie. What about Mamogolo (Aunt) Rachel? She'll think I'm a loose girl who sleeps around while her mother isn't even cold in the ground as yet.

Thato: (frantic) "I have to go. My granny will flip."

Kg: "Relax, ke jikile ko geno (I passed by your house) while you were sleeping. The party is still on so no one will even notice you're not around. They

probably think you're in your bedroom or something. I asked Palesa to say that you're with her since she also left."

I breathed out a sigh of relief. I really don't want any drama. Not today.

Kg: "I just went to her place to get you something comfortable to wear. You can change back into your funeral outfit when you go back home to avoid suspicion. I promise, I'll take you back before midnight when the noise dies down so you can have a peaceful night's sleep at home."

Kg had a pair of Jeans and a top he got from Palesa. We're more or less the same size, I'm slightly bigger from the waist down. But all in all, we wear the same size even the same shoe size.

Thato: "Thank you."

Kg: "Don't mention it. You can go take a shower upstairs, I'll be here waiting for you when you get back."

I smiled as I took the clothes from him. I could really use a warm shower. I walked into his bedroom and everything is so neatly packed. There aren't any loose socks or T-shirts lying around. Everything is super neat, but he has always been so well kept together. He has his own tv and laptop up here, and his sheets smell and feel so good as I touch them.

He even had a fresh and clean towel and some cosmetics laid out on the bed for me. I took off my clothes without worry that he would walk in on me. I walked into his bathroom and everything is literally spotless. He must have a helper or something, I mean there's no way a guy could be this clean. I stepped into the shower and enjoyed my time. We don't have a shower at home, but I'll be glad if I

install one, one day.

I must have lost track of time because the water started getting a but cold while I was in there. Eish, I shouldn't be getting thid comfortable in someone's house, more especially a grown 24 year old man's place. I walked out and dried myself. I was so lost in the warmth my body was feeling, I didn't even hear Kg walk in.

Kg: "Are you done-?"

He didn't even finish his sentence as I turned around and he saw me naked. He froze for a few seconds and turned around quickly. Wow, what a gentleman.

Kg: (nervously) "Uhm, sorry I was just checking to see if you're okay. I didn't know you weren't dressed."

This is the first time anyone apart from Mama and Palesa has ever seen me naked.

Thato: "It's okay."

Kg: "I'll be downstairs if you need me."

Thato: "Okay."

He walked back downstairs without turning back to look at me. I feel so awkward now. Palesa always says it's no big deal and that men get an instant erection when they see you naked. She says that if he doesn't then it means he's not into you. I'm not trying to date Kg or anything, but could it mean a good looking guy like him doesn't seem to find me attractive or what? Perhaps I'm not hot enough or something.

Chaper Eight

John 7:38 - "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."

Thato

I nervously walked back downstairs and found Kg seated on the couch, with some pizza on the table and cold drink, and a six pack of his beer.

Kg: (nervously) "I'm sorry for walking in on you like that. It wasn't my intention."

Shame, he looks so worried and I'm really curious. I mean I've never seen a guy naked let alone had a guy see me naked.

Thato: "It's okay, really."

He breathed out a silent sigh of relief.

Kg: "I got you some pizza. I figured you could use a decent meal before going home."

Thato: (smiling) "Thank you."

We ate in silence and I couldn't contain the question burning in my mind anymore, I just had to ask.

Thato: "Kg, may I ask you something?"

Kg: "Sure."

Thato: "Why didn't you get an erection after seeing me naked?"

He choked profusely on his beer and I suddenly regretted asking him that question.

Kg: "I don't get what you mean. I mean, no offense, do you even know what an erection is?"

Mara (But), Kg. I took Life sciences as a subject once upon a time.

Thato: (shyly) "Yes, we did it in Life Sciences."

Kg: (chuckling) "What makes you think I didn't get one?"

Okay, now I really wish I hadn't asked him that question.

Kg: "TT, men get erections all the time, sometimes

even when we're just thinking about sex. It's not even something you can control most of the time."

Thato: "Oh, I see."

Kg: "Now be honest, why did you really ask me that question?"

Thato: "Well, it's a bit stupid, but Palesa always says that if a guy doesn't get an erection if he sees you naked, then he doesn't like you or find you attractive."

Kg: (laughing) "Do you believe that?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

Kg: "Look, TT, you're young and inexperienced, so of

course people will lie to you. Don't believe everything your friend tells you. She's a bit troubled that one and a little too experienced for my liking."

I smiled a bit in relief.

Kg: "Just for the record, I do like and find you very, very attractive. I even have a boner just by thinking about you. I just choose not to act on it, because you're special. Sex is nice when you're both in love and when you both want to do it."

I felt myself get a bit flushed as I just indulged in my pizza and coldrink. After a few movies and episodes of Netflix shows, it was time for me to go home. I didn't feel like it, but I had to. I really didn't want people to start rumours about me. Kg doesn't live very far from me, literally the next street away. We decided to walk home after I had changed back into my funeral outfit. We got to the corner and people were still having a ball at the after tears. Are these

people for real? Kg could see the disappointment on my face.

Kg: "We could go back to my place and come back after they finish up. I really don't mind."

I feel so bad though. I can't be Misusing Kg like that. He most probably has his own things to do.

Thato: "Thank you, Kg, I really appreciate it, but I can't abuse you like that. I'll just take some sleeping tablets and I'll be out in a few minutes."

He seemed a bit disappointed by my response, but understood gladly.

Kg: "If you don't feel like sleeping, we can chat on WhatsApp or I can call you. Let me know as soon as you get into your bedroom."

Thato: (smiling) "Thank you."

He hugged me while I tiptoed and hugged him back. I inhaled his masculine scent and I walked away. Most people were so drunk and didn't even see me pass by. I saw Mmane (Aunt) Sophie and Kagiso still drinking with their friends as I made my way to mama's bedroom. I just don't see myself going back to my own bedroom from now on. I'd like to remember Mama just as she was, a happy and beautiful soul.

I got in and locked the door immediately, and started praying.

Thato: "Dear God, thank you so much for giving me the courage and strength to get through today. I honestly could not have done it without you. I ask of you dear God that you may please guide me, protect

me from all evil and danger and carry me throughout this year. I would love to achieve my dreams just as Mama would have wanted. You gave me to her for a reason Lord, you entrusted her with my life and boy, she did a great job. My heart is aching, oh Lord, but I know you'll mend it. Just as you said in Psalm 9:9 "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble." I put everything in your hands, Oh Lord. I pray this in Jesus' mighty name. Amen."

I lay on the bed and I texted Kg telling him I'm back home. We started chatting away as usual and I dozed off while we were busy at it. I got up at 7am the following day, as I had the last few errands to run. I feel so much lighter after praying last night. As I got out of my bedroom, I made sure to lock it since Kagiso is a little thief. I headed to the bathroom and did my business, and once I was done, 8 was met by Mmane Sophie, who was dressed and ready to go somewhere. As I was about to walk to my bedroom, she called me.

Sophie: "Thato, o kae ngwana (how are you, boo)?"

Hehe, just before my mother's burial she called me a useless orphan and practically cursed me. And now she's all smiles again. I can't wait to turn 18, finish school and get rid of them.

Thato: "Ke shap (I'm fine)."

Sophie: (smiling) "Hao, ne ke re ke tsamaye le wena today ro claimer life cover ya Mmago (Oh, I thought I'd go with you today to process your mother's life cover claim.)"

She puzzled me and took me by surprise because I never told her about the life cover. And I'm pretty sure Mama never told her about it either. Which can only mean one thing, she stole some of Mama's papers. I decided to play dumb.

Thato: (puzzled) "What life cover?"

Sophie: (edgy) "Oh, hai, I just assumed that your mother would have one. I mean all government employees have one, don't they?"

She's testing me shame, so I acted completely stupid.

Thato: "Aowa (No), nna akitsi selo (I don't know anything). But ska wara (don't worry), I'll ask as soon as I get the chance."

Sophie: "Okay no problem. Ke go direle (Can I make you some) breakfast?"

Ai, people and their love for money. Just yesterday she was all over everyone and buying all her friends booze. Kgante keng na (What's up with that)?!

Thato: "No thank you, ke shap (I'm okay)."

She was disappointed, very disappointed. I went into the bedroom and got dressed. Kg greeted me and asked me if he could accompany me. I like how he always asks for permission to do something before he actually does it. Palesa always says Soks is rough with everything he does. Apparently he doesn't even ask - he demands. Like whenever he wants sex from her she isn't even allowed to say no.

I might be inexperienced, but I know abuse when I see it. She says she likes rough guys so I let her be. I told Kg that he can meet me outside within five minutes since I'm done with everything. When I was about to leave the house, Mmane Sophie was right in the kitchen. If I didn't know better, I'd say she was anxiously waiting for me to finish so I could pass there. I made a mental note to leave via the lounge door next time.

Sophie: "Eh, Thato. Ne ke re kgopela tshelete ya borotho (May I please have money for bread)?"

She must be joking. Now that Mama is gone, she wants to turn me into the new breadwinner? No ways.

Thato: "Ska wara, Mmane (Don't worry, Aunty). I'll buy the bread on my way back. Le sale pila (Keep well)."

I left her standing in the middle of the kitchen, but I could feel her shooting daggers at me. I found Kg waiting for me at the usual corner. I greeted him and hugged him as he waited outside the car, having a smoke as usual. He opened the door for me and I got in. I quickly said a prayer to help me through the day and we drove off.

Sophie Maake

Mxm, ngwana o o nagana gore ke mang ena (Who does this child think she is)?! Petunia did her a huge favour by raising her and treated her like gold. It's bad enough Petunia refused to take my daughter to Model C schools so that our kids could be equal, but no, now that she has all this money she thinks she's the next best thing since sliced bread? I might not have finished school, but it's not my fault I wasn't gifted like that bitch Petunia. Thato owes me, how does she expect us to survive when none of us work? I have to make a plan and fast and I know the only person who can make it happen. I dialed his number and he picked up on the first ring as usual.

Romeo: "Ke (It's) Romeo."

Sophie: "Hao (Gosh), why are you answering the phone like you don't know it's me? Oh, kea bona (I see). The wife is there, neh (right)?"

Romeo: "How can I help you?"

Sophie: (chuckling) "I get the message. Listen, I need you to take care of Thato."

Romeo: (sigh) "Sophie, do you think I can go around killing my son's girlfriend? Wa gafa (Are you mad)? Besides, she's your niece, man."

Sophie: "No, man. I don't mean it like that. Bona, she doesn't want to give me money, so I need you to organize a few of your guys to steal it from her."

Romeo: "Ai, Sophie. Wa bona flop e thoma ge o gana go bereka (You see the problem comes when you don't want to work)."

Sophie: "Hao, Ro, why would I work when I can work

you? You're the biggest drug dealer in Rockville and the father of my child."

Romeo: "Wa bona bjanong (You see now)? O tla ka masepa (You're starting with your shit). A kao botsa (Didn't I tell you) not to go around telling people that? I know she's mine and I give you enough money to support the two of you. O tlo mbora (you're about to annoy me), Sophie."

Sophie: "Okay, sorry geh (then). Can you do it or not?"

Romeo: "I'll get my guys to be on the lookout. But if ke life cover, e ka se tswe bjanong (She won't get it now). E tswa (She'll get it) after bo ma 6 months to a year post death."

Sophie: "Post death ke dilo mang bjanong (what is post death now)?"

Romeo: "Yoh, Sophie, nkabe o kene skolo wa se fetsa nkabe o le number one nou (Had you actually bothered to finish school, you could have been my number one now). Instead you're my side chick. Post death means after death."

Sophie: "Mxm, se se salang (fact remains) I met you first and I gave birth to your first born. Ska ntebala, wena Romeo (Don't act like you don't know me). Ka kgona go gafa (I can be crazy when I want to be)."

Romeo: "Ah, man, baby ska ba so (don't be like that). You know I love you net le wena wa phanya (just that you have a loose mouth)."

Sophie: "Okay, you're forgiven. A o nromele zaka nyana mowe (Send me some money). I'm low on cash."

Romeo: "Ai, Sophie, you're always low on cash. Sharp, I'll send. Re tla bua later (We'll talk later)."

I hung up and relaxed in my chair. Within minutes he sent me R2000. That's my man. Thato won't know what's coming for her. I'll make sure that million gets taken away from her before she can even spend it.

Chapter Nine

Exodus 23:7 - "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked."

A few days later

Thato

It's been a week since Mama passed on. Funny

enough I still feel her presence. It's my birthday today, Friday 20 March and I'm officially 17. I used to wake up to Mama's kisses and hugs and beautiful and memorable gifts, but instead today, I was awoken by a beautiful dream of her. In the dream she was fully clothed in white and she was smiling. She told me she loved me and wished me a happy birthday.

That is truly enough for me, knowing she's well at peace and that she is watching over me. I'm quite happy that Palesa didn't forget my birthday either, she never forgets. She always wakes me up at midnight to be the first one to wish me a happy birthday. This year it's a bit extra special because even Kg wished me a happy birthday. Yes, we're officially friends now and we talk a lot and spend time together - a lot.

He even helps me with my physics work, especially where I don't understand. Can you believe he

downloaded and printed out previous question papers for me so that I could be able to catch up with my school work and prepare for my upcoming June exams? I'm so glad that I never bump into his step mom, though. She's a bit of a stepford wife, along with Palesa's mom. They even have their own Divas club here in Rockville, The Rockville Divas, wives and girlfriends of the richest men in Rockville.

His dad has seen me a few times, in fact he was the one who initiated a meeting between us. Apparently he wants the best for Kg, but for some reason Kg doesn't get along quite well with his father. I don't ask about it, I figured he would tell me when he's ready. Overall, we have great times together, clean and innocent fun. I can't believe I never knew how funny and calm he actually he is. He's actually quite hot and smells so damn good.

He likes Givenchy perfume and only wears Givency perfume, apparently he's brand loyal, just as how he

only wears Nike sportswear and wears only Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Versace. Others he apparently wears on special occasions. I've learnt so much about him in just a week. I actually prefer spending time with him than being here at home. I bought groceries the other day and they finished it in two days and never bothered to cook for me.

Imagine, buying groceries and not being allowed to eat any of it. So, I decided not to buy anymore. Besides, Kg always ensures I am sorted when it comes to food. Palesa says Soks keeps saying he's never seen Kg like this before. And of course he claims I give him good, raw pussy. Like really? Soks is quite out of order and I'm honestly glad he isn't my boyfriend, not that Kg is my boyfriend, but you get what I mean.

Anyway, Kg sent me a good morning text mixed with a happy birthday and I'm all over his status updates on WhatsApp today. I don't know what to make of

that, but he's a really cool guy. He's asked that I get up a bit early today as he has something special planned for me. I'm not complaining, I'd do anything to be away from these people.

I got dressed in my jean and vest and sneakers and took a jean jacket with in case it gets windy. I don't even feel like I belong to any family, as I just walked out while they were all watching tv over a drink of course. Koko Maria just hides her booze whenever the pastor visits. Ntate Moruti (Pastor) visits a lot more often than he's actually supposed to, but anyway. I found Kg waiting for me at the corner, dressed so well in his Versace Top and Armani Jeans with sneakers too.

He's smoking as usual waiting for me to give him a tight hug. He needs to stop his smoking, it's a bad habit for someone who likes to keep fit. As soon as I walkes up to him he threw his cigarette away. Ever since I complained about his bad breath whenever

he smokes, he stopped smoking around me. I feel very bad though, why should he alter his lifestyle for me? We're not even dating or anything.

Kg: "TT, Happy Birthday, gorgeous."

I smiled as I hugged him.

Thato: "Thank you."

Kg: "Are you ready to go?"

Thato: "Yes."

I got into the car as he opened the door for me as usual and walked into his side. I looked at him surprised as he didn't start the car.

Thato: (puzzled) "And then?"

Kg: "Aren't you going to pray for us?"

Thato: (smiling) "Dear Lord, thank you for this wonderful day. Please let this journey be a great and safe one. Bless Kgaugetelo with eyes and ears so that he can drive us carefully and bring us back home safe and sound. Most importantly please let us enjoy our day. In Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen."

Kg: "Amen. Now we can go."

I smiled to myself. I hardly see Kg at church - ever and I hardly hear him pray. He always waits for me to pray for us so I wonder what he does whenever he's alone. We got to Bounce, which is just close to Menlyn Maine and I was quite surprised to see Soks and Palesa there. Of course Palesa rushed towards me and gave me a huge hug.

Palesa: "Happy Birthday, Babe! Oh, I can't wait for you to see the gift I got you."

Thato: "Thank you."

Soks: "Hai, man. A re nweng (let's drink)."

Ai, Soks is forever drinking unlike Kg. I just don't get him, really. I honestly thought that older guys were a huge bore until I actually got to know Kg.

Palesa: (frowning) "Ah, baby, kgante ga re bounce nyana (Aren't we going to bounce a bit, though)?"

Soks: "I'm too old for such."

Palesa: "Bathong (Goodness) Soks, you're only 27."

Soks: "Heh, man! A ke nyake (I don't want to)."

I could see the disappointment on Palesa's face when Soks did that to her. He actually noticed and for a change he tried to apologize. Yes, tried.

Soks: "Ah, man, bona (look), baby. I didn't mean it like that. Waitse le wena gore o bjang (You know what you're like) at times. A re nwe beer nyana (Let's drink a beer or two) and bond."

Poor Palesa, she was actually trying to please her instead of the other way around.

Palesa: "They don't sell alcohol here."

Soks: "Let's go to Times Square. I'm sure they'll allow you in. I'll buy you anything you want."

She faked a smile as they left. I just don't know why Palesa is doing this to herself, but as she always says "The heart wants what it wants". I remember one day she came to school with a lot of make up, hiding a very obvious black eye. I asked her what happened and she said Soks got angry but it was her fault. I guess I don't know much about love, but abuse is abuse.

Kg and I decided to do our own thing just as he had planned. We enjoyed ourselves so much on those trampolines. I don't even know how Soks got Palesa in the Casino since she isn't 18 yet, but well I guess money talks. After our fun time at Bounce, Kg took me out to the movies to watch Matwetwe. I've always heard about this movie, but I guess today I get to see it live for myself.

I enjoyed myself so much and I actually laughed so hard for the first time in ages. It feels so good to be

carefree and happy for a change. After the movie, Kg took me out for lunch at Parrots in Menlyn. I ordered a virgin mojito as I have never even tasted alcohol in my life. I'm craving some and I'm tempted, but I'm scared it might turn me into something I'm not.

Kg: "Well, it's your birthday and you could do whatever you want. I can see you've been staring at the alcoholic cocktails menu. Order the Mojito, you won't be sorry."

Thato: "I'm scared, what if I turn into someone else?"

Kg: (chuckling) "Relax, it's just one. Besides, I've got you."

I nodded as I changed my order from virgin cocktail to alcoholic Mojito. I guess tasting it won't do any harm. Kg settled for his usual beer, but got a draft

this time. I don't even know the difference, but anyway, I started taking small sips and it tasted funny, but I loved it.

Kg: "Slow down, before you get drunk and pass out. Cocktails, well, alcoholic drinks are sipped slowly to avoid crashing and burning. Take it easy."

I took his advice and nodded. The food came and I was really starving come to think of it.

Chapter Ten

James 1:2-3 - "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience."

Kgaugelo Moloji

I'm staring at Thato while she's eating and I can't get

enough of how precious she is. Her beauty is more than just physical. I stopped praying when Mama died, I stopped believing in miracles when my dad married that evil woman. She's the reason why my half brother is the way he is. I stopped having faith until I met Thato.

I remember the first time I saw her when I came back from Varsity. She was still young at the time, but my word, she was radiantly beautiful. I fell in love with her smile, her natural flawlessness and her unique innocence. When I told Papa (Dad) about her after seeing her for the first time, he was happy that at least I had found a potential future wife, but Sonto, my stepmother immediately dismissed my feelings.

I mean she didn't even know her, but already she spoke of how Thato was the dumpster baby that Ausi Petunia found years ago. That didn't change anything, and after hearing how her biological mother burnt her own shack and threw Thato in that

fire. She went back the following day only to find that Thato miraculously survived and was only burnt on a part of her back.

She then threw her in a dustbin full of all kinds of filth. Imagine, a whole baby thrown into a fire and she didn't even die nor suffer any long term complications. I knew then that God saved her for me. I still don't get how Sonto knows the whole story and detailed even, but since she knows Sophie from way back, she must have told her about it. Sonto looks down on other people forgetting that she comes from a very poor family.

She got lucky by being Papa's side chick. And now, she's reaping from dirty money. I had everything well planned, especially since Thato didn't want to give me a chance when I started asking her out, of which I understood perfectly. Now with her almost reaching maturity, I worry about all these wrong guys who want her. I have an amazing day planned for us

today and I got her a really special gift and I just hope and pray she accepts it.

Kg: (nervously) "Thato, I bought you a gift."

Thato: (smiling) "Hmm, what is it? I can't wait to see it."

Kg: "You'll have to wait for us to get home. But first, I'd like to ask you to spend the night with me? I promise, I'll sleep on the couch and you can sleep on my bed."

Thato: (chuckling) "Come on, Kg. I trust you, really."

I breathed out a sigh in relief. Had she said no, all my efforts were going to be wasted. I'm glad Soks took Palesa out because I just want Thato to remember this special day forever. After our lunch,

we walked around the mall just to get the bit of alcohol in her system out and we did some window shopping.

We came across a beautiful jacket at one of the Boutiques and she stood and stared at it for a while. She instantly fell in love with it, so I bought it for her. She was excited and couldn't stop thanking me. I love seeing her smile so much. We got into my car and headed home.

Thato

Kg is such a nice guy. I always see such things in movies, and I never thought I'd ever be a recipient of such wonderful gestures. I'm a very sentimental person, just like Mama was. If you buy me something, I get attached to it and it holds sentimental value. So when I lose that item or it gets broken, my heart really breaks.

We arrived at Kg's place at about 6pm and before we entered his pad he asked me to wear a blindfold.

Kg: (Holding blindfold) "TT, do you mind wearing this?"

Thato: (smiling) "Okay, as long as you're not going to kill me."

Kg: (chuckling) "I could never."

He put the blindfold over my eyes and aided me as we slowly walked towards his room I presume. I heard him unlock his door and he let me walk in.

Kg: "I'm about to remove your blindfold, okay? Open your eyes slowly."

I opened my eyes slowly, and I just couldn't help but bawl in tears. There are Gold and White balloons everywhere and two big numbered balloons with the number 17 in the centre. There were roses everywhere, a few scented candles and a picnic blanket on the carpet in front of the tv, with food and snacks, champagne and wine on it.

Thato: (teary-eyed) "Kg... This is so beautiful."

Kg: (smiling) "Do you like it?"

Thato: "Are you kidding me? I absolutely love this. How did you manage to pull this off?"

Kg: (chuckling) "That's what events companies are for, love. I have one more surprise for you."

He ran upstairs and came back with a small box. Oh, Goodness, I hope he's not proposing or anything. We're not even a couple yet.

Kg: "TT, I have to be honest with you. I'm not a man of many words, but I know that I love you. I'd like you to give me a chance to prove to you how much I do love you. I want to make sure you keep smiling for eternity. I hate seeing you sad and I'd like to grow with you. You're such an amazing, talented and intelligent being, that I myself made the choice of dreaming about marrying you. I see you in my future, TT. Would you please be my girlfriend?"

I stood there in shock, staring at him. Shame, He's even shaking nervously. Truth is that I didn't think Kg would actually be into someone like me. I really like him, so what do I have to lose?

Thato: (smiling) "Yes, I'd love to be youe girl, Kg."

He smiled so much, he couldn't contain his happiness. He gave me a hug and this time the hug felt different, like a hug between lovers. All I had to do was just agree to his proposal. I officially have a boyfriend, guys.

Kg: "Oh, before I forget, I had this custom made for you."

He handed me the box and I unwrapped it and saw it's a jewelry box from Poggenpoel Jewelers. Is he kidding me? Those people are expensive! Kg is only 25 mos? What on earth does he do for a living? I nervously opened it and saw the most beautiful, diamond pendant I have ever seen in my life. The necklace is surrounded by real white diamonds, and the heart locket is also made of diamonds. I opened the locket and I just let the tears flow. There are two pictures, one on the left is a picture of Mama and I and the one on the right is a picture of Kg and I. I

know he got the picture of him and I from the photos we took a while ago, but where did he get the one of Mama and I?

Kg: "You're probably asking yourself where I got the picture of you and your mom, right?"

I nodded.

Kg: "I got it from your Instagram. I hope you don't mind. If you don't like it, I can take it back."

I did the unthinkable, actually the unimaginable. I planted a kiss on his lips leaving the both of us stunned.

Thato: "Thank you, Kg. This is the best gift anyone has ever given me."

Kg: (smiling) "I'm glad you like it."

Thato: "But did you have to get real diamonds, though? I mean we live in Rockville. I'd lose this in a day of wearing it."

Kg: (chuckling) "You can wear it when you're at school only."

Thato: "I love it so much, I don't ever want to take it off."

Kg: "Tell you what, you can wear this when you're at school and whenever you're at home, you can wear a cheaper one. I'll get you a nice one with fake diamonds just in case they try to steal it from you. Okay?"

I nodded and couldn't stop staring at it. He helped

me put it on and it just feels so surreal. I know Mama would have loved this.

Kg: "Come, a re je, motho wa ka (let's eat, my woman)."

I smiled and playfully hit his chest. We sat down and dug into our food. Yoh, we had the most amazing prawns ever. Kg is indeed one in a million and I'm glad I met him. I believe everything happens for a reason and Kg is in my life for a reason and that is to make me happy and heal my heart.

Chapter Eleven

"The way to be truly happy is to be truly human, and the way to be truly human is to be truly godly." –J.I. Packer

Proverbs 10:28 - The hope of the righteous will be gladness, but the expectation of the wicked will

perish.

Thato

Our dinner was so awesome, I ate and ate until I couldn't anymore. I swear this guy is trying to get me fat, shame. After dinner, I really felt like I could use a shower. I'm so used to a bath tub at home, so whenever I'm here, I make up an excuse to shower. Plus, that cocktail made me so dizzy, he gave me a whole lot of water and cream soda. Apparently cream soda makes one sober immediately.

Thato: "Yoh, Kg, ke dumile go hlapa (I feel like taking a shower)."

Kg: "Okay, go upstairs and shower. I'll be right here."

Then I remembered I don't have any clothes or

anything to bathe in.

Thato: "Eish, ga ke na dilo tsa go hlapa le diaparo (I don't have bathing essentials nor clothes)."

Kg: "Go upstairs and look on the left side of my closet."

Kg and his surprises. I did as he told me and I was stunned. He had a whole closet full of female clothes. They're all brand new and my size, surprisingly my style too. A lot of yellow coloured clothing items. Yellow is my favourite colour. He has a whole section filled with towels and bathing essentials. I'm a Nivea girl, and he got me all kinds of Nivea products and wash clothes and sponges.

I even see a few pairs of shoes, exactly my size. Wow, this guy. I feel like I'm in a movie, man. Kasi (Township) guys aren't romantic like this, no man. I

took off my clothes and got into the shower. Oh, I just love how soothing the water is to my muscles whenever I shower. Afterwards, I dried myself and lotioned my body.

I got into one of the few pairs of pajamas he bought for me and a new pair of slippers. I feel like I'm dreaming. I headed downstairs and found him seated in front of the tv with a fleece blanket, having a beer. He even had an aircon in his pad by the way, so there's no need for a heater.

Kg: (smiling) "Kgale o hlapa, watermeisie (You took so long, mermaid girl)."

Thato: (laughing) "Ai, man Kg. Ke rata shower bathong (I love taking a shower). Akere ko gae a ke na yona (I don't have one at home)."

Kg: "If you want I can get you one for yourself in your

bedroom.”

Hai I'm not used to such, honestly. Things get done for him at the click of his fingers. It's odd how I've been spending so much time with him, yet I don't know what he does for a living.

Thato: "Kg, le wena o kare o rata go dlala ka tshelete (You seem like you love playing with money). What is it that you do exactly?"

Kg: (chuckling) "I don't play with money, I spend it on valuable people. If you must know, I have a chemical engineering degree. I'm currently unemployed because Papa forced me down that route and well, I'm more into Jewelry design. I love designing things and I'd like to have my own company by the age of 30 at least."

No wonder he is this good at physics.

Thato: "I see. So, where do you get all this money?"

Kg: "I got a bursary to study, even for my masters. I didn't pay a single dime. My mom came from a wealthy family, a very wealthy family. She was royal, so she chose to marry my dad out of love. She left me money, though, a lot of it. So, I have a lot of investments and I live off that. Since I'm her only offspring, I get a monthly allowance from the Royal Family."

Wow, so Kg is actually royal? How rich is this dude? He lives such a normal and plain life, though.

Thato: "Wow, this is interesting. So, I'm chilling with the next King in line to the throne?"

I was actually joking, until he gave me a shocking answer.

Kg: "Actually, yes. My grandfather, my mother's father, is old now and he only had my mom and her sister. He never had any sons, so automatically the throne falls onto the first born male of the first daughter, which was my mom. So, until he steps down or passes away, God forbid, I get to become King."

This is so awkward, though. I don't picture Kg as a King. I thought Royals marry royals only.

Thato: "So, what happens when you refuse to become King?"

Kg: "Well, then either my uncles get the throne or my aunt's crazy son, Tumisho gets it and believe me when I say, you don't want that to happen."

I listened to him in silence and tried to absorb the

fact that he might become king one day and most probably be asked to marry a royal.

Kg: "Silence is golden, love. What's on your mind, TT? And please don't lie to me."

Thato: (loud sigh) "Well, isn't it that you're supposed to marry a royal or they choose a wife for you once you become King?"

Kg: (laughing) "Hao, love. You're already jealous of someone that doesn't even exist? You're cute, I like that."

I hit him playfully on his chest.

Thato: "I'm serious, Kgaugelo."

Kg: "Ao? Ke kgaugelo nou (So I'm Kgaugelo now)? Aowa (No), don't worry, love. We can marry anyone we want. No one is forced to marry a royal, so don't worry. I already told my great grandmother about you and she says the ancestors are pleased. She can't wait to meet you."

I felt goosebumps and heart palpitations at the same time. I don't know if I'm even ready for such things, really. I think he sensed my insecurity and changed the subject.

Kg: "Ke go tshelle juice (Would you like some juice)?"

Thato: "I'd like to have a bit of a taste of your wine. I used to steal some of Mama's wine and taste it. It was a bit bitter though and some were too sweet."

Kg: "hmm, ska mpotsa gore (Don't tell me that) you're turning into a drunkard."

Thato: "Not even. I'd just like to taste."

Kg: "I'll take you wine tasting soon, for now let me introduce you to a glass of Amarula."

He got up and went to his mini bar, took out a bottle of Amarula and poured some for me in a tall glass with lots of ice. He handed it to me.

Kg: "Just one glass. Ga ke batle o tshwane le Palesa (I don't want you to be like Palesa), so I'd rather have you drink when you're with me only."

Thato: (smiling) "Okay, daddy."

Kg: "Hmm, one day you'll be calling me that, for some other reason."

I don't really know what he means, but he had a mischievous smile on his face.

Chapter Twelve

Proverbs 6: 16-19 - "There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers."

Thato

Three months later

Life has been peaceful, honestly. I spend more time with Kg than I do at my own house. He helps me

with my school work where I don't understand something and he even bought me my own table and chair for when I'd like to do homework. At times, mostly weekends I sleep over here at his place. I don't mind what people think about me as he reassured me that he likes it this way.

Yes, we sleep in the same bed, but we haven't done the deed yet. I'm surprised he hasn't even tried to initiate, as we usually kiss and touch here and there. We hardly fondle, because wow, I had no idea it felt so good to be horny. Everyone doesn't believe that I'm still a virgin and I don't really care to be quite honest. Palesa also doesn't believe that I haven't slept with Kg yet. She says it's impossible for a guy to be all over a girl the way Kg is with me, without any sex involved.

I let her be and allowed her to make her own assumptions. She also spends a lot of time with Soks, but she hardly studies. She just managed to

pass her June Exams just. I'm so excited to show Kg my report. We're at school and it's report day today. Kg said he would come fetch us since Soks us busy somewhere with what, I have no idea.

Palesa: "Ah chomi (Oh, friend). Be honest, please. When do you even find the time to study when you're always with Kg? Gape nna Soks never lets me rest yoh. He wants sex day and night bathong. I only rest when I'm at home and even when he fetches me from school, he still wants a quickie."

I don't even get why Palesa subjects herself to such, but who am I?

Thato: "Believe it or not, babe. Kg helps me study and he even lets me stay upstairs while he stays downstairs to work on his designs. When I'm done he checks my work and at times he quizzes me just to help me prepare for tests and exams. At times he puts on some soft music for me while he sleeps or

he wakes up le nna (with me) and gets busy on his designs while I study then we go back to sleep.”

I could see the look on her face, almost like she is yearning for such a relationship.

Palesa: “Wow, chomi (friend). I guess Anastacia wasn't lying when she said Kg is a real romantic and soft. She made it seem so wrong, though.”

I looked at her puzzled. Aowa (No), the only Anastacia I know is the pastor's kid.

Thato: (puzzled) “O ra Anastacia o mofe (Which Anastacia are you talking about)?”

Palesa: “The one and only, ngwana moruti (the pastor's kid).”

But why would Ana be talking about Kg like that?
Were they dating?

Thato: "Ne ba jola (Were they dating)?"

Palesa: "Ah, not really. Kg o mo shapile di 1-0 (Kg did a hit and run on her). It's no big deal. Ana le ena wa lapisa ag (Ana is also very annoying)."

I felt pretty unsettled right there and then. I know the past is in the past, but I mean Ana is one of the hottest girls in Rockville. She is like our Kim Kardashian, even though they say she had surgery for her buttocks, boobs and pretty much everything else. I'm planning on giving Kg my virginity on his birthday next week. I don't know why, but I want to. I wanted it to be a surprise, now how will I do that with a picture of him and Ana in my head? Kg arrived as we got into the car and he drove off.

Kg: "Hey, girls."

Palesa: "Sho (Hi), Kg."

Kg: "Hao, and then? Palesa, why is my wife so sad?
Keng (What is it)? O faitse (Did you fail)?"

I tried to talk, but as usual Palesa beat me to it.

Palesa: (laughing) "Nonsense. Thato and fail don't go together - ever. She's just a bit sad because I told her about you and Anastacia."

Kg: (frowning) "Ai, Palesa man le wena. What did you tell her?"

Palesa: "The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

I could see Kg feeling a bit edgy. I'm just a bit bummed that Ana of all people will be talking about my boyfriend's penis size and all that. I don't even know why I'm jealous, I mean I knew he wasn't a virgin unlike me. Kg tried making conversation along the way, but I just couldn't help but become mute.

I have a very bad habit of being unable to pretend. Whenever I'm unhappy about something, it shows immediately. Kg said we're going to celebrate at his Chesa Nyama, so he parked his car and Palesa couldn't wait to go out as she spotted Soks sitting at one of the tables with some girl. As I was about to walk out, Kg gently held me.

Kg: "Love, keng (what is it)?"

I feel like I'm being petty, but I can't help it.

Thato: "Eish, Kg. Askies (I'm sorry), I didn't mean to be sour or anything the whole way here. Just that when Palesa mentioned you and Anastacia had a thing, I couldn't help but feel jealous. I mean, she's the hottest girl in Rockville and now that you slept with her, how will I even have sex with you? You most probably won't even like the way I look. I was planning on giving myself to you on your birthday -"

I didn't even realize I had spilled the beans until he interrupted me.

Kg: (surprised) "Ema pele (Wait a minute). Thato, o reng na (what are you saying)? Are you telling me you're planning on giving your virginity to me?"

Shit, I'm so bad at surprises, especially when I'm pissed. I nodded slowly.

Kg: (chuckling) "But, baby, you honestly don't have to.

I'm willing to wait for you."

Thato: (deep sigh) "I want to, Kg. It's not because of pressure or anything, but I want to. The timing feels okay and I just want to."

Kg: (chuckling) "Jah, ne. So Palesa made you spill the beans just like that all because of Ana? Ai, TT. If you must know, I actually never slept with her."

I raised my eyebrows in shock.

Kg: "Yes, she kept coming onto me and really wanted me to sleep with her, but I just couldn't. She's one of the hottest girls around yes, but she's not natural. All that 'hotness' you see is man made. She had alterations and she's slept with pretty much everyone around Rockville, even some people's fathers. That night Palesa told you about, Ana actually slept with Soks, but because Palesa arrived,

I had to pretend I slept with her. She doesn't take rejection well, so she lied to everyone that I slept with her, but my performance is weak and that I have a small dick. But since you've seen me a few times in my briefs, you can be the judge of that."

Kg suddenly made me smile. I hope he isn't lying just to appease my soul.

Thato: "So she never even saw you naked?"

Kg: "Not even close."

Thato: (smiling) "I'm sorry for overreacting."

Kg: "It's okay, now show daddy your report."

I smiled while blushing. He has a tendency of calling

himself daddy, ai Kg. I showed him my report and I couldn't help but smile with pride. I got an average of 95%.

Kg: (smiling) "Now that's my girl! This calls for a celebration, akere (right)?"

Thato: (smiling) "Yes."

Kg: "I'm so proud of you, baby. You're going places."

He smiled as he gave me a passionate kiss. A few months ago, I had no idea how to kiss someone with my tongue in their mouth, and thanks to Kg and his perfect skills, I'm brilliant at it now. We walked out of the car as we headed to the table, where Soks and Palesa were. Soks was trying to calm Palesa down as she almost landed a champagne bottle at the girl Soks was flirting with. this guy lacks serious respect for his girlfriend.

Soks: "Baby, le wena man you need to calm down. You can't fight every girl you see flirting with me."

He always has a tendency of shifting the blame, honestly.

Thato: "Hi, Soks."

Soks: "Sho, speke sa Kg (Kg's meat)."

Kg: "O tlo ntena, Soks (Don't annoy me). I keep telling you not to talk to her like that."

Soks: "Ka dlala (I'm kidding), man le wena. You're so sensitive. Sho, TT. O phasitse (Did you pass)?"

Thato: "Yes."

Soks: "Ke sure o shapile di distinction (I'm sure you got distinctions). At least o phadile (you did better than) Palesa. Selo se sa ka se ithatela lerete shame (This thing of mine loves herself some good dick)."

I really hate the way Soks speaks about women, especially Palesa, more especially in front of people. But she just takes it lying down, which just isn't right at all.

Thato: "Really, Soks?"

Soks: "Ag, man. Palesa o di tlwaetse (is used to this). It's how we talk. Or bjang (Isn't it), Pali, Pali?"

Palesa: (softly) "Yes. We do that all the time. He's just joking."

I could see deep down she wanted to cry, but I let her be. I'm not about to embarrass her in front of these two guys. While we waited for our meat to come, Lo and behold Anastacia made an appearance. She was dressed in a very tight red jumpsuit, which exposed her very large bums, curves and breasts. The closer she walked towards us, the more I noticed that she is indeed fake. From what I remember she was dark while growing up, but as soon as she hit puberty, she became lighter and lighter.

Anastacia: "Well, well, well. If it isn't the annoying and not so good looking Soks, with his lame friend Kg with a poor sex game."

I thought Kg would get annoyed as usual, but instead he was calm as fuck.

Soks: "Mxm, ah , Voetsek (Piss off), Sfebe ke wena (You whore)!"

I trust Soks to become agitated real quickly.

Anastacia: "Some things never change. O kae (How are you), Kg? Is your dick still limp? I see you're running a creche now."

She said that to me as she gave me a filthy, displeasing look.

Kg: "Ja, Ana. Waitse (You know), for someone who keeps calling my dick limp, you sure have stalker tendencies."

Anastacia: "Oh, please. Don't flatter yourself. Why would I, Anastacia, run after someone like you?"

Kg: "Well, because for one, I rejected you. We both know who fucked you that night, in the ass to be

exact. Two, you are stalking me, you even created a fake profile just to check up on mg movements on Instagram And Three, I'm not running a day care, I'm celebrating my future wife's exam results. She got all A's for all her subjects, something you wouldn't know about since your Bible loving mother paid people to write your exams for you. Now, unless you came here to order, I suggest you make your way out because as you can see the sign says 'Right of Admission Reserved'. Something I'm not quite sure you know what it means.”

Ouch, that was a mouthful. I felt my mouth hanging and Ana was about to cry.

Anastacia: (angry) ”Mxm, you think you can talk to me like that now that you're fucking this orphan-”

Ana didn't seem to want to let go, but Kg put her in her place really quickly.

Kg: "Sesi weh (Dear sis), an orphan is much better than botox and fake boobs and ass. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a celebration to feast on."

Anastacia stood there with all eyes on her. The disbelief and disappointment on her face spoke volumes. I honestly don't get why she had to do that though. She clicked her tongue and left. Yoh, remind me not to get on Kg's bad side. This guy can really shoot insults at a person.

Chapter Thirteen

Ecclesiastes 2:26 - "To the person who pleases Him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind."

Thato

It's been quite a ride ever since we sa Anastacia that day at the Chesa Nyama. Kg makes it a habit to go to church with me every now and then, and it angers a lot of girls apparently. One of Anastacia's friends even asked what's so special about me, while another said my pussy is still new. I don't even pay attention because they whisper and gossip, they'll never have the courage to tell it to my face. I just love spending time with my Kg.

It's still June holidays and I'm too excited for words. Today is the 25th of June, Kg's birthday and I hope for once I can surprise him for a change. I slept at his place last night and I had planned to get up before him, but once again he beat me to it. I woke up and found him out of bed. I brushed my teeth and headed downstairs, and decided to watch some tv.

I guess Kg must be in the house or something. As I was scrolling through the channels, and basking in the warmth of the aircon, his sliding door slid open without warning. I got the shock of my life to see his stepmother, Sonto standing before me. She gave me a filthy look, you know, that from head to toe look with a nasty frown.

Sonto: "Hmm. Hello."

Thato: (shaky) "Dumelang, Mme Sonto (Hello, Mam' Sonto)."

Sonto: "Di thaka tsa gao a di ya tshwanna go ba ko gae (Aren't girls your age supposed to be at their own homes)? Oh, I forgot, kana wena o tshuwana ya Modimo (you're an orphan)."

I don't get how people who don't know you always feel the need to be so mean and condescending. I

felt so weak, there's just something about this woman. There's an aura about her that's just not right. I don't know her and Kg doesn't like her either, but what she said to me hurt me badly. I could feel my tears building up and I wanted to cry. Luckily, Kg came just in time.

Kg: (annoyed) "Sonto."

Sonto: (startled) "Oh, Kgaugelo, my boy. Wa tla wa ntshosa (You startled me)."

Kg: "O nyaka eng mo roomong yaka (What do you want in my room)?"

Sono: (edgy) "Oh, hai. Ne ke re ke tlo dumedisa makoti wa bona (I thought I'd come and greet my daughter-in-law)."

Kg: "Ga se nna (I'm not) Tumisho, and the last time I checked I was not your son. Next time if you feel the need to barge into my room again without even asking or knocking, you'll regret it."

Sonto: "Hai, Kgaugelo, ska bua le nna bjalo (don't talk to me like that). I was just trying to be nice."

Kg: "Go be nice to your little friends o tlogele go ntena (and stop annoying me). Now move!"

Seems like Sonto is really afraid of Kg because she didn't even try to reprimand him like a parent. I guess his hatred for her is real. Sonto hurried away, got into her car and drove off. Kg walked in and shut the door behind him, as he dropped the plastic bags he had in his hands and walked up to me. He knelt before me and held my hands.

Kg: "Love, o shap (are you okay)? Did she upset you?"

What did she say?"

I could see his face harden immediately as he awaited my response. I really don't want to cause any drama.

Thato: (teary) "Nothing, Kg. She just said the usual things everyone says to me. It's okay, really."

Kg: (angry) "No, it's not okay. No one has the right to upset my girl like that, especially in my own house. I'll deal with her."

Thato: "Please let it go, babe. It's your birthday, remember?"

Kg: (smiling) "I get a birthday every year. Besides, as long as you're next to me, I'm happy. I don't need anything else."

Thato: (smiling) "I wanted to make you a nice meal today, but you got up before me."

Kg: "I quickly had to go out and buy a few groceries. I forgot to top up my list. I didn't even lock the door this time, askies (I'm sorry). Sonto knows she's not allowed in here, but don't worry, I'll sort her out."

I wish he'd just leave it. The last thing I want is to be accused of splitting his family apart.

Kg: "Oh, by the way, Papa wants to meet you. I told him I have to ask you first if you're okay with that."

Yoh, so now I'm meeting the family? I guess Sonto will be there too, right?

Thato: (nervously) "Uhm... I don't know, Kg."

Kg: "He's been begging to meet you. He says he's tired of me sneaking around so he must know who I'm dating, wa bona (you see)?"

I kept quiet and fiddled with my hands, until he lifted my chin.

Kg: "I'll be right there with you and we won't stay long, I promise. Plus, I have a very nice weekend planned for us. So, what do you say?"

I guess it can't do any harm, since he practically introduced himself to Koko and Sophie. He told them straight that he is my boyfriend and that if they don't see me at home, they must know that I'm with him. He didn't want them to start rumours about me and he also didn't want them to be too comfortable in my house. Surprisingly, Koko and Sophie were both happy about this if I could say so.

I know those two, they have hidden agendas and most probably didn't have a problem because Kg comes from a rich family. But Kg just let the world know that he's my boyfriend. He even attends my parent evenings, drops me off and fetches me from school. He even pays for my school fees, as he says he doesn't want me to spend the money Mama left for me. He even gives me lunch money, I mean wow. Within a week of dating, he updated his Facebook status to In a Relationship with Thato Maake.

I've never been in one before, so it's all quite new to me. He posts pictures of us everywhere, including Instagram. Even his WhatsApp Display Picture is a picture of the two of us. Ofcourse a lot of people weren't happy about it and those who had negative comments, he blocked them right away.

I asked him why he even did that because those were some of his close friends and family. He said

to me that if they could say something bad about me, then it means that they're not worth keeping in his life. I'm so honoured to be his girlfriend, honestly. The level of respect this guy has for me is just too amazing for words.

Thato: "Okay, I'd love to have dinner with your parents."

Kg: (smiling) "Good. Let me make my gorgeous woman some breakfast."

I smiled while masking the pain inside of me. Everyone who tries to insult me doesn't bother me at all, but Sonto, my goodness she's just something else. She really means what she says and she says it with pure hatred. Kg made us a really nice breakfast and we enjoyed it in front of the tv. All the while I mentally prepared myself for the Brunch with his dad and Sonto, since we're apparently going away later on. He doesn't want to tell me where

we're actually going, so it's a surprise I guess. I shall wait and see what today has in store for me.

Sonto Moloji

I've been hearing rumours about Kgaugelo and that useless tramp Thato. Even the Diva's Club has turned me into a joke, stating that I'm going to get a daughter-in-law soon. He's posting that girl everywhere, and he even spends all his time with her. Sure, I wasn't very nice to Kgaugelo when his dad and I got married, but I have grown to love him as my own son. I only want the best for him and he cannot ruin our family name by dating Thato. We Moloji's strive for class and she is not it. I decided to head out and go see Sophie. If there's anyone who can put a stop to this madness, it's her. I knocked on her door and as usual, her filthy self appeared. I honestly don't know what Romeo saw in her back in the day. It's not even midday yet and already she reeks of alcohol.

Sophie: (burping) "Heh banna (My goodness)!
(Clapping hands) Ka jeno Jesu wa theoga (Jesus is coming down today)! Wena (You), Sonto Moloji wa nketela (have come to visit me)?! Hehe!"

Sonto: (annoyed) "Mxm, Sophie, I'm here on serious business."

Sophie: "Sonto, tlogela go rata sekgoa (Stop speaking English), we both know gore o tswa Diepkloof, man."

Sonto: (rolling eyes) "Sophie weh! What's this of Kgaugelo and Thato dating? Kgante o bjang wena heh (What kind of a person are you)?! We had an agreement."

Sophie: "Aowa (No), we had an agreement that I'd keep your dirty little secret. You see, you should've

let me help you abort her when you had the chance.”

Sonto: “This is serioys, Sophie. Get her out of Kgaugelo's life, I mean it.”

Sophie: “Ai, Sonto. Ga o tlo ntlela ka di threats (Don't come here with threats), you have a lot more to lose than I do. Anyway, I'm working on a plan, but it's going to take a few months. I plan on getting her kidnapped and having her surrender her money to the kidnappers - the whole R1 million.”

Sonto: (unimpressed) “Waitse o setlaela (You're so stupid, you know), Sophie. How is that going to get Kgaugelo to leave her? He has money that boy, more money than you and I.”

Sophie: “Hmm. Maybe we can ask him for randsom.”

Sonto: "Mxm, you're such a time waster. I'll figure it out myself."

I was about to walk out until she stopped me.

Sophie: "Ao shiye two klipa nyana mowe (Leave me with R200). Ke chaile (I'm broke)."

Sonto: "Ag, man Sophie. You're always broke."

Sophie: "O be (You need to be) careful what you say to me. I made you and I can easily break you."

I clicked my tongue and left the R200 note on the table and walked out.

Chapter Fourteen

Matthew 10:26-28 - "So have no fear of them, for

nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Thato

Kg and I packed our bags for the coming trip. We're leaving as soon as our brunch is done and we'll be back Tuesday morning. Since it's Friday today and still holidays, we're going to enjoy ourselves for a few days. I don't get why he said I must pack in swimwear since it's still winter, but I did as instructed.

Kg is just so chilled, you'd swear it isn't his birthday. Instead of me doing things for him, He's the one doing things for me. I decided to get used to it. I didn't even know what to wear, so I settled for a pair

of jeans, boots and a top with a poncho. I'm nervous as hell, but I decided to say a little prayer while I was waiting for Kg downstairs.

Kg: "Love, o (are you) ready?"

Thato: "I think so."

Kg: "Don't worry, you'll be fine."

He held my hand as we walked out and headed into the house. The closer we stepped into the house, the more anxious I felt. It's my first time setting foot into this house. It's even more beautiful on the inside than it is on the outside. The whole house is covered in marble from the entrance to the walls. The furniture, my goodness.

Sonto might be a mean witch, but she sure has class.

We came across Tumisho, sitting on the couch, with his earphones on and glued on his phone. I've seen him once or twice. He really is a spoiled brat. He gets everything he wants but Kg makes him work for his money if he wants some from him.

Kg: (shouting) "Eh, Tumisho. You remember Thato, right?"

He removed his earphones since Kg shouted loud enough for him to hear.

Tumisho: "Oh, yeah. Sup?"

Ai, ma 2000.

Thato: "Hey."

Kg: "O kae Papa (Where's dad)?"

As Tumisho was about to respond, his dad appeared from the kitchen.

Romeo: "I'm right here."

He looks fairly old, probably in his fifties, but still wears skinny jeans and Versace. He likes jewelry from what I gathered, as he was draped in chains and diamond rings on almost every finger. He might be rich, but he lacks class. He is something in between a twenty year old and a forty year old. It must be a mid-life crisis. He even has a bit of a belly and a lot of girls have said that he likes dating young girls.

Romeo: (smiling) "Mfanaka (My boy). Wa re tlisetsa le pyatla (You have brought us a real gem). She's really beautiful, a true yellow bone."

Kg gave him a warning look. He was very unimpressed with his father's words.

Romeo: "Ah, chill out le wena. Hi, Thato, I'm Romeo, the man of the house."

Thato: (shyly) "Pleased to meet you, Ntate (Mr) Moloji."

Romeo: "Please, call me Romeo or Papa."

I just nodded.

Romeo: "Let's go to the dining room. Tumi, a re ye (let's go)."

I was under the impression it would be brunch

between Kg, his dad and I, but I guess it's a family thing.

Kg: "O kae (Where is) Sonto?"

Romeo: "She's upstairs changing into a new outfit. She says she wants to look good for Makoti wa rena (our daughter-in-law)."

In my mind I was thinking she's pretty pretentious if you ask me.

Romeo: "Le gona (Also), when are you going to call her Ma, Kgaugelo? I mean ke kgale (it's been too long)."

I felt Kg tense up.

Kg: "I'm not having that discussion with you."

Tumisho had his earphones on without a care in the world.

Romeo: "Askies (Sorry), son. I didn't mean to upset you."

Sonto walked in looking pretty dramatic. She's a tall woman, but small built much like me. She had no fat in sight and no wrinkle. She wears too much make up, and has very long nails. I don't know how she does any house work, that's if she does any at all. She was dressed in ridiculously high heels, a colourful doek and a very long, flowey Gucci dress.

Sonto: (smiling) "I hope you didn't start without me, now did you?"

Romeo: (smiling) "Nonsense. Why would he even?"

She stopped as she saw me and opened up her arms. Gosh, I really hate pretending.

Sonto: (open arms) "Thato, so nice to finally have you in my humble abode. Come give Mama a hug."

Kg gave her a look and I paused to look at him, as to check if it's okay with him.

Sonto: "Hao, Kgaugelo. I won't steal her, bathong (gosh)."

Kg: "It's okay, love. You can."

I nervously got up and hugged her. It felt so unreal, so faked even. She walked towards her seat next to

Romeo, But then I saw something that caught my eye. She has a small birthmark behind her right arm. I also have one just like that. I saw it briefly, but it could just be my imagination.

Sonto: "So, shall we pray?"

Hehe, now I've seen it all. A diva praying before a meal? Ja neh.

Kg prayed for us but I felt like Sonto's eyes were glazing on me. I just had to open my eyes while he was praying and I saw it. The evil, bloodshot look in her eyes, she was staring at me with pure hatred while Kg was praying. She didn't even look elsewhere when she saw me looking at her. I know my God, I fear no one but Him. I don't get why this lady hates me, but I'm not about to bow down to her. She's not my master and I'm no slave. Kg said amen and Sonto immediately changed back to her fake persona, and was nice again all of a sudden.

Sonto: "So, Thato, I hear you're in Matric. Which subjects do you do?"

Thato: "I do physics, Maths, Geography and Accounting."

Sonto was a bit shocked, but she probably thought I was sucking it right out of my thumb until Romeo confirmed it.

Sonto: "Hmm, I see. With a friend like Palesa, you sure can't be that bright."

Ja neh, so condescending.

Romeo: "Eng (What)? You don't know what you're talking about. I actually saw her June Exam report. She got an average of 95% for her subjects. I mean

who gets 98% for pure Maths?"

Sonto: "Well, I'm sure they make it a lot easier nowadays."

Romeo wasn't about to let her diss his son's girlfriend.

Romeo: "Aowa (No), Sonto. O kare wena self o palletswe ke Grade 11 three times wa be wa tlogela wa bolela so (How can you say that when You yourself failed Grade 11 three times and you ended up dropping out)? Aowa (No), let's not be jealous. Let's give credit where credit is due."

I had to laugh internally, while Kg couldn't contain himself. He burst out in laughter which led Sonto in an embarrassed state. She looked down and kept quiet from there onwards. Our lunch was surprisingly enjoyable with Sonto mute.

Romeo: "So, Thato, I hear you were adopted by your late mother. Have you perhaps tried to find out who your real mother is?"

Thato: "Not really, Ntate (sir). Apparently Mama left me a letter before she passed on, but I can't seem to find it. Hopefully, I'll find it very soon. Maybe that will tell me what's the deal."

Sonto immediately raised her eyebrows and widened her eyes as soon as I said that.

Sonto: (frantic) "Excuse me, I need to make a phone call."

We let her be and carried on with our conversation.

Romeo: "Well, I do hope you find the letter."

I put my elbow on the table to remove the hair from my face. That's the thing with having curly hair. It will always disturb you unless you clip it.

Romeo: "You know, my wife has the exact same birth mark on the very same spot. Le di bitsa eng kana, mfanaka (What do you call them again, my boy)? Di beauty what what?"

Kg: (sigh) "Beauty spot."

Romeo: "Tsona tseo (Yes, that). Small world, man."

I didn't take much note of what he said. Everyone has birthmarks, some don't. We spoke about a lot of things and I finally got to see why Kg and his dad don't get along much. He wants Kg to join the family business, which is the drug business, but Kg isn't interested. Romeo calls Kg's art work a useless

dream, and that really hurts him. He really would like to get his Father's approval.

Overall, we had a great lunch and we even forgot that Sonto wasn't even around for a while. She came back to the table while we were about to eat dessert. They have a nice life and everything gets done for them. They have a helper who cooks and cleans this mansion, so basically Sonto just spends Romeo's money.

We said our goodbyes and Romeo even offered to pay me R1000 per Lesson to Tutor Tumisho for Maths and Science. How could I say no and Kg even agreed. It would be nice money for next year. I know he's always there and all, but I have to be independent as well. We finally got into Kg's car and drove off.

Thato: "So, where to, daddy?"

He goes crazy when I call him that. I don't even know why. Talk about weird.

Kg: "We're driving to Durban, baby."

I smiled as he said that. I haven't been to Durban, so this ought to be nice. It's a good thing I prayed for us before we left. We took a lot of pictures in the car and on the road as well. Kg is a fast, but careful driver. It took us close to three hours to get to Durban. I asked him why he didn't just book a flight for us but he said that the best memories are made on the road, not on planes. I can't wait to see the beach for the very first time.

Sonto Moloji

I'm so frustrated, man fuck. How could I be so sloppy? As soon as she mentioned a letter, I

immediately recalled Sophie never gave me any letter written by Petunia. I need that letter, who knows what Petunia wrote in there? I decided to call the witch.

Sophie: "Ke (It's) Sophienaiza."

Sonto: (rolling her eyes) "Hey wena, ghetto queen! Where's the letter Petunia wrote?"

Sophie: "Letter? What letter?"

Sonto: "O ska ntena (Don't annoy me), Sophie. You know what I'm talking about."

Sophie: "Oh, that letter. Le wena o be specific (You should be more specific)."

Sonto: "Wow, Sophie. Such a big word. when did you have time to even learn the meaning?"

Sophie: "Keep playing like that and o tla se bo kereye borifi nyana ba gao (and you won't get your little letter)."

Sonto: (sigh) "How much?"

Sophie: "Now you're talking. Mfe ten block (Give me ten thousand rand). Ke nyaka diaparo tse di mphyia (I need new clothes)."

Sonto: "Eng (What)?! Wa gafa (You're crazy)!"

Sophie: "Okay then. Bye."

Sonto: "Okay! Ke tla gofa (I'll give you)."

Sophie: "You know my banking details. Ska nshapa ka nako (Don't waste my time)."

She hung up while I sighed in frustration. I don't know why I just never killed her, bloody bitch.

Chapter Fifteen

Micah 7:5 - "Put no trust in a neighbor; have no confidence in a friend; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms."

Thato

We arrived at Durban and checked in at the Southern Sun Elangeni and Maharani Hotel. My word, the beauty of this place is just magnificent. I'm in absolute awe. The view from the balcony of our room is just amazing and the cleanliness of the

rooms, the ambience and the pools are so amazing. The rooftop is the best view for me. I feel so bad that Kg had to drive us all the way from Soweto to Durban, but he doesn't mind at all. I thought he'd be tired, but I thought wrong. Kg hugged me from behind as I inhaled his expensive cologne.

Kg: "So, do you like it?"

Thato: "Baby, I love it. You shouldn't have, though. It's your birthday - not mine."

Kg: "I told you, this year's birthday is the best because I get to spend it with you."

Kg is really the sweetest. He turned me around and gave me a passionate kiss. My lips and tongue responded, yes, it's about damn time our tongue got to do the Passo Doble together. Oh, Kg's tongue can do magic in a girl's mouth. I can only imagine what

his tongue is like down there. Palesa always tells me that sex is nice, but when you get muffed it's even nicer. I don't know these things so I decided to watch some porn the other day.

I saw some hectic stuff and others I doubt I'd even try, but all those girls look like they really enjoy having a man's tongue down there. Kg kissed me, then he pulled out of the kiss and gently sucked on my neck. I just couldn't help but moan. I didn't even know I could moan. The closest I've ever been to moaning was whenever he'd fondle my breasts and I'd breathe heavily, involuntarily of course.

Thato: (moaning) "Aaah, daddy."

It seems like I just got him even more aroused as I called him that. He grabbed my breasts from underneath my shirt and I went wild. I never really touch him down there, but today, I'd like to feel his thing. My hand made its way down to his crotch as I

gently rubbed his cock.

Kg: (moaning) "Oh, shit, TT."

Hearing him curse and moan and breathe heavily in my ear, his warm breath slowly heating my neck, just gave me goosebumps. I felt so weird there, pretty wet. Palesa always says that when you get horny, you will feel very wet down there, almost like your discharge is a bit much. It felt so weird, but so good at the same time.

My clitoris was twitching, making me want more of what he was doing. He took off my poncho and then my top, until I was left in my bra. I took off his shirt, I didn't even know I could have such courage. I'm sober on top of it all. He took off my jeans until I was half naked, only dressed in my underwear.

He didn't even give me a chance to remove his jeans.

This is it, I thought to myself. I'm about to lose my virginity. Kg's eyes were so small, smaller than usual. I guess this is his horny look. He gave me a naughty smile and planted his mouth on mine as our lips danced together once again.

Our tongues were making love to each other, with our saliva exchanging dna, making his tongue an official resident of my mouth. He touched me all over, gently rubbing his fingers over my lace bra, sending tingly signals to my nipples. His hand went down to my pussy, and I just couldn't hold it in anymore.

Thato: "Aaah, Kg. Please, daddy..."

Kg didn't respond. Instead, he gently removed my bra and sucked on my breasts as he gently rubbed them. His one hand went down to my pussy, and his hand finally entered my underwear. I can't believe this is happening. I spread my legs a bit wider, and

he gently flicked his finger on my clit. Oh, shit. I've never had such an amazing feeling in my life before. I felt myself twitch and move involuntarily. I felt a hot wave overcome me. I can't even explain it.

Thato: "Shit, Kg. O nketsang (What are you doing to me)?"

Kg: (smiling) "The best is yet to come, my baby."

He traveled down my abdomen, planting wet kisses and wet trails with his tongue as he made his way to my pussy. He removed my panty, finally. He kissed my lower abdomen gently and then stared at my coochie and smiled. Gosh, does he really have to?

Thato: (embarrassed) "Kg, man."

Kg: (chuckling) "Damn, baby. You have such a

beautiful pussy. I can't wait to devour it.”

I smiled as I covered my face. The next thing I knew, I felt Kg's warm tongue on my clit. Flip, Palesa wasn't kidding at all. Shit, this feels amazing. He pressed his tongue on my clit, then licked it in a faster motion, then pressed his tongue on my clit again and repeated the cycle. I felt so hot, like I was about to explode.

Thato: "Aaah, daddy, shit!"

Kg: (softly) "Don't come yet, love."

What the hell does he mean by that? I'm so ready to come and I don't even know what it feels like. I think I'm close. Kg moved his tongue from my clit and went into the entrance of my pussy. He spread my legs so far apart, that both of them were on either side of my shoulders. He licked my pussy and

sucked it, I don't even know how to explain. He occasionally rubbed my clit with his finger as his tongue was playing down there. I felt the hot wave of heat come over me once again. The faster he went, the faster I breathed. The next thing I knew I was shaking and felt so hot all over my body. I felt some fluid gush out of me down there as Kg licked it from my pussy. Really, Kg?

He kissed my thighs and came up to me. He gently kissed me and I could taste myself in his mouth. It feels so good, but I'm so embarrassed. Sex is a bit disgusting, but if it feels anywhere close to what I just felt, then I want it.

Kg: (smiling) "Congratulations, baby. You've just had your first orgasm."

Thato: (shyly) "Eish, Kg. You're making me so shy now."

Kg: "No need to be shy. You look so good naked."

I smiled as he stared at me.

Kg: "I love you, Thato Maake."

Wow, this is actually the first time he has ever said those three powerful words to me.

Thato: (smiling) "I love you too, Kgaugelo Moloji."

He kissed my forehead and got off me. Hao, I thought we were going to get it on.

Thato: (surprised) "And then?"

Kg: "Hao? You didn't think I'd want your first time to be more special than this? Come on, baby. There's no rush. The best is yet to come, I promise."

I got up from the bed, sulking. I attempted to put my clothes back on, but he held me.

Kg: "You don't have to hide that beauty from me. Come, I'd like to show you a beautiful level of intimacy without physical sex. Let's go take a shower together."

I slowly walked with hon towards the hotel bathroom. He took off his jeans and briefs and I couldn't help but let my mouth hang open. I've never seen a penis up front like this, let alone a penis this big. I found myself staring at it in shock.

Kg: (chuckling) "It's rude to stare, you know."

Thato: (shyly) "I'm sorry."

Kg: (lifting my chin) "I'm kidding. What's yours is mine and what's mine is yours. You can touch it if you want to."

Eish, I'm not sure if that's a trick statement or what.

Thato: "Maybe later."

He smiled at me as we got into the shower. The water ran over us, and it's actually the very first time Kg and I get to see each other naked. He turned me around, while he was facing my back. He draped his fingers gently over my scar. I've never allowed anyone to see my scar before. Kg kissed my neck gently as he rubbed different parts of my body.

Kg: "You're so beautiful, TT. Both inside and out."

This scar tells a story and don't ever think otherwise. There is such beauty behind it even though it changed your body. I want to love you until you can't even breathe anymore. I want to show you your beauty and worth is so great, that you deserve a spot next to the stars. You have turned me into someone I never thought I'd ever become and for that, you deserve to have your surname changed. I pray every day for God to spare me long enough to see our children and grandchildren enter this earth. Your warmth brings the utmost peace to my soul. I love you baby."

I found myself so teary as he recited those beautiful words to me.

Thato: "I love you too, Kg."

We took turns washing each others backs without saying much and occasionally kissing one another. I have never felt this level of intimacy and I wish this

moment could last forever.

Chapter Sixteen

Psalm 37:4 - "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Thato

After our amazing shower, we got dressed. Kg makes me feel so relaxed and free in my own skin. I never feel the reason to be ashamed of being naked now. We got dressed, as he wore a suit and I wore an evening gown he bought me the other day. He just said it would look cute on me, little did I know. Kg got dressed in his suit with a yellow tie, to match with my yellow dress. I wore the diamond pendant he bought me a few months ago for my birthday.

Kg: "You look so beautiful."

Thato: "You look so handsome."

We headed out to the roof top. I expected us to be around a few people, but nope. Not my man, he booked out the whole roof top, with candles and yellow roses everywhere. Rose petals on the floor, and one table specially decorated just for the two of us. With the view we're overlooking, this feels like a real movie and I'm the main character.

Thato: (teary) "Kg... This is.... Wow."

Kg: (smiling) "I told you, you deserve the best. Come."

He pulled my chair for me as I got seated while he sat across me. Gosh this man looks beautiful in a suit.

Thato: "What are celebrating?"

Kg: "Well, we're celebrating good life, good health, happiness and most importantly blessings. The next time we have dinner while watching the stars like this, you'll be Mrs. Thato Moloji, a Mechanical Engineer, while I'll be the owner of my Jewelry design company, Thato Jewelers."

What? Is he being serious right now? He wants to name his company after me?

Thato: (teary) "You want to name your company after me, Kg?"

Kg: "No, baby. I already did."

He took out his phone and showed me the papers.

Oh, my goodness! He already registered the company and named it after me. This must be a dream, though. When God said "I'll give you the desires of your heart" He wasn't joking. I never knew love like this existed outside of books and movies.

Thato: "Oh, Kg. I don't know what to say."

Kg: "You don't have to say anything, all you have to do is love me back. That's all I ask."

Thato: "Kg, how can I not love you? You've proven to me that true love does exist and that you are very real and authentic. There's no other man I'd rather give my heart to. You're the first man I have ever loved and there's no doubt in my mind that you'll be the last. I love you, Kgaugelo."

We made a toast and a promise to each other, that no matter what happens, we'll fight for one another.

Sounds cheesy, but hey, it is what it is. We had such good food and he introduced me to mussels and Lobster. Whenever I'm with Kg, food is always the order of the day. We had some wine as he finally introduced me to some fine wine.

Now I know a bit of difference between Pinotage, Merlot and Chardonnay. Ai, white people came up with the most weirdest and most complicated things. White wine goes well with fish apparently. Ai, anyway, we enjoyed our meal and sat and talked as we had our wine. I don't drink a lot, I guess I just enjoy the taste, but tonight I had about three glasses and I must say I'm having dirty thoughts. I'm amazed at how Kg never makes it a mission to get into my pants. We can chill and talk without being physical. I feel like he's the partner I need.

Thato: "Daddy, let's take this party to the bedroom."

Kg: (chuckling) "Wa jaga, waitse (You're very

impatient, you know), baby. Besides, I'll act like I didn't see that litte red number you packed in."

Thato: (embarrassed) "Ah, man, Kg. That was supposed to be a surprise."

Kg: (chuckling) "Don't worry, I can still act surprised. Let's go."

We headed down to our room and as soon as I opened the door, I was met with yet another surprise. The room was dimmed, with scented candles everywhere, and roses. Oh, bathong (goodness), Kg is just something else. I'd say he reads too many romance novels but he doesn't read any.

Thato: "Kg..."

Kg: "Shh. Tsena (Get in)."

I walked in and I saw my lingerie on the bed. There's even a picnic basket next to the bed with some snacks, strawberries, yoghurt, chocolate, cream and of course a bottle of wine and a bottle of whiskey with some ice.

Kg: (smiling) "I'm going to the bathroom, so I'm giving you time to get dressed and do your thing. See you in ten minutes, baby."

He kissed me and proceeded to the bathroom. Yoh, now I'm so nervous. What if I don't smell nice down there now? I got into my lingerie. Lace always looks good on a lady. This item is a bit revealing, but I guess it's supposed to look that way. I took a small sip of the wine just for extra liquid courage.

I saw a pack of Durex condoms on the bedside. And here I was packing Choice condoms just the

other day. I'm so clueless, though. Kg and I got tested a few months ago, apparently we had to do it with or without sex just as a safety precaution. I'm glad we did it though. I lay on the bed with my palpitating heart, so, as of tomorrow I won't be a virgin anymore. I hope I don't regret this, though.

Kg walked out of the bathroom, naked. Yoh, this man is a masterpiece. It feels so weird looking at a firm dick of a man, nje, but I'll get used to it as time goes by. I don't even see the need for lingerie, but ke that's white people for you. They invented all these things to spice life up a bit, I guess. Kg took a sip of his whiskey, and looked at me.

Kg: "Are you sure you want to do this? You can always turn back."

Thato: "I'm sure. I want to."

Kg smiled as he gently kissed me. His whiskey tainted tongue just tastes so good in my mouth. I could feel his bulge protruding on top of my pussy, I could myself get wet instantly. He pulled out of the kiss and took a strawberry from the basket, and put some whipped cream on it and fed me one. I took a bite and he ate the rest of it.

He gently removed the lingerie off me and I was completely exposed. He looked at both my breasts and smiled. He put some whipped cream on my left nipple and gently sucked it off. His tongue just does this magic trick on my nipples and it gets me aroused everytime. Now I see why God invented nipples other than breastfeeding. He then took an ice cube and put it on my right nipple, oh, it caused me to moan slightly.

Thato: (breathing heavily) "Ahhh..."

He sucked off the water from the melting cube. He

proceeded to let the cube go down on my abdomen until he got to my pussy. He spread my legs apart again and rolled the ice cube on my clit and sucked the water off. He repeated the cycle until the cube melted completely. He kept licking and sucking me until I orgasmed right on his face again.

Thato: (moaning) "Aah, shit, daddy!"

He got up and kissed me again. Oh, this time he'd better not turn me down. He gently slid one of his fingers into the entrance of my pussy and I felt good. He put two in and I whined a bit. He took a condom out of the pack and rolled it onto his penis. He positioned himself on top of me and looked at me. I tried covering my face, but he begged me to look at him.

Kg: "Look at me, TT."

I opened my eyes slightly.

Kg: "It's going to hurt a bit, baby. If you want me to stop, let me know, okay?"

I nodded. He gently put the tip of his penis in and I felt so much pain. I can't even describe the pain, but wow. No one ever tells or shows us such on tv whenever they have sex. He kept stroking bit by bit until he was fully in.

Kg: (moaning) "Aaah, baby. Do you want me to stop?"

As much pain I was in, I didn't want him to stop. I don't even know what to call this feeling, but you're in pain and at the same time you just don't want to stop. There's slight pleasure, but fuck it's painful.

Thato: (shaking head) "No, daddy. Keep going."

Shame, Kg tried to make me feel better, he kissed me, sucked my neck and sucked on my breasts. The pain was more than the pleasure, but hopefully as time goes it will get better. Kg made sweet love to me despite the pain. He went on for a while and I heard him growl in pleasure while he stared deep into my eyes. After a while, he released his load and climaxed.

Kg: "Fuck!"

He kissed my tears away and gently kissed me on the lips.

Kg: "Thank you, TT. Thank you for such a beautiful gift. I love you."

Thato: "I love you too."

Kg: "Sit tight, I'll be right back."

He kissed my forehead and got off the bed. He went to the bathroom and I heard him run a bath. He came back with a towel and gently wiped me down there. Without saying a word, he gently picked me up and took me to the bathroom. He carefully placed me into the tub which was already filled with some foam bath, scented salts and oils. I whined a bit in pain as I felt like I tore down there.

Kg: "I'm sorry, but you'll get better with time, baby. I promise you next time won't be so painful."

He kissed my forehead and left me for a while. The warm water soothed the pain a bit and I felt at ease. Kg has so much love, really. Palesa told me that the first time she had sex was actually with Soks. He

actually had sex with her and she bled. He then went right back to sleep without taking good care of her like this.

I feel like she can do better and Thabo, our class mate was just that - better. But she doesn't want to date a learner so who am I? Kg came back and gently picked me up again and wrapped me in a towel. He applied soothing oils on me and we sat in bed together. For some reason we don't feel like sleeping, so we watched some tv, indulged in our snacks and alcohol, and went through our pictures which we took on the road and right here at the Hotel.

He uploaded a few pics on Instagram, and some weird girl with a ghost account commented and wrote some nasty comments. He said it's probably Anastacia, so he blocked and reported the account and we talked until we both dozed off.

Sonto Moloji

Yoh, I've never felt this frustrated in my entire life. The last time I felt this frustrated was when I was pregnant with Thato. I honestly wish she had died in that fire, then I wouldn't be having this problem right now. Now that Sophie has given me that letter, I made sure to destroy it. I burnt it immediately and came back home. Now ever since Romeo saw that girl, that's all he's been talking about.

Romeo: "Ao, baby. O tswa kae (Where have you been)?"

Sonto: "Ah, I just went to see Sophie. You know how she is, she never stops talking."

Romeo: "Hmm, maybe you can get her to do something useful with her life instead of drinking her life away."

Sonto: "Hmm."

Romeo: "Mara (But) Baby, did you see Thato, mara (though)? Kgaugelo did really well by choosing such a bright girl from this neighbourhood, hey. Unlike Soks ai."

Ag, I don't even want to talk about such. I'm honestly not in the mood for small talk. Not tonight.

Sonto: "Ja, I guess."

Romeo: "Did you see her birthmark? I swear she looks just like you, hey. Are you sure perhaps you're not related?"

Sonto: (edgy) "Uh.. Aowa, man, Romeo. You know I'm from Diepkloof and I'm Zulu anyways. Besides,

Thato's dad is white in any case.”

Romeo: (puzzled) “How do you know that?”

Eish, fuck. I hate how I burst whenever I'm stressed.

Sonto: “I... Uh.. Ag, man Sophie said so. You saw Thato, man. She's too light to be fully black, besides her eyes are gray. That should tell you about her genes.”

I hope he buys my story, though.

Romeo: “Oho, okay.”

Sonto: “Eish, Romeo, ke lapile (I'm tired). Ngiyolala (I'm going to bed).”

Romeo: "Bjanong one nyana (So, how about one round)?"

Sonto: "Eish, maybe later. Ngiphethwe ikhanda (I have a headache)."

I could see he was pissed but I'm not about to have his useless limp dick hump on me tonight. I get better dick elsewhere.

Chapter Seventeen

1 Corinthians 13:4 - "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud."

Thato

I woke up feeling much better than I did last night. Of course Kg woke me up again in the middle of the night and we had sex again. It was still painful, but a

lot less though. I'm glad he ordered breakfast because I'm starving. I always see couples on tv eating a lot after sex and all I can say is that sex does make you hungry. It's a workout and a half.

Kg: (smiling) "Morning, love."

Thato: (shyly) "Good morning, Babe."

Kg: "O robetse bjang (How did you sleep)?"

Thato: "It's not like you gave me much of a chance to sleep, hao (gosh), Kg."

Kg: (chuckling) "Askies (Sorry), baby. I just can't get enough of your awesome kuku (coochie). Eish, phela it had been a long time since I had had sex."

Thato: "How long?"

Kg: "Two years."

Thato: (shocked) "Heh (Huh)?! I thought guys couldn't last that long without sex?"

Kg: "I'm not guys nna, I'm Kg. It wasn't easy, but I got used to it. It's better than to sleep with someone just for the hell of it."

He's got a point though. At least he respects himself unlike Soks.

Kg: "Well, now that you're officially 17 and I'm 26, it's time we go have a bit of fun today. Eat up so we can go take a bath together."

I see Kg loves taking showers and bathing together. I love it too, I can only hope that this lasts a lifetime because I don't know what I'd do without Kg, honestly. We finished eating and got into the bathroom and did our business, no sex, just bathing together and laughing.

He occasionally kissed my scar and I even forget about it at times. He makes me feel so free in my own skin, so I love it when we're both naked. I am not afraid of his anaconda anymore. I don't stare at it like crazy, although it is quite big, but it makes me feel good.

We got dressed in our swimwear, and took some sun screen, towels and water bottles with. Luckily I can swim. I took swimming lessons at school. We wanted to go to the beach, but it was so full and Kg hates crowded places. So do I actually, so he took me to Ushaka Marine World. It's a bit full here, but luckily people do their own things. We took a lot of

pictures together, and Kg even went live at some point and took a video of us together.

Ai, Kg. He says he wants to create memories because once people are gone the only thing left of them will be pictures and videos. He's got a point, a really good one. How I wished that I had taken a lot of pictures and videos of Mama and I. We went on almost all the slides and it was mega fun. I so wish Palesa was here. A couples trip would be really nice next time, I should suggest it to Kg.

Thato: "Baby, maybe next time we should go somewhere with Palesa and Soks."

Kg: (sigh) "Ai, those two. Ba ithatela bjala (They love booze), but I'll think about it."

We enjoyed the rest of our day and Kg didn't want us to spend too much time at Ushaka, as the water can

make you tired. He's right, though. He said we'd go to the beach early in the morning when not a lot of people are there, so we headed back to the hotel to enjoy the ambience thereof. We took a quick shower and changed into casual clothes. It's really hot here in Durban unlike back in Pretoria.

We headed outside to the roof top again and this time we have a few people around. The waiters brought our drinks and some food. Yoh, swimming can really make you hungry. We dug into our food and watched the sun set. As we were chilling in each other's arms, Kg took this opportunity to speak about the future.

Kg: "So, baby. Since we practically live together, I'd like to ask you to formally move in."

Thato: (surprised) "Really? Why? I mean, not that I mind, but why?"

Kg: "Why not? I like having you around and whenever you're not in my bed I'm not happy. I can't even sleep."

Thato: (laughing) "Kg bathong (goodness), o (you're) dramatic."

Kg: (laughing) "I'll accept that. Bjanong o reng ka taba e (So what do you say about this)?"

Thato: "Okay, I agree."

Kg: "Good. Since you've gotten a bit tired of my surprises, I might as well tell you about what I have in mind for us next year."

I listened attentively. I swear this guy legit has me on his mind 24/7. We haven't even been together for

a whole year and already he's planning big. I read somewhere that a man knows what he wants, so whether he marries you within a year or three months, he knows what he wants. I guess it's a lot better than to be stringed along.

Kg: "I'd like to pay lobola for you right after you get your results in January. Then you and I can move to Jo'burg, where I'll get my company off the ground, and you can study at Wits since you really love it."

Kg has this all planned out. Lobola, though? Really? Am I ready for marriage? But why wouldn't I be? I have found family in kg, something I never had with my own blood family.

Thato: (excited) "Bathong (Goodness), Kg, when did you even think about marriage?"

Kg: "I told you, TT, I've thought about marrying you

the very first time I met you. If you're not up to it, we can wait. I don't want to pressurize you into doing anything you're not ready for. You're still young and you'll want to experience life at Varsity and party if you wish.”

I don't know about partying, because it just isn't my scene. I want to bag that degree, especially now that Kg is done with his. I don't want to be a housewife, no ways.

Thato: “No, baby. I would love to marry you, I'm just thinking about your chieftancy.”

Kg: “What about it?”

Thato: “I mean, won't we have to move to the Royal house and all once you become King?”

Kg: "Well, yes of course, but if you don't want it then I won't do it. Life is too short, baby. I'd rather have you than be a King without you by my side."

Mara (But) Kg. He would seriously reject his birthright for me? No, man. That wouldn't be right at all.

Thato: "No, silly. Whenever you decide to be King then I'd be more than happy to be your Queen. I just have to finish my degree first, that's all I ask of you."

Kg: (smiling) "Of course, baby. We wouldn't want to have a lazy and uneducated wife like Sonto."

I couldn't help but laugh while he did the same.

Thato: "Kg, man. That's being mean. She is old, man."

Kg: "She is old but behaves o kare ke ngwana (like a child). I mean she's even fucking boys half her age."

Thato: (shocked) "Eng (What)?! Who?"

Kg: "Hai, baby, o rata ditaba (You love news). It's not my place to tell."

Thato: "Mxm, ah mara baby I thought we don't keep secrets in our relationship."

Kg: "Of course but we don't gossip either. Ga ke go botse selo (I'm not telling you anything). Come, let's go, our spa session awaits us."

I got up sulking but he still didn't budge. Why do I have the feeling Sonto is sleeping with Soks? I mean it can only explain why Kg is so adamant on

not sharing who the guy is. He knows I'd tell Palesa. Ai, I indulged in our spa session and let other people's drama be theirs.

Sophie

Yoh, Sonto is a real pest when she wants to be. Luckily I made sure I made a copy of the letter. I wasn't about to give her the only leverage I have over her, besides her husband. He's not married to me, but I'm the one that fucks him brainless. Today is our usual meeting at one of his guest houses a bit far out of Rockville.

We have sex a few times a week and we even have a schedule. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, is my day. We always meet up at 6pm and we spend a few hours there. He doesn't sleep over and I'm tired of him not taking me seriously. It is time I also become his wife, I mean he can have two wives so why not let me indulge in the fancy life he's given Sonto? I'm

also a mother to his child, and Kagiso is not educated like Tumisho. Tumisho went to the best schools just like Kg, so why can't Kagiso be afforded the same opportunity?

We're in our room and as always Romeo likes taking it from the back. I occasionally fuck him while on top, but happens rarely. All he likes is doggy style, because his dick ends up sleeping while I'm on top. I don't know how he manages to fuck all these small girls he likes because truly speaking he's not that good. He sucks, actually. Le Soks wa te phalla (Even Soks is way better). Yep, the Soks, He's Rockville's male whore and poor Palesa doesn't even know.

He has a thing for older women and fucks almost anything with a hole in it. Sonto has no idea that I own her now. I know all her secrets and I even got Soks to record one of their little sex sessions. I wonder how Romeo would feel if he found out that

Sonto is fucking his right hand man. He'd better give me a life equal to Sonto's and I want in on the Diva's club, otherwise I'm about to fuck up both their lives.

Romeo: (moaning) "Ah, ah, ah shit!"

He collapsed on top of my back as usual while I removed him from me and wiped myself off. He threw him the towel and he gave me a weird look.

Romeo: (breathing heavily) "Hao, Sophie. Dintshang, bjanong (What's wrong now)? Keng o kare o kwatile (Why does it seem like you're angry)?"

Sophie: "At least you noticed. Ke lapile, Romeo (I'm tired). Kgale ke le Sefhiri (I've been kept a secret for far too long) and I met you before you met her!"

Romeo: "Are we still on about that, Sophie?"

Sophie: (annoyed) "Askies (Excuse me)?! O reng na (What are you saying), Romeo?! Ke tla gafa, wa nkutlwa (I'll go crazy, you hear me)?! Ska nteka Tumelo (Don't test my patience)!"

Romeo: "Okay, askies (Sorry), Sophie. You know you're my first love. You've always been, net man waitse (You know)."

Sophie: "Ke itse eng (What do I know)?! Are you ashamed of me, Romeo?!"

Romeo: "Ah, man Sophie. E seng bjao (Not like that). Okay, bona (look). I'll up your allowance to 30k."

30k?! Wa tshameka monna o (This man is playing).

Sophie: "Ska dlala ka nna (Don't mess with me),

Romeo. I want to be like Sonto. I want a full make over, I want to dress like her, I also want a car or a driver like her. I want in on the Diva's Club and I want Kagiso to be afforded the same opportunities as your sons. She's your first born daughter and she deserves the same treatment. It's bad enough you won't be an active father to her and I have to lie to her about who her father is. Wa itse pain eo (Do you know that pain), wena Romeo?!"

Romeo: (worried) "Ah, mara (but) Sophie, now you're demanding."

Sophie: "Take it or leave it. I'm done being your mule. Both Kagiso and I. We're a part of your life too, unless you're thinking otherwise. I can leave."

Romeo: (panicking) "Ah, okay okay geh Sophie. I'll do whatever you want. Just don't leave me and don't tell Kagiso yet. I'll think of something."

I smiled knowing I have him wrapped around my little finger. It's about damn time Sonto got to know me.

Sophie: "Good. O thome kaosane (You had better start tomorrow). Everyone must know that Sophie Maake is a Diva member by tomorrow."

Romeo: (sigh) "On one condition."

Sophie: "Anything."

Romeo: "You cancel the hit you're planning on Thato."

Ai, o tlo mbora o bjanong (He's about to bore me now).

Sophie: "Why?"

Romeo: "Because, she's your niece and Kgaugelo wa mo rata (loves her). And she might be Sonto's daughter."

I raised my eyebrows in shock. How the fuck does he know that?!

Sophie: "O ra bjang (How do you mean)?"

Romeo: "I mean, they sort of looks alike and they have the same birthmark. She knows too much about that child that no one knows. Just maobane she told me that Thato's father ke lekgoa (is white). O itse bjang ena (How does she know)?"

Ai, once again I have to save Sonto's ass.

Sophie: "Ag, man. It's because I told her. Petunia got Thato's birth records when she took her for testing as a baby. She has white genes akere wa mmona le ena (you can see her). She's not your ordinary yellow bone, ka mehlo a gray (with gray eyes)."

I hope he's buying it.

Romeo: "Ja, but something ga se right, man. Can you get those birth records for me? I know you can pull off anything."

He's right, I can pull off anything, yes. Now I have to fabricate a lot of documents which will come at a price for Sonto. I can't wait to make the bitch sweat.

Sophie: "Sure, but you know nothing is for free."

Romeo: "Ja I know that. At least you get me, Sophie, unlike Sonto. You listen to me and you're patient."

Yes but he'd better fulfill my wishes or else hell is about to break loose.

Chapter Eighteen

Proverbs 14:30 - "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones."

Three Months Later

Thato

It's been an amazing few months and Kg and I are still going strong. Yes, I stay with him now and even though Sonto doesn't like me much, she stays out of

my way. I tutor Tumisho twice a week and J get paid 2k per week. That's really not bad at all. At least Romeo makes sure he's always home whenever I'm there to Tutor Tumisho and Sonto is never around. That is minus one problem for me. I hardly use my own money, as Kg just buys everything for me.

I feel bad but he doesn't allow me to feel bad at all. I've accepted that he likes doing things for me, but I make sure I don't get too comfortable with that fact. At least Kg got me hooked up with a gynae and I got on the Evra Patch. At least I won't have to worry about pregnancy because we can't afford to have a child right now. I'd like to fulfill my dreams first and I'm glad he understood that. I had my awards evening a few weeks ago just after schools opened for Term 3 and Kg was there to support me as always.

I received my awards for 100% attendance, Top

achiever in Maths, Science, Accounting, English and Geography. I also received an award for the Top Achiever in the Grade. I mean, Mama would be so proud of me. I actually felt her presence that evening, I truly did. Kg on the other hand is super proud of me and he bought me a new phone just to encourage and congratulate me. We just wrote our last Prelim paper today and I'm too excited as I'm almost done with My Matric year.

I finally managed to persuade Kg to get Soks and Palesa to come with us on a couple's trip. This time it won't be a surprise since he asked me to organize everything. We're going to Kruger National Park for the weekend, and since it's Thursday, we're spending a few extra days and coming back on Tuesday. Of course Kg wants me all to himself this weekend, but I can't have that.

This weekend is all about fun with other couples for a change. We're done packing and awaiting on

Palesa to get in the car. Soks went out for a smoke, while I waited outside her gate for her to get out. I hardly enter her house whenever her creepy dad is home. Something is very offish with her dad, but I guess the Truth never stays hidden. We'll find out soon enough.

Palesa: (Sad) "Ai, chomi (Oh friend). O kae (How are you)?"

Thato: (puzzled) "Palesa, dintshang (what's wrong)?"

Palesa: (sigh) "Nex (nothing). I think I'm coming down with something."

She really doesn't look too well, but I didn't pester her. I let her be. We'll talk later on. Before we left, Soks took out a beer from the cooler box and gave one to Kg, but he refused since he's driving us and handed me a bottle of strongbow cider. Apparently,

I need to explore my taste buds and find other drinks I might like.

Thato: (puzzled) "Hao, baby?"

Kg: "It's only one for the road. You need it, trust me."

I took it and he opened it for me. He handed Palesa a bottle of Savanna and opened it as well. We got into the car and drove off. I sat with Palesa at the back for a change, while Kg and Soks sat in the front. Ai, I smell a bit of tension between Soks and Palesa because they're hardly talking. Kg keeps asking me if I'm okay every now and then, while Soks is blatantly ignoring Palesa.

Soks: "Eish, Kg le wena (though). Why did you have to choose a place so far? Nna wa itse ga ke motho le naga (You know I'm not an outdoor kind of man.)"

Kg: "Hai,man Soks, mfo (bro). You need to explore, more. Take your woman out more, e seng o phela ko di chesa nyama (not take her to chesa nyama all the time)."

Soks: (laughing) "O etsa dilo tsa makgoa, mfwetu (You like white people's things, bro). Nna ke mfana wa ko kasi (I'm a township guy)."

Kg: "So am I, but there's no harm in exploring and showing your woman a good time."

Thato: "Palesa, o shap (are you okay)?"

Palesa: "I'll brief you when we're alone."

Kg: "Love, can we stop by the mall? I'd like us to grab a few things before we get to our destination."

Thato: (smiling) "Sure, baby."

Soks: "Ai, ja ne. Ka bona nou o jesiwa monate (I can see now that you're tapping it). Bona o glower bjang (Look how you're glowing)."

Kg: "Soks, voetsek (piss off). This is why your relationships never last. You don't treat a lady with respect, man. O no phanya (You're too forward)."

Soks: "Ah, sorry geh (then)."

Kg parked the car and by then I had already finished my cider. As soon as he got out he came to open the door for me and kissed me.

Kg: (smiling) "O shap (Are you okay)?"

Thato: "Always."

Kg: (whispering in my ear) "That dress looks so hot on you. I hope you're not wearing any underwear."

His scent and gorgeous voice just made me instantly wet as soon as he said that. I just had to blush.

Thato: "Behave."

Soks: "Ag, man. Get a room, guys."

Kg laughed as we walked with them. Kg by my side and Palesa by Soks' side. He couldn't even care less, he was even checking other girls out and making comments about their looks and everything while Palesa was right there. The nerve of this guy, no wonder she's so sad. I just hope he didn't hit her

again. Once we got to Woolworths food, I used this as a great opportunity to speak to Palesa. We pretended to be busy shopping for our own things.

Thato: "Chomi (Friend), dintshang kgante (What's wrong)?"

Palesa: (teary) "Eish, chomi (friend). I think I'm pregnant."

Oh, shit. This can't be good.

Thato: "Chomi (Friend), o ra bjang (What do you mean)? You mean you haven't tested yet?"

Palesa: (shaking head) "No, I.. I missed my period... For the second month now."

This is bad, I mean Soks is hardly boyfriend material, let alone father material. This is a disaster. Palesa isn't one to panic much, but this time she's really stressed.

Palesa: (crying) "Chomi (Friend), what am I going to do? I can't have this baby, I can't."

Thato: "Hao, Soks isn't that bad, is he?"

Palesa: "Ga se wa Soks (It's not Soks' baby)."

I looked at her weary. She's dead serious. I had to come up with a serious plan.

Thato: "Baby, ra bowa ne (We'll be right back). We're going to Pick and Pay. We forgot to pack some lady things."

Kg: (puzzled) "Bjang (How), because I packed your bag?"

Eish, this guy can never take a hint.

Thato: "Aowa (No), man, baby. Palesa forgot a few things. We'll be right back."

I hurried out with Palesa while Kg was shouting.

Kg: "You forgot to take my card!"

Oh, really.

Thato: "I got it covered!"

We rushed out while Palesa was wiping her tears off her face. I really don't get what she means by Soks

not being the father, but now is not the time to ask about such. I went straight to the pregnancy tests and I grabbed three. I took a packet of pads and tampons with, just in case they ask what we bought. Those two are quite nosy, well, Soks is nosy and annoying. I paid in cash and we headed out.

Palesa: "Thank you, friend. I honestly don't know what I'd do without you."

Thato: "That's what friends are for, don't worry."

We went back out and found Kg and Soks already waiting for us.

Kg: "Kgale le ile (You took a while)."

He saw Palesa and noticed the glimmer of tears shining in her eyes as she quickly looked down.

Kg: "Le shap (Are you two okay)?"

I nodded and he was decent enough not to ask any further questions. We walked out and headed to the car. We drove off to our destination. I knew Palesa would raise suspicion if she was sober, so I decided to get her to drink. We'll figure something out along the way, but judging by the look of things, she doesn't want to keep the baby.

Sonto Moloji

I'm quite irritated to say the least. Just when I fixed one problem, another arises. Sophie o ntlwaela masepa (is fucking with me), seriously. I mean firstly she demands money from me and then she suddenly gets a makeover, from top to toe. I mean she looks like a whole different person, from wearing doeks all day, drinking Savanna and Black

Label and smelling like snuff to wearing 20 inch Peruvian weaves, draped in Prada, Dior and Gucci!

She even has a driver to drive her around now! I mean there's no way she could have gotten that upgrade from the measly money I've been giving her. Even her daughter Kagiso has a job at one of Romeo's guest houses as the manager. I mean what the fuck is happening?

Sophie is a leech and must have probably gotten Romeo to give her daughter a job. He should have consulted me! My question now is where does Sophie get all this money from?! I'm meeting up with the Rockville Divas in a few minutes at Capello and I'd like Romeo to tell me what the fuck he's playing at. I headed down and found him watching tv with a newspaper in front of him.

Sonto: (irritated) "Romeo, yini amasimba lawa (What's this shit)?"

Romeo: (calmly) "Sonto, ge o bolela Sizulu gora gore o jele di pekere (When you soeak Zulu I know you're angry). O jewa keng (What's eating you)?"

Sonto: "How could you give Kagiso a job without consulting me?"

Romeo: "Sonto, o nale di shares in my businesses (do you have shares in my businesses)? Do I have to tell you everything, kgante (though)? And besides, I'm uplifting the community and I don't get why you seem irritated by this."

I'm pissed that he sees nothing wrong with this, and I'm even more pissed at how blase he is about this issue.

Sonto: "You could have at least run it by me, Romeo. And what's this of Sophie getting a driver and make

over? Don't you have anything to do with this?"

Romeo: "O nyaka gore eng (What are you trying to say), Sonto?"

Sonto: "I'm just asking nje."

Romeo: "Well, you're asking the wrong person. I don't know what Sophie gets up to. Who knows? She might have scored someone rich to fuck with. Let other kids shine, man. You can't be the only rich diva in Rockville."

Arguing any further would just be a waste of time. I clicked my tongue and walked out.

Romeo: "Enjoy your day!"

Mxm, Romeo wants to make me go crazy, really. As I drove to Capello to meet Rachel, Anelisa and Bianca, I got the shock of my life. This day can't possibly get any worse.

Sophie: (smiling) "Nomasonto, how are you, babe?"

I'm about to kill someone today.

Chapter Nineteen

Job 5:2 - "Surely resentment destroys the fool, and jealousy kills the simple."

Thato

The ride was rather pleasant after Palesa had a few drinks. She actually had a bit much, but she has always had a high alcohol tolerance. She just seems like deep down she's carrying a lot of weight and she

can't escape it. The only way she knows how is to drink it away at times. She bottles up at times so I let her be. I don't like pressuring people at all.

We finally arrived at Thornhill Safari Lodge. Oh, my, this place is indeed worth the price. The view, the serenity of the place, the good feel of nature and the pool, is just awesome. Of course, we don't want to share with anyone, so I made sure I book us honeymoon suites. Hopefully Soks and Palesa will walk out of here feeling brand new. We even have a few couples activities lined up, so I just can't wait.

We headed to our rooms as Kg brought our luggage. At least Soks took his and Palesa's luggage. Perhaps Kg had a word or two with him about Tender Loving Care. While I was staring at the beautiful view just outside our balcony, Kg rushed towards me and held me from behind. He immediately started kissing my neck and put his hand underneath my dress and went straight for my

coochie. He removed my panty same time, while kissing my neck.

Kg: (breathing heavily) "Yoh, baby. Kgale ke go dumile (I've been craving you). Mfe saka toe (Give me what's mine)."

I smiled as I turned around. Kg is turning me into a sex addict, bathong (goodness). I walked towards the bed with him while we were hastily taking off our clothes. We were totally naked upon approaching the bed, and I threw him on the bed. It must be the Strongbow doing the work because I never have this much courage.

Kg: (smiling) "Come to daddy."

I smiled as I was about to get on top of him and insert his dick inside of me, he pulled me up.

Thato: (puzzled) "Kg-"

Kg: "Did you really think I'd have you without eating my baby first?"

Oh, Kg and his obsession with muffing mw bathong (gosh). I need him inside of me as in yesterday. He muffed me while I sat on his face. I've never done this before, but I guess with a guy like Kg, there's a first time for everything.

Thato: (moaning) "Aaah, daddy..."

He did his thing and sucked me til I couldn't hold it in anymore. I tried removing my pussy from his face, but he grabbed me so tight. I ended up gushing my juices all over his face.

Thato: (moaning) "Aaah, shit!"

Kg: (smiling) "You taste so good, baby. Always."

I was about to get on top of him, but he flipped me over so I could get on all fours. Kg, neh. He never lets me dominate, shame, but tonight he has another thing coming. He inserted his penis into my vagina and I went wild. Hearing him moan while he kisses my back, just sends goosebumps down my spine. He was thrusting at a very fast pace as this is supposed to be a quickie. Just when I was about to reach another climax, we heard a knock on the door, but that didn't keep Kg from thrusting.

Soks: (knocking) "Eh, Kgauza. Re eme ka lena, man (We're waiting on you)."

Kg: (thrusting) "Ja, man Soks, re etla (we're coming)."

Soks: "Mxm, ah, wa bona (you see)? O busy o ja marao daarso (You're busy fucking in there)."

Ai, Soks and his loose mouth, man. I still don't get what Palesa sees in him, really.

Kg: "Eh, man Soks, fokoff (fuck off)!"

We heard Soks chuckling as he walked away. I could feel Kg was close to his climax.

Kg: (moaning) "Shit, baby. Cum with me, please."

Whenever I want to cum quicker, I rub my clitors. Yes, Kg has taught me a thing or two. We came together and he immediately got a towel to wipe the both of us.

Thato: "Mxm, Kg, you never let me taje charge."

Kg: "Ah, baby. Sorry, okay next time you can make me you victim and do as you please with me."

Thato: "Alright. Let's go meet up with those two. They are probably getting impatient."

Kg: "Ah, Soks wa phapha (is forward). I'll have a word with him."

We headed out in our swimwear and since it's already after 1pm, we can't go riding in the bushes, the main activities we'll get to tomorrow. We took our sunscreen and snacks, while Soks and Palesa have the alcohol with them. We got to Palesa and Soks, and they look a bit better. I guess that's the power of sex.

Soks: "Ja, neh. That was fast, man. O shapa (You hit that in) record time, mos Kg?"

Kg: "Mxm, ah, man Soks. How many times must I tell you? Change the way you behave and you'll see miracles, man. Tlogela go spita (stop being forward)."

Soks: "Okay, sorry mfo (bro)."

Kg put some sunscreen on me while I put some on him, and handed me a cider once he was done. He gave me a kiss and I went to sit next to Palesa.

Palesa: "How do you guys do it, though?"

Thato: "Eng chomi (What friend)?"

Palesa: "How do you guys remain so happy and affectionate all the time? I mean Kg worships the ground you walk on, boo. He'd legit do anything for you."

Thato: "Well, I don't know how we do it, chomi (friend). All I can say is that I'm honestly blessed to have Kg. I don't have much experience in this dating thing, but what I can tell you is that I'm in love. Kg has shown me that love knows no bounds, isn't selfish and you have to communicate and work towards the same goal. We make sure we never go to bed angry, although we haven't really fought."

Palesa: (sad) "I wish Soks was like that, you know. Instead, He's just an animal. He treats me like shit most of the time, and then he apologizes by giving me money. I sometimes wish I had given Thabo a chance. He was so sweet to me and I was such a bitch to him, just because he didn't have money like Soks. The truth is friend, my life is a mess. At times

I feel I could just end it all, really.”

Yoh, Palesa is seriously scaring me right now.

Thato: “Palesa, what's so horrible that you'd want to end your life?”

I thought she was about to tell me her big secret, but she changed the subject yet again.

Palesa: (getting up) “I'm in the mood for a swim, let's go.”

She left me sitting there in worry and jumped right into the water. I hope she'll be able to swim since she's a bit tipsy. I took off my top and and got into the water slowly, with Kg staring at me as he was talking to Soks. While Palesa and I were talking about random things, these other two guys walked

towards us.

Guy1: "Hmm, I'd love to join you two gorgeous ladies."

Guy2:"Hi there. May we?"

Palesa: "Oh, yes, of course."

Thato: "Palesa?! No, you may not."

Guy1: "But your friend just said yes."

Thato: "And I'm saying no, I'm taken - we both are."

Palesa: "Well, you don't see a ring on my finger, do you?"

Yoh, Palesa is seriously going to mess things up for us. As they were about to respond, Kg walked towards them. They had their backs towards him, so they didn't see him coming.

Kg: (tapping guy1's shoulder) "Eh, mfo (bro), that's my wife you're pestering."

Guy1:"Ao (Is it)? I don't see any ring on her finger and besides, isn't she a bit too young to be your wife?"

Kg put his arms in his shorts pockets as usual. Now I know he's mad.

Kg: (chuckling) "Hehe, I'm going to count to three, actually make it one. You'd better keep those chicken legs walking before I make you regret setting foot on this ground."

Guy2: "Sorry, bro. Ne re sa nyake mathata (We didn't want any trouble). Mpho, a re vaye (let's go)."

I could see this Mpho dude was trying to challenge Kg, but he was a bit short, though. Yoh, Kg's veins were about to pop right from his face. The two guys left while I looked at Palesa, who didn't even look remorseful.

Palesa: "Keng (What)? Nna I'm not taken."

I looked at Kg and I thought he'd be mad at me, but his face softened immediately.

Kg: "O shap (Are you okay)?"

I nodded as he smiled at me and went back to his seat. Soks looked pissed, livid actually. He was

about to get up and approach Palesa, but Kg held him back.

Kgaugelo

I looked at those two rats who kept staring at my woman like she's a piece of meat. I'm not controlling, but I'm very possessive of what's mine. The fact that Palesa kept entertaining them shows just how toxic her relationship with Soks is. He just lowered her to something she clearly wasn't when she met him. It's like he loves her, but not enough to treat her right. This girl has lost respect for herself, all because of Soks. They say you are who you hang around with. He needs to fix himself or else I'll have to cut ties with him. I can't be associated with cheaters and women beaters.

Kg: "Eh, Soks. Calm down, man."

Soks: (breathing heavily) "Mxm, ah man. Palesa o ntlwaela masepa (is fucking with me)."

Kg: "Soks, you really need to check your tone when you speak to and of women, man. You can't go around treating Palesa like shit. If you don't love her then let her go."

Soks: "You don't get it, Kg. Wena o (You're) perfect, nna (I) on the other hand am just like my father. I am so addicted to Palesa, I love her so much I feel that she'll end up leaving me one day for someone better. I can see it in her eyes, she looks at me like I disgust her and I deserve that. Now that she's pregnant, I have to treat her right, man."

Kg: (shocked) "Soks o reng na (what are you saying)? You ruined her self esteem and now you're ruining her future? How could you get her pregnant, bra? She's only 18?!"

Soks: "Eish, mfo (Bro), I honestly don't know, but what I do know is that I love her and I want to make things right."

Kg: "Then start by getting help and stop hitting her for once."

Soks: (shocked) "How did you know?"

Kg: "Everyone knows, man. How she sometimes walks around with a scarf around her neck in broad daylight, how she's scared of you. You have to stop, man Soks. This isn't who you are. Be a man, a real man, a better man and cherish her. Mould her into the flower she was when you found her."

Soks: (teary) "Eish, Kg. I fucked up. Ke jele Sophie le Sonto ka mo (I fucked Sonto and Sophie) and now they just won't leave me alone. They'll tell Palesa

and she'll leave me for that stupid boy, Thabo.”

Kg: (sigh) ”Ai, end it with them and be honest with them. You can deal with her finding out when the time comes. For now, go sort things out with your woman.”

I could see him at least making an attempt to do better. He got up and slowly walked up to Palesa, who's already drunk. I don't even know how she's drinking while pregnant, but well, that's Palesa for you.

Soks: ”Pali, can I talk to you?”

Palesa gave him a long look and stared at him in silence for a short while.

Palesa: ”Okay.”

He held out his hand so that she could hold onto him as she walked out of the water. He wrapped a towel around her as they walked away together. My baby got out of the water and came to me.

Thato: "And that? What did you say to him?"

Kg: "I just knocked some sense into him."

Sonto

Yerr Sophie wants to kill me shame, honestly. How dare she worm her way into my lifestyle, my group like this?

Sonto: "Sophie, ufunani la (what are you doing here)?"

Bianca: "Oh, hey Sonto. Why didn't you tell us you have such a funky friend?"

Anelisa: "I mean I adore her already!"

Rachel: "Sophie told us about your life growing up and how you were in school. Hao (gosh), babe. You never told us you didn't finish school, bathong (goodness)!"

Anelisa: "Here we were under the impression that you obtained a degree in PR kgante dololo (but nothing)! Kanti azange ufike na se Matric mntase (You didn't even make it to matric, sis)!"

They all laughed at me like I was nothing. Who the fuck do these bitches think they are?

Sonto: "Askies (Excuse me)?! Wena (You) Bianca, are you forgetting that your new buddy Sophie wasn't there when I had to help you abort your side man's baby just to save your lousy marriage? And wena Anelisa, your mouth is so big now, but you were mute when you were begging me for food and R200 000 when your stupid husband blew all your family money by snorting his own supply!

And you, Rachel, you're a fine one to talk. You and I grew up in the dumps, honey. You were dark as fuck, charcoaled in fact before ugezwa imali (money cleaned you up) and now you're making fun of me?! You're forgetting I had to buy your case after you nearly stabbed your husband's side chick to death! At least I didn't finish school, but I made this club and I made you - ALL of you! The last time I checked none of you even got to taste Varsity air, So don't you dare tell me shit and laugh at me as if you're better than me."

I was breathing fire and they could see that.

Sophie: "Askies (Sorry), Nomasonto. We didn't mean it like that. I mean, we were just bonding over the good, old past."

Anelisa: "Yes, I'd also like to sincerely apologize."

Bianca: "Me too."

Rachel: "And me."

Sonto: "You'd better, otherwise your lives would go back to the dumps."

Sophie gave me a smirk. What the hell is this bitch up to?

Chapter Twenty

1 Corinthians 13:4 - "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud."

Sophie

Shame, Sonto looks like hell. She really thought I'd let her live the good life while I stayed behind? I don't want to be a side chick forever, she'd better watch out. I'm next in line and if Romeo can't marry me too, then one of us must die and it most certainly won't be me. After Sonto reprimanded these idiots she called her friends, she asked me aside.

Sonto: "Sophie, may I have a word with you?"

Sophie: "Sure."

I got up and followed her.

Sonto: "What the fuck, Sophie?"

Sophie: "Askies?"

Sonto: "What are you playing at? Where did you suddenly get the money for all these outfits? And your driver? And why are you worming your way into my life? If I didn't know better, I'd say you're trying to be me."

I couldn't help, but laugh.

Sophie: (laughing) "Sonto, ga se wena fela mo Rockville o kgonang go zola (You're not the only one capable of hustling in Rockville). O se kereya kae sebetse seo sa go mpotsisa masepa ao (Where do you get the audacity to ask me such shit)?! Wa tella wena mokgwa wa gao (You're actually very disrespectful)."

Sonto: (annoyed) "Sonto, this is MY club, MY friends. Go make your own friends at the local tavern or something."

Sophie: (laughing) "Wena wa ntebala ne (You forget who I am). I can turn that cheap Malaysian weave of yours upside down and shove it right into your ass. You forget that I hold all your secrets, dear Nomasonto. You wouldn't want me to tell dear Romeo what you did to his beloved wife, do you? That you're the reason Kgaugelo became motherless at the tender age of 9."

I saw panic in her eyes even though she tried to hide it.

Sonto: "You wouldn't dare!"

Sophie: "Keep fucking with me and I'll do it. Stay in

your lane, Sonto. I'm here to stay. This little charade you have going on here by running everyone's lives is about to come to an end."

I left her standing there in pure shock as I went back to my new found friends.

Sophie: "Ladies, this Capello scene ya tlapela (is boring), man. Why are you guys acting like you never grew up in the ghetto? And wena (you) Bianca? You're from Alex, Gomora in fact and you're coloured, so you're used to rough places. Enough of this, I'm taking you guys to Rocafela, my treat."

Anelisa: (surprised) "Oh, I could really use a serious dance."

Rachel: "What do you say, Sonto?"

Sonto: "Mxm, I decide where we go for entertainment."

Sophie: "Uh, uh, uh, no my dear Sonto. We're a team and we all have feelings. Hand up if you feel that we should all decide on where we'd like to go."

They slowly put their hands up, leaving me with the unanimous decision. I'm loving this new me, I'm going to break Sonto piece by piece.

Sophie: (smiling) "I guess you're outnumbered, Soso. You can join us or do something better. Your choice."

I left with her three friends as she reluctantly followed us. Shame, I can't wait to see her beg me to get out of her life.

Thato

After our swim, we headed back to our room to change. We took a quick shower together to get rid of the chlorine on our skin and headed back outside on the veranda. Kg started marinating the meat while I got the salads and snacks ready for our evening braai. Palesa and Soks came towards us walking hand in hand and all smiles. I'm too shocked for words, but all I can say is that Kg knows his thing shame.

Thato: "Heh, chomi (friend), I'm loving this. I see you've sorted things out."

Palesa: "Yes, well sort of."

Thato: (frowning) "Well, he found the pregnancy tests in my bag and confronted me about it. I had to lie and say that it is indeed his baby. You should

have seen him, Thato. He's so happy, I couldn't burst his bubble like that. I don't know what Kg said to him, but thank him for me. I have my Soks back and it's all thanks to him."

Thato: "Well, I'm glad you're alright, babe. I just hope this won't blow up in your face. Lies have a nasty way of coming out."

Palesa: (displeased) "Thato, since when are you such a relationship expert? I mwan can't you at least be happy for me? It's bad enough my own father fucks me almost every day and got me pregnant and now my best friend can't even pretend to be happy for me?"

Wait, what? Palesa realized she just blurted out her big secret. Oh, my God!

Thato: (shocked) "Palesa, what the fuck?"

Palesa looked down and changed the subject, for real. I can't believe she would hide such a thing from me, from everyone. Why the fuck hasn't she gotten the fucker arrested?! I knew there was something dodgy about that guy. I just knew it!

Palesa: "Forget I said anything."

Thato: "Pali-"

Palesa: (snappy) "I said forget it!"

I looked at her and froze, literally. Kg and Soks stopped whatever they were talking about and stared at us.

Kg: "Is everything okay?"

Thato: (teary) "I... I need some air."

I just stormed off while I didn't even see Palesa follow me. How the fuck can a father sleep with his own daughter and get her pregnant?! My God! I can't even breathe, I feel like this is even more traumatic for me than it is for her. she quickly ran after me and stopped me.

Palesa: "Thato. Bona chomi eish (Look friend), I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snao at you, okay? It's really no big deal."

I couldn't even believe she just said that. I looked at her and saw no emotion in sight. Fuck that monster damaged my friend so much, she took everything he handed to her lying down without a fight. It seems as if it's even become a norm to her.

Thato: "No big deal?! No big deal, Palesa?! Your own father has been raping you!"

Palesa: "Shhh, wa rasa le wena (not so loud). Yes, he's been raping me, okay? But don't you see? I get to have a second chance at life with Soks."

Thato: "Palesa, why don't you get him arrested? What about your mom?"

Palesa: "I can't... My mom... My mom knows. She knew all along."

Now I've heard it all! Bathong (Goodness), Mme Anelisa, a Rockville Diva knows her husband is molesting her child and is doing nothing about it?

Thato: "Let me help you, Kg can help you."

Palesa: "No! I don't want Soks to look at me differently, he'll think I'm damaged goods. He won't want to sleep with me anymore. Don't you get it? I love Soks."

Yoh, I honestly don't know what to do and I wish she hadn't told me any of this. How do I walk around keeping such a heavy secret burning me from the inside like this?

Chapter Twenty One

Proverbs 21:23 - "Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble."

Thato

My weekend was ruined just like that. I tried my utmost best to be happy and enjoy the rest of the evening, but my heart was just not at ease. I faked smiles and conversations here and there. I don't

even know why I'm the depressed one when Palesa is having the time of her life.

She's having fun with Soks as if she never even confessed abuse and rape and incestual pregnancy to me just a few minutes ago. Ai. We ate our meat and food in peace and had our drinks, thank goodness Soks and Palesa just couldn't wait any longer, they took it to their room, leaving Kg and I alone.

Kg: (puzzled) "Baby, o shap (are you okay)?"

Thato: (sigh) "Yes, just tired."

Kg: "You do know that I know when you're lying, right?"

Thato: (looking down) "Eish, Kg. What would you if a

person very close to you told you a really big secret that could destroy other people's lives? But you're not sure if you should even keep the secret because it has destroyed her life already.”

Kg: “Hmm, tough one. I think you should tell someone who can really help your friend. I mean, she'll probably be mad at you at first, but once she sees you did it for a good cause, she'll thank you for it.”

Thato: “I wasn't talking about Palesa, ypu know?”

Kg: (chuckling) “Yeah, sure. Come, don't let other people's misery ruin your weekend.”

We packed away the rest of the food that was left over and headed to our rooms. That goodness the rooms allow for self catering. We don't want to be disturbed. I hardly drank much today, but I need to

please my man for a change. I have to get myself out of that Palesa zone and give my man a blowjob finally. I've never done it, so I asked Palesa for some tips since she's the expert, but she's just so rough, so I got the book 30 Tips to blow his mind. It teaches women about giving oral sex to a man. Porn won't really teach you much, but I tried watching some videos.

We got into our room and I didn't waste time. I downed the rest of my cider and kissed Kg. He's tall, very tall, so I had to signal to him that I want to kiss. He was puzzled at first, but very pleased with my gesture in the end. I fondled his crotch and pulled out of the kiss. I unzipped his pants as he kissed me neck, while taking off my dress as well. After removing all his clothes, I gathered all the courage left in me.

Thato: "Lie down on the bed."

He smiled and did as instructed. I carefully got on my knees on top of him and held his dick. I could see the pleasure in his eyes already as I played with his balls gently using my hands.

Kg: (moaning) "Hmm, baby..."

I positioned myself and went down. I was about to plant my lips and tongue on his abdomen, until he gently paused.

Kg: "You don't have to unless you're sure, baby."

Thato: "I want to."

He nodded in affirmation as my tongue met with the tip of his penis. I slowly teirled my tongue on the tip, and I felt him tense up already. Both his hands gently massaged my curly hair in pleasure.

Kg: (moaning) "Hmm, shit, TT..."

Bathong (Gosh), I haven't even started yet. I took a bit of the tip into my mouth. It tastes a bit salty, but not bad at all. Kg is extremely clean, so I have no worry. I went a bit further, taking him into my mouth bit by bit, in circular motion, while my hands were rubbing the rest of his dick and balls. The faster my motion became, the harder and louder he moaned.

Kg: (moaning) "Aaah, yes, baby. Tjo, shit! O nketsang (What are you doing to me)?"

I went faster and faster, then slower again. I proceeded to alternate in between paces and I felt his breathing change rapidly, he was close.

Kg: (moaning) "Aaah, baby. Shit, I'm about to come, move please."

Eish, the thing about trying to prove a point nje, I didn't move and he shot his load into my mouth. I quickly went to the bathroom to spit it out. Sperm taste weird, slimy and just unnatural to have it in your mouth. Maybe one day I'll get used to it. I went back to the bed and found Kg already waiting for me. Does this dude ever get tired? He smiled at me and gave me a passionate kiss, and dipped his finger into the entrance of my pussy, causing me to moan instantly in his mouth.

Thato: "Aaah..."

He pulled out of the kiss and got down on his knees while I was standing. He positioned me, so that my one leg would be on his shoulder, as he devoured me while kneeling on the floor. The euphoric feeling you get when you feel someone's tongue and lips down there is amazing.

Thato: (moaning) "Aaah, daddy."

It's weird how I always switch from Kg to daddy during sex. It's become a norm now. I gushed on his face as usual and he lay on the bed, pulling me to him. I guess tonight is my time to be in charge. I'm a bit excited and I can see the excitement on his face. I slowly positioned myself on top of him and inserted him into me. He went wild instantly.

He grabbed my bums gently, fondled my breasts and squeezed my nipples. I went in circular motion and then bounced on top of him. Oh, my Kg went wild. I felt myself going crazy, I mean all the other positions are nice, but woman on top has some sort of power attached to it. It makes you go crazy, especially the extra pleasure you feel deep inside of your vaginal walls.

Apparently it's your gspot. I read up a bit on it. I rode him until we both climaxed as I dropped on top

of him. I thought he'd want to take a break, but nope, he quickly wiped the both of us and flipped me over for doggy style position and went at it again. We made amazing love until he finally gave in. I never knew drunk sex could be so nice. Well, he was the drunk one to be exact.

Kg: (breathing heavily) "Fuck, that was amazing, baby. Ke gore today you told yourself that you'd blow my mind away, neh?"

Thato: (laughing) "Well, did I? Blow you away?"

Kg: "Both literally and figuratively."

We both laughed.

Kg: "I love you, Thato."

Thato: "I love you too, Kgaugelo."

Whenever we tell each other we love one another and using our names, it just feels like it's a promise to one another. We were about to doze off until we heard Palesa and Soks arguing just next door. Yoh, these people want us to be chased away. Kg checked the time and it's just after midnight. We can't even pray with these two fighting. We could even hear them.

Palesa: "O ntseya bjang, mara Soks (What do you take me for, though)?!"

Soks: "Hai, man P, calm down. It's not what you think."

Palesa: "O ska nhlantsha (Don't piss me off)! Why would Sonto be sending you all those nudes?! O jola le di gogwane, Sojs (Are you dating grannies now,

Soks)?!"

Soks: "Eish, man P. Wa rasa (You're making noise). Let's talk about this like adults, please."

Palesa: "If you want to talk, mfe phone eo (Give me that phone)!"

Soks: "Hayi (No), it's mine, mos (isn't it)?! Aowa (No), now you're being dramatic."

Yoh, Soks just likes adding fuel to the fire.

Palesa: "Eng (What)?! O re ke dramatic, Soks (Are you calling me dramatic)?! Ke tlaobontsha bo dramatic (I'll show you dramatic)!"

We could hear Palesa walking up and down shuffling.

I don't know but I feel like this is about to turn into a disaster.

Thato: "Kg, maybe we should go check up on them."

Kg: "Okay, you stay here."

I nodded as he got out of bed and quickly wore his gown. Meanwhile, I was listening attentively to the two of them squabbling.

Soks: "Hai, man Palesa. O tlo stressa ncosi ya ka (You'll stress my baby out). Ska etsa so (Don't do this)."

Palesa: "Ja, akere wena o iketsa clever (You think you're clever)! O busy o nyobana le digogwana (You're busy fucking grannies), meanwhile wa nshapa, Soks (you hit me)! O mpya e bjang wena,

mara (What kind of a dog are you, though)?! Nagana fela (Just imagine), a whole grown woman! Am I not enough for you Soks? Heh (Huh)?! Isn't it bad enough that you treat me like a piece of shit?! Why don't you just let go of me so I can be free of all this shit, Soks?! Why?!"

Something didn't seem right. Kg was knocking on their door, but the door seemed closed. Soks seemed like he was in panic.

Soks: "Pali, please, put the gun down."

Oh, shit. Palesa has a gun aimed at Soks?! This is a shitty mess, really.

Palesa: (crying) "You keep hurting me, Soks. A man who loves a woman shouldn't treat her the way you treat me. I deserve better, I deserve peace of mind."

Soks: "Please, Pali. I can change, just please give me a chance."

Palesa: (crying) "Where were you when my father helped himself with me all those years? Where were you when you fucked me like an animal, then I had to go home with bruises given my you and my own dad had to shove his dick inside of me? Where were you when my own mother walked in on my dad raping me when I was ten, and he told her to close the door.

She did as she was told. Imagine, a mother is supposed to protect her children, but instead, she let him have me - every single night! I went crying to her, bleeding from my anus and I told her what he had done to me. I said to her 'Mama, bona papa o nkeditse eng (look what daddy did to me)'. And do you know what she said?"

Soks was quiet all this while, and Kg just seemed to be fighting with the door, begging her to open up.

Palesa: "She said to me 'Palesa, do it for the family, for us. If you don't, we'll be out on the streets. We'll lose this lavish lifestyle, is that what you want?' Imagine that, at the tender age of 9, I lost my virginity to my own father. I had my period early in life thanks to him. He even treated me like his wife instead of my mother.

You were supposed to be my sanctuary, my place of safety, but instead you just did the same thing he did to me. You used and abused me, turned me into a bedroom whore. Now, I'm pregnant with his child, Soks. Do you know what it's like to be me? Surely the world would be a better place without me in it. No one loves me, only Thato has been the sister I never had and even that wasn't enough."

Soks: "No, no no. Please, Palesa, Don't do this. We can fix it together, please. I promise I'll change for you. I promise, I'll deal with your father, just please

don't do this!"

I ran out of our room and saw Kg standing outside of theirs. I was in panic mode, and so was he. The caretaker rushed to us, livid.

Caretaker: "What is going on here? We don't want any drama!"

Thato: (frantic) "Enough with your bullshit, man! If you don't open that door right now, one of them will die!"

He quickly heeded my warning and opened the door. As soon as he did, Kg jumped in first. We saw Palesa holding a gun and pointing it at Soks.

Soks: "Pali, baby, don't do this."

Palesa: (crying) "You never loved me, Soks. You never did."

Thato: (scared) "Please, chomi (friend), don't do this."

Palesa: (crying) "I love you, Thato. I always have and I always will."

Fear crept up and quickly turned into panic.

Thato: (panicked) "No, Palesa, please!"

Palesa quickly took the gun and aimed it below her chin.

Palesa: "Please forgive me. Goodbye."

I saw the most horrific scene that will forever be engraved into my mind. I heard my first ever shotgun, I encountered my first ever suicide and my only friend, my best friend, just shot and killed herself right there in front of me, in front of all of us.

I stood frozen in shock as I saw her lifeless body drop down to the floor. Soks had his hands on his head and started screaming, the caretaker lost his mind and started screaming for help. All I heard was the faintness of their screams. I just stared at blood oozing from Palesa's brain.

This can't be, this can't fucking me. Her pure white gown, was slowly getting stained by her blood. Kg held me and pulled me out of there. I could see myself walking, but my legs felt numb. I heard Kg's words as if they came from a distance, until he shook me back to life.

Kg: "Thato! Thato! Are you okay?"

Then that same moment came back to me, the moment she blew her own brains out. I kept recalling the moment the gun went off. I looked at myself and saw a few blood stains on my gown. I vomited profusely on the floor, as Kg held me. And just like that, I lost two very important people in my life in the very same year.

Chapter Twenty Two

Galatians 6:2 - "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Thato

I was a complete mess afr vomiting. Kg says it's just shock. I was even shaking and shivering like I was feeling cold. Soks was a real mess, just sitting on the ground, staring at Palesa's body. Kg was by my side right through, while the caretaker was

standing afar, giving the police a statement. The paramedics came and checked on her. We had all given up hope that Palesa didn't make it. I was deeply distraught until I heard them say something hopeful.

Paramedic: "I feel a pulse. It's faint, but it's there."

They quickly did the necessary things and laid her onto the stretcher. Soks followed them and the police Pestered us as usual.

Policeman: "I'm afraid we need a statement from you, sir, from all of you before you leave."

Soks: (fuming) "Don't fuck with me! If you want a statement, you can follow me!"

He followed the paramedics into the ambulance,

while Kg and I got into his car.

Kg: (sigh) "You don't have to go, baby, really."

Thato: (softly) "Kgaugelo, please pray with me."

He just nodded. I felt the deep desire and an incredible need for prayer. There's a glimmer of hope that she might make it out of this alive. I can't lose Palesa, not now. We still have to experience varsity and be each other's maids of honour, be each other's children's godmothers.

Thato: "Dear God, Modimo yo a rategang (Our beloved God), I come before you as one of your children. I'm not perfect, but I plead for your mercy, your kindness, your grace. I ask you dear Lord to please protect my friend and help her survive this. It is not her fault that she underwent all the abuse and trauma.

Oh, God, my heart is in a great deal of agony, my heart cannot take anymore despair. Was it not you in 1 Peter 3:14 who said "But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats ; do not be frightened"? You promised us that you'd be there for us and reward those who suffer in your name. Was it not you in 1 Peter 4:1 who said "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin."

Did you not mean Palesa would be free from sin since she suffered immensely at the hands of her so called father? Where were you, Oh, Lord?! Where were you when she was in despair, in pain and endured suffering?! Why bless a man like that with children knowing very well he'd abuse her like that?! Was it not you who said "I knew you before you were born" in Jeremiah 1:5?! You knew her father, you knew the kind of monster he would turn out to be yet

you gave him Palesa, why oh, Lord?!

I didn't question you when you took my mother away from me, but now you want to take away my only friend, when she needs me the most?! I beg of you, dear God, have mercy on me, on her, on us. Give her a second chance at life. In John 7:38 you said "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." I ask this in Jesus Mighty Name. Amen."

I didn't even feel the tears burning my cheeks and myself shiver in anxiety.

Kg: "Let's go."

Kg started the car as we headed to the hospital. Upon arrival, I saw Soks sitting on one of the chairs filled with dejection, and a whole lot of regret.

Kg: "Mfo (Bro), Ba reng (What are they saying)?"

Soks: (teary) "Nothing as yet. She's in surgery."

Kg: "I'll get them to call her parents."

Soks: "No need. They have already been notified. Apparently they're on their way as we speak. Thato, why didn't you say anything about what Coin was doing to her? All these years..."

Thato: "I didn't know, I only found out just before the braai."

Soks: (angry) "I know, I was a shitty boyfriend to her, but I love her. Coin will regret this for a whole lifetime. Then I'm going for Anelisa. That bitch will regret everything she's put Palesa through."

Anelisa Lekgau

I was having the time of my life at Rockafela with the girls. I mean Sophie actually brought life into this group. Where has she been all our lives? We're so over Sonto and her bullying tendencies. The music is hip, the food is flowing and the alcohol is buzzing. I can't remember the last time I even had braai meat and a Savanna in my hand.

Bianca: (dancing) "Sophie, where have you been all my life?! This is just what we needed, man. Not golfing with big bellied, fat men and talking about which latest car to buy."

Sophie laughed out loud.

Sophie: "You people just forget about where you come from as soon as you become rich. Life is too short to walk around with a tight ass."

Rachel: (laughing) "Cheers to that."

Sonto on the other hand is sour as fuck, barely saying a word to anyone.

Anelisa: "Hao? Sonto? Loosen up a bit, man. Yazi uyakhohlwa ukuthi besi groova e next door (You know, you forget we used to party next door)."

Sonto: "Mxm, Anelisa, ska ntena (Don't bore me)!"

I saw Coin appear out of nowhere looking distressed. Mxm I don't even want to talk to the bastard. He's the one who replaced me with my own daughter. Imagine, making me pregnant only to fuck the very child that came out of me.

Coin: "Anelisa, masihambe (let's go)."

Anelisa: "Angiyi ndawo nawe (I'm not going anywhere with you)."

Coin: "Palesa shot herself, dammit!"

I felt like my whole world came to a standstill. I must have heard wrong.

Anelisa: "Utheni (What did you just say)?!"

Coin: "Palesa shot herself in the head. She's in hospital as we speak. Let's go."

Everyone was looking at me. I know, they're probably judging me. Who knows if they even heard the rumours already. Yes, I Anelisa Lekgau sold my only daughter to her father. I allowed him to have sex with her and in turn he made her pregnant. And

now, she has killed herself all because of me. I deserve everything that's coming to me. I sacrificed my own child for money and riches.

Anelisa: (angry) "This is all your fault, Coin!"

Coin: "Not here, Anelisa, please."

Anelisa: "If not here, then where, Coin?! Where?! Was I not enough for you?! Was it not enough that I did everything for you?! But you just had to do it, didn't you?! You just had to molest, rape and sodomize your own daughter! You impregnated her and now she had the last straw and killed herself!"

Coin: (calmly) "Ungazongi hlanyela wena Anelisa (Don't be stupid). I'd never do such a thing."

Bianca: (shocked) "So, it was all true?!"

Sonto: "Yes, every bit of it. He fucked his own daughter, day and night, whenever he had the chance."

Sophie: (bewildered) "You knew about this Sonto and didn't even try to save the poor girl?!"

Sonto: (surprised) "What? No, guys, you got it all wrong. I'm not the bad guy here, Coin is! And Anelisa! She's the poor excuse for a mother, not me."

Coin: "I have no idea what you're-"

Rachel: "Shut up, Coin! You're fucking disgusting! I'll make sure you pay for this! I'm going to tell Paper, Romeo and Quatro. You'll regret ever shoving your filthy dick into your defenceless child's vagina! Shame on you!"

Anelisa: "You make me sick, Coin!"

Sophie: "Why are you acting like you're better than him? You're just as much tk blame as he is. You knew about it and you allowed him to rape your only child, Anelisa. Is this what the Rockville Divas' motto is? To allow and cover up abuse?"

We were all so surprised and embarrassed as we stared at each other.

Sonto: "Mxm, don't act like you're better than any of us, wena Sophie!"

Sophie: "Oh? Why is that, Sonto? What am I hiding? Am I hiding a child that I dumped-"

Sonto: "Okay! I get the picture!"

Rachel: "I think you both should leave. Anelisa, go say your last goodbyes to your daughter. Wena (You) Coin, the squad will be waiting for you and don't you dare make a run for it."

I stormed out of there, as drunk as I was, I got into my car and sped off. Oh, Lord what have I done?

Sonto Moloji

I'm so angry right now. Sophie is out to finish me, to ruin every last bit of me. Was this her plan all along?

Sonto: "Hey, wena (you). Don't mess with me. What the fuck are you playing at, Sophie?"

Sophie: "Sonto, I'm not your mate or any of your little helpers you shove around at your house. Don't talk

to me like that. I'm just being me, babe. I didn't do anything wrong."

Sonto: "How much will it take for you to disappear?"

Sophie: (chuckling) "You mean how much of Romeo's money will it take for me to disappear. Disappear and go where? This is mt hometown, baby. I'm not going anywhere."

Sonto: "But Sophie you don't belong here, you've never had an interest in this type of life."

Sophie: "Things change, babe. Besides, judging from your friends, I fit in right perfectly."

Bianca: "Yoh, Sophie, what do you think we should do?"

Sonto: (shocked) "I'm the one who decides what we do around here!"

Rachel: "Sit the fuck down, Sonto. Sophie had much better ideas and perspective than you. Besides, she asks for our opinions and values our input unlike you."

Bianca: "Sophie? What now?"

Sophie: "I say we surrender him to mob justice. Let them beat him to death."

Sonto: (shocked) "We don't kill the men around here. They are the ones who bring in the money."

Sophie: "You call a thing like that a man? He raped his own child and drove her to suicide. Tell me, would you let him go scott free? Bianca? Rachel?"

They both shook their heads. These traitors!

Sophie: "If I didn't know better I'd say Sonto is in favour of rapists."

Bianca: (angered) "Well, are you Sonto?"

Sonto: (sigh) "Of course not."

Rachel: "I say let's do it. I'm all in. Sophie can take Coin's share in the business. It's high time we get the firm hand of a woman in this business, ladies. What do you say?"

Fuck this! Sophie waltzes into our club and already she gets a stake in this business?! We all had to grovel and work hard for a mere 1% share in this business! I need to find out what her plan is and

who is behind her new and sudden look!

Chapter Twenty Three

2 Corinthians 1:3 - "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

Thato

Life is truly something else, you know. The one minute everything could seem so okay, and then in an instant everything can change, all because of a person feeling too overwhelmed to speak. I feel sorry for Soks, but in a way he is partly to blame for this. A life lost at the tender age of 18. How cruel is this life? We waited in agony and suspense in the waiting room. We hardly said a word to each other,

while poor Kg was alternating his attention between Soks and I.

Kg: "I'm going to get us all something to drink so long."

I nodded as he left while Soks barely said anything.

Soks: "It's all my fault, Thato. I'm a horrible guy, I've never been a good boyfriend to her. You know, the first time I saw her, I noticed her killer body, her beautiful chocolate skin. But the one thing that made me fall for her was her loud and care free personality. I grew up in a very strict household. My father would beat my mother to a pulp every evening after coming home drunk.

I'd wake up along with my siblings and me being the oldest, I saw everything from a very young age. He would find my mother had finished cooking and the

poor woman was reading her Bible most of the time, at times he'd find her sleeping. He would kick the door wide open and demand sex from her. We lived in a one roomed shack, Thato. Can you imagine that? A whole father wanting sex right in front of his children. She'd beg him to stop and plead with him, but he'd beat her up so badly.

I intervened as it got worse and he'd beat me up too. He stepped on my manhood when I was 12, and he looked me straight in the eyes and said to me "Akere o monna wena nou? O gafisa ke go mela marete! I'll show you what real men do! (You're a man now, aren't you? Your ability to grow balls has gone to your head)!" He tore my poor mother's clothes apart as she begged for his mercy.

I was in so much pain, that I tried to fight him off her with the little power I had left in me, but he pushed me off him so hard, my arm broke. The physical pain I was in was nothing compared to the

psychological trauma he engraved into my head. My mother was hopeless and he rammed into her like she was an animal. From that day onwards, he would have his way with our mother right in front of us.

Until one day, I decided I had had enough. At the age of 16, I started working for Romeo. I helped him build this empire, I mean yes, drugs kill the youth, but what else was I to do? I couldn't endure another moment of suffering. My mother's beauty had faded along with her faith in God at that time, all because of a useless man I called my father.

I had made enough money to be able to get my mother and sisters out of that house. I took them to a neighbour's house for a brief visit and waited for my father to come back home. I had already poured petrol all over the shack. I wanted nothing to be left in it, and I wanted the whole place gone, along with the bitter memories thereof. He came home and

found me sitting on one of the chairs in our small man-made kitchen.

He barged in and started yelling at me and insulting me as usual. When I just stared him in the eyes, he tried to raise his fist at me, but I blocked it and threw him down. I opened the door and stood outside. I lit my lighter and looked at him for the last time. The bastard even had the nerve to laugh at me. I still remember his final words to me. He said "You'll never be better than me, you'll just end up being an even worse version of me." I knew then I wouldn't regret the decision I made that night.

I threw the lighter into the shack and watched him burn to death. I literally stared at him as the flames grabbed his entire body, and I saw him take his last breath. He was the mighty cobra, the terrorizer of the community. If you dared tell him shit he'd cut your throat off. Everyone was so happy that I burnt him to death, that when the police came to

investigate, they all said that he slept with the candle on while drunk.

From that day on everyone knew Soks, they respected me. I made sure that crime was a thing of the past and that women were protected in our neighbourhood. I'm probably the biggest hypocrite, here I am Soks the protector of women and children, meanwhile I work for the biggest drug lord in Rockville. My mother named me Solomon, just like the one in the Bible.

My mother believed I was destined for greatness, but I hated that name. So, I called myself Soks, Since I used to love Happy Socks in school. My mother would be so ashamed of me right now. I treat my sisters along with my mother like gold, yet here I was treating Palesa like complete shit.”

Shit, now I feel like trash. I should never have judged Soks like that. We both found ourselves in tears.

Now I know why Kg never spoke badly about him and never rejected him. This is such a painful story, I don't even know what to say. Parents have such a bad way of damaging us at times. Soks is beyond damaged.

Thato: "It will be okay, Soks. She'll make it. Then you can make it up to her, to yourself as well. God gives second chances."

Kg came back and gave us some coldrink.

Thato: "Thank you, babe."

He kissed my forehead. We then heard a lot of noise coming through.

Anelisa: (shouting) "Where is she?! Uphi umtnwanami (where's my child)?!"

She was about to jump at Soks, but he held her by her throat. Shuu, that escalated pretty fast.

Kg: "Soks, let her be."

Soks: (bewildered) "O nagana gore o mang wena (Who do you think you are), Anelisa?!"

Kg: (calmly) "Not here, Soks. Mo tlogele (Leave her)."

He roughly let her go as she dropped to the ground coughing. She went mute all of a sudden. I can't even look at her, she revolts me. The doctor came out looking really drained.

Doctor: "Palesa Lekgau's family?"

We all stood up and stared at him. I tried to read his face and search for some hope, but he looked down and took a deep sigh. I knew then that it was over.

Doctor: "I'm sorry, she didn't make it."

I felt myself collapse into Kg's arms, while Anelisa was screaming and throwing a tantrum on the floor. Soks buried his head in his arms and just let out a loud wail. This is it, my best friend is gone - forever.

We went back to the guest house and immediately packed our bags. We couldn't even stay another moment in there knowing that our friend took her own life in one of those rooms. Soks looked at the spot where Palesa lied for the very last time before we left. We got into the car immediately and Soks lay in the backseat. Kg drove us back home, at 3am in the morning. My poor man, this weekend was

supposed to be all about fun and little did I know it would be the last time we even see Palesa. Upon approaching Rockville, we found a whole mob of people burning tires and holding weapons. It looks like they're teaching someone a very hard lesson. Kg opened the window and asked one of the people what was happening.

Kg: "Ekse (Hi), go vayang (What's happening)?"

Guy: "Ah, community e trapa Bra Coin (The community is beating up Mr. Coin)."

I wish Kg hadn't opened the window, because as soon as he said that, Soks quickly got out of the car.

Thato: "Kg, go after him!"

Kg got out of the car while I peeped out of the

window. As soon as Soks walked through the crowd, they paved the way for him. That's how scared they are of him. Coin was on his knees, with a tyre around his neck, with a bleeding lip and one half closed eye and his hands tied behind his back. He looked really bruised, everywhere.

I then got the shock of my life as I saw Bianca, Rachel, Sonto and Mmane (Aunt) Sophie standing around him. Sophie looks like the head of the gang with a lighter in her hand. She looks so different, with a whole new wardrobe set that screams expensive. Where she even got the money, who knows? I then saw Romeo, Bianca's husband Paper and Rachel's husband Quatro also standing around him. Ja neh, so this is what they meant when they called themselves the Rockville 8. My question is what on earth is Sophie doing there?

I saw the crowd chanting until Sophie stopped them and started speaking.

Sophie: "My fellow people, as you can see, we are here to punish one of the evil community members. This man has ruined his daughter's life. He raped her at the knowledge and presence of his wife. He even impregnated her, bagaetsho (my people). We, the Rockvill Divas are showing you that we don't tolerate abuse in any way, shape or form. Now, let's deal with him."

Funny enough she abused me get she's acting all holy over there. The crowd cheered and while she was trying to speak, Soks took out his lighter and set Coin on fire. He looked at him and then gave them all a look while he was screaming in agony and left. Kg came back to the car and drove us to his place. I don't know what Sophie's plan is, but I know she's not one to be trusted.

Chapter Twenty Four

Psalm 18:2 - "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and

my deliverer; my God is my rock in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”

A few weeks later

Thato

It's been a really stressful few weeks. After Palesa's death, everything felt like it's going downhill. Coin was burnt to death, and Anelisa apparently got into a car accident. She drove her Audi RS8 while drunk and now she's wheelchair bound. She's no longer part of the Rockville Divas, thanks to Sophie. Speaking of Sophie, she's just taken over her new reign as the Queen of the Divas.

She even has a driver that drives her around like she's the queen of England. She's forever dripping in labeled clothes, especially Prada and Dior, not even

Sonto dresses like that. We all have no idea who her supplier is, but it must be someone very rich. Had it been anyone from Rockville, we would know by now. It's so bad that every time I tutor Tumisho, Sonto makes sure she's there just to ask me about Sophie's whereabouts and plans.

I mean, she suddenly is acting all nice towards me now and she's really annoying me. I can't even pretend anymore. I always make sure I hurry out or find an excuse not to mingle with them because wow, that lady can pretend. It seems as if she no longer holds any power over the Divas, which is frustrating her even more.

Soks has gone away ever since Palesa's death. Thanks to Kg, he agreed to finally get help. I'm super proud of him for admitting his problem and for seeking help. I can't imagine how he would have turned out if he hadn't seeked help. Apparently he was sleeping with both Sophie and Sonto, can you

imagine that? I just hope that Romeo doesn't find out, or else she will reap what she has sown, and knowing Romeo, he'll most definitely leave her with nothing.

I on the other hand struggled to sleep for days after the whole Palesa incident. I kept having nightmares until Kg booked me an appointment with a therapist. Ive been a bit better ever since and shame, he really tries. He still gets up with me at night to ensure I study hard for my final exams and I've already started with my first paper. I love the way he loves me and I can honestly say I am truly blessed.

We just went to get some Burger King. I've been craving it for some odd reason and believe me when I say I'm not much of a beef fan. Even Kg is so surprised, but he figured it must be PMS or something. My boobs have enlarged a bit and are tingly and sore, which is a sign of PMS. It's a real bitch if you ask me, but such is life. As we were

about to enter the gate so that Kg could park his car, we saw a familiar car driving out of the yard. That's Sophie's driver! What on earth is she doing coming out of Kg's house alone at 9pm? I looked at Kg and he dismissed me immediately.

Kg: "Aowa (No), baby. No gossiping, remember?"

Thato: "But aren't you even a little curious?"

Kg: "Niks, baby. The only way I managed to stay alive and healthy until the age of 26 is by minding my own business. Take it from me, etswa mo tsona (leave it)."

I guess he's right, but I mean I'm just a bit curious, that's all. Maybe I am a bit nosy. I need to work on that.

Sophie

Oh, life is so good now that I'm literally the new Queen Diva. I've even devised a new business plan with Soks gone now. These puppets all answer to me, even their useless husbands. I have managed to get them more stock and make them more profit than they've ever made in their whole entire existence. Imagine moving from making R100 000 a month to making R400 000 a month! That's a 300% difference. I have no idea what Stupid Sonto has been doing all this time, but I'm being worshipped now. It's only a matter of time I reclaim my spot as Romeo's wife and then I'll clean him out. He'll learn his lesson and regret the day he made me lie about my pregnancy. After a very short round as usual, I lay on Romeo's bare chest. I so miss Soks, man.

Romeo: "Sophie, I hope now that you are making enough money you have decided to stay away from Thato. She's happy and she's about to be my

daughter-in-law.”

Sophie: (puzzled) ”Eng (What)?! Are you saying Kg is planning on paying lobola for Thato?!”

Romeo: ”Yes and I fully support it. I swear, Sophie, if you dare pull that job I'll make sure you regret it.”

Mxm, this man. He thinks he owns me, I'm a Rockville Diva now.

Sophie: ”Romeo bathong (goodness), I swear I let that go. Thato can keep her little million, I have an empire to run.”

Romeo: (chuckling) ”You mean my empire.”

Oho, he doesn't know me this one, I have bigger

plans and I'm way ahead of him. I said my goodbyes and headed out. I saw Kg and Thato waiting in front of the gate as I drove out, but she knows better than to spill the beans. I'd make sure she lives to regret it.

Sonto

Life has been almost unberable ever since Sophie decided to be the new me. I can't stand her even more now. I mean who does she think she is? I've tried to get information from that bitch Thato, but she's not budging. I decided to do my own investigation. I found out that the driver is on Romeo's payroll. I refused to believe it at first. Romeo couldn't possibly cheat on all of this for Sophie. I mean she has no ass even!

I decided to follow her around. Every Tuesday and Thursday she met up with Romeo at one of his guests houses. I felt like I was dreaming. Now I'm patiently waiting for her just outside her house. I got

the driver on my payroll now and he just notified me that Romeo and Sophie are having their little rendezvous in my house and in my bed! How could Sophie do this to me? It's high time I end it all, she's a waste of space clearly. I saw the driver drop her off at the gate and I followed her in. I pointed the gun to her back, just as she was about to open the gate. The stupid bitch isn't even observant.

Sonto: (pointing gun) "Hi, Sophie."

Sophie: (alarmed) "Sonto! Why the fuck would you scare me like that?!"

Sonto: "Keep moving or else I'll shoot you right here."

She cautiously walked into the house and I got even more stunned. Ntate Moruti Patrick was naked in the living room with Maria. What the fuck is happening in Rockville mara (though)?

Sophie: "Ag, man, Mama! Why le ira dilo tse snaaks so (Why are you doing such nasty things) in the lounge)?!"

Maria: "Ag, man le wena! You said you won't be home!"

Patrick: (rushing to get dressed) "Please, bana baka (my children). Don't tell my wife, please!"

I seriously don't have the time for this. I pointed the gun at Patrick who nearly pissed himself.

Sonto: "Shesha, mdala (Hurry up, Grandpa)! I don't have all night!"

He quickly ran out while Maria stared at me in shock.

Sonto: "And then? Umeleni wena (What are you waiting for)? Hamba nawe (You should also leave)!"

She hurried to the bedroom.

Sophie: (annoyed) "Ag, man Sonto. You can't just barge into my house and make demands and threats, man!"

Sonto: "Point of correction, this is Thato's house. You don't have a home, remember?"

Sophie: (annoyed) "Listen here, bitch. Tell me what it is you came here for so that you could get the fuck out of my face. I'm tired and I'd like to sleep."

Sonto: "Oho, so you decide to fuck my man and now you want to take over my life?! Who do you think

you are, Sophie?"

Sophie: "I'm Sophie Maake, and yes, your dumb ass took so long to notice that I was fucking your useless husband. Newsflash, bitch, Kagiso is also his child."

What the fuck is Sophie playing at? Rhat can't be. I had my eyes wide open, trying to digest her bombshell.

Sophie: "Yebo (Yes), she's his blood, so you snooze you lose, sweetie."

Sonto: (bewildered) "So this was your plan all along, huh?!"

Sophie: "Oh, yes. And if you try to do anything, Romeo will know about your past. I'll also blurt out

what you did to Kg's mom. Yes, I own you now, Nomasonto. Game over, bitch!"

I stood there looking at her and all my rage surfaced. This bitch played me, and either way she's going to end up telling Romeo about my past in any case. I'm going to lose it all in the end, so I might as well face the music. I'll make sure she regrets everything she had done to me in a heartbeat. Killing her now would be a total waste and too lenient. I didn't think twice, I pulled the gun and pointed it at her. This time she saw that I wasn't joking.

Sophie: (panicky) "Sonto, man. I was playing. Let's talk about this, please!"

I shot her in the abdomen and in the thigh. She screamed out in pain and Maria stormed out of her room.

Maria: (shocked) "Wa gafa (Are you crazy), Sonto?!
O tla mpolayela ngwana (You'll kill my only child)!"

Sonto: (pointing gun at Maria) "If you dare tell
anyone about this, I'll come back to finish the both of
you."

I stormed out and got into my car and drove off. It's
high time I come up with a plan to end her and
Romeo once and for all. I'm no soccer ball and no
one will play me.

Chapter Twenty Five

1 Peter 2:1-2 - "Therefore, putting aside all malice
and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,
like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the
word, so that by it you may grow in respect to
salvation."

One Month Later

Thato

Life had been getting there, I even got accepted at Wits and Kg has already signed a lease for the new building he's going to use as his company premises. I'm so excited and so is he. As soon as he pays my lobola for me as we discussed, we're moving to Johannesburg. I wrote my last paper today, and although I've been feeling pretty fatigued and worn out, I am happy I'm done with my matric.

I haven't seen Sophie in a while and apparently she got shot that night we saw her leaving Romeo's house. Sonto shot her, I mean wow. I'd most probably also have done the same, having my so called friend sleep with my husband and replace me. I've been seeing more of Sophie and Kagiso here and honestly, I just wish I could get rid of them. It feels like they'll always be following me. Kg isn't even the least bothered, even after finding out that Kagiso is

actually his sister.

I think Sophie expected first class treatment, but seems like things have taken a turn for the worst for her. Romeo is hardly home and Kagiso has to take care of her and dress her wounds. I might have the chance to get them out of my house and be at peace. They can't be living in my house while hating me, though.

I've been so stressed lately that I even gained some weight. A few of my jeans are a bit tighter now, my breasts are still fuller and my face is a bit swollen. Perhaps I need to see a doctor, but I'm honestly so tired today. Kg would like us to go celebrate with a proper outing and I really don't feel like it.

I never say no to shopping, but wow this time I'm really not in the mood at all. Kg has been trying to get me out of bed since 9am, but I'm still tired as fuck and it's 12pm now. He stopped trying at about

10am ans I honestly thought I'd be feeling much better and energized after sleeping for so long, but I'm actually worse.

Kg: "Baby, tsoga (wake up)."

I reluctantly dragged myself out of the bed and headed to the bathroom, but he followed me. Ai, I paid no mind. Just as I was about to pee, he stopped me and pulled out a pregnancy test. What the hell?

Thato: (irritated) "What is this, Kg? Please don't tell me you actually want me to take a pregnancy test."

Kg: (looking down) "TT, I'm actually surprised you haven't noticed."

Thato: (frowning) "Heh (Huh)?"

Kg: "All your cravings, your mood swings, sleeping a lot, fatigue, the weight gain and large breasts, even the swollen face? You didn't even notice that you haven't had your period in over a month now."

I stared at him and started processing what he said to me and then it hit me. Oh, fuck! I widened my eyes and felt my heart race at a faster pace.

Thato: (worried) "Kg..."

Kg: (sigh) "Look, baby. I know we didn't plan this, but it has happened. You're done with school and we were going to get married anyway, so I'd like to pay Lobola next month instead of January. Why wait?"

I felt a bit dizzy and sat down on the toilet seat. Fuck, I'm not ready for a baby! When did this even happen? I mean I've been using my patch

consistently. Then I remembered the weekend after Palesa passed on. I was a mess and I think I forgot to put it on on time. Oh, shit, this can't be happening to me. I felt the tears stream down my face involuntarily.

Kg: (worried) "Hey, Baby, look at me, please. I know this comes at a shock, but know I'm not going anywhere. Unless you have doubts about us?"

Thato: "Of course not, Kg. I'm just so surprised and scared. You don't even know for sure if I'm pregnant or not."

Kg: "Thato, you're my world. Allow me to carry your fear so you won't have to be scared. You are my future, please allow God's will to happen. And I know you're pregnant, I can feel it. Just take the test, please."

I took a deep breath and decided to pee on the stick. Kg is so weird he's sitting there watching me do it. This guy. I put it on the basin and washed my hands then sat back on the toilet seat. He kneeled down before me and held my hands.

Kg: "Thato Maake, I know we never planned this baby, and I can assure you that I never intended on ruining your future. I love you so much, baby and I'm willing to do anything for you. I know you're scared, but please don't think of even killing our child."

I saw the glistening tears in his eyes. Oh, wow, does Kg really think I have it in me to abort a growing baby inside of me?

Thato: "Kg, I'd never do that to you - to us. I'm just in shock and scared, but know that I trust you. Your family will think that I trapped your or something."

Kg: (chuckling) "A man's job is to protect his wife's peace. If they think so then they're better off without us in their lives. I choose you and I'd choose you over and over again."

I gave him a hug and I could honestly feel that Kg was being genuine. Kg would never leave me, well, hopefully. He took a look at the test since I was dreading it. I saw him become ecstatic immediately.

Kg: (overjoyed) "We're going to be parents, baby!"

He hugged me and spun me around. Shit, I was secretly hoping that it would be negative, but I guess God blesses in mysterious ways.

Kg: "I love you, TT. I promise, I won't let you down."

I trust Kg and I decided on that day that I would trust

him no matter what.

A few weeks later

So, we went to the gynae and indeed it was confirmed that I am indeed pregnant. I'm about 9 weeks pregnant now and already Kg is treating me like an egg. We haven't told anyone about the pregnancy, as I didn't want people to get the wrong idea about our reason for getting married.

Kg proposed the following day, as always he surprised me and bought me a beautiful sapphire diamond ring. He keeps checking on me every five minutes and has already started buying a few baby clothes. He just can't contain himself. I love what he's doing although morning sickness is dealing with me heavily.

Today is the 12th of December and since Kg sent

out the letter to Sonto and Maria a week after we found out about my pregnancy, he wanted us to get married before I show. I don't even want to have a white wedding, we can do that later. Of course, Maria and Sophie were so happy, since they just want to milk the Moloji's. Kg's royal family is supposedly coming today and although I'm supposed to be at my house, I decided to do things differently.

I'm leaving with Kg and his father all the way to my house. I don't trust Sophie and Maria and I don't trust Kagiso either. They might know I'm pregnant and try to do something to my baby because we all know that deep down they don't like me. I got into my setswana attire and gosh, how I wish both Mama and Palesa were here today. I know Palesa would be super happy and would have probably been drinking by now, telling me to stop stressing. I lost my best friend, but I know I carry her spirit with me everywhere I go. Kg came down dressed in his gorgeous suit. He has to look respectable.

Kg: "Are you ready to go, Mma (Mrs) Moloi?"

Thato: (smiling) "Sure. I can't wait for this day to end. My feet are already killing me."

Kg: "I promise I'll give you a lifetime of massages after this."

We smiled and headed out. Romeo asked to drive his own car so Kg and I got into his. We spoke about how life will be aftwr this day, and I said a short prayer. We barely even drove out and made it to the next robot. The next thing I saw was a VW Golf ramming into Kg's side and he was instantly unconscious. The screeching sound of the tyres and the loud bang of the metal paralyzed me with instant fear and shock, that I felt a sudden pain in my stomach.

I looked over at Kg and he was all full of blood with his head on the steering wheel. I panicked and tried to wake up, but he didn't respond. I was still shaken, as I tried to open the door, my hand got cut by a few glass pieces from the windscreen. I looked over to his side and I was met with horror.

Two guys approached our car wearing balaclavas. I heard a car driving towards us and I suppose that's Romeo. One of the two guys started shooting at Romeo, while the other one opened my door and pointed his gun at me.

Thug 1: "Ekse (Hey)! Phuma wena voetsek (Get the fuck out of the car)!"

I slowly tried, but my legs failed me.

Thato: (scared) "Please... Please don't hurt me..."

Thug 1: "Eh, man wena, princess fiona! I didn't come here to play! Ngi se spaneng (I'm at work)!"

Thug 2: "Hey, man, just drag the bitch out! The cops must be coming!"

I tried to beg the guy to reason, but he didn't listen. He dragged me out forcefully, while dragging me on the tar road. I could feel the road scratching my legs and digging into my skin.

Thato: "Please... I'm pregnant!"

Thug 1: "Eh, man fok (fuck)! Ngi se spaneng wena (I'm on the job)!"

They threw me into the boot and I tried to fight him once I realized that this was actually a kidnapping.

Thato: (screaming) "Thusang (Help me)!"

The guy hit me with his gun on my forehead and I saw darkness.

Chapter Twenty Six

Psalm 38:19 - "But my enemies are vigorous and strong,

And many are those who hate me wrongfully."

Deuteronomy 24:16 - "Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin."

Thato

I saw my mother dressed in white, standing in front

of a beautiful lake, calling my name.

Petunia: "Thato, ngwanaka tsoga (My child wake up)."

I slowly woke up and saw her.

Thato: (teary) "Mama..."

Petunia: (smiling) "It's me, my baby. Listen, forgive me for never telling you the truth."

Thato: "What truth, Mama? I know you're not my biological mother. I forgive you and thank you for seeing me worthy enough to be your daughter."

Petunia: (shaking head) "No, my child. Your mother, she's an evil woman. She was hurt by a man she

deeply loved - your father. She'll explain everything to you. Please, Thato, know that from now on life is going to be tough until it gets better. You're going to endure hardships, but it will all be worth it. Such is life, ngwanaka (my child). Keep praying and you'll meet your husband again, and you'll get to find out the real truth about what happened to your father."

Thato: "O ra bjang, Mama (What do you mean)?"

Petunia: "Don't forget to pray."

She faded away, and I felt cold water being splashed on me. I gasped for air and opened my eyes. I found myself tied to a chair in a very filthy room, reeking of dirt.

Thug 1: "Vuka, nja (Wake up, dog)."

Oh, no. Mama, it was all just a dream. I felt my tears build up again as I remember what happened. My head hurts like hell. Oh, no, Kg! What happened to him? Did they kill my Kg? My baby.

Thug 2: "Ai, nawe Sporo. Wa m'shaya nge ntshiza vele (Did you have to hit her with your gun, though)? Bona untswembu njani (Look how gorgeous she is). I can most definitely see myself on top of her."

Thug 1: "I bet her pussy is white as fuck."

Thug 2: "Glow in the dark."

The both laughed as I burst into tears.

Thug 2: Mxm, ah uyabona ke manje (You see now). Boss Lady never said anything about babysitting. Mina I don't want this man, fok (Fuck)!"

I then heard a familiar voice approach us. Oh, no!
Sonto!

Sonto: "Now, now, boys. Settle down. this isn't a joke, man. Ni busy nina niyadlala lana (You're busy playing here)!"

I looked at her and she's still dressed in expensive clothes, but her beauty has faded and she even has darker skin. Her skin no longer had that glow, what the hell happened? Where has she been? And why is she holding me hostage?

Sonto: "I sent you your payment. Now leave, I'll call you if I need you."

Thug 1: "Sho sho."

Thug 2: "Hola."

Sonto: (smiling) "Hello, Thato. We meet again. Well, I'm sorry for the circumstances, but am I really sorry? Nah, not sorry."

She let out a disgusting laugh and I saw a few of her teeth missing. Oh, God, what did I ever do to this woman?

Sonto: "I'm sure you have a million questions going through your mind. Like why are you even here? Why do I hate you so badly, correct?"

I didn't even have the strength to answer her.

Sonto: "It's alright. I'll tell you anyway. Do you remember that day you first came to the house and you gobbled all my delicious food? How Raymond

would keep referring to your birthmark? Well, dear Thato, I'm sorry to break it to you, but you're my daughter."

What? Is this some kind of joke? I stared at her in astonishment.

Sonto: "I know, right? I mean imagine me giving birth to a hideous curse like you. You ruined my life, man."

Thato: (teary) "But... You're...."

Sonto: "Dark? I know, hey. Well, your mother fucking cheating father is or was white. I don't know where the fucker is. Yes, he cheated on me and left me for a white woman. I was an embarrassment to my own family, Thato. I couldn't even look them in the eye. When I told my mom I was pregnant, she immediately threw me out. I had to build my own

shack because of you.

When I told that white fuck that I was pregnant, he dumped me. I mean who dumps Sonto, though? Anyway, he dumped me and I was stuck with you. Of course, Sophie thought it would be the perfect plan to get rid of you, but I had faith. Until you were born. You came out and were the spitting image of your father. I couldn't bear to even look at you. It was bad enough I pushed you out of my body.

So, I thought long and hard about what to do with you. I couldn't dump you just anywhere because everyone knew that I had just given birth. So, I came up with a brilliant plan, I put you on the mattress in my shack and set the shack on fire. I went out to drown my sins and when I came back the next morning, I found people had already put out the fire. I was pleased knowing they didn't see any baby. As I was about to Leave, I heard a loud cry.

I couldn't believe it when I removed all the metal and rubble, you were right there. The only part that was damaged and burnt on you was a part of your back and bum. That's it. It was a miracle, sure, but God surely made a mistake when he gave me you. So, I decided to hike all the way to Rockville. I put you into a rice plastic bag and as soon as I got to the dumping site, I threw you in one of the bins and I left.”

She spoke about dumping me like it's such a normal thing to do. She was even smoking and staring at me in disgust. I'm so hurt, I can't even describe my emotions. How can a mother even hate her own offspring like this?

Thato: “Why do you hate me so much, Sonto? What did I ever do to you?”

Sonto: “Haven't you been listening to a word I've just said? For a top achiever you're actually quite slow.

Don't you get it? I hate you, I'll always hate you. You make me sick and I curse the day I birthed you.”

Her words cut deep, I won't lie, but I'm so used to such words than Kg's love for me took all the pain and insecurities away.

Thato: “Then why didn't you just tell me and let me be? Why did you have to hurt Kg and kidnap me on my wedding day?”

Sonto: (chuckling) “The world owes you nothing, sweetheart. This was all Sophie's plan, she had planned it all out before she started fucking with my husband. Well, Romeo begged her not to do it, so I decided to go ahead with it and pin it on her. She has to suffer for stealing my perfect life.”

Thato: (crying) “Please, let me go... I promise, I won't tell anyone.”

Sonto: (laughing) "You're so funny, boo, really. Besides, Kg is gone and you're going to give me your R1 million. I'm a bit low on cash as you can see and you're my only way out."

I honestly don't care about money right now, all I want is just to get out of here and be with my Kg. I don't need this drama in my life. How do I even explain this to people? My own mother kidnapped me and stole money from me?

Thato: "Look, Sonto, you can have it all, just please let me go."

Sonto: "I want you to suffer first, to feel what I felt all those years. I want you to always remember this day. It's a pity I ruined your beautiful day, shame. You should have seen the whole setup, the cake and even the surprise poor Kg had for you. He bought

you a car, I mean really? I give birth to you and you live a better life than me? Wow, honey, you're too good."

She was just rubbing salt to the wound, actually. How can she torture me like this? I've always felt that Sonto is evil, but this, this just takes the cake.

Sonto: "I'll leave you to think about your new life while I wait for my IT guy. The nice life Kg had given you is a thing of the past. Now that you're going to be introduced to the real world, you'll know how to stand on your own two feet, just like I did."

I felt myself burst into tears.

Thato: "You're so evil, Sonto! I wish nothing but a painful death upon you!"

Sonto: "That's alright, love. In the end we're all going to die. I'll see you a bit later. Bye."

Sonto left me screaming and shouting there on the chair. I tried my utmost best to wiggle out of the chair, but I failed. As I tried to jump towards the door, I fell to the side while tied to the chair. This is the worst that could ever happen to me.

I must have dozed off because I got woke up by Sonto splashing cold water on my face yet again. She pulled my chair up and I winced out in pain. My whole body is stiff and my abdomen feeld like it's on fire.

Sonto: (sigh) "It was pointless of you to try and run, you know. Look now, you've caused yourself unnecessary pain and discomfort."

Thato: "Please, Sonto, let me go. I'll give you the

money. Just please, think of me, think of my baby. You still have some good in you.”

I blurted out and I regret it.

Sonto: (wide eyed) “Did you just say, baby?”

I kept quiet and immediately regretted my choice of words.

Sonto: “Well, we can't let you have that baby, now can we? I mean I'm not ready to be a grandmother and besides, why would I let you pollute this earth any further by giving birth to more of my offspring?”

I felt like I was in a dream. Is Sonto really serious? What the fuck is she trying to do to me?

Chapter Twenty Seven

Isaiah 41:10 - "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Thato

Petunia: "Thato, my baby, tsoga hle (wake up). Wake up and pray."

Thato: "Mama, I can't. A ke na matla (I have no strength)."

Petunia: "Rapela (Pray), Thato. You have a destiny to fulfill. Now is not the time to give up."

I felt cold water being splashed on my face yet again as I gasped for air. My body is so weak, my spirit is

numb. I'm so dehydrated that I can't even think straight anymore. I must have even pissed myself since I've been tied onto this chair probably for two days now. I don't even know which day it is or if Kg is even alive. How does one even go about praying when you're staring death in the face? I looked up and saw Sonto standing before me with an unknown tall guy, holding a laptop in his hands.

Sonto: "Vuka wena (Wake up). Tony, this is Thato, my dear daughter who owes me her life. Do your thing. Here's the phone."

I saw the guy sit on another chair in front of me, as Sonto took out a cigarette and lit it. I can't even cry anymore, I have no more strength in me. I've been so loyal, well, I think to God. I've stayed out of trouble and I have maintained a good relationship with Him. I have been reading my Bible and praying, going to church. Now why do I deserve to be treated like a dog? Do I deserve to be crucified for at least

trying to be a good person?

That Tony guy was busy on his laptop and I just hope and pray Sonto takes the million rand and leaves me with something. How else will I survive when I don't even have an income? I want to go study next year and my fees are already going to cost me over R50 000 for the first year. My life was so well planned out, I was going to get married to the man of my dreams and get my degree, have my baby and have my happily ever after. Now it's all gone and taken within a split second.

Why is it that all the good people always suffer? Look at Mama, she was a good person, too good for her own good, actually and she died of cancer while people like Sophie, Koko and Kagiso go around living their lives as evil people.

Tony: "The money has been transferred straight into your bank account."

Sophie: "Good. Is there any more money?"

My heart started beating at an abnormal pace as I saw the guy give me a brief stare.

Tony: "No, that's it."

I breathed a silent sigh of relief.

Sonto: (chuckling) "You didn't even bother to save any of your money, you idiot. Kg's dick was that good, huh? It's a pity, I would have loved to taste him. Thanks, Tony. I'll be in touch."

The guy nodded and looked at me with so much pity. I don't know why no one has even bothered to come look for me. Am I that unwanted?

Sonto: "Now that all the formalities are out of the way, it's time for the big task."

What is she even talking about? She walked out of the room and came back with a bowl filled with sciccors, knives and gloves. I started panicking as I saw her put on her gloves.

Thato: (panicking) "Wha... What is that?! What are you trying to do to me, Sonto?!"

Sonto: (calmly) "Relax, baby girl. I told you last night, I'm not ready to be a grandmother and you're nowhere near ready to carry my offspring."

I looked her dead in the eye hoping that she was joking, but she was dead serious. Oh, my God! She wants to remove my baby from my womb! This can't be happening, Lord, this can't be. My mind is

going crazy, and I'm frantic right now.

Thato: (terrified) "Please... Please Sonto, I'll do anything, just please, please don't do this to me, I'm begging you!"

Sonto: (chuckling) "It's amazing what people can do in a distressed situation. I mean look at you now, you acted like you were better than me and now you're begging me? You thought you could be better than me? Your own mother? I birthed you, honey, so you're just as fucked up as I am. You'll never amount to anything in life. And I can't risk that for your unborn child."

I panicked as she untied my legs. The immense pain I felt around my ankles as she untied the rope, cannot be compared to the emotional turmoil that was boiling inside of me.

Thato: (teary) "Please Sonto , please!"

She took off my underwear as I kicked her on the face. She fell to the ground and I saw her mouth bleeding. She looked at me with so much venom in her eyes.

Sonto: (angry) "You bloody bitch!"

She got up so fast and slapped me so hard, I felt my ears ringing. She called the two thugs who kidnapped me.

Sonto: "Eh, Sporo, Spilo, wozani man (Come)!"

They rushed in and saw me sitting on that chair, with my underwear off. I was completely exposed. I've never been this humiliated in my entire life.

Sporo: (staring at my vagina) "Smoko (What's the problem)?"

Sonto: "Voetsek (Piss off)! Focus on the job at hand! Wena (You) hold her arms, wena (you), hold her legs."

Does Sonto really hate me this much that she would degrade and abuse me like this?

Thato: (screaming) "Sonto, please! Please kao kopa (I'm begging you)!"

I tried wiggling my way out, but the two guys were so strong, I couldn't move. Sonto put a dirty cloth in my mouth so that I could stop screaming. She spread my legs apart. I begged and begged while screaming internally. I begged God to hear my cry and save me.

"Modimo (God), where are you?! Where are you when I need you most? Was it not you in Jeremiah 33:3 who said "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."? I'm calling upon you Lord, hear my cry and save me from this misery!"

I said an internal prayer, but my prayer was unheard. Sonto shoved her hand into my vagina painfully and inserted what seemed like pills. I cried but the tears failed to make their appearance. I screamed but my voice failed to reach my lips.

Sonto: "Done. It shouldn't take long now. Nina, Tie her onto the bed. I want her to at least be comfortable as she says goodbye to the seed inside of her."

She gave me a long look as the two thugs tied me up to the bed and lay me there. They didn't even have the decency to cover me up down there.

Sonto: "One day, you'll thank me for this."

She said that and walked out. I lay in that filthy, hard bed and wondered if God even exists? Have I been praying and worshipping someone who doesn't exist? Surely He can't exist when I'm in so much pain and when the world is filled with so much evil. I can't live like this, what else will come after this? Will she kill me? Leave me for dead? As I started thinking of all these thoughts, I felt an immense pain in my stomach.

I can't even scream or cry, I'm tied onto a bed and I'm being forced to get rid of my baby. I don't even know whether it was a girl or a boy. Kg was so excited and now, his seed is gone, being ejected from my body like a piece of shit. The pain became worse by the minute. The more pain I felt, the weaker I got. I felt myself get wet down there and I knew I was bleeding. The smell of the blood was so strong, I couldn't even

stomach it. I felt my stomach turn, but even so, I couldn't vomit because there was no food in my stomach.

I felt myself slowly fade away, while I heard my mother's faint voice.

Petunia: "Hang in there, Thato. Be strong, I'll always be with you..."

I felt my eyes become weaker and weaker.

Sonto: "It's done. Do as I told you. Throw her off and leave. Make sure no one sees you."

That was the last time I heard or saw anything in that room.

Sophie Maake

We all sat and waited for Thato to arrive at her Lobola ceremony. Everything was all set and good to go. I must be honest, all I'm excited about is the money. I've let go of her and I have tried to stop tormenting her. I don't need her money in any case. We were all waiting patiently, while I was sipping on some Dom Perignon, until a neighbour came running towards us telling us that Kg had been shot and Thato was missing.

Honestly, it was as if God's grace had finally started to make an appearance in my life. Everything was coming well together. I'd like to give myself credit for this, but it wasn't me. Romeo came speeding towards the gate and nearly bumped me over. He walked out with a bleeding arm, it seems as if he had been shot in the arm. Before I could ask anything, he grabbed me by the throat with his one hand.

Romeo: (pissed) "It was you, Sophie, wasn't it?!"

Sophie: (begging) "Aah, wa nkgama (You're choking me)!"

He let go of me roughly as I dropped to the ground while grasping for air. Everyone stared at us in shock.

Romeo: "You did this! After I begged you not to do it!"

Sophie: "I swear, Romeo, this time it wasn't me. I had nothing to do with this."

Romeo: "This was all part of your plan, wasn't it?! You thought I wouldn't find out that you were trying to take all my money from me and leave me broke?! Do you see why I never married you to begin with,

Sophie?!"

I looked at him wide-eyed. How the fuck did he find out?

Romeo: "Ja, tomola mahlo (keep widening your eyes), sefebe ke wena (you bitch)! You'd better hope and pray Kg makes it and you'd better pray that Thato gets found, or else, o nyele (you'll shit yourself)!"

He got back into his car and drove off in high speed. This has Sonto written all over it. Who does that? Who does she think she is? Does she really think Petunia died a natural death? Yes she was going to die eventually, but I couldn't let her live that long. I had to see her take her last breath and I was especially angry that she didn't even bother to leave me a single dime! If she thinks I'll let her go just like that, she has another thing coming. It is time I find her and teach her a lesson she'll never forget - even

in death!

Chapter Twenty Eight

Matthew 6:34 -"Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil."

Two weeks later

Sophie

Ever since Romeo told me shit on the day of Thato's supposed wedding day, everything has been a shitty mess. We found out that Kg was admitted into hospital and was in a comatose state. Meanwhile Thato is still missing, Romeo filed a missing person's report and even now we still have no idea where she is. Now that Romeo has completely written me off, I have to rely on my old ways again.

I'm still trying to track Sonto down and believe me when I say that I'll make her pay when I do find her. I tried telling Romeo the truth about Sonto but he didn't even give me a chance to speak. Things are so bad that Romeo just packed his stuff and left. He sold the house and took Tumisho with him. He even left with Kg, we have no idea where he went. To make matters worse, he left with all our profit.

These bitches don't even have brains. I have no idea how they even got into this business without brains. I might not have finished school, but I'm a serious hustler. Even Paper and Quarto are fucking clueless, so I have no other choice but to get an investor. We don't have enough capital to buy start up merchandise and I know just the person to help me. I walked to her house and knocked.

Mma Moruti: "Tsena (Enter)!"

I walked in and she was a bit surprised to see my new look. I hardly go to church so she's a bit shocked. She's heard a few rumours about my transformation, but this is the first time she sees me like this.

Sophie: (smiling) "Hi, Glenda. O kae (How are you)?"

Mma Moruti: "Heh! Sophie, man! (Clapping hands) O robetse le mang gore o kgone go reka Prada, ngwaneso (Who did you sleep with in order to afford Prada, babe)?"

Mxm, Glenda wa ntlwaela waitse (Is really full of shit, you know).

Sophie: (chuckling) "Heh, Glenda. A se wena o ka bolelang masepao (You out of all people can't say such shit to me)."

I saw her expression change immediately.

Glenda: (angered) "How dare you come into my house, the house of the lord and talk to me like that?!"

She was shouting and ranting, throwing tantrums is really not on my menu of the day today. Patrick walked up to her and was very surprised to see me. I could see him start to shake. I love having a hold over people, especially holy people. These two don't know me. I can crush them both immediately, and make the congregation burn them both to death.

Patrick: (nervous) "Ah, Sophie. O kae (How are you)?"

Sophie: "I'm good, Ntate Moruti (Pastor), wena (you)?"

Patrick: "Ke right (I'm okay). O ka thabela tee (Would you like some tea)?"

Glenda seemed to be angered even more by Patrick's politeness.

Glenda: "Hey wena, Patrick. Tee ya masepa (Fuck tea)! Koba motho o (Chase her out)! Wa tella (She's rude)!"

I gave Patrick a look and he knew exactly what he had to do.

Patrick: "Aowa, man Glenda. A re utlwe gore o nyaka eng (Let's hear what she has to say). God never chases people away, so who are we to chase a member of our community who might be in desperate need of our help?"

Glenda was breathing heavily in frustration but kept quiet. She really lives by what people say about and think of her. She would rather die than have people think she's the rude bitch that she actually is.

Sophie: Kea leboga, Ntate (Thank you, pastor). I came here with a business proposal. I'd like to open my own business well it's actually a non-profit organization. I'd like to open a soup kitchen for all the needy people in our community, especially women and children. You see, Ntate, people like Romeo uplifted the community and now with him gone, we are all suffering. People are going hungry and they resort to crime. We can't have that."

Pastor: "Hmm, you really have something good in mind there. I like the idea, although Romeo was accused of dealing in drugs, he is still a child of the lord and he did do a lot for our people. I love it, what do you think, Love?"

Glenda: (annoyed) "Ja, I guess it's something."

Patrick: "How much do you need for this amazing project of yours?"

Now he's talking. I'm planning on going big this time, we'll have to make our own stash from now on, no more buying from suppliers. It's high time these people got to know who Sophie Maake is.

Sophie: "I won't need much, Ntate, just R100 000."

Glenda immediately flipped.

Glenda: (angry) "Eng (What)?! Over my dead body! I can't-"

I didn't even allow her to finish her sentence. I might

have stopped going to church long ago, but I do know the Bible, all thanks to my mother.

Sophie: "Luke 12:2 "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known."

They both looked at me puzzled, while Patrick looked down in shame.

Sophie: "Proverbs 11:13 says "Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered."

Glenda: "Sophie-"

I interrupted her even further.

Sophie: Ecclesiastes 12:14 - "For God will bring every

deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Luke 8:17 "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.

The Seventh Commandment says "Thou shall not commit adultery."

You see, I know of someone, a very prominent someone who's married but is having an affair. I also know his wife likes doing the same, even worse."

I saw Patrick start sweating, while Glenda was also panicking. These two don't know me at all.

Sophie: "The sixth commandment states "Thou shall

not kill". I know of a very prominent figure who killed a small boy to silence him. Shame, it's amazing what goes on behind closed doors right here in Rockville, you know.

The Eighth commandment says "Thou shall not bear false witness against your neighbour." Basically, God hates liars, and I myself am guilty of that at times.

1 John 1:9 says "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. I think it's time I confess my sin, Pastor. I need salvation."

I saw Glenda quickly have a change of heart.

Glenda: "She'll make a great community leader, don't you think, Love?"

Patrick: "Absolutely, my love."

Glenda: "Actually, I'm going to give you R200 000. What do you think, Love?"

Patrick: (smiling) "Oh, yes. I love the idea. Is that fine, Sophie?"

Sophie: (smiling) "Absolutely. You're so generous. Here are my banking details, I expect the deposit no later than today so that I can start the preparations."

Patrick: "Oh, God is working through you, Sophie."

Sophie: "Amen, Pastor, Amen! Le saleng sentle, akere (Keep well)."

With that said, I walked out and headed to Bianca's

house. It's high time I started grooming these bitches to work hard and play hard at the same time.

Thato

I heard some machines beeping, my eyes feel so heavy, the light is blinding my eyes as I try to open them. I looked around and I see another bed next to me, with people I don't even know. I saw a man in a white coat standing in front of me. I tried to speak, but my throat feels so dry.

Doctor: (shocked) "Miss! You're finally awake! Can you see me?"

I nodded.

Doctor: "Good, you can hear me. Can you tell me what your name is?"

I tried to speak but my throat is just too dry.

Thato: "Wa.... Wa... Ter..."

Doctor: "Come again, Miss?"

I pointed at the glass of water next to him and he helped me drink with a straw inside. I gulped the whole glass down and nearly choked on it. I feel like I have been dead for a while.

Thato: "Where am I?"

Doctor: "You're in hospital. You've been out of it for two weeks. When you came in here you were in a very bad state, Miss. Abortion is a choice when you do it the legal route. You almost died because of all those pills you used. I'm still amazed you didn't lose

your womb.”

Wait, what? Abortion?

Thato: (surprised) “Excuse me, doctor, abortion?”

Doctor: “You don't remember taking any abortion pills?”

Tears started streaming down my face as I recalled what happened. Sonto killed my baby. How cruel could a woman be?

Doctor: “Miss, I'm really sorry. Perhaps I'll need to inform the police if you didn't do this yourself. Do you know your name?”

Thato: “Thato, Thato Maake.”

Doctor: (shocked) "Now I remember you! I saw a picture of you on the news a few weeks ago. They reported you missing."

There's hope, maybe Kg has been looking for me.

Thato: "Has anyone come to see me perhaps?"

Doctor: "I'm afraid not, Miss. I'll look into it, don't worry. Hopefully we'll find your family."

Thato: "Where am I? I mean I'm from Rockville."

Doctor: "You were taken to Netcare Milpark Hospital, but after being stabilized and they couldn't identify you, they had to bring you here to Charlotte Maxeke Hospital. You're in Parktown, Miss. You seriously don't remember anything?"

I shook my head. I can't trust anyone anymore. Who knows who is working with Sophie now?

Doctor: "Alright then. I'll call the police right away."

Chapter Twenty Nine

John 16:33 - "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Thato

I'm so numb I can't even explain the feeling. I feel like a dark cloud has suddenly come over me. I don't even have my phone, ID or anything on me. Where will I even begin? How will I even go home? Do I even still have a home? I have to go back to being abused in my own house, miserable and broke. I

can't be subjected to that life again, I can't.

My life has changed, but my fate probably hasn't. I will find a way to get my own place and register for my course next year. I can't afford to live in res, as I have about R180 000 or so in my account and that won't last me for more than a year. If I have to get my own place and study material, I have to get a job too. This is going to be tough, but I have to do it. The doctor disturbs me from my thoughts as he walked in with the police.

Doctor: "Thato, the police are here. They'd like to have a word with you."

I nodded.

Doctor: "Please be brief, my patient has to get some rest."

Policeman 1: "Don't worry, we won't take much of her time. Ms. Maake, my name is Detective Matjeke, and this my partner Luitenant Xaba. Can you remember what happened to you before you were found?"

I looked down as I thought long and hard by my answers. I'm afraid to disclose anything, but I'd rather risk half of the truth.

Matjeke: "Miss Maake, we really don't have all day."

He's so insensitive for a police officer. What happened to doing your job with a passion?

Xaba: "Wait, man Matjeke. You'll scare her off. That's not how it works, not how we work. Step aside."

That Matjeke dude clicked his tongue and stepped aside. I got irritated immediately. I've always heard stories about the ill-treatment of the police, but I never thought I'd actually be at the receiving end.

Xaba: "Forgive my partner, Miss. Please tell me anything you remember before you were found."

I sunk on the bed and took a deep breath and sighed.

Thato: "It was supposed to be my wedding day. My fiancée and I were in the car and drove out to my family. We didn't even get to my house when a golf 6 rammed into us. They hit the driver's side and my fiancée instantly got knocked unconscious. These two guys came towards me with guns. They demanded that I walk out, but I was in pain. I begged them to leave me, but they took me with them. They dragged me out of our car and into the boot. They hit me with a gun and I woke up tied onto

a chair.”

He was jotting things down while Matjeke looked annoyed. The doctor was standing there feeling sorry for me as I wept and wiped my tears away.

Xaba: “Okay, did they tell you why they took you with?”

Thato: “No, they took my money, R1 million from my late mother's life insurance policy. They... They put an abortion pill inside of me when I told them I'm pregnant and I don't remember anything else.”

I lied because I'm actually terrified of Sonto. Who knows where she might be and who she's scheming with now? Although I do recall those two guys dumping me in some field and they took my diamond necklace and diamond ring. I don't even know how greedy people can be.

Xaba: "Hmm, you said you're from Soweto?"

Thato: "Yes, Rockville."

Xaba: "What was your fiance's name?"

Was? Why is he referring to him like he's dead?

Thato: "His name is Kgaugelo Moloji, the son of Romeo Moloji."

As soon as I said that they both looked at each other. That's a sign of bad news, right? What do they know that I don't?

Xaba: "Uh, Miss Maake. I'm sorry, but Romeo and Kgaugelo Moloji left a week after you were reported

missing. Police within your area investigating this matter were sent there and he had already sold the house. He took off with both his sons and they're nowhere to be found.”

I felt like I was stabbed in the gut. Why on earth would Romeo take off with Kg? But that surely means that Kg is alive, right? I mean, he has to be. There's still hope, but why didn't Romeo come and look for me? But I can't expect much from him. He owes me nothing and we're not related. He's always wanted Kg to agree with his way of doing things, so maybe they went to start afresh somewhere. I don't know how I'll manage without Kg in my life, but I'll have to try and hope that I find him soon.

Xaba told me they found me in Braam, imagine. Those guys really drove a while with me. I gave him descriptions of the two guys and the left with his rude partner. They promised to keep in touch but knowing the police that's just another empty

promise on their list of many.

Doctor: "Is there perhaps anyone you might want to call?"

I don't even have a phone. Palesa is gone, I have no mother, perhaps I can try Kg's number. The doctor gave me his phone as I dialed Kg's number. I still know it off by heart. I got the most heart-wrenching message no one wants to hear. "The number you have dialed does not exist, please check the number and dial again."

I dialed two or three more times and felt my heart drop right into the pit of my stomach. This can't be happening. Tears rolled down my face, whenever you're angry or heartbroken, you literally feel a huge lump in your throat as well as this really tightening pain in your abdomen. Your tears feel extra hot and extra salty, like they're digging right into your skin just to remind you how fresh the wound is.

The doctor just looked at me with such pity.

Doctor: "Look, I don't know what you went through, but I can refer you to some psychologists, free of charge."

I felt like I was in a really bad dream and it was replaying every minute.

Doctor: "I hate to be the bearer of sad news, but I have to discharge you today. We need this bed for someone who's in desperate need of it."

I felt myself cry even harder. I don't have a phone nor money on me and now I have to go back home. I don't even know Jo'burg and my wounds haven't even healed yet. I could see the poor man looking at me.

Doctor: "Look, I can drop you off at the taxi rank and give you some money to go back home. Promise me you'll take care of yourself."

Thato: "Why are you being so nice to me?"

Doctor: "Because I have seen a few girls in your situation, who've been victims to foreign men and drugs. Prostitution isn't the way out, but I understand your situation."

I looked at him puzzled. Does he actually think I'm a prostitute?

Doctor: "It's okay, I'm not judging you. Although I can offer you some assistance and refer you to places that help you heal and get a head start towards a new life. You can get dressed so long, I'll drive you there during lunch."

I don't know if I should be offended or if God is trying to be funny. I got dressed slowly in the ripped clothes I was found in. My body is still in so much pain, and I have a few bruises left on my legs and thighs. I can't hide them since I'm wearing a traditional dress, but I can't expect royalty coming straight from the hospital. I waited for the doctor to come and as promised he did come.

Doctor: "We can go."

I slowly got up and he wasn't even impatient with me at all while I walked very slowly alongside him. I tried walking faster, but damn the pain was just too unbearable. We finally made it to his car, a black Mercedes A-Class. He's really nice and quite straightforward. I guess that's how white people operate. He drove me to the taxi rank and upon exiting the car, he handed me R500.

Doctor: "I hope you get home safely, Thato. You're

still young and I hope and pray that you do get to go to Varsity. If you ever come back to Parktown, don't be afraid to call me.”

He's so nice, I guess God is helping me out.

Thato: “Thank you so much. I promise, I'll repay you when I come back to Jo'burg.”

Doctor: “No need. Here is my card, just in case you ever need to talk or something.”

I looked at his card, “Dr. L. Groenewald, Critical Care Specialist.” I thanked him once again and walked out. I don't know, but for some reason I feel like I'll see him again. I walked slowly and greeted the men at the rank. I asked them where we take Rockville taxis and they showed me where to go. I refused to sit in the front, I mean I've been unconscious for two weeks now how on earth will I count the taxi fare of

all 15 people? The taxi ride home was painful as fuck and rather uncomfortable. I could feel every bump and hump and my bruises could feel it too. When I got to my stop I tried to walk out a bit fast even though I was still in a lot of pain. I feel so hungry, so I immediately stopped at the chesa nyama to buy myself a sphaltlo (kota) before I headed home. I kept hoping I'd see Kg or Romeo or someone, but I saw no one. Even the chesa nyama name was changed. I ordered a R10 kota and sat in one of the benches. I saw Ruth, one of Anastacia's friends along with two of her friends approach me.

Ruth: (shocked) "Hehe! Thato?! Ke wena o (Is this you)?! What happened, baby girl? Re utlwile ba re o kidnapilwe (We heard you were kidnapped)! Kgante ne e le maka or bjang (Was it all lies or what)?!"

I ignored them and took my kota and attempted to leave, but they blocked my way.

Ruth: "Aowa wena! Maybe you cheated on Kg and he showed you a lesson. Plus ke utlwile ba re (I heard that) he and his father and brother took off and left you behind. I guess the mighty Thato has fallen."

The three of them laughed while Ruth took a picture of me. She said she's going to put my picture on Twitter. I don't understand why they're being mean to me because I have never been mean to them - ever. I felt so touched, and literally wanted to cry, but I refuse to cry in front of such people.

Proverbs 19:29 says "Condemnation is ready for scoffers, and beating for the backs of fools."

Proverbs 17:5 says "Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished."

Be careful who you make fun of, for it might be you tomorrow.

Chapter Thirty

1 Peter 5:7 - "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Thato

I couldn't stand all the stares from people who keep looking at me like I've just lost my mind. Some are even whispering while some are pointing at me and laughing at me. This is way worse than when I wasn't dating Kg. I mean, wow. If they're not complaining about my skin colour, it's my eyes, if not

that it's my body. I never asked to be the way I am, I never asked Sonto to give birth to me.

At times like these I actually wish she had actually smothered me with a pillow or something. Ntate Moruti (Pastor) always says that everyone has a purpose and that we are all blessings. He even said imagine out of all the sperms a man produces during intercourse, and out of all those sperms, you became the chosen one. When I had Mama and Palesa everything made sense and I never felt out of place, but now I actually notice all the stares, glares and laughs.

How I wish I could just dig a hole and never come back out. I walked past Kg's house, just to see for myself and indeed the house is up for sale. It's actually sold, but I don't even know who our new neighbours will be. I felt my tears burn my cheeks yet again as I thought of the good memories we have shared in this house.

Yes, it was bitter sweet with Sonto's nastiness towards me, but I wouldn't trade the joy I shared with Kg in there for anything or anyone. I guess everything happens for a reason as they like saying. I walked past the stop sign, where the accident happened. It still feels like yesterday, that time it's a few days before christmas. Indeed it will be a black Christmas for me. I walked into the yard and found Kagiso sitting on a chair with two beer quarts. She looked really shocked to say the least, shocked but happy to see me in this state.

Kagiso: (surprised) "Heeeh! Jesu wa theoga (Jesus is coming down)! Mma (Granny)! Mama! Tla le boneng (Come and see)!"

I ignored her and walked passed her. Koko Maria walked out of the house and was also shocked to see me.

Maria: (shocked) "And then, wena (you)?! O tswa kae (Where have you been)?"

I ignored her too and walked past and headed straight to my bedroom. I found Sophie sitting in the lounge, getting her nails done before I walked into my room.

Sophie: (surprised) "Hao, kgante ga wa timela (Wow, so you weren't missing)? Ai, le rata drama, waitse (You're so dramatic, you know)."

And that's just how I'm back to my old, miserable life.

Sophie: (shouting from the lounge) "Oh, Romeo o tlisitse diaparo tsao (brought your clothes) before he left! You're welcome!"

I closed the door and went through my clothes. At

least they brought my clothes back along with my documents. I see a few of my items missing. Mxm, Kagiso probably took some of them. I went through my traveling bag and found the cheap locket Kg bought for me, just in case the diamond one got stolen. I couldn't help but shed a few tears as I opened it. I miss him so much, I just don't know what is happening right now, but I'm trying to have faith in God. I trust that He knows what he's got planned for me.

Christmas finally came. The more the days went by, the more depressed I came. I feel so weak, spiritually, emotionally and physically. My wounds have healed a bit, but my heart and soul are still severely wounded. I tried praying the day I came back home, but wow, I just couldn't anymore. I went to PEP Cel to buy myself a cheap phone the other day, and I headed to the bank to transfer the R150 000 I had invested a few months ago. I thought at least it would be about R200 000 or so by now, but instead I had to pay a penalty for withdrawing the

money before it reached maturity. I'm annoyed, but well, I have to save as much money as I can.

I got up this morning and tried to have a new feel for life. I got ready for church, perhaps I'll get a good message from Ntate Moruti today. I got into one of the dresses Kg bought for me and wore my locket. I headed out and found everyone asleep, except for Koko. She's headed for church as always.

Maria: "Hmm, magadi a padile bjanong o zama kereke (Your lobola failed and now you're trying church)?"

Really? This woman hates me, just like Sonto does. I sped up and walked a bit faster. I'd rather walk ahead of her than listen to her tell me shit, especially on Christmas Day. Upon arrival at church, I saw everything decorated, from the gates to the entrance. There is even a huge tent this year, I guess they're going big. I don't see Anastacia, the golden church

girl, although I see Ruth and her friends laughing at me again. I decided to ignore again and I walked into the church.

The congregation started singing and everytime I walk into church and hear a song by our choir, I just can't help but cry. I cry because church reminds me of Mama, I cry because life was so good and now everything is just a real mess. I quickly wiped my tears off and listened attentively as Ntate Moruti started the sermon.

Patrick: "Amen, Bazalwane (Congregation)."

Crowd: "Amen."

Patrick: "Today, is a very special day, as we celebrate the birth of Christ. I'd like to talk about how most of you relate to Jesus Christ, but don't actually realize it. We knew from the moment Jesus was growing in

Mary's womb that His life was going to be different. God had declared him different and set him apart from all others from His conception.

Jesus did many things, from teaching people about the word of God, to feeding children, raising the dead and even turning water into wine. A lot of people didn't believe in Him, but some, the blessed ones never denied him.

I'd like to specifically talk about Jesus's Crucifixion. God could have chosen another way out for Jesus, but He allowed him to be crucified. When Jesus was taken by the religious leaders, his apostles ran away. They left Jesus alone with his enemies, because they became afraid. But the apostles Peter and John did not go very far away. They followed along to see what happens to Jesus.

The priests take Jesus to the old man Ananias, who used to be the high priest. The crowd does not stay

here long. They next take Jesus to the house of Caiphus, who was now the high priest. Many religious leaders had gathered at his house.

Jesus was betrayed many times, and yet He still found us all worthy to sacrifice himself for. He promised us eternal life if we believe in Him. Some of you sitting here are also crucified, on a daily basis and some even from the moment you were born. Some of you sitting here before me, live to crucify others. Your tongues spit venom and become a dangerous weapon, they wound the innocent's souls and in turn you become wicked without even realizing it.

John 14:6 says "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

With this sermon today, I'd like to give you a few lessons we can learn from the Lord Jesus:

1. Be clear with what you want.

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” – Matthew 7:7-8

Jesus knew that clarity is one of the secrets to success. Be deliberate in living your life. Be clear with what you want to achieve. Know what to ask for and how to ask for it.

2. When you find “it,” take the leap.

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has

and buys it.” – Matthew 13:44-46

When you finally find your life’s purpose, your mission, or your own dream, take a chance and take a leap in faith. You may or may not make it immediately, but you will definitely make it. The joy and fulfillment are also in the pursuit. Everything else is just icing on the cake. Jump into your purpose!

3. Be forbearing and love those who criticize you.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on (your) right cheek, turn the other one to him as well.” – Matthew 5:38-39

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you,

that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same?" —
Matthew 5:44-47

When we are being pushed, it's more natural for us to push back. It's difficult not to fight back. But, when we pull them closer to us instead of pushing them back, imagine the surprise. There would also be less conflict. Besides, it's more rewarding to love those who cannot love us back. Always respond with love.

4. Always go beyond what is required.

"If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for

two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.” — Matthew 5:40-42

Always go the extra mile—in your career, in your business, in your relationships, in your service, in loving others, and in everything you do. Pursue excellence in all your undertakings.

5. Keep your promises and be careful with what you say.

“Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’” — Matthew: 5:37

“By your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” — Matthew 12:37

There’s an old proverb saying, “Before you speak once, think twice.” Your words have power over your life and the life of others. Always be truthful in what

you say and be trustworthy with your promises.
When in doubt with what to say, say words of love.

6. How you look at others is a reflection of how you look at yourself.

“Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you.” – Matthew 7:1-2

If you measure others' success based on their finances, chances are that's also how you measure your own success. If you measure their success based on their job titles, chances are that's also how you measure your own success. Do you need to change the measure you use?

7. Follow the Golden Rule.

“Do to others whatever you would have them do to you.” – Matthew 7:12

This is all the life lessons from Jesus combined. In fact, this is probably Jesus's most popular lesson for Christians and non-Christians alike. What do you want others to do to you and for you? Do the same to them and for them. No matter what you believe in, you can never go wrong with the Golden Rule.

8. Forgive others... countless times if you need to.

“If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.” – Matthew 6:14-15

“Then Peter approaching asked him, ‘Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.’” – Matthew 18:21-22.”

I felt my tears screaming down my face uncontrollably. I feel like my heart is a bit at ease. I love every he said, but number 8 is really hard to do. How do I forgive everyone who's wronged me and more especially Sonto? How do I forgive her after she did such an evil deed to me? I truly wish that after today, I can find immense peace within myself and that God will most definitely open doors for me.

Chapter Thirty One

Matthew 6:24 - "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Sophie

Today is Christmas and I have no time to go to church. I have a business to take care of and since I'm now in charge of this whole operation, I call the

shots. Patrick and Glenda were more than happy to give me start up capital, so I made sure that Bianca and Rachel do something instead of drinking all day.

Those two run the soup kitchen, where we cook and give the needy food every day. That's of course just a cover up for our drug operation. I'm so glad Romeo left because he just gave me room to be a better me. Paper and Quatro also get to do their part instead of playing golf all day and feeding their fat asses. They get to ensure that we packaged the correct amount of Nyaope in each of the bags and also, Monopi, which is a mixture of Nyaope and Cocaine.

Everyone has a role now and since well I saved this group, I get the bigger cut. I have no husband or man to control me and tell me otherwise. I'm loving the new me and Rockville is still going to see more of me. Business is booming so much, especially at this time of the year, that I even have cops on my

payroll. I have to pack and store some drugs in the house now since there just isn't any space left at the rest of the houses. I tried getting Anelisa to join the group again, but apparently she was on the brink of depression and God saved her. I feel like that's just an excuse to stay broke.

No one can touch me now, not even Thato. This is still her house, but I call the shots. I'm in the lounge, counting the money we made this morning with one of my boys, when Thato walked in unexpectedly. She's supposed to be at church, mos.

Sophie: "And then wena (you)? Don't you knock?"

Thato: (annoyed) "Excuse me? This is my house."

Sophie: (chuckling) "That shit is getting old, boo. This is your house on paper, I call the shots here. Besides, now that o bethile ke lefase (life has got

you by the balls), you remembered all of a sudden that you have a house. Where were you when I took care of the bills of this house? Who cleans the house? Maintains it? Ska mpotsa masepa (Don't tell me shit)!"

Thato: (angry) "I've had it! I will not allow you to bully me in my own house, Sophie. It's time for you to move out. I'm not obliged to stay with you here."

This tramp is about to annoy me. I took out my gun and pointed it at her, and she got the shock of her life. The Thato I know would have dared me to shoot, but this wimp I'm seeing in front of me is a whole new Thato, a very frightened and scared Thato. Perhaps she was really abused while she was kidnapped. I'm glad they knocked some sense into her. She was becoming a real pest. Thato still stood frozen there and ran out without even trying to stop me. I carried on counting the money, I have a living to earn.

Thato

I stormed out of the house and kept running until I stopped in the middle of the park. What on earth has my life become? Now Sophie turns guns on me in my own house? When she pointed that gun at me, it reminded me of that day. I instantly had a flash back of the day I got kidnapped. How odd is life? Just almost a year ago, I buried my mother, then a few months ago, I buried my best friend and now, I'm spending my very first Black Christmas - all alone, without anyone to talk to or share the day with. I decided to head straight to the police station. Of course, no one wants to work on Christmas Day so the police station is awefully quiet and the queue is almost non-existent. I found one rather bored officer and I approached her.

Thato: "Dumelang (Hello)."

Police Officer: "Ja?"

She was still paging through her magazine, chewing her bubblegum in the most ghastly manner and didn't even bother to look at me. For someone who took an oath before getting appointed for this job, she sure isn't living up to it.

Thato: "Eh, Mama, ke tlile go bula case (I came to open a case)."

Police Officer: (sigh) "Ja?"

I tried within all my might not get angry, especially not after the beautiful sermon I had today.

Thato: "My aunt, she's refusing to leave my house. Just earlier on, she pointed a gun at me in my own house when I told her to leave."

Police Officer: "Who is this aunt of yours and where do you live?"

Thato: "Her name is Sophie, Sophie Maake. My address is-"

I didn't even get to finish my sentence and only then when she heard her name did she have the smallest decency to raise her head and look at me.

Police officer: "Sesi (Sis), o nale mengwaga e me kae (How old are you)?"

Thato: "I'm 17, turning 18 in March."

She looked at me and went back to her magazine.

Police Officer: "Ai, bana ba ka jeno la lapisa man (You kids of today are so tiring)."

Is she seriously insulting my intelligence while I'm trying to open a case?

Thato: "Askies (Excuse me)?"

Police Officer: (sigh) "Eh, John. A re jike mo Rockville (Let's drive through to Rockville). This girl o re o nyaka go tshwarisa Sophie (This girl is saying she wants to open a case against Sophie)."

The way she said it made me realize that they know her well - everyone knows her well. We got into their car and headed to my house. I honestly feel like they're just not taking me seriously. They're even making jokes about all this. Once we got to my house, Sophie even approached them and greeted them all smiles.

Sophie: "Hello, Batho ba molao (People of the Law). To what do I owe this pleasure?"

Police Officer: "Sho sho (Sure sure), Mamazala (Ma'am). Ngwana o wa mo itse (Do you know this child)?"

Sophie: "Yes, she's my niece."

Police Officer: "Well, she said you pointed a gun at her and you refuse to leave her house."

Sophie put on the best class act I've ever seen. This witch is the devil herself.

Sophie: (teary) "Eng (What)? Thato, do you hate me that much? I would honestly die for you and you get me arrested the first chance you get? Forgive her

officers for wasting your precious time and resources like this. You see, her mom died then she found out she was adopted and now her fiance dumped her on her wedding day.”

I was in such shock, I just couldn't believe it. The police officers even told me they couldn't do anything to help me. I mean what the fuck is happening?! They said it's a family issue and that we need to sort it out ourselves. Just like that, the police failed me. As soon as they drove away, Sophie gave me a big slap across the face. The slap was so hard, I nearly fell to the ground. I held my cheek in shock and stared at her.

Thato: “What the fuck?!”

Sophie: “Let that be the last day you ever pull such a stupid stunt. The next time you won't make it home. I mean it, Thato. I own you now.”

Chapter Thirty Two

Philippians 4:6-8 - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Thato

I felt my cheek burning after Sophie slapped me. She didn't even look remorseful, but instead she looked at me with eyes full of hatred and evil. What did I ever do to deserve such? I find people who love me and then I lose them all in one year? I ran to my room with tears burning my eyes, they flowed down

like a volcano. The pain in the pit of my stomach is so severe, I feel like vomiting, but nothing comes out of my mouth.

My throat feels like I have something choking me. Now I understand why Palesa decided to end it all. Sometimes it's just the only way out. I used to say suicidal people are selfish, until I experienced it with my own eyes. My soul is exhausted, my body is overworked, my emotions are all over the place. I decided to use the most powerful weapon I have - my tongue and my knees. I knelt down and started praying.

"Modimo wa ka o a rateng (My Loving God), ke itlisa go wena , Ntate (I come before you, Father). Ke imetswe, Ntate, Ga ke sa tseba gore le lebelle kae (I'm overwhelmed, Father, I don't know which way to go now). I ask that you tap into my soul and help me heal. I ask that you show me what I have to do, for I cannot stay another minute in this toxic place. I

know I still have a destiny to fulfill, but my heart is empty, Lord. Show me the way and lead me into the light, help me not to fear any darkness that is approaching me. I ask this in Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen.”

I opened my eyes and I felt so much relief. Immediately after praying, I received a message from Wits reminding me about my application fee. Campus is opening on the 20th of February, so that's about a month or so away. I then took the decision to head to Jo'burg. I don't know where I'll live, but I'll find something.

I went onto Facebook and went through a few pages where people post rooms and flats available. Since Wits is situated in Jan Smuts Avenue, I decided to check for accommodation around Rosebank. I have no idea how to get to Jo'burg, but I'm not completely brainless. By God's grace I saw Rami, a former classmate of mine posting that she's looking for a

room mate at her two bedroom flat.

She's someone I know, and I was quite fond of her although we weren't close friends. I told her I'm interested and by luck she was also moving the rest of her things today. I only have my learner's license, but I can drive. I thank Kg too for helping me learn how drive a bit better. I offered to drive us both there and luckily her parents agreed since she's already 18 unlike me. I'm officially taking Mama's car with me and I will see what to do with it when I get there.

I packed all my clothes and all my photos, along with a few sentimental items of Mama. I put them in the boot, while Sophie was sitting on a chair just in front of the gate. She's so deliberate, but I'm not about to ask her for permission to leave. I opened the gate without saying anything to her, I headed back into the car and started the ignition. I put the gear in reverse mode, and I drove out in so much speed, that

she nearly fell from her chair. Upon leaving, I heard her swearing at me.

Sophie: "Masepao (Fuck you), Thato! O se hlole o boa mo (Don't you dare come back here)!"

I didn't even bother to close the gate, I headed out and went to pick Rami up. She lives about ten minutes away from my house. I'll most definitely miss Rockville, but with Sophie turning my house into a drug factory and abusing me, I think it's high time I left. I got to her house and her mom and dad came to the car to greet me as they put her luggage into the car. Luckily it's just the two of us, so there's plenty of space in the car. I got out to greet them out of respect and they prayed for us. I like how close they are and Rami has always been a calm child from what I've gathered. We got into the car and headed out. It seems as if Rami knows the way, so there's no need for a navigator and she can talk shame. She asked that we stop by McDonald's to

grab some food before we headed out to the highway.

Rami: "Hao, Tee, when I heard about Palesa I was so broken, hey. I mean you two were like two peas in a pod. I'm so glad they killed that asshole she called her father. I mean imagine all the trauma she endured."

Yes, it's never easy talking about her, but I guess she's just trying to make conversation.

Thato: "Yes, it was, hey."

Rami: "How are you coping, though? I mean with your mom gone and Kg gone as well?"

To be honest I haven't had anyone ask me how I'm doing, really. There's just something about when a

person asks you how you're coping. You just bawl out and let everything out. Mama used to say it's never good to bottle things up.

Thato: (teary) "To be honest, Rami, I'm a real mess. I haven't healed and I have no one, literally no one in my life. When I found out I was adopted, I understood why my aunt, grandmother and Kagiso were treating me like dirt all my life. Palesa was always my shoulder to cry on and when she died, Kg was the last man standing. You know we were supposed to get married the day I got kidnapped and now I have idea where he is."

Rami held my hand and I didn't even realize that I was tearing up.

Rami: "I'm so sorry, Tee. Everything happens for a reason, though hey. You don't understand it now but one day I know you will. What happened when you got kidnapped if I may ask?"

That is something I really don't want to talk about today.

Thato: "That, I'll tell you one of these days over a glass of wine."

I forged a smile as she smiled back. She's a lovely girl, with a curvy body and cute dimples. She likes weaves a bit too much, but other than that, she's a darling and easy to relate to. We finished eating and headed out. I'm amazed that Mama's car is still in such a strong condition, with Kagiso and Sophie in the yard. I'm quite surprised they never tried to pawn the battery or other parts of the car. We finally arrived in Rosebank after an hour and a half. I must say Jo'burg is busy, very busy. Kasi (Township) is very busy, but this is just a jungle. No wonder why everyone goes to Jozi for work and opportunities. We finally got to our flat, and I really like it a lot. The parking is a lot safer and the flats are clean. We're

going to split R5000 between us plus water and electricity costs, so it really isn't that bad at all. We had to pay a 50% deposit as well, so all in all I had to pay R5000 upfront. I can't expect R180 000 to last me a whole year, as I need to plan ahead. Come January, I'll register and pay my first year fees upfront, to avoid chaos. I made a mental note to look for a job as well, that way I know I'll be able to depend on myself if anything goes wrong. Rami and I helped each other with our bags and while in the parking lot, we were met with two cute and tall guys who had just gotten out of an Audi R8. Yoh, I never knew Varsity boys could drive such nice cars.

Guy1: (smiling) "Hey, ladies. Let me help you with that."

I'm not very good at allowing strangers into my life just like that, but Rami seems very friendly.

Rami: (smiling) "Oh, thank you. You're too kind."

The other guy walked up to me.

Guy 2: "May I?"

I nodded and handed him my luggage bag. We got into the lift and walked up to floor 5, since our flat is over there. It's literally ten minutes away from Campus, so I could always walk if I want to. We got in and they finally introduced themselves.

Guy1: "Hi, I'm Thendo."

Guy 2: "I'm Rudzani."

Now I get it, they're Venda. Their accents are so eloquent and proper, they almost sound a bit british. They're both a bit dark, but they're not really my type. I don't even think I have a type since I've only been

with Kg.

Rami: "I'm Rami, this is my friend Thato, she's a bit shy."

Rudzani: "Thato, are you coloured?"

Thato: (laughing) "No, I'm black."

Rudzani: "Oh, your eyes, they're grey. Which is quite odd in black people."

Thato: "It's complicated."

I used to get such questions a lot and a lot of people would even touch my hair to see if it's even real, but it never used to bother me until now. Rami could see I was a bit uncomfortable and decided to

change the subject.

Rami: "So, guys, I hear a bit of an accent there. Is it man made or?"

They both laughed and I myself couldn't help but laugh at that question. Man made? Really?

Thendo: "Actually, we're brothers. We stayed in London for a few years until our parents decided to come back to South Africa."

London ne. They must be loaded. It took me a while to notice the resemblance since they don't look very much alike.

Rami: "Oh, so you two must be loaded."

Rudzani: (laughing) "No, we're not. Our parents are."

Rami: "I see."

Thendo: "So, what are you two going to study?"

Rami: "I'm enrolled for Law."

Thato: "Engineering, Mechanical in fact."

I don't know why Rami went for Law when she was always such a great performer. She had great marks but I guess it's her passion.

Thendo: "Eh, this must be God's will, man. I'm studying Law, it's my Third year, though."

Rudzani: "I'm doing my third year of Engineering, but

mining.”

I see already there's a spark between Thendo and Rami. Rudzani seems interested in me, but I really don't think I'm up for any relationship or fling with anyone for that matter. I'm glad we met a few new people, though.

Chapter Thirty Three

1 Peter 5:8-9 - "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world."

Thato

I'm honestly so glad that I met Rami again. I feel like things are slowly falling back into place. I don't know

what the future holds, but I do know that I am destined for greatness. Thendo and Rendani were so excited to meet us, although I think Rendani is a bit much.

He seems to be so glued to me and always makes an attempt for the four of us to be split instead of spending time together as a group. We've only known each other for a few hours and already I see something offish about him. Thendo is the bubbly one, no wonder he and Rami get along so well.

Rendani is calm like me, but he's too calm. He just seems like he's hiding a lot more than meets the eye. They wanted the four of us to chill together today and make it some sort of house warming, but luckily Rami saw that it wasn't part of my plan. The two of them left and we were finally left alone.

Rami: "Tee, sorry for making you uncomfortable. Had I known I would have chased those two idiots

away.”

Thato: “It's okay, don't worry about it.”

Rami: “Let me order us some pizza and snacks and some good wine from Uber eats.”

I don't mind eating out and all, but now is the time to save money whenever I can. I didn't even realize my facial expression changed as soon as she mentioned that. We have to share, I can't let her pay for everything.

Rami: “Don't worry about it, it's my treat, okay?”

I looked down embarrassed. How do I even begin to tell her that I have financial problems? The last thing I want to do is make another girl feed me out of her own pocket. She ordered and insisted on paying for

everything. I can't help but feel bad, especially when she gave the deliverer a big fat tip.

Rami: "Tee, cheer up, will you? You've never let anyone get to you for as long as I've known you. What is really going on?"

Thato: (sigh) "I've been through quite a lot these past few months, Rami. I don't even know where to begin, really."

She looked at me attentively as I took a deep breath and told her everything that happened, from Kg proposing to me, to the kidnapping and me losing my baby at the hands of my mother. I was in tears as well as she. We broke down together and I felt at ease after I told her everything. I'm actually glad that I got to share my pain with someone who's actually willing to listen.

Rami: (teary) "Oh, Tee. I'm so sorry you had to go through this, really. Such trauma even when you saw your own best friend shoot herself. Yoh, I truly hope you find Kg. Apparently they left without telling anyone, and Romeo even took the business capital and everything in it. None of us actually knew for sure that he was the drug king pin of Rockville until he disappeared. Things are so bad now that your aunt is the new leader of their gang. Apparently she's making her own drugs now. I even heard that Mma Moruti might be dealing with the drugs too. She often visits your aunt a lot and your granny is dating the pastor."

I was so shocked about all the dirt she was dishing out and I couldn't help but burst in laughter. I laughed so hard that she even laughed too. People have bigger problems out there, really. As for my grandmother, I have been suspecting it for a while, really. I've always said that the houses in that neighbourhood hide a lot of secrets.

Thato: "My goodness, Rami! O di tseya kae di taba tse kana (Where do you get all this news)?"

Rami: "Ah, I'm connected, hey."

We laughed together. I really enjoy her company and she reminds me a lot of Palesa. I used to get the latest gossip and sex tips from her.

Rami: "Eish, chomi (friend), forgive me, but I have to ask. How's Kg in bed? Is he really good because Anastacia used to talk rubbish about his dick game."

Thato: (laughing) "Rami man. Honestly, Kg is good in bed, really, really good. Ana was just angry because he refused to sleep with her."

Rami: (laughing) "I knew it! Ke itsitse (I knew it)! Tjo (Wow!) Anastacia o rata maka man (is a liar). She's

just as fake as her boobs and ass!”

I burst out in laughter as we carried on eating and drinking. My very first Christmas day without Palesa, Mama and Kg ended up being a really good one. I can't wait to see what the new year has in store for me.

A few days later

It's the 31st of December today and man am I glad that the year has finally come to an end. Mama and I would always pray at midnight and enjoy the beauty of the fireworks on every new year's eve. We'd always make one wish each of what we wanted to achieve the following year. Now that she's gone I really have no tradition anymore.

Rami and I have been having a pretty good time, she even bought us a tv. I honestly don't know how she

gets money, but my gut is telling me she's not getting it from her parents. Her parents are okay, just not rich. Rendani and Thendo kept coming over almost every day until Rami told them we need a few days to settle in. In all honesty I like them and all, but their persistence, especially Rendani's is just offish for me. I just can't pin point it yet but he seems dodgy. As Rami was packing her bag to go home for a few days, she got puzzled and looked at me.

Rami: "And then?"

Thato: "And then what?"

Rami: "Why o sa pake (aren't you packing)?"

Thato: (sigh) "I don't want to go back home, Rami."

Rami: "You're not. You're spending New Year's with my family and I."

I know she's trying, but I hate imposing on people and being a charity case. She shouldn't feel obliged to include me in her family's thing.

Thato: "Rami, you don't have to feel sorry for me, you know."

Rami: "Nonsense, You're coming with me and I'm not taking no for an answer. Besides, I'd never leave you here alone and let Rendani feast off you."

Thato: "O ra bjang (what do you mean)?"

Rami: "Come on, don't tell me you don't see how the guy drools over you ever chance he gets. He's too dodgy unlike his brother. I don't trust him and now

that I've found a sister in you, I'll never let him have you."

Rami is so sweet, much like Palesa.

Thato: (chuckling) "Rami..."

Rami: "Go pack, we're leaving in an hour."

Thato: "I was hoping I'd stay and look for a job, you know."

Rami: "I know people, I'll get you sorted in no time. Don't you see I'm never broke?"

I looked at her puzzled.

Thato: "What do you mean? I mean you just got here,

mos (right)?”

Rami: “I have an aunt who lives in Fourways, so I'd come here every other weekend. She owns a club and lets girls like you and I work there to make extra cash, so that's what I do, but my parents don't know about it.”

I don't like the sound of this, honestly.

Thato: (worried) “What kind of work?”

Rami: “Entertainment fela (only). I'll tell you about it some other time.”

The way she quickly dismissed the question, shows that it must be something I might not like. What if Rami is into blessers or something?

We finally got into my car with our bags and as we were about to leave, Rendani and Thendo made their grand appearance as usual. Yoh, these two behave like A-class stalkers.

Rendani: "Ladies, you weren't going to leave without saying goodbye, were you?"

Rami: "Ah, man sorry. But I mean you have our numbers so you would have been able to call, right?"

Thendo: "No worries. Enjoy your trip. Rami, you owe me a party when you get back."

These two like flirting. I tried to get the feel of what Rami told me earlier on about Rendani drooling over me and lo and behold, I saw it. He was staring at my breasts and practically drooling over me. I looked at him in shock and he quickly changed his facial expression when he saw that I noticed.

Rendani: "Ah, Thato, have a nice trip, babe. I'll call you, okay?"

He doesn't even have my number and he just made me feel very uneasy. I just got into the car without saying anything to him and Rami stared at me.

Rami: "See? I told you he's dodgy. We don't have to hang around them if you don't want to. Thendo is a flirt, but at least he doesn't hide his persona. Rendani ena o kare (seems like a) pervert."

I just have to wait and see. My gut is telling me I have to be careful around this guy.

Chapter Thirty Four

Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and

not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Thato

We finally made it to Rockville. I must say, I honestly don't miss this place. I even saw that Kg's old house already has new residents in it. We saw a big tent from his street being pulled up. Apparently Sophie and her new gang are organizing a street bash for everyone in Rockville and there will be free booze flowing. I can't say I'm surprised and I don't even feel like going home to see them or anything. We found Rami's parents and her older brother, Kgabo, already braaing and preparing for tonight. Her parents were so happy to see me that her mom had even prepared the spare room for me. She made it so homely and decorated it specially for me. She even bought scented candles and bath oils to make me feel welcome. I mean who does that?

Thato: "Rami, why did your mom go through all that trouble? She really didn't have to."

Rami: "Mom is like that, well, only to those she likes. She's never liked any of my friends, so consider yourself really lucky."

I don't exactly know what she means by her mom not liking any of her friends. Rami must have been keeping bad company, but anyway. Her brother Kgabo is also very nice and polite. He doesn't say much either. Apparently he's a pharmacist and lives somewhere in Mooikloof. He's 30 and still not married and has no kids. Rami says he is terrified of commitment. We all have a story to tell, I guess.

I settled in just fine and not once did I feel out of place. Rami's parents didn't mind us drinking, but really I can't drink in front of people who have welcomed me into their home with open arms. I decided against it and had juice instead. Rami was

having the time of her life drinking her mom's wine. We had some food and I offered to do the dishes along with Rami. It really felt like I had a sister in a friend again. It pains me not to be with Palesa anymore, but I know she's in a better place. I also wonder at times where Soks ran off to, but I hope he's okay wherever he is.

Midnight struck and I was so surprised to hear Rami's mom call us all into the lounge. They switched off the tv and she said a very powerful yet humorous prayer for all of us, myself included.

Rami's Mom: "Modimo wa rona (Dear God), re lebogela tsohle o re fileng (We thank you for all you've given us), but most importantly we thank you for life. We've lost so many people last year and we ask that you bless us with your mercy and grace this year. Bless our children with great health, good lives and prosperity in all ways. Bless Kgabo with a forgiving heart and allow him to open up and find the

love of his life so that he can bear us a few grandkids. Bless Rami with self-control so that she can finish school and make us all proud. Bless our new daughter, Thato, with the greatness she is destined to have. She is highly favoured oh, Lord. She just doesn't know it yet. Help her pass this rough patch in her life and help her reach her goals and dreams. All shall be revealed to her in good time and please assure her that once the storm has passed, she will reach her destiny and claim all the riches she's meant to have. Bless my loving husband and I with nothing but happiness, and may he finally win the lotto, please. I need to retire now. In Jesus Name we Pray, Amen.”

I couldn't help but cry a bit afterwards. I'm humbled to have met such a kind family. We all hugged and even Kgabo hugged me as we wished each other a happy new year. We sat and watched the fireworks for a little while. I looked up at the sky and said a silent prayer for Mama. I know she's watching over me from heaven. Rami's Mom and dad went to bed

as Kgabo stunned me while I was sitting outside with Rami. He came towards us with a bottle of wine and a clean, empty wine glass, and handed it to me.

Kgabo: "Here. I'm sure you must be dying to have a drink."

I looked down embarrassed. What if this is a test or something?

Rami: "Ai, Tee. Relax and drink. Kgabo never talks to any of my friends, like ever. He must either like you or he has a message to give to you."

I looked at her puzzled.

Thato: (frowning) "Message?"

Rami: "He has a gift. He's a bit of a prophet. Ga o makale a sena motho (Aren't you surprised why he doesn't have a girlfriend)? Ba mo tshabela bo bohle (They all run away from him)."

Kgabo: (unimpressed) "Mxm, Rami, wa phapha bjanong (you're so forward)."

Rami: "Sorry abuti (brother). Let me give you some space ko rota (and go pee)."

Rami walked way and headed into the house. I was still contemplating whether or not I should drink the wine or not.

Kgabo: "I know you're dying for a glass, so I'll leave it here in case you change your mind."

Thato: "Why is there only one glass? Where's

yours?"

Kgabo: "I don't drink."

That explains his timidity.

Kgabo: "Have you been doing what your mother said to you the day you were kidnapped?"

I gave him an astonished look. Could Rami have told him about my business?

Kgabo: "Don't worry, Rami didn't tell me anything."

I widened my eyes in shock. Is he a mind reader too?

Kgabo: "And no, I'm not a mind reader."

This is all too freaky for me. I opened the wine hastily and poured myself a glass and drank a bit of it.

Kgabo: (smiling) "Seriously, though. I'm no mind reader. No need to be afraid. So, are you going to answer me?"

Thato: "Uhm, I have been praying, well, at least I've been trying."

Kgabo: (shaking head) "You need to keep praying. That's the only way you'll be strong enough to face what's to come."

I felt my heart palpitating and fear kicking in.

Kgabo: "Do not be afraid, please. I can feel whatever

you feel. So, if your heart is beating abnormally, it affects me too. So please, try to relax otherwise I won't sleep."

I tried my best to relax but the fear wasn't going anywhere.

Thato: "What do you mean I have to be strong enough of what's to come?"

Kgabo: "You'll see for yourself, but what I can tell you is that Kgaugelo is not dead. He's alive, but frail - both in mind and in spirit."

Yoh, this guy is confusing me all in a new year on top of it all.

Thato: "You're not making sense, Kgabo."

Kgabo: "Time will tell. If you pray and ask for guidance, it shall all be revealed to you. Just never stop praying. You are very close to your destiny, and finding the truth about who you really are, but the longer you delay your faith and prayer, the longer it will take for you to reach that destiny."

Yoh, all this is giving me a headache now.

Thato: "Eish."

Kgabo: "Now I have a headache too."

Now I feel bad even though I have no idea how these spiritual things work.

Kgabo: "Danger, temptation and trouble is lurking, but believe me, my sister is wild but she has a good heart and a very soft spot for you. She'll look out for

you, just trust her. You will be okay, as long as you pray, my dear.”

I felt myself overwhelmed with thoughts that don't even make sense.

Thato: “Okay.”

Kgabo: “God is already fighting for you and so is your mother, Petunia. Sonto's time is near and so is Sophie's. You'll find out a lot of things that don't even make sense, but believe me, you'll be rewarded for your kind heart.”

And just like that he greeted me goodnight. Soon afterwards Rami came back. I had even forgotten about her for a while.

Rami: “And then, chomi (friend)? He didn't scare you

off, did he?"

Thato: "No, not really. It's just that he's told me a lot of stuff."

Rami: "Whatever it is make sure you follow it or else o tlo itshola (you'll regret it). His prophies are confusing, but they never lie. Whatever he told you to do, do it."

I'm grateful she's not even nosy about this. I just hope I can be able to process everything he told me.

Chapter Thirty Five

Psalm 46:1-3 - " God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging."

A few weeks later

Thato

Life has been such a breeze for the past few weeks. I enjoyed myself with Rami and her family and honestly her mom is the best. I've been praying ever since Kgabo spoke to me that evening, well, I've been trying to, really.

I'm mostly excited about today. It's our first day on Campus and it's also Orientation week. I can't wait to meet new people and experience the whole varsity vibe. I never understand people who just don't want to experience this, but people aren't the same. I love the whole vibe of this campus although Jo'burg is just busy, way too busy.

We haven't seen Rendani and Thendo ever since we

left for Rockville. We both assumed they were in Venda for holidays or something, which was fine for me. Thendo and Rami have been hitting it off like crazy, while I don't even have Rendani's numbers. It's a good thing, though. He just makes me seem uncomfortable, I mean who stares at a woman's breasts while talking though?

We had a lot of fun getting to experience the campus life, being shown around to lecture halls and of course being told about the famous history of Wits University. We were given a few books about our course choices in case we wanted to change and we were given a few activities to meet a few of our study mates.

Rami and I grabbed some lunch at the cafeteria, as we took a break before the next orientation session was about to start. What I like about varsity is that you don't attend classes all day like in high school. You have certain classes on certain days and certain

times too. So, you can plan nicely what you do in your free time between those lectures. As Rami and I were eating, Rendani approached us. Ai, this guy.

Rendani: (smiling) Ladies, long time no see. I'm starting to get the idea you're dodging me."

I kept quiet because I'm just speechless, honestly. Rami rolled her eyes.

Rami: "Hi, Rendani. Yes, we are actually avoiding you."

Wow, so straight to the point. Rami mara (though).

Rendani: (offended) "Excuse me? Did I do something wrong?"

I was about to answer, but Rami beat me to it

Rami: "Actually, yes. See Rendani, women don't like perverts. Yes, I see the way you look at my friend. We both see you and we don't like it. So, we don't like hanging out with such guys."

Wow, Rendani seemed pretty offended by that.

Rendani: "Is that what you really think of me? That I'm a pervert who preys on innocent girls?"

Rami: (rolling eyes) "Rendani, we both came here for an education. So please excuse us, we're trying to have our lunch."

I felt a bit bad for Rendani as he walked away from us slowly with his head down. Wow, remind me to never get on Rami's bad side. I gave her a puzzled

look.

Rami: "What?"

Thato: "That was a bit harsh, wasn't it?"

Rami: "The sooner you learn to be tougher on people, the sooner you'll learn that's how they'll stop thinking you're naive and clueless. Batho ba lapisa (people are tiring)."

I guess she's right in a way. We headed back to the hall to do some orientation activities, much to my dismay Rendani and Thendo were part of the team leaders we got for our new orientation session. Yoh, this is awkward. I'm not in Rami's group because she's grouped with people who do Law. So since we're grouped according to our study choices, we're apart.

I could see Rendani giving me glances every now and then. He was assigned to our group, so that he could be our leader. Just my luck. He was very straight forward and didn't make jokes as usual, I guess it was because of what Rami said to him. I looked down as I felt quite awkward and shaky, until the girl next to me started speaking to me.

Girl: "He totally has the hots for you."

I looked up and saw her. She's very cute, dark skinned, and her skin is just too flawless. There is no scar, pimple or blemish in sight. She has a beautiful Afro hair style with a beaded fringe and wears the cutest glasses I've ever seen.

Thato: "Huh?"

Girl: "Rendani. He totally has the hots for you, I mean haven't you seen the way he's been staring at

you?"

Thato: "Oh, no. How do you know his name?"

Girl: "Oh, I heard his name when they introduced them to us. I'm Khanyi by the way."

She extended her hand as I gave her a handshake.

Thato: "I'm Thato."

Khanyi: "So, which Engineering course are you enrolled in?"

Thato: "Mechanical."

Her face lit up immediately.

Khanyi: "Me too. Oh, thank goodness! I was beginning to think I'd never find a friend. All the other people who do Mechanical are all guys."

She's calling me a friend already. She's too cute and adorable. She surely can't do any harm. While we did our activities, we spoke briefly about our backgrounds. So she's apparently from Mamelodi and lives in Res. She has five brothers and is the last born and like many black households, she's the golden child.

Basically, every one of them including her parents are hoping that she'll be the first graduate in the family. All her brothers work, but they never made it to Varsity. Some have, but never finished. She grew up being very shielded and protected, so she's still a virgin and has never had a boyfriend before. That's a recipe for disaster if you ask me. She's going to turn into a wild child, believe me. As we were talking,

Rendani walked up to us.

Rendani: "Sorry to break up your little party, girls, but you're behind on the activities."

He gave me a glance and I stared back at him. I think he wanted to be deliberate.

Khanyi: (blushing) "Sorry, Rendani."

We continued with our activities without saying a word to him. Khanyi is very fun, and talkative. Something tells me she and Rami will be a perfect fit. After our session we walked out and I heard Rendani call out to me. I looked back and he ran towards me. He wasn't even out of breath, that's how sporty he is. He reminds me of Kg a bit.

Rendani: "Thato, can I talk to you for a moment?"

Thato: "Sure. Khanyi, I'll be right back."

Meanwhile Khanyi was blushing like crazy. Ai.

Thato: "Yes?"

Rendani: (sigh) "Look, I'm so sorry about being a jerk. I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable in any way. I'm no pervert, Thato. I was raised very well, so please forgive me."

I looked at him and he looked full of remorse. Shame, maybe I misjudged him. He seems genuine, I think.

Thato: "It's okay, it's just that with everything happening today you just can't trust a stranger, right?"

Rendani: "True, just give me a chance to prove that you can trust me. I'd like to be your friend, that's all."

I smiled and I nodded.

Thato: "Okay."

Rendani: (relieved) "May I come over with my brother later on? Just for a housewarming party? Don't worry, it's a party for four."

Then I thought about Khanyi.

Thato: "Well, my friend Khanyi might want to come over."

Rendani: "Sure, she can come as well. Don't worry,

we'll bring all the food and drinks.”

I nodded as he said goodbye. Rami came out of the hall and walked to Khanyi and I. Khanyi was still blushing and staring at Rendani walk away

Rami: “And then?”

Thato: “Oh, he asked if they could host a housewarming for us at our flat. They'll bring the drinks and food.”

Rami: (raised eyebrow) “Ai, Rendani is trying too much, but I'll give him the benefit of the doubt. As long as you stay by my side tonight.”

I nodded.

Thato: "Oh, this is Khanyi by the way."

Rami: "Hi, Khanyi."

Khanyi greeted back and Rami seemed cool with her presence. I invited Khanyi over for the housewarming and she didn't even want to go back to her place and change. She went straight to our flat with us. We got into my car and drove back to our flat. Upon arrival we cleaned up and since Khanyi didn't bring any clothes, I gave her a top to wear just in the mean time since we're pretty much the same size. There's no way she can fit into Rami's clothes, she has an ass that could fit both of us in it. We took out a few snacks, I mean we don't want to seem like we've been expecting their food and drinks. They finally arrived with tons of food and tons of drinks. Thendo brought his laptop and speaker, so that we could listen to some music. The whole time Khanyi was blushing while looking at Rendani.

Rami: "Aowa (No), girl. It's rude to stare. Don't make it so obvious that you're a virgin."

Khanyi: "How do you know I'm a virgin?"

Rami: "I can tell, I'm an expert at these things."

I laughed a bit.

Khanyi: "Thato, are you one?"

I was about to answer, but Rami beat me to it yet again.

Rami: "This one is not one, she lost her virginity a few months ago. So consider the both of you virgins since you have a lot to learn."

I couldn't help but burst out in laughter as Khanyi looked like she was taking some serious tips. Ai, Khanyi seems like she's on a real mission to lose her virginity. Rendani brought me a glass of wine which he filled. He didn't even ask me if that's what I wanted to drink.

Rendani: "A glass of wine for the beautiful lady."

I was about to take it, but Rami accidentally fell on me and the glass spilled on my yellow top.

Rami: "Oh, man. I'm so clumsy. Forgive me friend."

Rendani was a bit unimpressed and clenched his jaw. I don't get it, it's just a glass of wine and besides, there's plenty where it came from.

Rami: "It was just a mistake, right Rendani?"

Rendani changed his facial expression all of a sudden and it became a lot softer. He didn't seem upset anymore.

Rendani: "Of course. I'll get a cloth for you."

While he went to the kitchen counter, Rami became serious as she pulled Khanyi and I to her bedroom.

Rami: "Lesson number one: never take an unsealed drink from a stranger. You seriously need to be more vigilant Thato, that goes for you too, virgin mary."

Wow, does Rami really think Rendani is capable of drugging me? Why does it seem like she knows what she's talking about? Like she has some sort of

experience with these kind of things?

Chapter Thirty Six

2 Corinthians 12:9 - "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me."

A few days later

Thato

That night was a great night. I took Rami's advice and went for ciders instead. Khanyi had her first taste of alcohol that night and yhr following day she was a real mess, after vomiting every drop of alcohol she had that night. Rami made her her famous hangover cure and I was shocked to see her up and running by 9am, just in time for orientation.

Rendani and Thendo have been spending quite a lot of time with us, even some of the first years are already jealous. Ai, I don't see their reasons because honestly, Rendani isn't my type. Thendo and Rami flirt every chance they get, so I'm not bothered. We have officially started with our lectures and to be honest I'm starting to stress out. I'm worried about money, and I won't have much by the end of the year. I have started looking at possible jobs like waitering, but the money isn't much. I can't help but feel a bit doen today, even on a Saturday.

Rami: "Babes, why are you so sour?"

Thato: (sigh) "I've been looking at possible jobs, Rami. None of them will be able to help me pay off my studies next year. I'm on the bursary waiting list, apparently they give out a limited number each year. If I don't get a job soon, I might not come back next year."

Rami: "Babe, I'll help you look, don't worry about it so much. Besides, I'm here to help. I make enough to survive and have fun."

Rami always disappears on Saturday evenings. She says she goes to work. It's time I ask here what she actually does that require her to work so much at night. I mean she's literally never broke.

Thato: "What about your kind of job? I mean you did say you make a lot of money."

Rami: "Eish, Tee. You wouldn't be interested in my kind of job, man. It's just not for girls like you."

I don't know if I should feel offended or if I should feel like Rami doesn't want to help me. I can't help but feel defeated and odd about her reaction. I felt the tears building up again.

Rami: (worried) "Tee, bathong (gosh). Ska Ila (Don't cry). Eish, okay. What I meant is you wouldn't be interested in my kind of work because I'm sort of an escort."

I gave her an astonished look.

Thato: (shocked) "Heh (huh)?! You mean like a prostitute?"

Rami: (chuckling) "No, man. I don't sleep with them, I just entertain them. I only perform small favours fela (only)."

Yoh, this is too much for me.

Thato: "Small favours such as?"

Rami: "Ag, you know, Rubbing their dicks every now and then. A blow job here and there. Sometimes they just want to see you naked while others just want to eat you out. Others just want to talk, or spoon or cuddle. We have a strict no sex rule, unless you want to rank a lot of money. But that would be too much for me, I'd probably kill myself if I allowed any of these fat fucks to shove their dicks inside of me."

I don't even know what to say.

Thato: "How often do you do such a job?"

Rami: "A few times a month, depending on the gig. Sometimes we're hired to be these men's dates, and you just have to sit there and pretend to enjoy their conversation."

Ja neh, life is a movie.

Thato: "So, how much do you make on one job?"

Rami: "Depends on the client, but normally we make about R5000 to even R20 000 per job. If you make more than R10 000 then you most probably have to sleep with the guy and do whatever he wants. But we always have panic buttons on standby and they are not allowed to sleep with us outside of the club."

I'm honestly too shocked for words. So is this what people get up to in Jo'burg? R5000 a few times could really boost me a great deal. I might as well see for myself and if I don't like it then I'll have to settle for something else.

Thato: "I'd like to try it."

Rami didn't seem very pleased about it.

Rami: "Tee, I don't think it's a good idea, really."

Thato: "Please, Rami. I'm desperate. At least let me try one gig."

Rami was reluctant, but she agreed.

Rami: "Okay, but you'll have to follow my lead, please. And stay by my side and listen attentively."

I nodded and listened carefully.

Rami: "I have a gig tonight at 8pm, at the club. We're hosting the Naidoo's. These men are loaded and are big in the business industry. You have to dress the part and behave the part as well. To ease your mind

and nerves, have a drink or two before we get there. Now, we're talking about Indian Moguls here. Pravesh and Rajesh are brothers, twins to be exact.

Their father is a serious blesser, but he's the biggest pervert of them all. You just have to be calm and entertain them. If they touch you, you gently move their hands and touch their chest and brush their thighs every now and then. The dad, Adesh, likes new girls so he'll most probably pick you tonight. He likes them young and innocent and likes the thrill of the rush, more especially when you don't want to sleep with him. Don't worry, Bouncers are always outside and my aunt Vivian would ruin his reputation for a whole lifetime.”

This all sounds like a messed up movie, but I'm the last person to judge right now. I'm in need of extra money. Rami got me into one of her expensive dresses, luckily it's a stretch so I managed to fit in it perfectly. She did my make up and styled my hair. I

look a few years older after this whole make over, I mean I look mature, very mature. I'm really scared of what's to come, but Rami promised to be by my side.

Apparently she spoke to this aunt Vivian of hers, who's actually her mom's sister. I don't even know why Rami even does all this, she doesn't need the money. She says money is never enough and she has a demanding lifestyle. I thought we were going to use my car, but Rami said we never use our own transport whenever we do these gigs just in case these perves want to follow us and check where we live. The driver called Rami and upon leaving the apartment, we bumped into the Venda brothers yet again. They were so shocked, but in a good way. They even thought we were going partying or something.

Thendo: (whistling) "Looking good, Rami baby."

Rami: (laughing) "I always look good, Thendo."

Thendo: (laughing) "Of course."

Rendani was speechless, he was almost drooling. Such looks make me uncomfortable just coming from a guy like Rendani, now how will I even manage when rich, fat men like Adesh and his sons glare at me like that?

Thato: "It's rude to stare, you know."

Rendani: "Uh, sorry, it's just that... You look so beautiful."

Thato: "Uhm, thank you."

Rami: "Tee, hun we have to bounce. Later guys."

We walked away but I could feel Rendani's eyes on me. We got into the car and I said a silent prayer, I know, I'm probably a hypocrite for praying before going to the devil's playground, but what's a girl to do? We finally arrived at Club Vivienne. What did I expect? She named the club after herself, but in French spelling. It's a really posh club though.

As we entered, we didn't even have to wait in the queue like all the other people, instead the bouncers greeted Rami on first name basis on top of that. We walked in and the club was buzzing, a bit full, but it's really loud in here and way too busy for my liking. All these lights, disco balls and loud music makes me feel a bit dizzy.

This doesn't look like an escort setting to me. Then we walked through a door behind this really big bouncer. The door is so well hidden and well camouflaged, that you can't even notice it. We walked through and everything in here is much

quieter than the clubbing side. It's a much fancier side, with expensive champagne everywhere, from Verve to Dom Perignon and a few half naked girls walking around in lingerie. I'm so shocked, but I tried to act normal. I couldn't even stomach any food at the flat as I was nervous about all this.

Rami: "Here, have a sip or two and relax."

I took the glass of champagne and downed the whole glass. Champagne isn't even that tasty, it's just expensive.

Rami: "Don't drink too much and too fast, you might do stupid stuff due to alcohol. Whenever you're with these guys, drink slowly, very slowly. Opt for the glasses brought by her (pointing at one of the girls in lingerie). She brings us non-alcoholic drinks that look and taste like alcohol. That way they can't drug you or try to take advantage of you. Never leave your drink unattended, if you want to excuse yourself,

take it with you or finish it right in front of them.”

This is quite a lot of information to process all in one night. It's even worse than Engineering. A beautiful, but mature woman with a big afro walked down the stairs. I assume this is Vivian.

Vivian: (smiling) "Rami, baby. I see you've brought us a new protege. Hmm, she doesn't seem like she's one to even set foot into such places. My dear, how are you?"

Thato: "I'm well and you?"

Vivian: "Very good, thank you. Whenever you feel uncomfortable, let us know. This is a place of fun, not abuse, okay?"

I nodded anxiously as we sat down on one of the

couches. Rami sat next to me the whole time, shame, I actually feel bad because she has to be my babysitter tonight. Then a few minutes later, three men walked in. Two almost identical looking Indians, and one older looking one.

The twins are draped in hair gel, my goodness and the man has a fat belly for days. I don't even know how he bends over when his belly almost reaches his knees. Vivian greeted them, so these must be the Naidoos. The twins Rajesh and Pravesh wasted no time and sat in between the girls, while Adesh, the father looked straight at me. I knew right there and then that I'm his target for tonight.

Adesh: "Viv, I see you brought us a new girl. I like this one, she's very beautiful and unique. Where did you find her?"

Vivian: "I can't give away my secrets. Remember now, Adesh, play nice."

Adesh: "Of course, your wish is my command, Madame V."

He walked towards me and extended his arm. I handed him my hand reluctantly as he kissed it. His wrinkled skin gave me nasty goosebumps and his awful smell nearly made me puke. How does Rami stomach this shit?

Adesh: "Rami, baby, This friend of yours is a real beaut."

Rami: (smiling) "She is my sister."

Adesh: "Well, in that case, I'd like to have two of the most beautiful girls tonight."

Adesh walked up the stairs with Rami and I by his

side. My heart was pounding and racing way too fast. I felt so flushed and everytime I felt his disgusting fingers slither down my back, I felt like I was losing a part of myself. Rami did warn me, what have I gotten myself into?

Rendani

I can't believe Thato isn't even phased by my efforts. I've tried being nice to her, but she doesn't even show any interest in me. She's so beautiful, and I don't know, but I just her all for myself. If I ever have her, no scratch that when I have her I'll make sure I get her pregnant. I find myself fantasizing about her every chance she gets. I know it's wrong, but I can't help it.

She arouses me every time I see her and after I saw her in that tight dress, I couldn't help, but picture her firm, pink nipples and her tight, bright pussy. I honestly can't wait to dip my fingers in there.

Thendo always gets the beautiful girls and now it's my turn to shine as well. I didn't believe her for a second when she said they're just going for a night out, so I followed them.

I told Thendo I'm going to the garage to buy something and I saw them go into Madame Vivienne's club. We all know what happens in that club and for Thato to stoop so low, I didn't expect it really. I expected it from Rami, but not her. Thato is clearly hung up on that stupid ex of hers, she even hasn't bothered to remove their pictures together on Social Media. If she finds out that he's actually right under her nose, I won't stand a chance. I'll have to resort to desperate measures really quickly. I always get what I want and girls never say no to me.

Chapter Thirty Seven

1 Corinthians 10:13 - "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability,

but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

Thato

I got so nervous the moment we walked into one of the bedrooms. I tried to hide it, but Rami could clearly see that I am.

Rami: (whispering) ”Relax. You won't do anything, trust me.”

I nodded slightly as Adesh slowly walked towards us with his big belly. I can't even stomach looking at him. He slowly took his jacket off and came to sit inbetween us as we were sitting on the couch facing the bed.

Adesh: (smiling) ”So Rams, tell me what you two

would like to do for me tonight? I promise, I pay very good price tonight. I'll triple your fee. For both."

I felt very nervous as his filthy hand landed on my thigh. Rami is such a natural, she's not even worried.

Rami: "Adesh, tonight let me do the work. She's new, so you need to behave."

Adesh: (sigh) "Why don't you just accept my proposal and be my concubine? I promise I take good care of you - of both of you."

I'd never be anyone's concubine. He can miss me.

Rami: (smiling) "Maybe one day."

She pulled him away from the couch, as I sat there

watching nervously. I can't imagine myself doing such. I watched Rami slowly take off Adesh's pants while he was looking at me with a slight smirk on his face. I never understand why rich people do such vile things in the name of money. She slowly started sucking his penis and I felt like I could puke. Adesh slowly lay on the bed with the rest of his body, as he moaned in pleasure.

Adesh: "Ahh, Rami. You always know how to make me cum. Tell your friend to join us."

Rami: "Another time, Adesh."

She signaled to me with her eyes to leave. I didn't even think twice. I stormed out of there with my stomach turning. Vivian saw me and she didn't even ask any questions.

Vivian: "The driver is outside. Come, I'll escort you."

Thato: (relieved) "Thank you."

As we walked out I literally felt like I was about to vomit, but I kept swallowing my vomit. When we got outside, I saw the driver already waiting and Vivian looked at me.

Vivian: "Listen, Rami told me about your situation. The moment you walked in I knew this wouldn't be the job for you. I can hook you up with a Nanny job. A high profile client of mine is looking for a nanny for his grandchild. I'll be in touch."

She gave me a hug and I was shocked as I thought she would be mad at me for driving one of her high rollers away or something. As I was about to get into the car, I saw Rendani approach.

Rendani: "Hi, TT."

I froze for a second. No one ever calls me that except for Kg. Could it be a coincidence that he's decided to call me that? I don't know. Vivian looked at him puzzled and then at me.

Vivian: "Do you know this guy?"

Thato: "Yes, we live in the same building and attend at the same campus."

Vivian: "Okay then. Be safe."

Rendani: "Do you need a ride?"

I thought about riding with the driver, but then going with Rendani can't be a bad idea, right? I know him after all, well, sort of. I got into his car and he drove off. I thought he would head straight to the flat, but

he made a stop at the nearest McDonald's drive through. I feel a bit weird because he didn't ask me if I'd like to have food or anything. I guess I'm just used to Kg. Perhaps it's time I get him out of my mind.

Rendani: "Would you like something to eat?"

I'm actually a bit hungry, so I ordered a large Quarter Pounder Meal with some orange juice. He ordered a McFeast Meal and we headed home. I didn't even wait for us to get home, I just started eating my chips. We got to our building and I thought he'd press his floor number in the lift, but instead, he only pressed my floor number.

Thato: (puzzled) "Aren't you going to your flat?"

Rendani: "Oh, I thought perhaps you and I could chill together for a bit. You look like you went through

something hectic in that club.”

I thought it was just a coincidence seeing him outside the club at that specific time, but what if he was actually stalking me or something?

Thato: “Oh, okay.”

Rendani: “I apologize, I should have asked first.”

Yes, actually he should've.

Thato: “It's okay.”

We walked to my flat and he sat on the couch. I ate the rest of my food as he ate his. I feel a lot better now.

Rendani: "So, do you mind telling me what happened tonight?"

What makes him think that something actually happened? Rendani has this weird and quite annoying tendency of being too interested in my life. Even after I made it clear that I don't want a boyfriend. Even if I did, I wouldn't want it to be him.

Thato: "Excuse me?"

Rendani: "TT-"

Thato: "Don't call me that! Since when do you even call me that?!"

Rendani: (looking down) "I'm sorry, look, Thato. I don't think girls like you should be prostituting themselves for money. I mean, I can expect that

from Rami but not you. You're better than that, if you need money then I can take care of you.”

I felt myself fume from the pit of my stomach. Who the fuck does things like that?

Thato: (angered) ”Excuse me?! O nagana gore o mang (Who do you think you are), Rendani?!”

Rendani: ”I didn't mean it like that-”

I didn't even wait for him to finish.

Thato: ”You don't even know me and I'm starting to think you're stalking me or something! Who gave you the right to call me a prostitute?!”

Rendani: ”Thato, please...”

Thato: "Please leave. In fact, let me refund you for the food you bought me."

He was a bit hurt by my reaction.

Rendani: "I bought that food for you out of love."

I didn't even wait, instead, I took out some money from my purse and shoved it in his hand.

Thato: "Leave!"

He slowly walked out with his head down in shame. I don't get what Rendani's plan is with me, but he's annoying as fuck. I tried sleeping after he left but I was struggling to, so I sat in front of the tv and tried to watch something. Rami walked in hours later.

Rami: (worried) "Yoh, Tee, why o sa arabe phone (why weren't you answering your phone)?"

Thato: "I forgot I had put it on silent. I haven't checked it ever since I got back. Askies (Sorry)."

She hugged me and I hugged her back. I feel so relieved that she's back.

Rami: "I'm sorry you had to go through that, but I did warn you."

Yes, she did actually, plenty of times and I kept on insisting.

Thato: "Yes, you did. I'm so sorry for putting you in that awkward position."

Rami: "No need, man. I just want to make sure you're okay."

Thato: "To be honest, I'm traumatized. I mean, He's so fat and ugly and smelly."

Rami burst out in laughter. She's so relaxed for someone who just had to suck off a fat fuck.

Rami: "Thato, just be glad you don't love money like I do, hey. It's not so bad. It's just a blow job. Besides, I come bearing good news."

Thato: "What?"

She took out an envelope and handed it to me.

Rami: "Adesh was so excited to see a new face, even Vivian is surprised. He coughed out 20K each for the two of us. He says he'd like to see you again, but I told Vivian that it's not possible. You won't be going any more."

Im so shocked I couldn't believe it. All this money is so tempting, really.

Rami: "Don't even think of going back there again. Besides, she has hooked you up with a job for one of her prestige clients. You'll just watch the kid few times a week and drive the child around as often as needed. They're willing to pay you R10 000 a month just to work three times a week."

Yoh, I don't know what kind of client is willing to pay 10k for a nanny, but I'm all for it. Perhaps I was meant to go to the club tonight and meet Vivian. I think otherwise I would never have gotten this opportunity. My prayers have finally been answered.

Chapter Thirty Eight

1 John 4:18 - "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

Thato

I slept like a baby after last night's hectic ordeal. I'm very glad my night turned out to be great in any case. I'm still pissed at Rendani though and I doubt I'd ever want him near me ever again. I had a bit of a weird dream about Kg, though.

I dreamt seeing him and I kept calling after him, but he gave me one look and then kept walking further. It's like he didn't even recognize me in the dream, I'm not sure. I did however pray for his safety and health, wherever he might be. I have a very strange feeling

that he's alive somewhere, somehow. Today I don't have any lectures scheduled, so I have to go meet my new boss so we can sign the contract and even finalize my working hours and salary. I'm not complaining that I'd be working three to four days a week, sometimes during weekends.

I quickly said a prayer before I headed out. I don't have my license yet, so I don't want to get arrested or be given a ticket. I headed out and scouted if Rendani is stalking me, but luckily he wasn't around. I decided to call an Uber, even though Westcliffe is about 7 minutes away from Braamfontein, I still don't know Johannesburg that well to walk around alone. Apparently people get mugged here a lot.

I arrived in Northcliffe and my goodness, these houses are a real beaut. I've never encountered such beauty in my life before. I gave the Uber driver his fare and walked towards the gate. The gate is huge and long, and the walls as well. You cannot

see what's behind the walls, but the house is huge. A mansion of note, even from the outside it's that visible. I pressed the intercome and within seconds, a rather rude woman answered.

Woman: "Yes?"

Thato: (nervously) "Hi, I'm Thato Maake, I'm here for the Au pair position."

Woman: "Come in."

She opened the gate and I was in awe. I've never seen such a beautiful house before, only on tv. They must be filthy rich. I saw an Audi R8 that looks exactly like the one Rendani and Thendo like driving. Ah, everyone around this neighbourhood probably owns an Audi or something. It's a bit of a mission to walk towards the door, as the yard is very big.

No wonder everyone has a car around here. There's water fountains around the yard and beautiful roses and a huge garden. I passed a few gardeners and I greeted them with a smile. Luckily they greeted back. These people most probably have a lot of money. They must be loaded. I finally got to the door, after what felt like an eternity of walking. I knocked and I got the shock of my life.

Thato: (astonished) "Rendani?"

Rendani: (rudely) "Ja."

This guy must be stalking me or something. I'm supposed to meet the Nembilwi household. Oh, shit. I don't even know Rendani's surname. Could he be one of the people who actually live here?

Thato: (nervously) "I came here for-"

Rendani didn't even give me a second to speak. He shut me down in a very rude manner.

Rendani: "For the maid job, yes."

I frowned as I looked at him. Maid? Yoh he doesn't even call them helpers? Maybe I misunderstood what Rami told me. I thought I was going to be an au pair. Not that I mind cleaning and all that. I could do with the extra cash.

Rendani: "Ma weh! A tsho swika (She has arrived)!"

With that said he left me standing right there. I don't even know if I'm supposed to walk in or not. I was raised in such a way that you never enter the house without being invited in. So, I stood there like an idiot until Rendani came back. It feels like he's being deliberately rude towards me. Most probably because of the way I spoke to him last night. He

deserved it, and I won't change my statement.

Rendani: "What are you still waiting for? Ma doesn't have all day, you know."

Wow, I just walked in and followed him. I have no idea why he would be this rude instead of apologizing to me. The house is so big, and draped in real marble. The house is sparkling clean and I wonder how many people actually clean this house. We walked towards a huge lounge with the most beautiful black leather couches. We approached a very beautiful dark skinned woman.

Her skin is so flawless, you'd swear she's never had a single pimple in her life. Now I see where Rendani and Thendo get their looks. She's beautiful, but not very friendly to say the least. She gave me a filthy look which made me feel like I'm a bit inadequate or something. People have been very mean towards me for years, but I've never felt this intimidated in my

entire life.

Mrs. Nembilwi: (frowning) "Nahone Zwino (And now)? What is this, Rendani?"

By this she was referring to me, even making hand gestures. I've never been this humiliated before. I just stood there, forcing the tears back.

Rendani: "Zwine na khou zwi amba, Mma weh (What are you saying, Mom)?"

They're so rude without a care in the world. I don't understand a single fucking word of Venda, but do they even care?

Mrs. Nembilwi: "Your father never mentioned he's bringing a white girl here! How will she even clean?! Does she even know how to?!"

Wow, she's even talking about me as if I'm not even here. How condescending.

Rendani: (laughing) Mma weh (Mom, please). She's black, although I'm not sure if she is even 100% black.”

There is Rendani, rubbing salt into the deep wound.

Rendani: ”Hayi, your father likes bringing me random girls. You, what's your name?”

Thato: (nervous) ”My name is Thato, ma'am.”

Mrs. Nembilwi: ”Hmm, you do know that you're here for the maid position, right?”

Thato: "I was under the impression that I'd be an Au pair."

Mrs. Nembilwi: (frowning) "If you don't need this job, I can skip right to the next candidate. I mean a lot of people would kill for 10 grand."

Thato: "I didn't mean any offense, Ma'am. Yes, I'll take the job."

Mrs. Nembilwi: "Good. You start now. Rendani will show you to one of the bedrooms where you can get changed into your uniform."

Wow, just like that, I met my first boss ever, the rudest bitch in Northcliffe. In a split second, I went from Thato the student to Thato the Student / Maid. I work for Rendani's parents, how humiliating. God, you promised me a better life. Is this what I'm really meant for? Humiliation at the hands of people who

hate me for no reason?

Chapter Thirty Nine

Hebrews 11:1 – “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Thato

I don't know what Rendani's plan is or if it is a coincidence that he is here today at the same time I was supposed to meet my new Employer. I don't know, but I'm getting a very funny feeling about him. He's just not putting my mind at ease. He walked in front of me as we headed up the stairs, while walking up I saw big and very beautiful family portraits.

A particular one caught my eye, one with Rendani, Thendo, Mrs. Nembilwi, a man who I assume is their father, a much older looking woman who looks a lot

like Rendani and Thendo, and a very young girl, who also looks a lot like Mrs. Nembilwi, and another older looking guy who looks a lot like the man I presume to be the father.

They were all standing around an older looking man sitting on a big chair, wearing Traditional Venda attire. The old man is holding a uniquely carved knob-kierrie. I can't help but think that the man looks exactly like a Chief. Anyway, Rendani stopped in front of one of the doors and stared at me as he opened the door.

Rendani: "This is the room you'll be using when you're here. I know you're not used to Royalty, so don't get too comfy."

With that said, he walked away. Wow, so this guy is actually sour because I pretty much rejected him?

The fucking nerve! Does he really think I'd even

consider giving him a chance after his little petty stunts? He can miss me. I changed into the uniform, although it is way too big on me. I can't help but feel as if Mrs. Nembilwi is deliberately trying to make my life a living hell. I mean, doesn't she even work? I knelt down and said a little prayer before heading out.

"Dear God, I humble myself before you. I thank you so much for your mercy and Grace and for allowing me an opportunity to be here. I don't know what the future holds or what my purpose here is, but I ask you to lead the way, oh, Lord. Heal my heart and protect my Kg wherever he may be. Help me endure whatever is about to come, for you are the one who always fights my battles. You said in Proverbs 3:5-6 "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him, and He will act." I choose to trust in you Lord, fight all my battles for me and make me whole again. I pray it in Jesus Mighty name, Amen."

I got up hastily and walked downstairs, only to find Mrs. Nembilwi already waiting for me and tapping her foot.

Mrs. Nembilwi: (annoyed) “I know, you’re not used to such a big house and you were most probably raised in a tin house, but did you have to take so long?”

Wow, this woman is rude as fuck. Tin house? Really? She is a very boastful woman, if you ask me. That is something the Lord hates, people who idolize money and forget to humble themselves. She should ask Sonto what happens to people like them, that one is yet to receive her punishment.

Thato: “I apologize, Ma’am. I never meant to keep you waiting.”

Mrs. Nembilwi: “Next time, I won’t be so lenient! A lot of girls would kill for this job! You’re not special just because you’re light!”

There it is again. That condescending attitude of hers. What is it with people and their hatred towards the colour of my skin? I never asked God to make me the way I am. As she was done giving me a tongue lashing, a man who looks exactly like the one in the portrait I saw earlier on approached us.

Mr. Nembilwi: "Hai, Hai, Hai, Constance! Why are you shouting at this poor child like that?! What have I been telling you about being rude towards our helpers?!"

He looked seriously pissed, something tells me he is the exact opposite of his wife. I looked at Mrs. Nembilwi as she slowly looked down.

Mrs. Nembilwi: "I'm very sorry, My husband. I didn't mean to. She was taking long and I just upset. I'm having a bad day."

Really?

Mr. Nembilwi: “And why is she dressed like that?! She is supposed to be an Au Pair, not one of the helpers!”

I didn't even know what to do as Mrs. Nembilwi tried to look for an explanation and Rendani appeared out of nowhere. I guess he has a bad habit of appearing out of nowhere.

Rendani: “Hao, Daddy, she is fine like this. Besides, we need more help around the house.”

Mr. Nembilwi: (Snappy) “Was I talking to you, Rendani?!”

Rendani looked down in shame.

Rendani: "No, Daddy."

Mr. Nembilwi: "You never seem to learn your place. I don't know why you can never be like Thendo. I must always do the thinking for you."

Okay, now I get it. Rendani is a bit of a trouble maker and is living in Thendo's shadow. It must be tough being him.

Rendani: "Ah, you always compare me to Thendo, Dad."

Mr. Nembilwi: "I'll deal with you later."

He walked towards me and extended his hand. Wow, he is so kind and humble. His wife never even bothered to shake my hand.

Mr. Nembilwi: (smiling) “Good day, my name is Thodani Nembilwi. I’m mostly known as Tiger, but you can call me Baba.”

I didn’t even know if I should shake his hand or not, but not doing so is considered rude in my culture, so I went for it. Of course Rendani and Mrs. Nembilwi didn’t take it very well.

Thato: “Pleased to meet you, sir.”

Mr. Nembilwi: “Please, call me Baba. And please, get out of that hideous uniform. We’re not shooting some weird movie. Your duties will be taking care of Princess, my granddaughter. You’ll be driving her around every now and then, making her food, bathing her, that sort of thing.”

Wow, he speaks with so much authority. It seems

as if everyone is afraid of him in this house. His voice and command is so stern, he doesn't even need to ask to be respected.

Thato: "Okay, Baba."

Mrs. Nembilwi: (fuming) "But, Tiger! She is here to assist me with the house chores, I-"

Mr. Nembilwi: (interrupting) "She can help Mavis serve us if the need arises, otherwise, that is my final word. Unless you would like to go against my wishes?"

Mrs. Nembilwi: (looking down) "No, my husband."

Mr. Nembilwi: "Good. I'll be in my study if anyone needs me. No disturbances, please. Thato, it was very lovely to meet you. If anyone, I mean anyone

makes you feel uncomfortable, especially my idiot son over here, please do feel free to let me know. He has some very disrespectful tendencies.”

I just nodded, since I had no idea what to say. It is my first day here and already I am being subjected to this crazy family dynamic. Mr. Nembilwi left us there, while Mrs. Nembilwi looked at me like she was ready to kill.

Mrs. Nembilwi: “Go change your outfit! But be warned, you will not win my husband’s favour for very long. Don’t get too comfortable, the last maid who tried to get into my husband’s pants, didn’t make it out of here alive.”

She clicked her tongue and left me standing there gobsmacked. Was that a threat? Does she honestly think I want her husband for myself? Such an old man, though? Rendani looked at me with pure disgust.

Rendani: (Angry) “ Don’t get too comfy, missy. This is my house and you’ll still be under my command!”

Wow, hurt much, are we? He clicked his tongue too and left. I proceeded to the bedroom upstairs and changed back into my clothes. I don’t even know what to do as I am dressed in a maxi dress and jean jacket and sandals. I just hope that the rest of the family isn’t as sickening as Mrs. Nembilwi and Rendani. I can only hope that he changes his ways and stops making me feel uncomfortable. I wouldn’t want to lose a job that can change my life in an instant.

Chapter Fourty

Psalm 46:10 – “Be still and know that I am God.”

Thato

Rendani left a very sour taste in my mouth. I cannot believe that a guy as old as him would stoop so low just because he got rejected by a girl. What an idiot. I met a few of the family members, especially Princess. She is the three year old I will be looking after on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. At times I will be here on Saturdays, but that will be overtime. I mean, how nice is that? Mr. Nembilwi is the one who will actually be paying me. I signed my contract today, much to Mrs. Nembilwi's dismay.

I'm just glad Princess likes me, and so does her mother, Chedza. She is not really bothered by what Princess does, since everything is pretty much done for her. I also met Rendani and Thendo's younger sister, Amber, who is in matric, so we're pretty much the same age.

I really like her, she has all this money flowing around her, but she is no phased at al. She likes the simple life and always refers to her family as

pretentious. I don't get the story behind that, but I didn't fret about it. I don't get why she gets to have an English name, but anyway. I am still yet to meet the first born son, Mulalo.

Apparently he is some big shot lawyer and lives in Jozi as well. These people are seriously balling. It must be really nice to wake up and not worry about where you'll get your next meal from. I mean, Mrs. Nembilwi's biggest stress is chipping her nail and when she will be getting her next Malaysian weave shipped to her.

Other than that, she worries about her weight, her husband's eating habits and also about the little fictitious movie that keeps playing in her head of me trying to steal .her man. I don't get it, but well, it is what it is.

Speaking of lunch, I met Ausi Mavis, the house Helper. She is a very nice lady and I really like her - a

lot. She is like the granny I never had. She is in her late fifties, and when I asked her why she is still working, she said that she won't get a job anywhere else that pays her this well.

She says her madame is a pain in the ass, but Mrs. Nembilwi cannot live without Mavis. Apparently Mavis raised all these kids and changed their diapers – even little Princess. She says all these kids are spoiled rotten by Mrs. Nembilwi, but Tiger draws the line.

She says she has never met a male boss that is so respectful, but that I must be very careful around him. He has a tendency of liking young girls, no wonder Mrs. N thinks I will steal her man from him. That's the thing with married men, they always think they can do better.

They just never know what to do with their money. As I was preparing the rest of the lunch with Ausi

Mavis, Mrs. N walked into the kitchen with an annoyed look on her face. What's new?

Mrs. N: "Thato, my husband wants you to take his lunch to him in his study."

I looked at Ausi Mavis who just gave me a blank stare, but deep down I knew what she was trying to tell me.

Mrs. N: (sigh) "Zwino (So)? Are you just going to stand there and stare at me? Do you get paid to stare at me, Thato?"

Bathong (goodness) this woman. I haven't even reached pay day yet and already she is making it seem like I'm an ungrateful brat.

Thato: "Apologies, Ma'am, I'll take the food right

away.”

Mrs. N just clicked her tongue and left in haste. I quickly picked up the tray and Ausi Mavis held my arm.

Ausi Mavis: “Be careful of him. You are a prayer warrior, Thato. Just keep your cool and be careful.”

I looked at her and I knew she meant every word. Whatever Tiger is capable of doing, I get the feeling he has done it before. I knocked swiftly on his study door and my heart started palpitating as he told me to enter. I did as told and found him sitting on his chair, behind his office desk.

He smiled so widely as soon as he saw me walk in. I don't know, the smile on his face is not the same, genuine smile I saw a few hours ago. His eyes seem to be wandering around, and inviting themselves to

what is underneath my clothes.

I don't know, but I get the feeling he is undressing me with his eyes. I started shaking as I stood in front of him while his eyes just made trails up and down my body. I nearly spilled the juice as I hastily put the tray down on his table. The shock was overwhelming my body. What the fuck is going on with this family?

Thato: (shaky) "I... I'm very sorry, Mr. Nembilwi. Please forgive me for my clumsiness. I'll go get a cloth to wipe it all off."

I was about to hurry out, when he called me.

Mr. N: "Don't worry about that, Thato. Mistakes happen. Please, sit."

Eish, I was seriously dreading this. I really didn't want to sit down with him, but once again it would be rude to decline. Who knows? I might get fired for declining his offer. I sat down hesitantly.

Mr. N: (smiling) "You are a very lovely girl, Thato. Very beautiful, too. What is a girl like you really doing here?"

Thato: (nervous) I, I'm a Mechanical Engineering student, and I needed a job like this to help me pay off my fees."

Mr. N: "Hmm, I see. You must be a very bright girl, Thato. No wonder my boy has fallen head over heels with you. If I didn't know better, I'd say he is indeed obsessed with you."

Thato: (frowning) "Excuse me?"

Mr. N: "Rendani, he is completely crazy about you. He has been stalking your Facebook and Instagram pages. He does not take rejection very well, you know. That boy is really out of his mind."

I started feeling a bit dizzy. Rendani has been stalking and watching my every move?! No bloody wonder he keeps popping up everywhere I go. Perhaps Tiger is a good father. He is informing me about this so he can only mean well, right?

Mr. N: "You know, he doesn't take rejection very well, because he is a boy. I'm a man, Thato, A very patient man. I can give you all your heart's desires, I can even pay all your fees and costs upfront, if you just agree to be mine."

What the actual fuck?! My eyes literally popped out. I don't know what to do, and honestly I have no idea why my life always turns into such a crazy spiral.

Thato: (scared) "I, I don't follow."

Mr. N: "Let me be straightforward with you. I really like you, Thato. I want you to be my mistress. I promise, we will be very discreet. I won't expect anything from you other than our initial agreement. We can even sign a contract. I can take good care of you if you just let me have you."

I'm so overwhelmed with shock that I can't even speak. I just looked at him, and though he would say it was a dream or something, but nope. He was dead serious.

Mr. N: "I'll give you a week to think about it. Just don't take too long."

I don't even know what to say. I tried speaking, but my throat was extremely dry. I couldn't even open

my mouth, because my tongue betrayed me instantly.

Mr. N: "You may leave."

I quickly go up and walked out of that study in high speed. I was about to go to Ausi Mavis, but Mrs. N stopped me. Yoh, this woman is so insecure it is not even funny. It is unattractive and very distasteful.

Mrs. N: (fuming) "Why did you take so long in there? What did he say to you?"

Thato: "Nothing. He just asked me about my school work."

Hao, Mrs. N slapped me so hard out of the blue that I fell to the ground. Everyone rushed to the scene to see why I was screaming after the shock of her

slapping me. I held my burning cheek and I could feel her eyes pierce through my skin, filled with nothing but venom.

Amber: (shocked) “Ma! Why would you do such a thing?!”

I was still in shock as I did not even say anything.

Chedza: “Are you okay, sis?”

I had to pretend.

Thato: “Uh, yes, I am. Thank you.”

As I was about to get up, Mrs. N was shouting and cursing at me again, until a tall, dark and very handsome guy walked in. He looks a lot like Mr. N.

They breathe the same aura and he has the same authority in his voice as his father. This must be Mulalo.

Mulalo: "What is happening here?! Ma, have you started again?!"

Everyone kept quiet and stared at him with the same fear as they looked at his father with.

Mrs. N: "This witch is trying to steal my husband from me!"

Mulalo: "Did you witness her trying to do so, or are you throwing your insults as you please again?"

Mrs. N: (frustrated) "No! I swear she is, Mulalo! You can even see the way she is dressed-"

Mulalo: (interrupting) “Don’t you dare, Ma! She could sue you and get you arrested. Gosh, you can be so boring at times.”

He extended his hand to help me get up.

Mulalo: “Hi, I’m Mulalo.”

I looked at him and I saw the most beautiful jaw bone God has ever created. Those teeth wow, I haven’t seen such beauty ever since Kg.

Thato: “Thato...”

I saw Rendani look at me with pure rage more than hatred. It is like he saw the spark or whatever it is people call it. This guy has this gorgeous aura around him. He looks so neat and clean and must probably be smart too. But, could the Nembilwi

brothers all have a defect of disrespecting women?

It seems like they're all born with that gene. Thendo, on the other hand is just a flirt, and has never disrespected a female for the little while I have known him, while Rendani has a very hectic reputation on campus.

Tiger, on the other hand is a sick perve. I don't know what to make of this situation, but it has barely been one day and already I have been abused by my so called madame. Can this get any worse?

Chapter Fourty One

Deutoronomy 8:18 – “But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as is today.”

Thato

Mulalo still had his hand stretched out, while the rest of the people who stood before me were watching with mixed emotions; Chedza and Amber's faces were full of pity; while Mrs. N and Rendani were overwhelmed with hate and pure rage. I reached for his hand as he slowly helped me up, with my one hand still on my cheek. Fuck, this woman can slap. I've been slapped before, but this time, shame, I'm feeling it.

Mulalo: "How are you feeling? Let me see."

I slowly removed my hand from my burning cheek. As I removed it, I could feel it sting a bit. Mulalo took one look at my cheek and clenched his jaw immediately. His face hardened, with his veins popping out of his neck and forehead. He turned to look at his mother and I have honestly never seen a grown man scold his mother like that before in my entire life.

Mulalo: (enraged) “No vha ni tshi khou ri mini (you were saying)? What was your reason to slap this poor girl on her first day of work on top of that?”

Mulalo has such authority and sternness, I doubt his mother would shout at him. In fact, Mrs. N looked a bit apprehensive.

Mrs. N: “I... I, I was just scolding her for her inappropriate behaviour. I didn't mean to slap her, things just got out of hand.”

She looked down on distress.

Mulalo: “Funny enough that is not the song you were singing when I walked in here. I'll deal with you later. Come.”

As he pulled me towards the direction of the kitchen, Mr. N walked out of his study and stopped us.

Mr. N: "What's with all this commotion?!"

Mr. N's face immediately hardened when he saw me holding my cheek. It must have turned red, and it feels swollen. He turned to look at Mrs. N and immediately walked up to her, fuming.

Mr. N: "What did you do, Constance?! Don't you ever learn?!"

Mrs. N: (looking down) "I was just reprimanding her for her bad behaviour, my love."

Mr. N: "To the bedroom. Now!"

Mrs. N slowly walked after her husband without even looking at any of us. I don't know, but something tells me Mr. N is a bit abusive towards his wife,

especially when he does not get what he wants or if she goes against his wishes. What is going to happen to me if I refuse to accept his proposal? I am frightened, petrified actually. Mulalo walked with me towards the kitchen and left the rest of the family standing in the middle of the foyer.

I could feel Rendani's eyes pierce my back as I walked towards the kitchen. Mulalo put me on one of the high chairs as he went for the first aid kit. I don't know, but he reminds me a lot of KG. Oh, my goodness, his height, his complexion, his tidiness and his gorgeous scent just reminds me a lot of Kg. I cannot help but think of him. Eish, but God why, though? Why did he have to leave me?

Mulalo: "This will probably sting you a little bit."

He put a warm cloth on my cheek with some anti-septic liquid. I squirmed a bit in pain at first, but I felt a lot better after a few seconds. I don't know

why he is being so nice to me all of a sudden. I mean, his brother is being a dick towards me now that I have said no to his advances, and his father has made a proposal to me. I am a bit offended, honestly.

Mulalo: (smiling) “Forgive me for not formally introducing myself. Hi, Mfumakadzi (Queen), My name is Mulalo Nembilwi, I am the first born son of that dickhead Todani and the bitch who just slapped you. How unfortunate.”

Wow, talk about straight talk. I thought he would say he was just joking, but he was dead serious. I don't know why he would refer to his parents as such, but who am I to judge? He even called me Mfumakadzi (Queen). I have heard that somewhere on Muvhango, but what on earth does it even mean?

Thato: “Uhm, Hello Mulalo. Pleased to meet you. I'm Thato, Thato Maake.”

Mulalo: (frowning) "That's it? Aren't you going to give me a proper introduction just like I did?"

I don't even know what to say since he just called his dad a dickhead and his mom a bitch.

Thato: "Oh, uhm, well, I am the daughter of the late Petunia Maake and well, I am a Mechanical Engineering student at Wits. This is my first year and I am just here to earn extra money for my studies."

Mulalo: "I see. You're too beautiful to be treated like a servant, Mfumakadzi (Queen)."

Thato: (puzzled) "May I ask what Mfumakadzi means?"

Mulalo: (Chuckling) "Oh, forgive me, it means

Queen.”

That laugh, it is so infectious, just like Kg’s laugh. My goodness he also has dimples and perfectly shaped and sparkly teeth. Yoh, I cannot help but see a glimpse of Kg in him. My mind must be playing tricks on me. It has been months, and by now he would have found me if he really did love me, right? I didn’t even realize I was deep in thought and gazing at him like a love struck teenager.

Mulalo: (frowning) “Did I say something wrong, Mfumakadzi (Queen)?”

I quickly came back to mother earth.

Thato: “Oh, no, forgive me. It’s just that you remind me of someone.”

Mulalo9: "Someone good, perhaps?"

Thato: "Let's just say it is someone I'd rather not talk about right now."

Mulalo: "As you wish, Mfumakadzi (Queen)."

Thato: "Forgive me. Thank you so much for helping me out, but I really have to get going. I'll only be back here on Wednesday."

I could see a flash of disappointment on his face.

Mulalo: "Oh, well, I cannot wait to see you then."

Is this guy flirting with me or something? I can't even tell. He must be too old for me anyway, probably in his thirties.

Thato: "Okay."

I was about to walk upstairs and fetch my bag, when he stopped me.

Mulalo: "How are you going to get home? I can take you there."

I don't even know if it is a wise idea to allow him to drive me there.

Thato: "I don't know if it is a good idea..."

Mulalo: "Jo'burg streets aren't safe for young girls like you. Go fetch your bag, I'll take you."

I slowly walked up and fetched my bag. As I walked

out and headed downstairs, I saw Mr. N walking out of his room, buckling his belt. I hurried down the stairs to avoid him, and Mulalo noticed the sudden fear in me. Rendani approached me as well, and stopped me right in front of his brother, who looked ready to kill.

Rendan: “Ja, neh. So, you rejected me just so you could cause chaos in my family?”

Thato: (puzzled) “Excuse me?”

Rendani: “You heard me. You think you’re so smart, Thato, but be warned, I’m watching you.”

Mulalo pushed him out of the way and gave him a stern warning.

Mulalo: “Watch what you say, boy. She does not

want you, and she is not your type in any case.”

Rendani: (chuckling) “You have always had a soft spot for servants.”

Mulalo: “It’s much better than falling for real diamonds who don’t even want you back. It must hurt, hey?”

Rendani’s smirk suddenly disappeared while Mulalo gently grabbed me and pulled me away from Rendani. Perhaps this job was not a blessing in disguise after all. I don’t think I am ready for such drama. Maybe I just need to end it, but then again, I’d just be going there for a few days a week, right? Mulalo opened the door for me as I entered. Wow, this guy drives a Jaguar.

This family must be swimming in money, even though I still don’t know what they actually do to

earn that money. Mulalo started the car as we drove off. I've always thought that rich people had it easy and that they lived happy lives, until I actually realized that all that money is just for show. It masks all the rejection, unhappiness and regrets that they have buried deep inside of their hearts. I realized all of that just after a day of being in the Nembilwi household. Such is life.

Today "Tiger" Nembilwi

I couldn't believe my eyes when I first saw that beautiful girl. Yes, I might be over 50, but I still have a lot of fire burning inside of me. I always heard Rendani talk about a girl he is in love with and that her name is Thato. When Vivian sent me a message, saying that she has someone who could be an au pair for my grandchild, I hoped it would be her. She is one in a million, and Rendani didn't lie.

She is hot and I just can't help, but imagine my lips

on those pink, bright nipples of hers. Ever since she came to my study, I deliberately summoned her here just to imagine her naked. Her bright skin tells me that her pussy is as bright as they come. I can't wait to suck on that. I always get what I want, and judging by how desperate she is for money, I will be sure to get her – one way or another.

I always rush to get these girls and they always bore me within a week, but with this one, I'll have to play my cards right. I am going to be patient with her and hopefully she will be my mistress, for real. I intend on making her mine and mine alone. Sure, I love Constance, but she is such a nag and has become a bit of a bore. A man cannot be having the same meal for years without getting some dessert outside.

While I was in my study day dreaming of Thato, and looking at her pictures on Instagram. I had to unzip my pants and rub my dick while staring at her

pictures. I had to imagine her sucking on it with her gorgeous pink lips. I was about to reach my climax, when I heard all the commotion downstairs. Shit, this family will be the death of me one day.

That is when I went down and found Thato holding her cheek. I knew then that Constance had started with her shit again. This bitch always wants to ruin my chance at happiness. I summoned her to our bedroom, because she just has to get punished. We walked in and I shut the door behind me.

Tiger: "Constance. What is wrong with you?!"

Constance: (frightened) "Please, forgive me, my love. I... I couldn't help, but notice the way you looked at her. I know that you want her, just like you always want all these young girls who work for us."

Tiger: "Constance, you know that I'm a man of many

desires. I give you all the money in the world. You have a comfortable life and everything you want because of me. You don't even have to lift a finger, man. What more do you want from me?"

Constance: (teary) "I want you to be my husband. Mine and mine alone, Todani. Why can't you see that your behaviour is breaking me?"

Tiger:" When you married me you promised to be there for me through thick and thin. I need this, can't you see? You alone cannot satisfy my needs. You refused to let me take a second wife, so you have no choice but to let me enjoy other women. Besides, why are you complaining when I always come back home to you?"

Constance: (pleading) "Please, Todani. I'll do anything for you. Just please, love me like you used to. Please..."

I unbuckled my pants as I looked at her.

Tiger: “You like wasting my time. I specifically told you to treat that child well, but you just had to go against my wishes. You even slapped her, Constance. Now, bent down. You know what to do.”

Constance: (pleading) “Please, Tiger, I...”

I slapped her so hard that she nearly fell on the floor.

Tiger: “I said, get on your knees!”

She did as instructed. I just love it when she gets scared and frightened. I love inflicting pain on women, it gives me great pleasure. She got on her knees and sucked on my cock just the way I like it. That’s the nice part about being married to women

like Constance, you find them broke and you upgrade them. They end up worshipping you and giving you anything you want.

Tiger: (moaning) "Aah, fuck! Yes, Connie. Suck that dick, baby. Just the way I like it."

She sucked harder and harder and I shot my load all over her face.

Tiger: "Aah, thank you, my wife. I love you."

Constance: "I love you too."

Tiger: "Now wipe that shit off your face and go book yourself and your friends into a spa, my treat."

I walked out of there and buckled my belt as I saw

Thato walking out of one of the bedrooms. I wanted to speak to her, but I saw her running down towards Mulalo. This boy is really testing me. Thato is mine, and Rendani should also know that.

Besides, Mulalo stands no chance because once Thato finds out that he is actually married, it will be game over for him. There can never be three bulls in one kraal and they both need to be reminded.

Chapter Fourty Two

Proverbs 16"28 – "A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends."

Thato

Mulalo asked for my number before dropping me off, and I gave it to him. I don't know, a part of me gave it to him because he reminds me of Kg. Seeing Mulalo gives me some kind of hope, peace of mind

that a glimpse of Kg is there somehow. He is a nice guy, but I just don't even think I can trust anyone from that family. As I got out of his car, I found Rami about to walk into the building. She stopped as she saw me approach.

Thato: "Hey friend."

Rami: (frowning) "And then? Why is one of Tiger's sons dropping you off?"

Hao, Rami knows Tiger and his sons?

Thato: (frowning) "You know Mulalo?"

Rami: Yes. You didn't answer my question, though. Are you busy with that guy?"

Thato: (laughing) “Don’t be ridiculous. I literally met him an hour ago.”

She looked at my face and got frightened.

Rami: “What happened to your face?!”

Thato: “Come, let’s go in and I’ll tell you all about my day over a bottle of wine.”

Rami walked in with me while she examined my face the whole time we were walking together. I’d most probably have reacted the same had I been her. We got into the flat and I opened us a bottle of wine with some ice and sat down next to her. I gulped it all down, while she barely touched hers. The whole time she was staring at me, waiting for me to start talking.

Rami: “Talk.”

Thato: (sigh) “Eish, friend. I had no idea my day was going to turn out like this.”

I told her everything that happened from Mrs. Nembilwi’s rude introduction, to Rendani’s pettiness, to Mr. Nembilwi’s outrageous proposal to meeting Mulalo and his generous gesture. The whole time she kept gasping and covering her mouth in shock. When I got to Mr. Nembilwi’s part, she got angry, really angry.

Rami: “That son of a bitch! Wa go tlwaela (he has disrespected you), Thato. I have to let Vivian know about this.”

Which brings me to my next question. How does she know Tiger and his kids?

Thato: “How do you know Tiger and Mulalo?”

Rami: "He is one of the premium card holders at my aunt's club. You can't go back there, Tee. Those people are dodgy and shady as fuck. I was a bit suspicious about the salary, but now that I know you're working for Tiger, I can't let you go back there."

Thato: (frowning) "What do you mean?"

Rami: (sigh) "Look, all I know is that Tiger is very shady. He likes to have rough sex with a few of our girls. I refused to be of service to him when I noticed his abusive tendencies. He likes choking and beating the shit out of the women he fucks and pays good money too, about 30 grand per session. He has always cheated on Constance and since she is one of Vivian's close friends, she is also one of the regular customers at the club."

I frowned as I looked at her. What does she mean she is a regular at the club?

Rami: "You see, my aunt has a very elite sex club. It only depends on the kind of work you're willing to do. The more you're willing to do, the more these rich assholes pay you for it. There are certain nights that are only for women, mostly Wednesday and Sunday evenings. A lot of Vivian's friends come to the club to fuck boys younger than them since their old husbands prefer fucking younger girls in their spare time."

This is some real, freaky shit.

Thato: "What exactly do these men do for a living?"

Rami: "They mostly run businesses as a front for their illegal activities. They are all drug dealers."

I got the shock of my life. So Tiger is a drug dealer?

Does this now mean Mulalo is a part of it too?

Thato: "So, does this mean Rendani and Thendo are part of it too?"

Rami: "I don't know. I only met them the first time that day we arrived. I have never seen them at the club, I have only seen Tiger and Mulalo once or twice. But he is so reserved, he never chooses a girl. He stopped coming after the third time, Vivian says that Tiger wanted to introduce him to this life, but he just won't budge. He does not seem like his father, but I don't trust them. I think Vivian should look for another job for you."

I don't know if I actually should wait for another job. What if it never comes? I mean ten thousand rand is a pretty good deal for looking after a child and cleaning up after rich people, right?

Thato: (worried) “But, Rami, what if I don’t get a better deal than this?”

Rami: “It is a lot better than to stress yourself out like this and sell your soul to the devil himself. I don’t trust those people, and neither should you. Please, trust me. I’ll talk to Vivian, but in the mean time, trust me.”

Thato: (sigh) “Rami, I cannot expect you to take care of me. I need to hustle on my own.”

Rami: “I get that you’re proud, baby, I do. But now, I need you to lean on me. Any other job is better than working for a pervert who is ready to rape you.”

I can’t believe I didn’t think of it like that. What if I was to get stuck in the house alone with Tiger and he ended up raping me? I cannot believe I was that naïve. I was willing to sacrifice my common sense

all for money. This is freaking me out so badly, that only now it has begun sinking in. I slowly sank on the couch, as tears escaped my eyes. Rami rushed to my side and hugged me tight.

Rami: "Don't worry, boo. Trust me, you're my sister now. I won't let anything happen to you. Not while I'm alive."

Vivian Letswalo

My name is Vivian Letswalo, proud owner of Madame Vivienne club. I love my job even though I had to start from scratch to make it happen. Nothing in this life is for free, and I knew at the tender age of 13 that sex sells. I was always the black sheep in my family. Yes, Rami's mother and I are sisters, but she was always the favourite.

So, that led me to do odd things and ultimately I

ended up dating at a very young age. My family never knew that part of me, they just thought of me as a wild child since I always used to party. Until in Varsity, where I met the man of my dreams. He was older than me – way older than me. He promised me heaven and earth, until he dumped me when I told him I was pregnant with his child.

I was devastated, and even more devastated when I had to abort the child. From that day onwards, my heart became stone cold towards men. I hate men with every fibre of my being, and the only way I knew how to make money, was by hitting them where it hurts – their pockets. These filthy bastards don't give a shit about us nor our feelings.

My so called man of my dreams came back into my life when I finished my degree. Yes, he was broke as fuck and on the brink of depression. His wife had left him and he only had about R200 000 left in his account. From a multi-millionaire, to nearly broke, all

because he chose to spend his money on bitches. So, I cleaned him out one night when he was drunk and I left him.

I took out a loan and I put the money together to build Madame Vivienne. He committed suicide, but who gives a shit? I took what was due to me. I am the queen of Jo'burg and all these men who think they can own women, answer to me. They come here for a good time, but I call the shots. They can't handle being bossed by a woman at times, but it is what it is.

They all answer to my husband, David Groen, also known as Gringo. Yes, I chose to marry even after all the bullshit I went through. I don't have children of my own due to the abortion and the complications thereof, but I became a stepmother to Gringo's children when his wife died. He is a bit old, 55 to say the least, while I'm only 40. I love him so much and he is a man that actually gets me. They say

business and pleasure don't mix, but with Gringo and I, everything just gels.

We make money together and all these motherfuckers answer to us. If they can't handle the heat, they need to leave. Today was yet another hectic day, but I am glad to see my husband. I found him cooking up a storm, as usual. He is not your usual drug lord, you know.

Vivian: "Hey, honey."

Gringo: (smiling) "Finally, my darling wife arrives."

He kissed me passionately and handed me a glass of wine. Just what I need.

Gringo: "How was your day, today?"

Vivian: (sigh) "Good, love. Just one of those days,

you know it is.”

Gringo: “Perhaps you should retire and get someone else to run it for you, someone like Rami.”

Vivian: “You know I want her to finish her studies, and besides, I don’t want her to go down this route. I have tried to get her to stop this. I even offered her a managerial position, but she refused.”

Gringo: “Invite her over for lunch, I’ll knock some sense into her.”

Vivian: “What would I do without you?”

Gringo: “Well, let me think. You would be sad, lonely and very much sexually frustrated.”

I couldn't help but burst out in laughter. My husband, he is just something else. A gangster and joker all in one.

Gringo: "So, did you manage to speak to that girl you told me about?"

Vivian: "Well, yes, but not today. I haven't spoken to her yet. I'd like to know how her day went, although I was a bit skeptical of taking her to Tiger's house. You know how he gets."

Gringo: "Don't worry, love. If he tries something funny, I'll personally deal with him. I deal with drugs, not manipulating and raping young girls."

I guess he is right. There is just something about Thato, I cannot pin point it. She is so smart and humble, I cannot help but want to do something for her. I want to see her skin thicken a bit. She needs

to learn that it is a jungle out there and that women need to learn how to fend for themselves in case shit hits the fan. As I was talking to my husband, while he was cooking, my phone rang.

Gringo: "Who is it?"

Vivian: "It's Rami."

Gringo: "Answer it. It might be important."

Vivian: "Rami. Dilo di siame (Is everything okay)?"

Rami: "Hello, Mmane (aunt). Yes, well, no, not really."

Vivian: (frowning) "What is it?"

Rami: (sigh) “Ke (It’s) Tiger. O flopile (He messed up).”

She told me everything that happened from Connie slapping her, to Tiger making advances towards her. I can’t believe this. These two are fucking with my business image and when you fuck with me, you fuck with my livelihood. Thato may not be family of mine, but I take all the girls that work for me as my daughters. This guy needs to be taught a serious lesson.

Vivian: (pissed) “Okay, my girl. Thank you for notifying me. Gringo wants you to have lunch with us on Saturday. Bring Thato with.”

Rami: “Okay, aunty. Bye.”

I hung up and sighed in frustration.

Gringo: "And?"

Vivian: "Just as I feared. Tiger offered Thato a mistress position. I mean, she is only 1, for crying out loud!"

Gringo: (Angry) "That motherfucker doesn't listen. I forgave him when he fucked my cousin's daughter, but this. This has gone too far. Perhaps you should just help Thato with her fees, love."

Vivian: "Believe me, G. I have thought about it, but I just can't hand it over to her like that. She needs to work for it, somehow."

Gringo: "I know when you call me G, you're dead serious. Tell you what, let me meet her and then we can see how we can deal with all this. I mean, she sounds like a very bright girl. And you haven't stopped talking about her ever since you met her."

Vivian: "She just reminds me of my younger self, you know. The me I was before I became Madame Vivienne."

Gringo: "I get you, my love. Come, let's eat. We can deal with all of this tomorrow."

Chapter Fourty Three

Hebrews 4:16 – "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Thato

I slept very well, until I had a very weird dream yet again. I could not get through to Kg in the dream, I mean I was still calling out to him and all he did was just look back at me and kept moving forward. It is a very strange dream, which causes me to become restless every single time I have it. I wake up and

pray every time, and then I struggle going back to sleep. I do however, manage to do my assignments in the early hours of the morning, so at least something productive does come out of my insomnia.

I am glad I haven't seen or heard anything from Rendani ever since his rude behaviour towards me. I am most grateful for Rami, if she wasn't in my life I honestly would not know what to do, really. I decided to get up before my alarm rang as I have a 7am lecture today.

I made some breakfast for Rami, a very nice omelette, filled with avocado, chicken livers and baby tomatoes. I topped it off with a blueberry and plain yoghurt smoothie. I don't know if my heart will ever make peace with the fact that Kg is no longer a part of my life. I seem to be doing a lot of things, seeing a lot of things that remind me of him. As I was about to call Rami from her room, she appeared.

Thato: (smiling) "Good morning, sunshine. I was just

about to call you.”

Rami: “You didn’t have to, really. The gorgeous aroma of your food called me out of my room on its own. Girl, where did you learn to make such nice food?”

Thato: (chuckling) “Come on, you haven’t even tasted it.”

Rami: “I don’t have to. I can tell that it tastes just as good as it looks. The same way a person can tell you’re beautiful inside and outside just by looking at you. Your beautiful grey eyes tell a story.”

Thato: (looking down) “Seems like you’re the only person who seems to think so. I mean pretty much everyone has something negative to say about the way that I look. At times, I hate looking at myself.”

Rami: "Brika net daar (hold it right there). You cannot even talk such shit about yourself, Thato. Have you actually looked in the mirror, hun? I mean, actually looked?"

I shrugged my shoulders and tried to change the subject.

Thato: "Eat before your food gets cold."

Rami: "You cannot dodge me. Bona (Look), Tee, you're so gorgeous and life is way too short not to believe that. Confidence is key, babe. I mean Kg is literally not the only man who saw the value in you. Do you know why people keep insulting and making fun of you?"

Thato: "Why?"

Rami: "Well, for starters, because they're ugly."

I burst out in laughter. Rami, mara (though).

Rami: "I'm serious. But on the real though, the people who always feel the need to insult you lack what you possess. You possess natural beauty, brains and class money cannot buy, sis. The sooner you realize that, the better. You're one rare gem and some look forever for your kind, but never find it. Hence, people like Tiger want to go out of their way to destroy you, because they cannot phathom anyone else having you. People always want to ruin a good thing, unfortunately such is life. Even God knew before he created us, that we would all be sinners, one way or another. Greed comes in many forms, Tee, and one of those forms is when a man wants to possess more than one woman because he himself lacks natural power and grace. You truly are one of a kind."

I felt myself tearing up as she told me that. I know she is supposed to say such things to me as my friend, but that felt so genuine, like she spoke honestly and from the heart. I really don't know what to say to her.

Thato: "You're going to make me cry, Rami, man."

Rami: "You are still yet to cry, because it's your birthday this weekend, and I need you on you're A-game. I don't need you sulking when you're turning 18."

Thato: (surprised) "Hao (goodness), Rami. You really didn't have to plan anything for me, you know."

Rami: "You're right, I didn't have to, but I wanted to. So, just accept it, you're stuck with me."

I laughed as I prayed for the food and we dug in. I have never heard Rami pray for us, she always insists that I do it. Which reminds me that I need to ask her about her relationship with God.

Rami: (impressed) “Wow, girl! Where did you learn how to cook like this?! I bet you didn’t learn this from your aunt Sophie or Koko (granny) Maria.”

We both burst out laughing.

Thato: “Actually, I learnt a lot of fancy stuff from Kg. Mama taught me how to cook, but he taught me a lot about Italian dishes and the likes. I can even bake a dish or two.”

Rami: “Shame, man, friend. We really need to find that guy. I mean he has got you so fucked up and you still blush whenever you talk about him. Aowa (No), man. You really need to get laid as in ASAP.”

Thato: “Don’t be silly, man. I’m perfectly fine without sex. I don’t even crave it.”

Rami: “That’s because you’re in the early stages of withdrawal. Wait for the symptoms, Tee. Yoh, it’s a nightmare, I tell you.”

Thato: “Hao, why are you acting like you’ve been getting laid when you haven’t had any for a while?”

Rami: “Eish, ja, ne. You’re so right about that. I really need to get busy and look for the next available dick. Maybe Thendo might be my next dick fest.”

I burst out in laughter as I listened to her crazy stories. We cleaned up after eating and got ready for Campus. We got there and thought we’d call Khanyi, since we haven’t seen her for days. She has really been scarce. I was about to dial her number,

when Rami exclaimed in shock.

Rami: "What the fuck?!"

I turned around and looked towards the direction she was staring and I got the shock of my life. Rendani had his arm around Khanyi's arm and they were smiling while he occasionally kissed her cheek. They stopped as they approached us. Rami didn't look happy at all, while I was stunned and speechless.

Rendani: "Rami, Thato."

He gave me one of his disgusted looks as usual when he said my name. I don't even care anymore. He didn't even wait for us to respond, not that we were going to anyway, and he turned to Khanyi.

Rendani: "Baby, I'll see you later, okay?"

Khanyi: "Okay."

He gave her a passionate kiss which lasted about a minute or so. He then gave Rami and I one last disgusted look before he left. Rami and I still stared at Khanyi hoping she would say this is all just a sick joke.

Rami: "And then?"

Khanyi: "Hao, and then what?"

Thato: "What do you mean and then what? What is that all about?"

Khanyi: "Hao, what do you mean? Rendani and I are

officially dating now. See? I told you I'd get him."

Truly speaking she never said that. She just kept hoping she would get to be his girlfriend. Why do I get the feeling this guy is trying to date Khanyi just so that he could find a reason to see me or something?

Rami: (folding hands) "He's using you. Don't trust that guy."

Khanyi just seemed to get annoyed after Rami said that.

Khanyi: "I just became one of the hottest guys on Campus's girlfriend. Why can't you two at least be happy for me?"

Ai, Khanyi.

Thato: “We are, but we’re just looking out for you. I’d hate to see you get hurt.”

Khanyi: “You really like acting like an expert, Thato, when all the while you have never had a relationship to last you a whole year.”

Okay, ouch. That really hurt me, it actually cut deeply. She didn’t have to take it there. I just kept quiet in shock and moreover disappointment more than anything.

Rami: (annoyed) “Khanyi, you really don’t have to be a bitch about it. You’ve been a girlfriend for what? A mere two minutes and now you feel you’ve grown enough clits to insult Thato like that? All we’re saying is that you need to keep your eyes open, that’s all. I’m going to class. Tee, later.”

Rami walked away looking seriously pissed. I am

too, but I just decided to walk away. She felt the need to run after me as soon as she saw me leaving her there.

Khanyi: (Shouting) "Thato, wait!"

I still kept walking while she just followed me to the lecture hall. I hate it when people use my past experiences to insult me. I mean where does she get the right, the audacity to talk to me like that? I finally walked into venue and she came to sit next to me. I took out my notebook and ignored her all the way.

Khanyi: "Thato, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that."

I ignored her and focused on the lecture at hand. An hour and a half later, I could see she didn't enjoy the lecture at all. Who talks to someone like that, though? I guess it is true what they say, good dick

ruins good friendships. After the lecture I walked out in haste as she was swiftly walking behind me trying to get my attention. I went to the canteen and waited for Rami. I had such a good morning, so Khanyi spoiled it. I didn't feel like staying another minute longer, since we all have one class for the day. Khanyi stood there looking a little remorseful, but I wasn't a tad bit bothered. Rami approached us and just gave Khanyi a look.

Rami: "Are you ready to leave, Tee?"

Luckily she saw that I didn't want to stay on Campus any further.

Thato: "Yes, please, let's go."

Khanyi: "Guys, Nkosi-yami (My goodness). I'm sorry. It just came out wrong."

Rami: "Khanyi, you're a nice girl, but very naïve. You

still have a lot to learn about life, love and sex. But who are we to say anything? We don't know anything, right? So, give us some space, we'll see you some time during the week or on Saturday when we leave for Cape Town. Well, that's if you still want to join us."

Just like that we left her with her mouth hanging and we made our way to the car. She drives us around, just until I can get my license. Since we don't have any classes today, we decided to head out to Spur for a meal and a few drinks. Rami is planning on taking me to Cape Town for my 18th Birthday. What on earth did I do to deserve such a good friend?

Vivian Letswalo

I barely slept a wink after Rami's call last night. Could I have misjudged the situation? I mean I nearly landed an innocent girl in trouble, what if that fuck raped her? I just wanted to teach her

independence without her feeling like a burden or like she is a nuisance. I have helped a lot of girls, but most of them end up working for me at the club to make means and extra money. There is just something about Thato, I just can't pin point it. She is way too ambitious and innocent to work in my club. All the other girls just want to make money to support their families and children back home.

A lot of them have made some poor choices, but Thato seems like she has been through quite a lot, and I can't help but activate my motherly instincts. Tiger seems to have gotten way too far with his shit. He has forgotten who I am and I have to put him in his lane. Thato is not one of my escorts or a random stripper. Out of all my clients, he is the only one who lacks respect for these girls' profession. I invited Vivian and Tiger over for a meal, just so we could chat. Gringo is busy making us some lunch, while I just finished getting dressed. I headed downstairs and found him already setting the table.

Gringo: (smiling) "Good morning, my love. How are you?"

Vivian: "I'm alright, how are you?"

Gringo: "I'd be much better if you give me a good kiss."

I chuckled and kissed him.

Gringo: "You seem worried, but please don't. I might be a bit old, but I still have a mean streak."

I couldn't help but laugh. Yes, he still does. The doorbell rang as Sis' Gracious went to get it. In walked Tiger with his wife and Rendani, Mulalo and Thendo by his side. Why the fuck would he bring his sons to our house? I didn't invite them. This is exactly what I am talking about. He is the total

opposite of Gorilla and Wolf. They joined us a few months ago, but they have way more respect than this asshole and his son, Rendani. Gorilla's son Wolfe is actually way more ruthless and hands on than he is, but even so, they respect the way we operate our business and they stay in their lane. I still don't get why Connie just doesn't leave his ass. I mean she has no pre-nup. Their marriage is as good as over.

Tiger: "Afternoon, Groen Family. Apologies for being a bit late. As you can see, I have brought my heirs to the show. I hope you don't mind, do you?"

I could see Gringo getting really irritated. It takes a lot for him to get annoyed, and Tiger is just one of the few people that actually irritate him. I regret the day we made him join our business. We only did so because he is royal and he could bring in a huge share of money on the first go and a lot of upmarket clients. Other than that, the man has absolutely no

class whatsoever.

Gringo: "You know my wife and I feel about people who just never follow even the simplest instructions."

Tiger: (laughing) "G, my man. Come on, I just want to rope my sons into the business. Is that so bad?"

Gringo: "Sit, let's eat. Constance, how are you? You look a bit dreadful today."

Connie: (looking down) "I'm okay, G. Just a bit tired."

Gringo: "Well, there is nothing a spa day can't fix, right?"

She faked a laugh but I could tell she isn't her normal self. For a very disrespectful woman, she sure likes abuse. I mean it's not cold outside, the sun is

blazing yet she is wearing a scarf around her neck. She is probably hiding all the marks caused by Tiger. No wonder his sons lack direction. They have to witness him doing such shit to their mother. These boys look like they'd rather be anywhere else other than here, except for Rendani. Gringo said a prayer for us as we started eating.

Gringo: "So, Tiger, how did it go with Thato yesterday?"

I saw Rendani and Mulalo's eyes widen as Gringo mentioned her name, while Tiger's face lit up and Connie's face hardened. Something just isn't right with this whole setup.

Tiger: "Oh, it went really well, she signed her contract yesterday. I'm actually glad you got me such a nice girl, Vivian."

Vivian: "Is there anything you'd like to tell me, to tell us, Tiger?"

Connie kept looking down in fear, as her hands started trembling. Tiger wasn't even scared to say the least.

Tiger: "Such as?"

Vivian: (Pissed) "Well, for starters, why don't you start telling us why you offered Thato to be your mistress!"

I felt myself becoming enraged. I get really angry when old men try taking advantage of young girls who are helpless just because they have money. I saw Tiger's face starting to change as he himself started to tremble when he saw Gringo and I staring at him with fixed eyes. Meanwhile Mulalo was pissed to the core.

Tiger: (trembling) I can explain.”

Mulalo: (fuming) “Dad! How could you?! She is only 17 for fuck’s sake! Ma, is this what you’re settling for?! All the bullshit he has put you through and yet you’re still staying?!”

Tiger: “I... It’s not what you think, G. I mean, okay, I asked her that, but I was just testing her, you know.”

I got tired of hearing the same old shit coming from this guy’s foul mouth.

Vivian: “You know, Tiger, I regret the day Gringo made you his right hand man. You’re useless, you lack respect for yourself and everyone around you, more especially women. I’d love to meet the woman that birthed you and ask her why the fuck she didn’t cut off your dick and balls when you started going through puberty, because you’re one sick fuck.”

Rendani: (annoyed) “Well, you run a sex club filled with young girls and you’re sitting there judging my father?! He has made the business what it is, if anything else, you should be on your knees thanking him!”

Ja, neh. Seems like everyone is on a trip to piss me off today. I gave Gringo the look. He knows when I look at him like that, I am low-key asking for permission to take matters into my own hands. He didn’t respond, he just nodded and carried on eating his food. I took my gun which I always leave underneath the table and I shot both Rendani and Tiger in the knee, from underneath the table. Thendo was just shocked, while Constance was shaking, about to piss herself. Gringo carried on eating his food, while Tiger and Rendani were screaming in agony. Mulalo didn’t look bothered by it all, in fact it was almost as if he was surprised why I didn’t kill them both. I stood up and pointed the gun at Rendani.

Vivian: (poning gun) "Give me one good reason why I shouldn't shot this useless, disrespectful boy, Tiger."

Tiger: (Screaming) "Aaah, please, Viv, I'm begging you. He didn't mean it. We both didn't mean to. Look, I'll personally apologize to Thato, just don't shoot him. I'll do anything."

Vivian: "As of today, you are no longer Gringo's right hand man. Gorilla's son, Wolf will take over your position. It's high time a young man showed you old fucks how to do things."

Tiger: (crying) "Whatever you wish, Viv."

Vivian: "Now, get the fuck out of my house before I finish you both off."

Rendani: "Aaaah, but we can't walk."

I shot him in his other knee, and Thendo quickly got him up and pulled him out of the house. Mulalo on the other hand, didn't seem bothered by his father's state of pain.

Mulalo: "You can walk yourself."

He got up and looked at both Gringo and I.

Mulalo: "My apologies, Mr. and Mrs. Groen. I had no intention of ruining such a pleasant breakfast. I also have no intention of being called a rapist's son any further, nor do I have any intentions of joining the business. Pease, do forgive me."

He is one smart boy out of the rest of them. With that said he walked out, leaving Tiger trying to walk, with Constance glued to her seat in shock. I pointed the gun at her too, just for control.

Vivian: "And wena (you), Connie. You'd better learn some manners. The way you welcomed Thato yesterday is no way for you to welcome anyone who works for you. You of all people should know how I deal with rude people. I also expect an apology from you to her on Saturday. Now, take your shitty husband with you. He's bleeding all over my expensive carpet."

She stood up in haste and aided her bleeding husband out. Fuck, they just had to bleed over my expensive white, fur carpet.

Chapter Fourty Four

Psalm 1: 1 – 3 – "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."

A few days later

Thato

It has been a rather quiet few days. I have been avoiding Khanyi ever since that day. Her words actually cut me deep and as of that day, I have been missing Kg a lot more than I ever have. I have been getting the same dream of Kg every single night, no matter how much I pray about it. Last night was a bit bad, so Rami came to my room, burnt some incense and lit a candle for me. Shame, she prayed with me and we managed to fall asleep in my bed.

Today, of all days I miss my mom and Kg so dearly. I keep looking at my locket, and I wonder what Kg would have done for me today, since he gave me a very special and unforgettable birthday last year. Well, I'm officially 18 and pretty much legal now. I

woke up and found Rami out of bed. She must have probably missed her bed. As I was about to pray and lighten the burden in my spirit in hopes of a better day, Rami walked in with a breakfast tray, filled with Woolies treats and one choc caramel cup cake with a lit candle on top. She even made me a blueberry and yoghurt smoothie. This girl is just amazing.

Rami: (singing) "Happy Birthday to you, happy birthday to you! Happy Birthday dear Thato, Happy Birthday to you!"

I smiled as the tears threatened my eyes.

Rami: "Close your eyes and make a wish, nana."

I smiled and closed my eyes. I paused for a while with my eyes closed and thought of the kind of wish I'd like to make. Well, I'd like to make two this year,

so I wish to find Kg and to meet my real father. I don't even know why I wish to meet him, but perhaps like would be less stressful if I met him, really. Perhaps I have siblings, so it would be very nice to get to know my siblings. I blew the candle after about 5 minutes.

Rami: "Wow, girl. So much for your wish, I hope whatever it is that it comes true. Ska botsa motho (Don't tell anyone) what you wished for, though. You might just jinx it."

I laughed slightly and I couldn't help but let the tears flow.

Rami: (worried) "Babe, keng (what is it)?"

Thato: "It's just that, I really miss my mom and Kg, Rami. Gosh, that guy was just too perfect. Now it's like he has disappeared off the face of the earth. Life can just be so unfair at times. Maybe he just

didn't love me as he said he did."

Rami: (teary) "Oh, friend. Come, on. I'm pretty sure Kg is somewhere and that dream you keep having ke (is a) sigh. Look, this coming week will be all about us. I just want you to enjoy being legal and we can sort this Kg stuff out when we come back. I'll ask my brother to call you when we come back and then you can tell him all about it, okay?"

Thato: "Okay."

Rami wiped my tears off as we had our food. A few minutes later, I received a video call, from Rami's parents. Oh, now I'm really going to cry.

Rami: "Answer it."

Thato: "Dumelang Mme le Ntate (Hello Mom and

Dad).”

Mrs. Letswalo: “Hao (Gosh), Thato ngwanake (my child). Rephrase that, Hello, Mama le Papa (Mom and Dad).”

Rami and I both laughed.

Mr. Letswalo: “Ah, wa bona bjanong (you see now). Ne re rile re tlo mo opella, bjanong wa complainer (We both agreed that we were going to sing for her, now you’re complaining).”

These two are very funny.

Mrs. Letswalo: “Ah, man le wena. Happy Birthday, my baby. I wish you many more years to come. Your world is going to be filled with blessings, you just wait and see.”

Thato: (smiling) “Thank you very much, Mme (mom).”

Mr. Letswalo: “Ke go lakaletsa dilo tse pila bophelong (I wish you only the best in life), Thato. O fetse sekolo o tlo bontsha batho bamo gore wena o bohlale (Finish school and come show these people just how clever you are). I keep bragging to everyone that I have two daughters in University now, so don’t disappoint me. Both of you.”

I couldn’t help but shed the tears. Damn, I’m so emotional today. I also keep thinking I would have been five months pregnant today had it not been for Sonto. I’m just such an emotional wreck and I cannot help it. I feel like there is a huge hole in the middle of my heart, and it is refusing to close up.

Mrs. Letswalo: “Ah, wa bona bjanong (you see now),

Love. O Ilisa ngwana bjanong (you're making her cry). We cannot let you go to Cape Town without a good old prayer, my girls. A re rapeleng (Let us pray)."

We all closed our eyes while Rami's mom prayed for us.

Mrs. Letswalo: "Modimo wa rona o re mo ratang (Our Loving God), The God of mercy, The God of grace, The God of peace and love, our protector, our deliverer, You who makes the mountains move and the earth shake. I thank you, oh, Lord for everything you have given us. I mostly thank you for giving Rami the sister she has never had.

I ask that you bless my two daughters with nothing, but good health and a great future. Bless them with greatness and eliminate all evil around them, dear Lord. Thank you for sparing Thato until now. Help her reach her goals and may she reach her destiny.

We humble ourselves before you and ask that you protect them throughout their trip. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen."

We all said amen, and I must say that I feel very much lighter after her prayer. I can only hope that we have a great week ahead of us. We said our goodbyes and Rami and I went to get ready for the day ahead. We finished packing too, since we'll be going to the airport straight from Vivian's house.

I don't even know what to wear since I don't want to offend anyone, but Rami says her aunt's husband is very nice and not bothered by any traditional things too much. Plus he is white, so he isn't very conventional. I settled for a bright yellow knee-length flowey dress that Kg bought for me some time last year. It has always been one of my favourite dresses to date.

I love my hair, but perhaps it's time for change. I

need to cut it or something. Either way, it will remain curly unless I straighten it. I asked Rami to put on some light make up on me, just for change. I feel like I'm about to dine with the Gupta's or something. She put on some red lipstick on me, and all I can say is wow. I look like a million dollars. We headed out with our bags in the boot.

Apparently Khanyi won't be able to go on the trip with us because Rendani was shot, so she is looking after him. I'm not saddened or anything, plus I really don't need any negative vibes right now. She only sent me a brief message this morning. It's a lot better than insults. We got into the car and headed out to Northcliffe. I guess a lot of people who have a lot of money live around here. We drove in and this house is very big, much bigger than the Nembilwi household. It is also a lot more stylishly designed than Tiger's house. I'm so glad I won't be seeing him again. I have only been a 'maid' for one day, which is a funny story I'd like to tell my children one day. Of course, my troubles aren't over yet. I still have to

sort out my fees since the first quarter of the first semester is over.

I won't allow myself to be stressed on my birthday. We drove in and parked along the driveway. I see a beautiful Lexus parked right before my car. Vivian and her husband have quite a lot of class, I must say. This house is so modern, I can tell she probably hosts a lot of parties around here. I took a deep breath before walking in. Rami didn't even ring the bell, I guess she is supposed to feel at home.

Rami: "Hello?! I'm home!"

We were approached by Dr. Groen! The nice doctor that treated me the time I was in hospital. Wow, small world. He was a bit shocked to see me, quite too shocked.

Rami: "Hi, Uncle Louis! How are you?"

Dr. Groen: "Hi, Rams, I'm well and you?"

Rami: "I can't complain. This is my sister, Thato."

She always introduces me as her sister. I'm so used to it now.

Dr. Groen: "We've met before. How are you Thato? It's so good to see you again."

Thato: "Likewise, Doctor. I'm very well, thank you."

Rami: (puzzled) "Am I missing something?"

Thato: "He's the doctor who cared for me after the kidnapping. I landed here."

Rami: "Oh, that explains it. Small world. Uncle Louis, where is G man?"

Dr. Groen: "They're on the patio, waiting on you two."

Rami: "Aren't you going to join us?"

Dr. Groen: "I'd love to, but I'm on call. Enjoy Cape Town, you two. And Thato, Happy Birthday."

Thato: "Thank you."

He walked out with a smile on his face, as we walked out to the Patio and found Vivian with her husband sipping on cocktails and whiskey at 12pm. It seems really nice to be rich, I just hope their family is completely normal. They both smiled as they saw us.

Vivian: "Hey girls!"

She hugged us both and when Mr. Groen approached us, he hugged Rami and greeted her first. When he got to me, he just gave me a long, puzzled look. I get that a lot, I'm not even offended anymore.

Gringo: (smiling) "Hi, Thato. My name is David Groen, but you can call me Gringo or Dad or something. Just not Uncle, please."

I just had to laugh.

Thato: "Okay, Gringo. Pleased to meet you."

He is actually very friendly, but he just keeps staring at me. Maybe I'm wearing way too much make up, I don't know."

Gringo: "You have such beautiful, curly hair. Very unique colour too."

Thato: "Oh, thank you."

Gringo: "My mother has the very same type of hair. One day you'll meet her, I hope."

I smiled as we sat down. They couldn't even wait for us to eat. Gringo prayed for the food and we dug in. Wow, rich people just eat really nice food, even on tv. I never see them eat pap. These croissants are so delicious, not even Woolworths food has such nice croissants.

Rami:" Wow, Gman, you cook exactly like Thato. Damn, these croissants are to die for."

I just had to moan again as I took a bite each time. I haven't moaned like this in a very long time, not since Kg left. This food is to die for, I just have to ask.

Thato: "These croissants, may I ask where you bought them from?"

Vivian: (laughing) "No, dear, Gringo makes almost all of the food we eat. He is brilliant in the kitchen."

Wow, this man.

Thato: "I need this recipe, Mr. G, if you really don't mind."

Gringo: (smiling) "You love cooking, too?"

Rami: “Are you kidding me?” She can cook up a storm. Hey, I bet she can show you a thing or two, Gman.”

We all laughed out as we enjoyed the rest of our food. Afterwards, Rami and I put the dishes into the dishwasher. Just because they have a helper, doesn't mean she must clean up after all of us all the time. We headed back as they admired the view of the pool, while Vivian offered me a Mojito. Eish, I don't know what it is with me and not wanting to drink in front of older people. I looked at the drink and then at Vivian and I politely shook my head.

Rami: “Oh, Auntie, she doesn't like drinking in front of old people.”

Vivian: (frowning) “Hey, wena (you). Who are you calling old?”

Rami: "No offense."

Vivian: "Thato, it is your 18th birthday. You need to live a little. What if you die tomorrow without tasting Viv's amazing mojito?"

I laughed a little. I took the drink and tasted some. Wow, I have had a few cocktails in life, but this one is just amazing. Vivian and her husband are truly something else. They are a real match made in heaven. I don't know why she married a man this old, but I guess love has no bounds, no age difference can stop two people from loving one another. I had hoped that Kg and I would reach this stage of our relationship one day, but such is life. Perhaps this trip will help me let go of him.

Gringo: "So, Thato, your birthday is starting on a good note, because we have some good news for you."

I raised my eyebrows and listened attentively.

Vivian: “Firstly I need to apologize for putting you in such a situation with Tiger and Constance. Believe me when I say that I dealt with them appropriately.”

Thato: “It’s okay, really.”

Vivian: “My husband and I would like to pay for your fees – all of them, provided you get good grades and you can pay us back somehow.”

I felt my heart jump for joy. I don’t know why these two people would choose to be so nice to me of all people, but I guess it must be God’s way of telling me that blessings come in many forms. I now have one less thing to worry about in life, I mean my fees are going to be taken care of.

Thato: (elated) "Oh, thank you! Thank you! I can't even thank you enough. I promise Mr. and Mrs. Groen, I'll pay you back every single cent."

Vivian: (frowning) "Oh, please, Thato, you misunderstood me. I didn't mean you'll have to pay us back in the form of money, oh, no. I mean you could somehow work for us, you know. We'll pay you of course."

My heart sank a bit when I heard that. I hope she does not want me to be an escort.

Vivian: "Relax, you won't be an escort. And neither will you, Rami."

Rami: (shocked) "Haowa (No), Auntie."

Gringo: "It's time to deal with your demons the right way, Rami. We all know that the time has come. Being an escort will not solve the problem. Besides, all the girls at the club are given five years max to work there. It should not be a lifelong career."

I looked at Rami who kept quiet for a while. What demons are they talking about? What is Rami hiding that is this serious?

Rami: "Okay, Gman. I hear you."

Vivian: "Since we're both paying for your fees, we're not making you work for it, but we're trying to teach you how to be independent. Trust me on this."

We carried on enjoying the rest of the lunch, and as a surprise, Rami's parents sent us both 3k each, while Gringo and Vivian sent us both 5k each for the trip. I don't even know what to say, they are extremely

generous and Khanyi is going to be sorry for not joining us. I cannot wait for my very first Cape Town trip. I feel like after this trip, I'll come back as a whole new person.

Chapter Forty Five

2 Peter 2:1 – “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”

Thato

Vivian and Gringo are so kind, they took us straight to the airport. I was basking in the delicious cocktails, I even forgot that I don't have a passport.

Thato: “Rami, how will we get to Cape Town when I don't have a passport?”

Rami: “Don’t you worry, wena. The Groen’s have it all covered.”

I didn’t know how we were going to do that, but I let them be. As promised, we had a smooth walk in through the airport. I don’t know how Gringo managed to pull it off, but he did it. We didn’t go through to one of the scheduled flights, instead, we went right to their private jet. I couldn’t help but gasp in amusement. These two must be seriously loaded. It’s my first time ever seeing a private jet, so I’d like to make memories.

Thato: “May we take a picture together? All four of us, right in front of this jet? I’d like to remember this moment for the rest of my life.”

Vivian: “Hao, Thato, why are you talking as if we won’t be together forever?”

I really don't like getting my hopes up whenever I meet new people, I mean, I am so used to disappointment.

Thato: "It's not like that, Auntie Vivian, It's just that, a lot of people who come into my life never stay for very long."

I felt the tears creeping up on me, but I fought them back.

Gringo: "Well, that is all about to change. You're going to be a part of our family from this point forward."

That really warmed my heart and I couldn't help but silently wish that it does indeed come true. It is not even about the money, but I just love how friendly and loving they both are.

Gringo asked one of the security guards to take a picture of us together, with my phone. We ended up taking a lot more than one. I can't help, but feel like this is the beginning of many memories. Gringo and Vivian hugged Rami and I and we went into the Jet. I have never flown before, so I hope I don't get scared or anything.

Rami: "Don't be nervous, babe. We're going to have lots and lots of fun. Do you know what I love about Private Jets?"

Thato: "What?"

Rami: "Free food and booze."

We both burst out in laughter. One of the hostesses came to take our orders, so Rami ordered some whiskey for us. Kg always used to drink it and I couldn't really stomach it, no matter how smooth it

was. But there is one particular brand that I was able to enjoy while I was with him, Bisquit Cognac. So, I decided why not try it?

Thato: "Do you perhaps have Bisquit Cognac?"

Hostess: (smiling) "We have everything. Would you like single or a double?"

At least Kg taught me something while we were together.

Thato: "Double, on the rocks, please."

Hostess: "Coming right up."

Rami: (smiling) "Hehe, Dankie Kg! You can really study ngwaneso (sis)."

We both laughed.

Thato: "I saw the Jet is named Isabella. Who is that if I may ask?"

Rami: "Oh, that is Gringo's daughter."

Thato: "Oh, where is she?"

Rami: "We don't know, he does not either. Apparently the mother of the child ran away when she was pregnant with their daughter, just before she was about to give birth. He never saw them again."

Shame, that must be some kind of pain.

Thato: "Wow, how long ago was that?"

Rami: "I'm not sure, about 18 or 20 years ago. He still gets upset about it whenever he talks of her. Imagine how painful he has had to adjust, not knowing what she looks like or if she is even well taken care of, or if she's even alive for that matter. All I know is if she ever resurfaces, she'll die a slow, painful death. Gringo is a nice guy, but protects those he loves with everything in him. He hates betrayal and lies."

Yoh, I have to remind myself never to get on his bad side. He and Vivian both seem like they can kill you when they are pissed. We flew for about two hours or so, and believe me I never even felt the flight, because Rami talks non-stop. We finally arrived at our place, I assumed we were going to stay at a hotel or guest house or something, but I was puzzled when the driver dropped us off at one of the beach houses near Fresnaye. I thought Rami rented it for

us, until I saw her unlock the front door.

Thato: (puzzled) "Rami, whose house is this?"

Rami: "It's Aunt Viv and Uncle G's beach house. Well, actually Gman bought it for his daughter back in the day, as a present for when she got older one day. Well, he never found her, although he comes here often. Gman is a spiritual person, you know. At times he comes here and I find him meditating and praying, asking God to bring his daughter to him. He always says he has a feeling that she is alive and an exact replica of himself. He only has two boys with his late wife, so this girl would have been his only daughter. It's crazy, but you would be very surprised at how much faith the dude has, you know."

I feel very bad for this guy, shame. His story is a lot similar to mine. I need to find my father, while he has to find his daughter. It's crazy to have such an overwhelming yearning feeling for someone you

have never even met in your life, but the truth is, I have no idea what it is like to even have a father figure in my life. Perhaps Mama's letter would have brought peace of mind to me.

We got in and took our bags to our rooms. Wow, this house is absolutely amazing. I could actually see myself living here. The house is so big, with six bedrooms, a huge living room, a huge kitchen, and the furniture is just a breeze. It has such a beautiful mixture of colours, this is most definitely something I'd do to decorate this house. The beautiful modern feel of this house is warm and welcoming.

I love the couch that is facing the beach. I can actually see myself sitting there with a cup of coffee or something and watching the sea. I found myself in absolute awe of this house, that I didn't even realize I wasn't paying attention to Rami.

Rami: "Hello? Earth to Thato."

Thato: "Oh, sorry, Rami. I'm just too impressed."

Rami: "Come, you have all week to admire the whole view of this house. I see you like that couch. Already imagining Kg hitting it from behind while you're watching the sunrise, huh?"

We both burst out in laughter. Rami, though.

Thato: "Sies, man, Rami!"

Rami: "Just checking. Come, we can unpack later. We need to get dressed and ready to go. Our driver will come fetch us."

I honestly thought we're going to have a quiet night in.

Thato: "Where are we going?"

Rami: "You didn't think that I'd let you enjoy the rest of your 18th birthday in peace and quiet, did you?"

Rami, mara (though). I keep forgetting she is a real hardcore party girl.

Thato: "I thought we were going to stay indoors and drink and talk."

Rami: "We have all week, plus boring, virgin Khanyi isn't here to annoy us."

Thato: "Knowing Rendani, she is most probably not a virgin anymore."

We both laughed.

Rami: “The shade, girl, the shade.”

We went to our respective rooms, and they all have en-suite bathrooms and we freshened up. I stood in front of my mirror with my towel on, since I have no idea what to wear. As I stood there, thinking, Rami walked in, also wrapped in her towel, holding a gift bag.

Thato: “And then?”

Rami: “You didn’t think I’d bring you all the way to Cape Town for your very first club outing without a killer outfit, did you?”

Oh, Rami is just one of a kind.

Thato: "Rami..."

Rami: "Stop wasting time and open it."

I slowly opened it and checked what is inside of it. I became so astonished, in so much awe. I saw the most beautiful Versace dress I have ever seen, actually the only Versace dress I have ever seen. I felt myself getting really teary. I need to stop being so emotional, honestly.

Rami: "Don't cry, man. If you do, then I'll cry and you know I hate crying."

Thato: "Oh, Rami. I have no idea what to say."

Rami: "You don't have to say anything. You're the sister I needed in my life. I love you, boo. I can't believe we were never this close before."

I gave her a fat hug and she betrayed me by removing the towel around my body. I tried to cover myself, but she wouldn't let me, instead she removed hers too. I couldn't help but gasp in awe. Rami has the most beautiful, natural body that I have ever seen. Anastacia is curvy, but she is so fake. Rami has boobs, curves and ass. No fat belly or rolls in sight.

Thato: "Rami, mara (though). Give me my towel, please."

Rami: "Thato, you have an amazing body. I honestly don't know why you always hide it. And no, I'm not saying this just because I'm your sister, I truly mean it."

Thato: "Rami, I don't know where to start to even see the beauty you keep talking about. I mean Kg is

literally the only guy who has said that to me.”

Rami: “That’s because you’re so focused on him and the past. I’m not saying forget about him, no. I’m saying let go, live life and actually notice other guys out there. I’d kill to have your body, you know. My boobs are way too big for me and my curves do get tiring. You have the perfect hour glass shape. Don’t let people tell you otherwise.”

I guess she is right, though. I really need to appreciate myself a lot more and love my body. I mean as Viv said, life is too short not to appreciate yourself. I got into the tight, figure hugging dress. It is a bit short, but just short enough. I cannot wait to experience what it is like to be in a club. Well, apart from those blinding lights I saw at Madame Vivienne, I cannot cope with so much noise.

Rami put on some proper make up and lashes on me, as she says, I need to explore a few looks. I must

say I look really beautiful and she managed to straighten my hair. I look absolutely different, I almost couldn't recognize myself.

Rami: "Bona o pila bjang, sis (Look how gorgeous you look). Why can't I have white genes, mara (though)? I'd kill for such smooth hair."

We both burst out in laughter. We headed out in our gorgeous outfits and heels. I have to walk very slowly as I am not used to wearing heels a lot. We found our driver already waiting for us and we were off to the club.

Vivian Letswalo

Gringo and I got home straight after dropping the girls off. I don't know, but meeting Thato has given me a whole new perspective in life. I had accepted a long time ago that I can't have children, but perhaps

adoption might be on the cards for me some day. I thought of hiring someone to keep an eye on them, but I see that Gringo had already done so.

Vivian: G, baby. Why didn't you tell me you already hired Smally to keep an eye on the girls?"

Gringo: "Sorry, love. You know how I feel about safety."

He goes overboard at times, but it is totally understandable. I mean, we're the biggest drug dealers in South Africa, so we can never be too careful. As we were about to have some wine, Gringo's phone rang and he answered it and immediately put it on speaker. He always does that, he as always done that actually.

Apparently he likes having transparency between us. He says that cheating ruined his first marriage and

he had wanted to start on a clean slate with me. Secrets is something he hates, and he would rather die than keep a secret from me. I have learnt to be upfront at all times, thanks to him.

Gringo: "Smally, what's cooking?"

Smally: "Boss, just a heads up. It seems like someone was sent by one of your men to spy on the girls."

My heart started beating very fast. I immediately felt like catching the plane and going to Cape Town. I would never forgive myself if anything happens to those two.

Gringo: (puzzled) "Did you catch the guy?"

Smally: "Yes, boss. It was easy as pie. Apparently

Rendani sent him to spy on the girls.”

Tiger and his lapdog just don't quit. I have to sort them out ASAP. I made a promise to God a long time ago that I'd never kill again, but it seems like Tiger just wants to keep rubbing me up the wrong fucking way.

Gringo: “Bring him to me. I'll send the chopper. Tomorrow might be too late.”

Smally: “Sure, boss.”

Gringo hung up and looked at me.

Gringo: “I think it's high time we sent a serious message to Tiger. He is starting to annoy the shit out of me.”

Rendani

I cannot believe that even after all my efforts Thato still doesn't want me. I mean, I even hooked up with Khanyi just so I could try and make her jealous and even get close to her, but it seems as if I have just made things a whole lot worse. She has been clingy as fuck, especially now that we fucked.

Had I known that she was a virgin, I would have not fucked her dumb ass. Ever since she heard that I was hospitalized since that bastard Gringo shot me, she has been by my side the whole bloody time. To make matters worse, she refused to go on the trip, so I have to make a plan and get her there.

I need her to spy on Thato for me. I can't help but be obsessed about her. I love her, I mean no other girl matches her stature. I swear, if she agrees to be mine, I promise I'll take good care of her. Now that Wolf does not even remember her, I will make sure that it stays that way.

It's a real pity that his father is half the cause of all this, but it is what it is. You can't have everything in life, and I just hope and pray that Thato becomes mine. I'll be damned if I let Mulalo take her from me. As I was trying to view the latest pictures I received from my P.I, I got a call from him.

Rendani: "Lizzard, I hope you have good news. Those pictures are great, my man. I can't wait to see more. Next time get me some of her in the shower."

Gringo: "You had better run, Rendani. This world of mine is not for small boys like you. I eat your kind for breakfast. Run and don't stop, because you have just stepped on the wrong man's toes!"

I got chills down my spine as he said that. Perhaps he is just bluffing. How the fuck did he get hold of Lizzard's phone? Mxm, Gringo thinks he can own

everyone of us and none of us would do anything to object to all that? He can miss me. I decided it is time for plan B, so I called Khanyi.

Khanyi: "Hey, babe."

Rendani: "Pack your bags, we're flying to Cape Town."

Chapter Fourty Six

1 John 2:4 – "Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Matthew 5: 39 – "But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

Thato

I am so excited for what is yet to come. We arrived at one of Cape Town's elite clubs, Club Vixen. Apparently it is also one of Vivian's clubs. That woman really likes fun and entertainment, and thank goodness this one is a lot more sophisticated than the one in Jo'burg. It is a lot less noisy, and not very full. It is quite full of sophisticated people, and not random partygoers.

I think Rami deliberately brought me here just so I could enjoy myself and be free. She even got greeted by name by the bouncers, waiters and the manager. I guess she is also a regular here. I have no idea how her parents even let her come to these places, but I guess they are close like that with Vivian.

Rami: "So, what do you think?"

Thato: "I actually love it. Why do I get the feeling you didn't take me to a noisy club on purpose?"

Rami: "Because I'm your sister and I actually know what you like. Why would I take you to a place you would dread?"

She is so thoughtful and I thank God each and every day for giving me a friend like Rami, a true sister of note.

Thato: "Rams, thank you so much for everything."

Rami: "You can thank me later after getting sloshed."

I laughed as we headed to the VIP section. Of course there are a few people here, but a lot of people in this club are not ratchet, some did bring a few girls and you can clearly see that some of them

are out with their mistresses. But, who am I to judge? Rami ordered us some blow job shooters, and some beers. I settled for Corona tonight, I think I'd like to remember Kg for a while, and she settled for Savanna.

We don't have to be sophisticated tonight. I would like to enjoy my birthday, with Kg at the back of my mind. I hope he is okay wherever he is. We had one shooter each, as we don't want to get drunk before midnight. I have never really danced before in my life, but after three beers, and Rami pulling me to dance with her, I couldn't help but do it.

I think I suck at dancing to be honest, but Mama always used to say, "If you can talk, you can sing and if you can walk, you can dance." God bless her soul. While we were dancing, I couldn't help but hear all of my favourite songs. Yes, a few amapiano songs by Kabza and a lot of Sasha's songs. I also love Something Soweto.

Thato: “Rami, why is the DJ playing all of my favourites? Is it a coincidence?”

Rami: (Laughing) “Coincidence? Where Rami is involved? Never. I gave him a playlist of all your favourite songs. So, I told you that tonight will be your night, baby girl.”

I just love Rami and one day, I will be able to do something as nice as this for her birthday. We took a break and sat down for a bit. We took a few pictures and I posted them on my Insta with the caption #SisterSister. I even uploaded one of the few we took in front of the jet this afternoon with the caption #FamilyVibes. Within a few seconds I got a lot of likes, I hardly pay attention to my insta, but then one particular comment took me by surprise.

“Happy Birthday, my baby.” I checked the account

and I was immediately irritated to see that it was Sonto. I immediately blocked her and got her out of my mind. I refuse to let her get to me at a time like this. She might have taken my first baby from me, but I will not let her ruin my life any further. One of the guys who were seated right across us, kept eyeing me and he finally got the courage to approach us.

Guy: "Ladies, mind if my friend and I join you?"

Damn, I haven't seen a hot guy like him in ages. I am not into light guys at all, but this one has a mild complexion. He had removed his suit jacket, and his muscles were protruding out of his shirt. Damn, I felt my clit vibrate a bit down there. That has not happened in a while. I used to think that it only needs to happen when a guy touches you or when you're busy with foreplay, but Rami told me that it can happen randomly.

Rami: “Depends, if you sing happy birthday to my sister, then you and your friend can join us.”

Rami, though. This girl is so extra, but that’s exactly what is so loveable about her. She is a lot like Palesa, just calmer. I know Palesa would have told me about the guy’s dick print from a mile away. The guy chuckled and walked to the DJ booth. I thought he had lost interest or got annoyed by Rami’s request, but I heard the music stop. We both looked towards the booth direction, and the guy had the mic in his hand.

Guy: “This is for the beautiful lady dressed in gold, it is her birthday, so here goes.”

I thought he was going to reveal his deep voice, but to my surprise he had the most angelic voice I had ever heard, much like John Legend.

Guy: (singing) "Happy Birthday, to you. Happy Birthday, to you. Happy Birthday, dear gorgeous lady dressed in Gold. Happy Birthday to you."

Wow, I felt a bit flushed since everybody's eyes were aimed right at Rami and I. Rami was so impressed, she gave the guy a thumbs up. Everyone clapped their hands and he handed the mic back to the DJ. Then, the DJ played Happy Birthday by Samthing Soweto. Yerr, Rami deserves to be an event planner because wow, this girl can surprise you. The guy walked towards us while his friend came with their ice bucket and his jacket.

Rami: "Hmm. Impressive, John Legend. But, I must warn you. It takes a lot to impress my sister. You have big shoes to fill from her last ex."

Guy: (chuckling) "I'm Blake, and this is my twin brother Bjorn."

Oh, they are coloured. No wonder the accent. I see the resemblance now that they are closer to us. Rami introduced us as Blake came to sit next to me and Bjorn sat next to Rami. We had a lot of fun, and I am quite surprised yet pleased as to just how much Bjorn and I had in common. He is 27, and owns his own company with his brother. He seems like a nice guy, but there is just something about heart break and your first love. For as long as you still dwell on the past, no guy will interest you – not even the cutest guy on earth.

Vivian Letswalo

People just don't stop pissing us off. Just when we wanted to have our own lives and be at peace, Tiger's shitty son decides to play Romeo with Thato. I don't know what it is about her, but I already feel so attached to her. Gringo too, most probably because he does not have a daughter, apart from the one that

has been missing for years. Smally sent one of our other boys to bring this Lizzard idiot to us.

As promised, he was delivered within the hour. His hands were tied behind his back, with a cloth bag over his head. Gringo immediately shoved him onto the chair at our warehouse. We don't kill people in our house, unless it is an emergency. We built that house out of love, and we do not want any blood spilled in it, hence I was so pissed that day when I shot Tiger and Rendani.

Gringo removed the bag from his head, and this little Lizzard looked scared as fuck. I don't get why little boys always want to play in the big league with real men, but run away at the first sight of trouble.

Gringo: "Ja, Lizzard. Let's cut the bullshit and start talking. Why did Rendani send you to spy on my daughters?"

Lizzard: (Scared) "Please, don't hurt me. I had no idea they were your daughters, Gringo. I swear."

Gringo: "Would it have mattered had they been someone else's daughters? Were their lives going to be deemed less of importance?"

Lizzard: "No...no, Gringo. That's not what I meant."

Gringo: "Why did Rendani send you to spy on my girls?! I hate repeating myself."

Lizzard: "Look, he said that he was in love with this girl, Thato. He has been paying me to spy on her for weeks now. He is obsessed with her, and now even more that she does not want him. Mulalo is also a bit obsessed with her, and wants to leave his wife for her, Tiger on the other hand wants to get into her pants. He just pays me to make sure that no one

touches her, and to make sure he knows of her every move.”

Gringo: “Hmm, Lizzard. I’d let you go scott free, but you pissed me off by taking pictures of my girls while they were in the shower. I mean, that is a violation of basic human rights. I hate perverts, you know.”

Lizard: “Please... please, I’ll do anything.”

Gringo: “You work for me now. You’re going to pretend that you shot me or something and that you’re still working for Rendani. You’re going to report his every move and instruction to me. You are going to bug his whole house, without getting caught. I don’t know how you’re going to do it, but you will. If you fail, then I’ll do the same to your daughter, even worse. Jy verstaan (You understand)?!”

Lizzard: (nodding profusely) “Yes, yes, Gringo.”

Gringo: “Unfortunately I cannot let you go scott free. I mean, I’ll be paying you double what he is paying you right now, but I have trust issues. I can’t let you go just like this. So, you used your hands and fingers to take those pictures and answer his calls, so I will have to cut one hand off.”

Lizzard started wailing like a baby and begging me to forgive him.

Vivian: “Have a heart this time, love. Not the hand, cut one finger off.”

Lizzard still cried out like a baby, and before he knew it, I cut off his right thumb. He screamed out in pain, while Vivian injected a calming injection into him. One of our men took him away for Louis to sort him

out. I am not to be messed with, especially when it comes to my loved ones.

Thato

I honestly had such a good time and Blake took my number, while Bjorn took Rami's number. You know, for someone who talks a lot about guys and has experience, Rami sure does not act on it. She always flirts with guys, but seems like that is all where it ends.

We headed to our beach house and sat out on the balcony with a blanket. She got us some Mcdonalds on the way home and we dug in. This reminds me of the time Kg and I used to drink and go to Mcdonald's before bed time. I couldn't sleep drunk and hungry.

Thato: "So, Rams, you mind telling me about what Gringo and Vivian said earlier today? About you

dealing with your demons the right way?”

I saw her expression change immediately. Rami is an emotional person, but it takes a lot to get her to cry and be extremely emotional about it.

Rami: (deep sigh) “ Do you remember there was a time back in Grade 11 when I didn’t come to school for a whole month?”

Thato: “You were on an exchange student program in Berlin.”

She looked down with teary eyes and shook her head.

Rami: “I was not in Berlin, I was right here, in South Africa. Something happened to me that only my parents and brother know. Mma Moruti (Pastor’s

wife) tried to rape me.”

I was so flabbergasted, I nearly spilled my cream soda. She said it with so much pain and agony in her eyes, I never knew Rami was hiding such a big secret. What the fuck is happening in Rockville?

Rami: “She has a tendency of molesting young boys in the church, Tee. I was one of the ushers, I adored the church, I made sure I never missed it. Then one day, she invited us for a church camp. Mama didn’t want me to go, but you could never separate me from church. I adored it so much, so I went. Upon arrival, Ntate Moruti (Pastor) was not there, he never goes on these trips.

She took us all into one big, dark room, where she made other children have sex. She forces the kids to have sex with each other, some boys and some girls. If you don’t do it, you get whipped until you agree. She chooses some boys and girls for herself,

and unfortunately I was one of those.

She took me to her own private bedroom and told me to strip my clothes off. I was so shocked and scared, that I refused. She pinned me on the bed, while I was crying and screaming and she ripped my panties off me. She shoved two of her fingers in and out of me and I screamed. I still remember the pain sometimes when I close my eyes and drift off to sleep.

I managed to bite her finger off so hard, and I ran away from that camp. Luckily I had my phone with me and some money in my pocket. I took a taxi to the nearest police station and called my parents. They were so angry and went to confront her, but she is such a vile woman, Thato. She pointed her gun at my parents and threatened to kill them if they ever tried to talk.

My parents didn't care, so they wanted to go to the

press with this, but I begged them not to. Imagine, a whole woman violated me, and not just any woman, a pastor's wife. It was not easy for me to get through that, so I went through a whole lot of depressive situations and even attempted suicide at one point.

I stopped going to church from that day and so did my parents. Of course, my Aunt Viv was livid and wanted to kill her, but I told her to leave it and let God deal with her.”

The whole time throughout her story, I was in tears. I knew she had something offish about her, but this! This is just pure evil.

Rami: “So, I met my first boyfriend at 16 and I foolishly gave myself to him. Within a week, he dumped me. So, I told myself I'd never allow myself to be that stupid again. Yes, I talk a lot about all these things, but deep down, I am terrified of being

with another man again.”

I gave her a tight hug as we cried together. This world is just full of evil, and I have no idea how Mma Moruti lives with herself, preaching on that pulpit while hiding such evil deeds. Rami seems a lot better than I am at dealing with things.

After her story, we just went back to the good old Rami. As we were about to head inside in front of the fireplace, we heard a knock on the door. As I opened the door, I was shocked.

Tatho: “Khanyi, what are you doing here?”

Khanyi: “Hey, guys! I was hoping the invitation still stands.”

How did she get here at this time of the morning?

Chapter Fourty Seven

Proverbs 14:15 – “The simple believes everything, but he prudent gives thought to his steps.”

Thato

Something doesn't seem very right. I mean Khanyi does not have any money per say, so how did she get here at this time of the night. Most importantly, how did she find us at this time of the night?

Perhaps I underestimated Rendani. That guy is really dangerous and creepy. Rami most probably thought that I was taking too long answering the door, hence she came.

Rami: (shocked) “And then? Khanyi?! Ka nako e (At this time of the night)?”

Khanyi: (Excited) “Hey, Rams! I thought I would come by and spend the rest of the trip with you guys.”

Rami looked at her carefully and I’m glad she thought the same thing I was thinking.

Rami: “How did you get here at this time of the night and how did you know we were here?”

Khanyi: “Oh, Rendani flew me over here in his family chopper. What’s with the 20 questions? I mean I thought you’d be over what I said to you the other day.”

Rami and I looked at each other and then at her.

Khanyi: “Hao, guys. Am I not welcome?”

I honestly didn't want her to come in, but I think Khanyi had other plans.

Rami: "Oh, sorry. We're just a bit shocked. Do come in."

Khanyi didn't even think twice, as she walked in with a small luggage bag.

Rami: "Go make yourself comfortable in one of the bedrooms, Khanyi. I'll get you a nice, cold drink."

She was too excited to notice our suspicion of her. Khanyi is too naïve for y liking. I can't believe she even let Rendani into her life so easily.

Thato: "So, what's your plan, Rami?"

Rami: “Don’t worry, the quickest way to get bitches like that to reveal what they are up to, is to get them drunk.”

Rami took out one of the expensive wine bottles that Vivian and Gringo left here. The house was fully furnished and had a few edibles when we got here. We got three glasses, although Rami and I were not in the mood to drink anymore, we just had to take a few sips so that she could think we’re also drinking with her.

She came out of her bedroom, and Rami immediately handed her a glass. As expected, she finished the whole glass within ten minutes. I don’t get how a girl like that could just throw away her dreams and ambitions within the first few months of tasting varsity life. Word is that Khanyi even attends every party there is on campus, and is a regular at the boy’s res.

Rami: "So, Khanyi, how are things between you and Rendani? I mean you never actually got the chance to tell us about how you guys finally got to date and all."

Khanyi started blabbing as anticipated. As soon as she finished her glass, Rami was ready to top her up.

Khanyi: "Ah, chomi (friend), yazini (you know what)? He just came up to me one afternoon and offered me a ride since I was on my way to buy some groceries. He confessed his undying love for me and told me that he really likes me and liked me from the first time he saw me. I was so impressed, I mean everyone wants Rendani. We started hanging out together a lot, and two days later, we had sex."

Rami and I were a bit taken aback, but I mean what did we expect from a girl like Khanyi who does not know much about boys and who has been kept under lockdown all her life?

Rami: “Heh (really)? O ra gore o mo file, ngwaneso (So you mean to tell me that you gave it up to him, sis)?”

Khanyi: Oh, yes. It was painful at first, but after that, I cannot believe I didn’t lose my virginity sooner like you two. I mean I have missed out on a lot. Rami, you have to teach me some tricks, I mean Rendani is very talented and experienced, so I want to up my game and make sure he never leaves me.”

Al, Khanyi. I have no words, I just kept quiet the whole time.

Khanyi: “Thato, you’re so quiet. I hope I’m not stressing you out, hey. I mean since you broke up with Kg and lost your baby all in a span of months.”

Her last statement sent chills down my spine. I

mean, how the fuck does she know about that? I never told her anything about Kg nor about my pregnancy. Who is this bitch? I looked at Rami and she was also as shocked as I was.

Rami: "How do you know about all that, Khanyi?"

I respect alcohol, especially the expensive wines, because Khanyi sang like a canary.

Khanyi: "Rendani told me."

That send even more cold shivers down my spine and a very tight pain in my gut.

Rami: "What exactly did he tell you?"

As Khanyi was about to talk, her phone rang and it

was Rendani. So, Rami's suspicions have been confirmed. This guy is actually spying on us. As Khanyi was about to answer the phone, Rami snatched it from her and switched it off.

Rami: "Rendani can call you later today, we're catching up and want to know all the juicy details, babe. Now, out with it. How do you know all that about Tee?"

Khanyi: "Ah, Rendani told me all about it. He said that Thato was adopted by a woman named Sonti or Sonto or something. He also said that Thato was in a relationship with Kg and that they got hijacked or something and something about Thato losing her baby. It's quite a sad story, hey."

I felt myself shiver as she spoke. Who the hell is Rendani and how does he know all of this? Could he have been involved with Sonto? Could he have staged the hijacking on her behalf? Does he know

where Kg is? I have so many questions pacing through my mind.

Rami: "Did he say where Kg is?"

Khanyi: "Ah, not much. He just told me that Kg does not even remember Thato at all and that it is all his father's doings. That's all he told me. Why are we even talking about Thato now? I thought this was my moment to tell you all about Rendani and I."

I felt like I was about to lose my mind. Who the hell is Rendani and why is he torturing me like this? All this time he knew where Kg was and he didn't even bother to share, but instead he stalked me.

I felt my head spinning for a moment as I rushed to the kitchen to get a glass of water, while Rami handed Khanyi the bottle of wine and I tried to get my act together. Rami rushed towards me and

hugged me, as tears streamed down my face. We had to whisper, I mean who knows if Rendani had the house bugged or something?

Thato: “How could Rendani do this to me, Rami? What have I ever done to him?”

Rami: “Shhh, we’ll get to the bottom of all of this, I promise. It’s pretty obvious that Rendani got with Khanyi just to get to you. Let’s deal with Rendani for now and then Kg. One problem at a time, okay?”

I nodded as we hugged.

Rendani

I can’t believe Khanyi is such a stupid bitch. I sent her to that beach house and specifically told her not to spill any beans. But what did I expect from a

dickmatized 18 year old? Fuck, this girl is going to be the end of me. I even bugged her clothes without her even noticing.

I overheard everything, and it still didn't tell me much. As soon as I heard her talk about me and what I told her about Thato and KG and Sonto, I knew that she had fucked up. I tried calling her and the phone switched off and took me straight to voicemail! Fuck! This is all a mess.

I was this close to getting Thato to be mine, and now, that bitch Rami most probably told Vivian and Gringo. I need to get the fuck out of Jozi ASAP, before he finds me. I'll have to get Thato one way or another. I have come way too far to let her go now.

Chapter Fourty Eight

John 8:32 – “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.”

The following day.

Thato

I didn't sleep very well last night. Well, we actually slept around 4am. I got up at 6am, and decided to come sit on the couch that overlooks the view of the sea. I tried to doze off, but my brain refused. I got my phone and looked at all the pictures Kg and I took last year. It's amazing how attached you could get to a person you have known for a shortwhile. I miss him so much, and I was at a point where I was about to let go of him, until Khanyi told us everything she did. How do I move on not knowing where Kg even is?

Life can be so unfair. Now I understand people who go through major depression when they are looking for lost loved ones who have been missing for years.

I have been praying, but something tells me I am just not looking far enough. I don't know, really. I went through my Insta, and noticed a very odd comment from a blast in the past on the picture I posted yesterday, of Rami, Gringo, Vivian and I in front of the jet.

It was a comment from Anastacia. How this girl always manages to find me baffles me. "I see you have wormed your way into another family, while I am living your dream." She even added a laughing emoji. This bitch is annoying as fuck, so I blocked her. I don't even know what she means and I cannot wait for the community to hear about her fucked up mother. I scrolled some more through some of my pictures and I received a call from an unfamiliar number. I decided to answer it anyway.

Thato: "Hello."

Voice: "Hello, Thato. O kae (How are you)?"

It's Kgabo, Rami's brother. I have been meaning to call him, though, well I didn't have his number.

Thato: "Hello, abuti (brother), ke shap (I'm okay).
How are you?"

Kgabo: "Ah, ke siame (I'm well). Happy belated birthday. Sorry I couldn't call you yesterday, ne ke ile thabeng (I was at the mountain)."

He is taking this prophet life very seriously. I admire that.

Thato: "Kea leboga, abuti (Thank you, brother)."

Kgabo: "How is Cape Town?"

His parents must have told him that we're here or he

probably saw that in his dreams or something.

Thato: "Go monate (It's nice), so far."

Kgabo: "Hmm, what have you been doing about the dream you keep having lately?"

I knew this wasn't just a social call.

Thato: (sigh) "Ke likile, abuti, (I have tried, brother), to be honest. I have been praying a lot, but it keeps coming back."

Kgabo: "What do you think of the dream? What do you think it means?"

Thato: "Honestly, I don't know. I think Kg is in some kind of trouble or he has forgotten about me."

Kgabo: "Life is all about risks, Thato. We are fighting spiritual battles everywhere we go. It is time to tap into your spiritual being, pray, meditate. And you will see what the dream means. As I have said, danger is lurking, trouble awaits, you are the only one who can bring Kg back to you. He is alive, yes, but he is in a very dark place. Only you can save him because you are his true love. In regards to your father, the answer is right in front of you, right under your nose. I hope I'm making sense."

He never makes sense, but I get him.

Thato: "I think so."

Kgabo: "There is a reason why you ended up in Cape Town, in that specific house. Pray, meditate this week. Switch on your candle every night when you pray and leave it on all night. By Friday, when you

come back, you will have seen what the ancestors want you to see. We will talk then. Enjoy your trip, Thato and remember, your mom is always with you.”

We said our goodbyes as I sat on the couch deep in thought. I have no idea what he means, but once again I will have to take his instructions to heart and pray. I got up from the couch and decided to make some breakfast. I ended up baking up a storm, trying out the croissant recipe I got from Gringo. I added my own twist to it, and added mozzarella cheese.

I even made some garlic loaf, scrambled eggs, with spicy guacamole and English sausages. I'd like to try out some cocktails for a change, so I made us some Mimosas, with Strawberry Mojito's. It's 11am, and never too late for a drink as Aunt Vivian likes saying. I was about to call Rami out, not giving a care about Khanyi, but she walked out on her own accord.

Rami: “Hmmm, girl, you’re going to make me fat. I always get woken up by your delicious food.”

Thato: (chuckling) “Good morning to you too, sis. Come, let’s eat.”

Rami sat down and we dug in. Oh, I was moaning at the taste of my own food. I cannot believe that I can make such good food.

Rami: “You and Gringo would get along so well, Tee. I mean can you imagine you two cooking up a storm in the kitchen? You would make a shit load of money.”

We both burst out in laughter. I added some cayenne pepper in the Mimosa, just to remove the hangover. Khanyi was still in bed, minus one for us. I told her about what Kgabo said and she said we

would go to the market to get some candles.

Rami: "So, check this. I found this in Khanyi's bag."

She showed me a wire. What the fuck? Was Khanyi actually spying on me for Rendani or what?"

Rami: "Rendani was using it to spy on us, but don't worry. I dipped it in water, before taking it back. Some people are trash. I called Gringo and informed him about it, and apparently Rendani had already sent someone to spy on us here, but he has gone missing. Ran away is more like it."

Rendani is such a coward for the pervert that he is. I cannot believe he can't even face his own demons now. I just hope they find him sooner rather than later. I just need a bit of peace and smooth sailing in my life. Rami and I finished eating and had our cocktails. We went to our bedrooms to take a

shower and headed out. We did some shopping, bought a few nice items and went out for lunch. We did say we were going out to buy candles, but three hours later, our hands were filled with shopping bags.

We had ourselves the best fish and chips, not even Jo'burg has such good tasting fish and chips. If only I could ask for the recipe. We did some grocery shopping and headed back to the house. We both found Khanyi sitting on the couch, looking very annoyed. She had eaten the leftovers we left this morning, and didn't even bother to clean up or put them in the dishwasher. Some girls are seriously annoying.

Rami: (annoyed) "Khanyi, the least you could have done, was to clean up after yourself."

I thought she would be a bit remorseful, but nope. She even decided to give us an attitude.

Khanyi: “Had you not left me here all alone, then maybe I wouldn’t have had to clean up.”

Okay, this chick is seriously going to upset me. Is she trying to ruin our trip?

Thato: “Excuse me, Khanyi? Are you being for real right now?”

Khanyi: Yes, I am. Had you not pestered me with those stupid questions about Rendani last night, I would still have a man today. And now, he dumped me – all because of you two!”

Okay, firstly she ditches us for dick then she pitches up here out of nowhere with wires and shit without letting us know, and now she is insulting us because Rendani dumped her?

Thato: “Look here, Khanyi, you refused to listen to us when we told you Rendani doesn’t love you. You rocked up here without asking us if it is okay for you to come. You got here just to spy on us as you were given instructions by your so called boyfriend who is obsessed with me by the way! Now that we welcomed you here with open arms, you choose to thank us by being rude?!”

Rami threw the wire at her and she didn’t even seem bothered.

Khanyi: “This is all your fault, Thato. You think that everyone wants you just because your father is white.”

There we go again, the white insult. I have actually had it with people who just feel the need to insult me because of my skin colour. Nothing is wrong with me and had I been such a defect, God would not have given me life.

Thato: (infuriated) “Listen here, you skinny bitch, and you listen very carefully! I am who I am, I didn’t choose to be the way I am and I don’t regret one thing about me. I am a child of God, a God who saw it fitting to make me the way I am. I am smart, beautiful, and way smarter than your dumb ass. You chose to fuck the first guy who told you that you’re beautiful. You fucked up big time and now you have the nerve to insult me?!”

You haven’t even paying much attention to your grades, Khanyi. You actually forgot why you came to varsity in the first place, and you are busy with boys instead of living up to your family’s standards. I bet you didn’t even use a condom with Rendani, you stupid fuck!”

I was fuming, while Rami stared at Khanyi, who looked like she has just seen a ghost. I am honestly tired of bitches like her. She can go fuck herself for

all I care.

Rami: "I think it is time for you to leave, Khanyi.
Three is a crowd this time."

Khanyi started weeping while we both just stared at her.

Khanyi: (crying) "Please guys, I am sorry for the way I have been acting. I didn't mean to."

We were not even bothered, and since Rendani dumped her, he most probably didn't even give her any taxi fare or book her a flight.

Rami: "I'll get the driver to take you back home with our private jet. It's been fun, but you need to leave."

We left her weeping on the floor on her knees, while I went to my bedroom and Rami went into hers. Later on that evening, we had a lot of fun without Khanyi's presence. Rami even cooked with me while we had a bit of wine. We watched some movies on Netflix while I made a note that I have to go to the beach tomorrow. We ended up going to bed around 11pm. I lit the candle, prayed and left it on the whole night as instructed by Kgabo. As usual I had the same dream of Kg not hearing me while I called out to him, but this time, it was a bit different. He stared at me for a very long time and we were around the beach.

I don't get what it means, but I still prayed. I woke up the following morning, and asked Rami that we go to the beach. It was so much fun to actually wake up next to the beach without a lot of people being there. Since we were right next to it, Rami went into the house to make us some cocktails with snacks. After about two of them, I was a bit tipsy. Luckily we were underneath a garden Umbrella with sunscreen and our Summer hats on.

Thato: "I'm going into the water, Rami."

Rami: "Ah, Nna ke sa nwa (I'm still drinking). I'll keep an eye on you, though. O ska drowna, akere (Don't drown, okay)?"

I laughed and walked towards the water. The sea water feels so nice. No wonder why black people always feel the need to go to the beach to cleanse away all their bad luck. It's always nice to feel the salt water on your skin. Salt has a way of purifying the skin, so I guess it is also spiritual. I felt hungry after a while, so Rami and I took our towels and headed to one of the restaurants near the beach.

I love the vibe here, the food is lovely, the music and the drinks kept flowing. Rami went to the toilet, while I sipped on my drink. As I looked up, I couldn't believe my eyes. This must be a dream. I rubbed my eyes and pinched myself to check if indeed it was real. I slowly got up and ran towards him as he

stared at me. I impulsively hugged him with tears in my eyes.

Thato: "Oh, Kg! I can't believe this is actually happening. Is this really you?"

He looked at me puzzled and looked quite confused.

Kg: "I'm sorry, do I know you?"

Chapter Forty Nine.

Psalm 34:18 – "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

Thato

I couldn't believe my eyes, but the most painful part was that which was coming out of Kg's mouth. He

still looked the same, just a bit more buffed up. He even grew more beard now. I see the same Kg I have always known physically, but that's it. He looked at me like I was a ghost or something, completely confused and lost.

Thato: (Surprised) "It's me, babe. What do you mean do you know me?"

Kg: (puzzled) "I'm sorry, you must be confusing me with someone else."

I looked him in the eye and it was most definitely not a dream. It was real, and he had no idea who I was. I was left embarrassed and confused. My heart literally sunk to the pit of my stomach. The pain I am feeling right this moment does not comprehend to the pain I felt when he got shot right in front of me.

All these months I had painted a faint picture in my

mind where he would be delighted to see me again, where I would tell him about our baby, the pain I went through, but this is more than I have ever expected. Why did Kgabo ask me to pray only to find even more heartache? Why is life so unfair?

Thato: (embarrassed) "Oh, I'm so sorry, sir. Please forgive me. I mistook you for someone else."

Kg: (smiling) "It's okay, I get that a lot. My name is Wolf."

He extended his hand, wow, so I am literally re-introducing myself to my own fiancé. I shook his hand and felt the same electrifying goose bumps I felt the first day he touched my hand. I thought long and hard about my introduction.

Thato: "I'm Thato, but you can call me TT."

I was hoping he would say this is all a joke or something, but no. He genuinely didn't remember me. It hurt me immensely.

Kg: "Nice to meet you, TT."

As he let go of my hand, I had another huge blow to my ego and my heart. A visibly pregnant Anastacia appeared from the bathroom section, and stood right next to Kg. Right at that moment, I remembered her nasty comment on my picture on Instagram.

She still looks fake as fuck, and ten shades lighter. I could see some visible silicone straight from where I was standing, and a huge red diamond ring on her ring finger. This has just gone from bad to a million times worse.

Kg: (smiling) "Hey baby. I just met this nice girl. She knows me from somewhere, but I can't recall

meeting her anywhere.”

I froze as I saw Anastacia holding my man’s hand while rubbing her pregnant belly. Indeed she is living my dream.

Anastacia: (smiling) “Oh, really, babe? Ag, she probably knows you from Diepkloof or something.”

Kg: “I guess so. Was nice meeting you once again, TT.”

He smiled and walked towards his table along with Anastacia, while rami came rushing towards me and held my hand.

Rami: (worried) “Are you okay?”

Thato: (shaken) "Please, let's go home."

Rami: "Okay."

We walked out while I took one last look at Kg and I saw Anastacia instead since he had his back towards me from where they were seated.

Anastacia looked at me and gave me one fat smirk. I have always known that life could be a bit unfair to some people, but this is just a enormous blow to me. Why do I have to be entrapped in such a nightmare?

We got into our car and headed straight to the beach house. All this while my heart was pulsating like nothing else, I couldn't say a word. My throat felt like a huge lump was entangled right in the middle of it, refusing to go down. My stomach had a huge knot that kept turning, making me feel tighter and tighter.

I felt like I was about to vomit, my threatening tears were burning the insides of my eyelids, while my whole face felt like it was literally on fire. We got out and Rami never let go of my hand, not even once. As soon as we walked into the house, I sunk into the couch.

Rami didn't say anything, she just went straight for the wine in the kitchen, and came back with a bottle and two wine glasses. I took the glass and gulped it all at once, and I burst into tears soon after. Rami held me, comforted me, but it still felt painful as fuck.

Thato: (crying) "I can't believe this, Rami. Why does everything have to be so hard for me?"

Rami: "Shhh, it's okay, babe. I know you're going through a lot, but now is the time to get up and fight for what's yours, Tee. You're a strong girl and I know we all deal with pain differently, but this time, ngwaneso, swabisa manaba a gao (prove your

enemies wrong). Ema ema (stand up) and fight.”

Thato: “I feel so numb, Rami. How will I do that?”

Rami: “You gain strength from God, babe. Your strength lies in your knees, your power lies in your tongue and your weapon against destruction is your faith. There is a reason why all this is happening to you, and honestly, I feel like this is just a path you have to take to be able to reach your destiny. Do you remember Rachel in the Bible? She patiently waited to marry her love Jacob after being cruelly deceived by her father, who tricked Jacob into marrying her sister Leah.

Her prayers were answered, and although she was childless at first, she became the mother to Joseph and Benjamin. Genesis 12:3 says: “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Proverbs 4:16 says: “For they cannot sleep

unless they do evil; and they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble.” What I mean is that Anastacia clearly did something to him, Tee.

No man would ever pretend not to know you without even attempting to make contact with you after being shot in front of you like that. There is a reason why karma exists on earth, and she will surely get her karma. I’ll personally help you get to the bottom of this, but deal with you first. He will come back to you, in due time.”

Deep down I know she’s right, but I can’t believe it right now. It hurts so badly, that I can’t even think straight. I cried until I had no more tears left, and I headed to bed early. Rami said she would come sleep with me after a short while. I feel so bad right now, since our trip was supposed to be a great one and now it seems like drama keeps following me everywhere.

I decided to light my candle and burnt some incense and prayed. I prayed like it was the last time I would ever pray. "Dear God, Modimo wa ka o a rategang (My loving God), The father of Jesus Christ, the creator of all living things, the one who makes everything possible, Jehovah Jireh (My Provider), Jehovah Rophe (My Healer), Jehovah Makadesh (My Sanctifier), Jehovah Shalom (My Peace), Jehovah Rohi (My Shepherd), Jehovah Tsidkenu (My Righteousness), Adonai (My master). Psalm 34:18 says "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." In Isaiah 41:10 you promise us that "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Psalm 73:26 says "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." 1 Corinthians 13:7 says "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

Heal me, oh, Lord. Heal me from the inside, cleanse

my heart and help me not to hold any grudges towards anyone. I ask that you help me forgive all those who have trespassed against me. I ask that you strengthen me for whatever is coming my way, for you know why things happen. Lead me on the right path and let Kg come back to me if it is your will, oh, God. I ask this in Jesus' mighty name. Amen."

I felt so much at ease afterwards, and got into bed. I dozed off immediately.

Rami

I have never seen Thato so broken before. I have only known her for a short period of time, but I love her so much. It hurts me to see her in so much pain, more especially since it was caused by another woman. I have no doubt in my mind that Anastacia caused all this. From what she has told me about Kg and the way their relationship was, there is no

way he could have fallen for Anastacia, at least not willingly.

I have heard Gman and Vivian talk about Wolf and Gorilla, and now it all makes sense. There must be a reason why Kg and his dad Romeo have been using an alias. There is more to this story, so I decided to call Gringo. As I was about to dial his number, he called me. I quickly answered, and he sounded in so much distress.

Rami: "Hello."

Gringo: "Rami, how are you guys? Is everything okay? Is Thato okay?"

Rami: (puzzled) "Yes, we're both fine, she is just in a bit of emotional distress. Why? Have you heard anything?"

Gringo: "No, I just had a weird feeling, like I kind of felt like she is not okay, like her soul is in trouble."

Hao, Gman is feeling Thato's soul all of a sudden. But I guess it is because he is a very spiritual guy. He tends to call me at times when I feel down too.

Rami: "She is just upset, that's all. She saw her missing ex a few hours ago and he can't remember her."

Gringo: (worried) "Perhaps you guys should come back home and spend the rest of the week with Viv and I. Plus, we can't trace Rendani anywhere."

Rami: (sigh) "I'll think about it. Let Tee and I spend one more day here and then we'll come back."

Gringo: "Okay, if you need anything else, you know

where to find me.”

Rami: “Sure, Gman. Send my greetings to Aunt V.”

We hung up as I went to Thato’s bedroom. Shame, my poor sis. I have been through heartbreak, but this is another kind of level of heartbreak. I hope and pray I never get to experience such. I got in bed and dozed off right away.

Chapter Fifty

John 16:33 – “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

2 Timothy 3:1-17 – “ But understand tis, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents,

ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”

Thato

I managed to sleep a bit last night, although I had a flashback of the day Kg was shot right next to me and I was dragged on the coarse, tar road. The entire events from that day until the day those two thugs dumped me in an open veld played in my mind like a movie. I remember how I ended up on the veld now, I kept passing out every now and then, and I remember them negotiating if they should rape me or not.

I recall the short one, saying that I'm damaged goods anyway and that fucking a woman who just

had an abortion is bad luck, and that could cause them to die. Imagine that, my bleeding vagina saved me from getting raped.

The other one said that he had always wanted to fuck a yellow bone, but vowed to rape me the next time he saw me. I faintly recall him ripping my diamond pendant from me, saying he will wear it as a reminder of the yellow bone he never got to fuck. I don't get how cruel people can be, but I guess such is life.

I woke up before Rami as always, and sat in the couch, facing the beach yet again. My heart is still achy, but my spirit is a bit soothed. After about an hour, I decided to make some breakfast for us. Just a quick breakfast with a strawberry smoothie with some cayenne pepper. I have no idea where I get these recipes from, but ever since I have discovered the kitchen, it seems as though they come naturally. Rami got out of the bedroom and followed the smell

of the food as usual.

Rami: "Hmm, good morning, sunshine."

Thato: (chuckling) "Good morning."

Rami: "How are you feeling today?"

Thato: (sigh) "I have honestly felt better, but I am so glad that you're here. I am so sorry for ruining our girls trip, though."

Rami: "You did nothing wrong, Tee, honestly. We all go through a lot, so don't beat yourself up about it."

Rami is a breeze to hang around with. We decided to do shopping one last time, since we feel it's better to go back home earlier than expected. We went out to the mall and got ourselves some nice outfits. As usual, three hours later, we picked up quite a few

outfits. As we were about to enter Bugatti's since I was craving their awesome creamy spinach, I got the shock of my life and I nearly dropped my bags. I started shaking, shivering actually and I literally halted at the sight of those two. I tried to walk back, but I felt my movement become restricted.

Rami: (panicky) "Tee, what's wrong? Are you okay?"

As I was about to answer her, I saw the tall one wearing my diamond locket. He stared at me with a huge smile on his face and had the nerve to flash his revolting eyes at me. I saw his face much clearer this time, even though he was draped in Gucci, he still could not hide his horrid scraped face. The short one turned around and looked a bit worried when he saw me look at them.

I forgot about Rami for a minute, as she stared at me for a while and then looked at them. The tall one put his hand on my diamond locket, most probably

as a sign. I have to get the fuck out of here. I literally felt like I was about to piss my pants.

Thato: (shaky) "Rami, let's get out of here, please."

I managed to scrape the bit of strength left in me as I hurried out of there, barely holding onto my paper bags. I was shaking, with tears flowing down my face. My body was about to fail me, but I just kept pacing ahead. We had to wait outside the mall for a minute, as the driver was away at the time. I kept tapping my right foot, anxiously looking back, thinking those two might come and attack me again.

It seems as if every time I pray, trouble follows me. I didn't even realize the tears kept blinding my eyes. Rami was in severe panic, as she saw how nervous I was. She immediately dialed Gringo, who told her that he would send the driver straight to the airport. Smally would bring our clothes back to Jo'burg later. She had no idea what was happening, but I felt my

chest close in, like I was about to have a panic attack.

I dropped those paper bags on the ground and started breathing heavily. The more I gasped for air, the more I felt my chest close in on me. My whole body felt a hot wave consume me, making me feel like I'm about to die. Rami was shaking and worried, but tried to calm me down.

Rami: (Panicked) "Thato, breathe, babe, breathe. Slow down and breathe."

I looked at her as she held both my hands, while coaching me and aiding me to breathe slowly. The more I did it, the calmer I began feeling. I felt my heart start beating at a much more normal pace, and I didn't even care about the crowd of people staring at us. As the driver quickly parked alongside us, I saw the two guys approaching us. I quickly picked up our bags and got into the car.

Rami: "What are you waiting for?! Drive!"

I kept staring back while in the car, thinking they might have been following us.

Rami: (worried) "Tee, what's happening? You're scaring me. Who are those guys?"

Thato: (shaky) "They are the ones who kidnapped me."

Right then Rami felt uneasy. She also kept looking back and dialed Gringo yet again, and put him on loud speaker.

Rami: (worried) "Gman, those two guys, it's the same guys who kidnapped Thato a while back."

Gringo had no clue what happened to me a few months ago, but he sounded so worried, though. He is a real father figure of note.

Gringo: "I'll get my guys to get on it. Don't you worry, you're safe. No one is following you. I'll be waiting for you at the airport when you get back, okay?"

Rami: "Okay."

Gringo: "Thato, you're okay. Just remember to breathe."

I couldn't even utter a word. I felt so scared, and I had thought that I got over the pain I felt months ago, but clearly not. We arrived at the airport a while later, and got out immediately. We got into the jet, and I ordered a stiff drink. The pilot didn't even wait a while as usual, we flew off. Within two hours, we arrived at the airport, both of us very anxious and

barely saying a word to one another.

As promised Gringo was waiting for us at the airport. I don't know why I feel so close to this man. I barely know him, but once we got out, both Rami and I got a huge, relieving hug from Gringo. I think it only sunk in at that moment that we could have gotten kidnapped yet again or died or something. We both broke down in tears and wet the poor man's shirt.

Gringo: "It's okay, girls. Daddy's got you now. You're safe, and I'll make sure they all pay."

There is something relieving in Gringo's voice, something reassuring and soothing. I felt like he actually meant what he said and I knew then that I could trust him. We got to Gringo's house and he immediately told us to go sit on the couch.

Rami and I are so used to sharing a couch, so we

chose the longest one and sat next to each other. He came back with chamomile tea, even though it's a bit hot outside. Apparently it soothes a person, especially one in distress. He scooted in between us and started asking questions a few minutes later.

Gringo: "Now, tell me what happened at the mall."

I explained everything that happened, from the day of the hijacking to Sonto forcefully aborting my baby. When I saw those guys, it felt as if I was literally reliving those few days. I could see Gringo's veins popping out of his head as he clenched his jaw and frowned.

Gringo: "Do you know these guy's names?"

Thato: (shaking head) "Sonto referred to them as Sporo and Spilotro or something. I cannot recall them ever using their real names."

Gringo: "I'm on it."

He left us there and we watched tv. We must have drifted off in sleep, because we were woken up by a frantic Vivian.

Vivian: (frantic) "Girls! Le shap (Are you okay)? Did they hurt you?"

Rami: "No, Aunty, re shap (we're okay). Just that Thato had a panic attack."

Vivian: (hardened face) "Come, we need to change and go to the warehouse."

I have no idea what she is talking about, but we did as told. She led us into one of the bedrooms. This house is just amazing, everything is a bit oversized,

even the bed. Four or five people could easily fit on these beds. We found two all black jumpsuits and gloves laid out on the bed. Vivian instructed us to get dressed in them.

I looked at Rami who didn't seem surprised, so I did as instructed. They were the perfect size, so we got dressed and met Gringo and Vivian down stairs. Both of them were dressed in all black as well. Seems like we're going to a funeral or something. I didn't ask any questions as we were led to the car. While, we were in the limousine, Gringo decided to speak up.

Gringo: "Rami, you already know the drill, but Thato, I think it is time we told you the truth about who and what we actually are."

My heart started pacing way too fast again, as I imagined the worst.

Gringo: “Vivian and I are the biggest drug dealers in South Africa. We have a lot of people working for us, so it is very important to us that we protect our loved ones. We have a lot of enemies – people who don’t like us and would do anything to overthrow our empire. I need to know before I say anything further, if you have a problem with this.”

I honestly don’t have a problem. I don’t condone drugs or anything, but who am I to judge? These two welcomed me into their hearts, and house and basically into their family. They have treated me like their own daughter, and I cannot crucify them for dealing in drugs.

Thato: “No, I have no problem whatsoever.”

He took a deep sigh, almost as if he was awaiting my approval.

Gringo: “Okay, when we punish the ones who hurt us or hurt our loved ones, we perform a special ceremony. We make sure that they remember the pain and torture, even in death. Today, you’re about to grow a thick skin. You are about to witness the two men who turned your life into a living hell all at the hands of your own mother, die a slow, painful death. I need you to be strong, because this is not for the fainthearted.”

Oh, my goodness. I’m about to become a murder accomplice at the age of 18. How do I go about this because it seems as if I’m already in way too deep for me to turn back.

Chapter Fifty One

Romans 3:23 – “For a have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Thato

I felt a huge knot in my stomach. I felt tense, nervy and way too uneasy. I have never witnessed a murder before, let alone anyone trying to murder someone, except for when Sox set Coin on fire. I swallowed hard when we arrived at an unknown location and I heard Gringo tell us to get out of the car. I was shaking, but I tried my best not to show it.

We walked into a warehouse for real. This feels like a hardcore, action movie, with the house in a far, far place in the middle of nowhere. There are about two other cars parked outside in the driveway, and two big guys standing outside the door. They both greeted us and I just waved back. As we entered, I could familiarize myself with the stench of blood and chemicals. Something tells me a lot of people have died here.

We walked a bit further and we were met with a

podium of some sort. This looks like a court room, with one two big chairs in the middle, surrounded by smaller chairs all around. In total, I counted ten chairs in here. Gringo and Vivian sat in the two big chairs, while Rami sat next to Vivian and I sat next to Gringo. It's a bit too dim in here, as I can't see properly what's happening in front of us.

Gringo: "Switch on the lights, Smally."

Smally: "Sure, boss."

As he switched on the other lights before us, I got the shock of my life yet again. The two thugs who kidnapped me were on their knees, with their hands tied behind their backs, and their mouths taped. They looked scared as fuck, but then again they didn't look this scared a few hours ago when they intimidated me. I looked at the tall one, with my precious, diamond locket around his neck.

I thought I would feel scared and anxious, but after seeing them and recalling all the painful memories they have engrained into my head, I felt enraged. I actually wished for them to die, although death seems way too easy for them. Mama always said that anger is the most dangerous weapon apart from the tongue, because it could easily make or break you. Gringo spoke into the microphone in front of him, just as we all had one in front of us, on the long tables set before us.

Gringo: “Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to today’s hearing. As you can see, we have two perpetrators before us. My wife, would you like to read out their charges?”

Vivian: (smiling) “With pleasure, babe. In front of us we have two very young gentlemen, who have had their whole future planned out, but unfortunately chose to play God with a young lady’s life. Their

charges are as follows: Hijacking; attempted murder; kidnapping; conspiracy to fraud; attempted rape; grievous bodily harm; assault; accomplices to killing an innocent life of which I despise the most by the way, and lastly, they left a young girl to die in an open field. Gentlemen, how do you plead? Think very carefully before you answer, I'm severely allergic to lies and liars."

I couldn't believe my eyes, Vivian and Gringo were so in their elements, they looked like two completely different people. Something tells me they do this quite a lot, and one would think they do it for fun, but in actual fact, they do it to punish those who have wronged them.

Sporo: "I... Guilty."

Gringo: "Spilotro?"

Spilotro: "Guilty."

They both looked like they have been moered, with half closed eyes, busted lips and bruised necks and faces. They were even shirtless, with their nipples cut off.

Vivian: "This makes everything so much easier. My husband, what do you think is the perfect punishment for them?"

Gringo: "Perhaps we should ask the victim. Thato?"

Thato: (enraged) "I hope they suffer a slow, painful death. I want them to remember my screams and wails as they die."

Gringo: "Very well, then. Smally, bring the torture items."

Smally nodded and wheeled out a long table filled with weird objects; from a saw, to a shovel, car tools as well as a blowing torch and a thick rope. My heart didn't even skip a beat as we saw them.

Gringo stood up and approached the two guys, whose eyes popped out as they saw the table filled with tools.

Gringo: "Well, since you dragged Thato onto a tar road before you knocked her out with your gun, wena Sporo, I need to teach you a very strong lesson. Seems like a screw went loose sometime in your brain."

Gringo took out a electric saw and chopped off one of Sporo's hands. He screamed out in pain as Spilotro literally wet himself at the bloody sight. Gringo went on to cut the other hand as Sporo started begging and screaming.

Sporo: (begging) "Please, don't kill me, I promise I'll change. I'll do anything."

Gringo: "That's what Thato said when you kidnapped her, but you didn't listen. Wena (You), Spilotro, you failed to listen when Thato begged you to let her go as well. You failed to listen to your mother when she warned to stay away from this idiot. I hate it when people refuse to use their God-given assets."

He took a very sharp, short knife from the table and cut off both his ears. He screamed out in pain, but Gringo seemed unbothered, and neither did Rami and Vivian. Why does it seem like it takes a lot for a person to reach this level of numbness? I mean they are all acting so normal, while I seem like the only one with my stomach turning.

Gringo: "Without wasting any more time, let me get to real business."

Gringo took a blowing torch and lit it. The two guys screamed out and cried, but Gringo went for Sporo. He put the blowing torch on his stomach, as I literally saw his intestines fall out of his body. I was at the point of vomiting, as the horrendous smell of blood was too much to bear. I tried with all my might not to swallow any saliva, as I knew it would come back and I would regurgitate in a heartbeat. He went to Spilotro, and put the blowing torch on his dick, as I literally watched his dick fall off. They both wailed and begged as he looked at them both.

Gringo: "I believe this doesn't belong to you."

He ripped off my diamond bracelet from his neck.

Gringo: "Now, for the finale. Smally, please let out the cats."

Smally: "Yes, sir."

I asked myself what could be more painful than having your own intestines burnt out of your body, but then as Gringo came to sit next to me, back into his seat, I saw two big lions being let into the room. My heart started pounding at an abnormal pace, but the Lions didn't do anything, I guess they were trained to wait for instructions.

Gringo: "You left my Thato to die as she bled out in that field. She could have attracted any animal to chew her off and chew her to death. Now, you get to experience this yourselves. You live by the sword, you die by the sword, my friends. I'll be sending a very stern message to your little boss. Any last words?"

Both of them were bleeding profusely as they tried begging Gringo to let them go, while Spilotro looked like he was about to die. Gringo then gave the final instructions.

Gringo: "Melanie, Oscar, Eat!"

I didn't see that coming. Lions having their own names and commands! The two lions jumped on top of the two thugs and started biting off their heads. They bit and chewed off every bit of their limbs, until there were human bones left. The smell of the bloodied flesh, sent shivers down my spine and a very distasteful feeling to my gut. I couldn't help but vomit right there and then. The more I looked at them, the more I vomited. Fuck, blood smells horrible and I never want to see such ever again. How do these people sleep at night knowing that they tortured people to death? None of them seemed bothered by my vomiting.

Gringo: "It's okay, the first kill is always the worst. You'll be back to normal in no time. I'll have this necklace cleaned up for you and then you can wear it again."

I just nodded with the feeling of a turned stomach. I just cannot wait to get home so that I can sleep or even try to at least.

Chapter Fifty Two

1 John 3:18 – “Dear Children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

Two weeks later

Thato

It's been a rollercoaster ride for these past two weeks. I couldn't sleep well for the first two weeks so Louis gave me a sedative. A week later, Rami and I went back to our flat. It's really nice being around Aunt Vivian and Gringo, I mean they spoil us rotten and try to make us fat by forever feeding us. I got a

lot of recipes from Gringo and I'll be sure to try them out soon.

He kept asking me who my mother was and that we need to teach her a lesson, but after seeing a whole human's head being ripped off, I don't think I'm ready to see such anytime soon. There is no way I'll tell Gringo and Vivian about Kg and Anastacia. I mean what if he decides to torture and kill him too? Speaking of Kg or Wolfe as they call him and Anastacia, they have magically re-appeared on Social Media.

All of a Sunday, Anastacia is posting pictures and videos of her and Kg and Romeo as well. She posts pictures of the unborn baby, and recently went for a pregnancy photo-shoot. I won't like, it stings and hurts like a bitch. Even though Kg looks so different in the pictures, I mean he literally looks stiff, hardened and very unhappy. Perhaps it's my brain trying to console me, but what can I say?

I went through a deep depression for a maximum of two days until Rami forced me to get out of my misery. I did call Kgabo a while back, and indeed he told me that the danger is still lurking and that I must pray. I feel so broken, I mean how do I even move on with life knowing he is with her and has fathered her unborn child? It hurts, deeply, but life must go on. As the Lord says in Jeremiah 29: 11 "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

I don't know what the future holds, but that's the beauty of life. Had we known what the future actually holds, would life have been as exciting and unpredictable as it is now? It's our first day back at campus today and honestly I'm glad. I managed to pass all my modules, along with Rami. We haven't heard from nor seen Khanyi ever since Cape Town.

I have accepted that I'd be attending alone from now

on. I attended my first two classes, without her presence. Maybe she is keeping her distance from me, which is a good thing. I also haven't seen Rendani, although I have seen Thendo once or twice. Perhaps life can get back to normal very soon. I sat in the cafeteria, waiting on Rami.

I went through my phone and checked on the latest trends on Twitter and Instagram, when I received a call from an unfamiliar number. Even Truecaller couldn't recognize the number. I hesitated, but answered it anyway.

Thato: (hesitant) "Hello?"

Voice: "Thato, ngwanaka (my child). O kae (how are you)?"

I got chills down my spine. Bathong (Goodness), why is my painful past following me around? I froze for a while after realizing that Sonto was on the

other end of the line.

Sonto: "Hello? Thatho bathong (my goodness)."

Thato: "Hello, Sonto."

Sonto: "Hao (gosh), don't tell me you're still angry at me for what happened? I mean you were not ready to be a mother. Ke go afoletse morwalo (I lessened the load for you), if anything you should be thanking me."

I felt myself fuming instead of crying as usual. Anger has a way of changing a person from the inside. Is she being serious right now?!

Thato: (infuriated) "O nyaka eng (What do you want), Sonto?"

Sonto: “Yoh, hai go ra gore o sa kwatile (it means you’re still angry). Anyway, I’ll get straight to the point. I need some money.”

This bitch must be out of her sick mind.

Thato: “O reng (What)?! You must be fucking kidding me, Sonto! Do you have any idea what you have done to me?! You stole my money, you killed my baby! Now you have the audacity to call me and demand money from me?!”

Sonto: “Thato, weh. I am in a rut right now, bathong (goodness). I’m your mother and I’d like us to fix things, man. I mean look how well you turned out without Kg. O tlo bas hap (You’ll be okay).”

I couldn’t contain my calmness anymore. It was time for me to bring out all guns blazing.

Thato: (angry) “Don’t fuck with me, Sonto! I think it is high time I re-introduce myself to you. You said it yourself that you hate me and wished you had aborted me, right? Well, now you will really regret giving birth to me. It’s high time you get to see what Gringo has done to your two space men!”

She kept quiet for a while, which is so unusual for Sonto. She always has something to say, an insult or two to throw around.

Sonto: (panicky) “Did you just say Gringo? As in David Groen?”

Thato: “Oh, yes! Sporo and Spilotro were fed to his mighty lions, and I cannot wait to see you get executed. Your time to fuck around has run out, Sonto. Be prepared to die.”

Sonto: (panicky) “Wait, Thato-“

I never even gave her an opportunity to finish vomiting her shit. I immediately hung up and blocked her number. I felt myself breathing heavily, overwhelmed with rage. I even got startled a bit when Rami approached me.

Rami: (worried) “Tee. O shap (Are you okay)?”

Thato: (fuming) “I’m fine, I just got a weird call from Sonto.”

Rami: “Perhaps we should tell Gringo to look for her and teach her a lesson, once and for all.”

Thato: “Yes, we can do that, but right now I just need to get myself in order. People are just messing with me on the real, you know. I feel like the more I pray, the closer my enemies come forward. I didn’t do anything to these people for them to hate me so

much. I am done crying, for real. It is time they got to know the person I have become.”

Rami looked at me quite impressed to say the least.

Rami: (smiling) “You don’t know how long I have been waiting to see this side of yours. Honestly, I got tired of seeing you crying and turning red all the time.”

We both burst out in candid laughter.

Thato: “Rami...”

Rami: “I’m for real, yoh. Next time you cry, I will take a picture of you, and maybe then you will stop crying so much.”

We both laughed as we carried on eating our food.

Sonto Moloji

I cannot believe what I just heard. What the fuck has gotten into Thato? I expected the usual weakling I have always known. How dare she talk to me like that? Okay, I probably went overboard by killing her child and stealing her million, but she didn't need that money anyway. Even more so now, she sounds like she has found her feet. What stresses me out is the fact that she has met Gringo. If indeed he has found out that she is his daughter, of which I doubt, then I would have been dead by now.

All I know is that I need to get the fuck out of the country, before he skins me alive. What I did to Thato is nothing compared to what he is about to do to me. Sure, I lied, I lied about a lot of things, but he got what he deserved. If he wasn't prepared to marry me, then why should I have given him access

to my child? I have to think of a plan B.

Sporo and Spilotro are a thing of the past now, I have to contact everyone who owes me, starting with Sophie. I dialed her number and she answered on the first ring.

Sophie: "Sophie hello."

Sonto: "Sophie, long time no see."

Sophie: (irritated) "Ag, Sonto. O mpatlang (what do you want from me)?"

Sonto: "That is no way to speak to your sister wife, man. I need your help. I need some money, just enough for me to skip the country."

Sophie: (chuckling) "So, the mighty Nomasonto has fallen. Keng na (What is it)? Spatje se wele na (Has your pussy grown old)?"

Sonto: (annoyed) "Sophie, ska ntlwaela masepa (Don't fuck with me). You owe me."

Sophie: (laughing) "I don't owe you shit, honey. Life is a breeze now, I own Rockville, something you failed to do long ago."

Sonto: (begging) "Sophie, please, I'm begging you, okay. Gringo is coming after me, and it is just a matter of time before he comes after you too."

Sophie: "Gringo wa masepa ga a ntshose selo (Fuck Gringo). Let him come, I'll shoot him before he even sets foot here. I have to go, Sophie. Time is money. Ciao (bye)."

She hung up on me. The bitch hung up on me.

Sophie must be joking. I have to try something else. Perhaps I can get through to Glenda. I called her and she also answered in a heartbeat.

Glenda: "Mma Moruti (Pastor's wife) Hello?"

Sonto: "Glenda, I need your help."

Glenda: (sigh) "Sonto, o nyaka eng bjanong (What do you want now)?"

Sonto: "I need money. I have to skip the country."

Glenda: (chuckling) "I don't have all day, you know. Why would I give you money?"

Sonto: "Because if you don't then I'll have to tell Gringo what you did to his niece, Rami. And we both

know you don't want that to happen, do you?"

Glenda: "You have no proof, Sonto. Honestly, you are such a bore. Had you asked nicely, perhaps I would have given you some, but o tla ka masepa (you asked me with a shitty attitude). It is high time you faced your demons and stopped running. I have to go, bye."

She also hung up and I banged my hands on the table in frustration. How can these women do such to me? After all I have done for them? I have to think of something before Gringo finds me. My time on earth is running out, the angel of death is calling me, I can feel it.

Chapter Fifty Three

Proverbs 24:163 – "For though a righteous man falls seven times, he will rise again, but the wicked stumble into calamity."

Psalm 146:8 – “The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down. The Lord loves the godly.”

A few days later

Thato

It is Sunday and Gringo gave Rami and I a weird call the other day asking us if we could go to church in Rockville. I don't even know why because he usually practices Buddhism. Rami was a bit uncomfortable with the idea, but something tells me that Gringo is on a mission to make people pay for their sins. Indeed the Bible is right about sins catching us when we fall.

I don't know what he has planned, but they asked us to dress in black and dress really well for the

occasion. Rami and I wore matching black Versace Jumpsuits, a lot similar to the ones we wore the night those two thugs go executed. I wear my diamond pendant everywhere now and even though I haven't seen Kg ever since that day, I feel a bit at peace.

Gringo and Vivian fetched Rami and I from our flat as we headed out in their Black Lexus. They too wore black outfits, as Gringo was dressed in a black Italian Suit, with Aunt Vivian dressed in a tight, leather Prada dress. We wore our shades and coats since it's a bit chilly outside. And so we were – the fantastic four.

We smelled expensive, looked expensive, it felt like I was in a whole movie. Even when we got out of the car everyone was staring at us, most probably at the big white man holding Vivian's hand and then there was Rami and I. They probably think I am a prostitute now or something, but fuck them.

I don't live for them, they most certainly don't do shit for me. As we were about to enter the church, Ruth, Anastacia's rude friend who laughed at me and ridiculed me when I came back home from the hospital, stopped me.

Ruth: (smiling) "Hey, Tee. Long time no see, babe. I love your dress."

I don't get why church people are the most fakest of them all. It baffles me, really.

Thato: (unbothered) "Ruth, get the fuck out of my way, I have a church service to attend. I don't have time for fake bitches right now."

Just like that, I left her speechless while her dumb friends were laughing at her. I don't even like swearing in church, but she asked for it. I don't even

know why she was named after such a strong and courageous woman in the Bible.

Ruth: “Le tshegang lena (What are you two laughing at)?!”

As we walked in, I could feel the stares and glares of the people, while I remained unbothered. I saw Mmane (Aunty) Sophie and Koko (Grandma) Maria staring at me. Sophie quickly stood up and approached Gringo, who was seated right next to me. She has changed quite a lot, swathed in expensive clothes

Sophie: (smiling) “Mr. Gringo, it is so lovely to meet you.”

I thought Gringo would be his usual, friendly self, but he showed her his rude side instantly.

Gringo: “And you must be the infamous Sophie. The one who is currently making her own merchandise that has already killed over 30 boys and girls. Hmm, I see you still haven’t changed a bit from back in the day. You’re also Thato’s evil aunt, is it not?”

I saw Sophie starting to shake a bit. Seems like Gringo rattles a lot of people. Sophie is disrespectful as fuck, and I thought nothing and no one could shake her. She could grab a grown man by the balls, but now it seems as if Gringo’s words have her by the clit and I am enjoying every minute of it.

Sophie: (shaky) “Uh, Mr. Gringo, I”

Gringo: (interrupting) “I’ll deal with you later. Sit, the service is about to start. You had better not leave because there are a whole lot of surprises that await us today.”

She looked at me and I gave her a smirk, as she went to sit down looking defeated more than anything. I just love it. She is finally getting a taste of her own medicine, she used to torture me, insult me, belittle and abuse me in all kinds of ways. She never even bothered to give me the love I deserved and I cannot wait to see what Gringo has planned for her.

We looked ahead, as Mma Moruti (Pastor's wife) walked up the podium alongside her husband with the ushers. The whole congregation stood up, while the four of us remained seated. I felt Rami tense up a bit as soon as Mma Moruti appeared on the podium and I squeezed her hand a bit tighter for affirmation.

Mma Moruti: "Amen Bazalwane, Amen!"

Congregation: "Amen!"

Mma Moruti: "Oh, today is a very special day, isn't it? We should thank the good Lord for giving us more life, good health and just happiness galore. The church is growing, bazalwane, and I am pleased to announce a special guest today, Mr. David Groen, who is one of the most influential people in the country. He has asked us for a special sermon today, as he has something to show us, hence we even have our plasma tv out today. Please, let's all welcome Mr. Groen, Bazalwane."

The congregation clapped immensely as some murmured and gasped, probably asking themselves why an influential white man came all the way to Rockville to give a speech. As she sat down, Gringo walked up the podium and the crowd stopped clapping and looked at him attentively.

Gringo: "Amen, Bazalwane, Amen!"

Congregation: "Amen!"

Gringo: "I greet you all in His holy name, because without God, we wouldn't be here today. For he is just and merciful, and most importantly He is very good at delivering His promises to us. One of us promises was that he would bring justice to the betrayed, to the hurt and to all the victims in this world. I, personally hate liars, I actually despise them. Of course God loves those who forgive as He would also forgive those who have trespassed against Him. One of the things God despises and keeps repeating in the Bible is false prophets."

I saw Mma Moruti shift uneasily.

Gringo: "False prophets are the ones who actually bring disaster and chaos unto our world, isn't it, Bazalwane?"

Congregation: "Oh, yes!"

Some were murmuring, while some were shouting Amen and Oh, yes. Ai, people see a white man standing in front of them and begin rejoicing as if they don't sin.

Gringo: "Matthew 7:15 says "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Jeremiah 23:16 says "This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you, they fill you with false hopes. They will speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord." Ezekiel 13:9 – "My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and who give lying divinations. They shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord God."

Matthew 24:24 says “For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”

I even saw the congregation move their hands and shout Hallejuja’s and Amens while Sophie, Koko, Mma Moruti and Ntate Moruti were scared shitless.

Gringo: “Today is a very special day, Bazalwane, I am going to reveal to you your false prophets, fake preachers and deceivers who lie amongst you. Some of you even bed them, when no one is watching, yet preach something else.”

He switched on the tv, and everyone began gasping. There was a video of Mma Moruti in a very big and dim room, ordering a group of teenagers, both boys and girls to strip off their clothes and perform illicit, sexual practices on one another. I could not believe my eyes and it seems just as bad as Rami described it. I couldn’t help but shed a tear, not of pain, but for

Rami.

I looked at her, and her face was hardened, she had removed her shades with no tears in sight. She was shooting daggers right at Mma Moruti, while the whole congregation was shocked to the core and couldn't believe their eyes. She attempted to get up, but Gringo firmly told her to sit back down. Then, a voice tape played of Mma Moruti ordering a guy to get rid of a body.

Mma Moruti: "Do as I say and you will receive your cut. You had better not tell anyone that I had Morena killed for power and money. This remains my secret, along with Sophie's and yours, wa nkutlwa (You hear me), Sporo?"

Wow these two guys have been around mos? The Congregation gasped as some of them were shouting, crying and yelling. I even saw Morena's Mother stand up and shout.

Morena's Mom: "O bolaile, ngwanake (You killed my son), moloji towe (You witch)! Ne o tshenga le nna o mfile le tshetele ya go tlala madi a ngwanaka (You were laughing with me and you even gave me blood money, filled with MY son's money!)"

Yoh, Rockville is full of secrets, I can't even cope anymore. Mma Moruti is a whole pastor's wife, a molester and murderer.

Gringo: "There she is, Bazalwane, a whole Pastor's wife. She forced herself on young children and sold their videos for child porn and made millions off it. She even forgot to mention that she killed the young boy and buried him in the middle of nowhere. She even forgot to mention that she fathered a child with one of the Pastors in the church back in the day."

While the crowd gasped, Ntate Moruti gave her one

fat slap across the face as she fell down from her chair. Everyone was shouting and Gringo stood up and walked towards Mma Moruti. He didn't say anything, instead he grabbed her and pulled her out of the church, while Aunty Vivian, Rami and I firmly walked behind him. I didn't even want to stop as I saw Anastacia alongside Kg with Romeo, as they were about to walk into the church. Mxm, this girl has no respect for the house of God. She even chooses to arrive late to make a fashion statement.

She cried out and screamed as she saw her mother being dragged into the boot, while Kg was staring at my diamond necklace. I didn't even care, I had to be there for Rami, and Kg is the last thing on my mind. I could hear Anastacia screaming, while Kg was not even bothered.

Anastacia: (crying) "Mama! Hey, wena (you), Kg! Can't you see I'm crying and in pain here?!"

Kg just grabbed her and handed her over to Romeo as he stared at me. I got into the car and we drove off, leaving him standing there.

Anastacia

I can't believe all this! People just let that big white man drag my mother out of the church like she is some kind of criminal! Whatever happened to innocent until proven guilty?! No one is perfect and now I am even more upset at Romeo and Kg for not even attempting to save my mother from the hands of that beast. As I saw the car driving out, Sophie walked out of the church. Kg didn't even bother, instead he got into the car and drove away. Who leaves his pregnant wife in distress like this?!

Sophie: "Romeo, I see you look good. Tshelete ya go utswiwa e go tshwere pila, ne (Stolen money is treating you well, neh)?"

Romeo: (chuckling) “Ja, Sophie. I could say the same for you, pity it doesn’t hide that phuza (beer) face. How is my daughter?”

Sophie: “She is old enough to answer a phone, you know. Why don’t you ask her?”

Anastacia: “Can someone give me some attention, please?!”

Sophie: “Ah, didimala (keep quiet) wena man. We all know the child you’re carrying doesn’t belong to Kg.”

Romeo: (pissed) “Why do you always have to have such a loose mouth?! Do you see why I never married you?!”

Sophie: “Does it seem like I care? I’m my own

woman now, Romeo. Your time in Rockville is over. I own this town now.”

Romeo: “All these people hate you now, Sophie.”

Sophie: “At least they won’t touch me. Wena Anastacia o re o nyakang (what do you want)?”

Anastacia: “You just saw what Kg did! He left me standing here!”

Sophie: “What did you expect? He doesn’t love you, he loves that bitch and now that she has found her father, you are all doomed.”

Romeo and I were shocked to the core.

Romeo: (shaky) “You mean Gringo is Thato’s dad?!”

Sophie: "Yes, and after he is done with Glenda, you had better hope and pray Thato never finds out about what you did to Kg, because you'll be next on the hit list. He has already promised me a visit."

Romeo looked scared as fuck, but I don't care. I came to get Kg and my plan has to follow through.

Anastacia: "Take me to that sangoma of yours. O rile a ka mfa bheka mina (You said she could give me some muti for him to love me)."

Sophie: "Everything has a price, Anastacia."

Anastacia: "I don't give a fuck. Just take me there now."

We all got into Sophie's car and drove off. It's high

time I got what belongs to me.

Chapter Fifty Four

Isaiah 43:18-19 – “Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

Thato

The whole car ride was rather odd, with Mma Moruti shouting in the boot, banging the door from the inside, and Gringo and Aunt Vivian chatting away like we were going to the mall or something. Rami was just quiet, while she had her hand in mine. I on the other hand was rather worried about Kg. I don't get his thing with Anastacia, but I guess I have to have hope. One thing is for sure, Gringo sure knows how to drop a bomb on someone.

We finally entered the Warehouse gates. It's broad daylight and still, I can't even see how we got here. All I know is that we drive for a while to get here. Gringo instructed Rami and I to get out of the car, while he got Smally and one of his other guys to take Mma Moruti out of the car. She was terrified, to say the least and she was begging for mercy. It's funny how a moment of distress can make you forget all your evil doings.

Mma Moruti: (pleading) "Please, Gringo, let me go. I promise I won't come back, forgive me for everything I did, just please let me go."

Gringo: "Forgiveness is not up to me, that's up to the Lord. I am here to punish you."

Mma Moruti was still crying as she was being dragged into the warehouse. The four of us took our

positions and grabbed our seats. It feels a little different sitting in this chair today, I feel a lot less scared and more excited if I should say that. Does this make me a bad person? Have I turned evil now?

We sat in our chairs, and even when it's broad daylight, we still have to turn on the lights inside the warehouse. Every time Gringo comes in here, he immediately gets into his zone. I don't even know how I could ever be able to switch moods instantly the way he does.

Gringo: "Lights!"

The lights went on. I can still picture Sporo and Spilotro getting eaten by the Lions right where the fear-ridden Mma Moruti is kneeling. She isn't tied up like those two were, and I can still smell the horrible stench of blood. I hope I won't get a nervous breakdown or something this time.

Gringo: “Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today, to witness the terrible downfall of our beloved Glenda Mtshweni, also known as Mma Moruti. Smally, make sure you record this.”

Smally: “On it, boss.”

Gringo: “The Bible says no bad deed goes unpunished, and just like Peter betrayed Jesus, you, Glenda, betrayed the congregation. You stole the innocence of children, and you let worldly things get to you. You sold your soul to the devil and became addicted to sex and pornography. You know what they say, right? You live by the sword, you die by the sword. In this case, you raped children, both men and women, so I guess you know what this means, right?”

I saw fear in Mma Moruti’s eyes. She began wailing

and squeeling, pleading for mercy yet again. I hope Gringo is not planning what I think he is.

Gringo: "Smally, let them in."

Smally just nodded and headed for the door. Upon opening the door, I got so stunned that I nearly dropped from my chair. I saw three big men, really big. They were so huge, I could see veins popping from their abs, arms and face. Usually women say they like well-built men, but these two just look freakishly disgusting. To top it all off, they were butt-naked.

They approached Mma Moruti and then it hit me. He is really planning on doing what I thought. How can he think of doing such? Sure, she did wrong, way more than wrong, but this? Will this solve the problem? I stared at Rami, and she just kept looking ahead with a blank look on her face. Aunt Vivian on the other hand was so laid back, one could swear

she was watching a pleasant movie.

My heart started pacing at an abnormal rate so much, that I literally felt like it was about to jump right out of my chest. I felt like my chest was about to close in yet again, as I tried to breathe slower. My face felt hot, and I felt a bit dazed. I felt like pleading with Gringo, but then what good would that do?

I'd probably be seen as a traitor or something. As the guys slowly walked towards Mma Moruti, she tried to get up and run, but one of them crudely grabbed her top. He was so big and overpowering, that her top tore. I felt myself feeling more and more unease.

Gringo: "Gentlemen, you know what to do."

They just nodded and started tearing her clothes apart. I felt myself getting weak in the knees, tongue

-tied and losing the ability to think straight. Am I about to witness another crime? Gringo hired these men to rape Mma Moruti. I looked at Vivian and Rami with pleading eyes, but they just kept staring ahead with lifeless eyes.

I know, Mma Moruti has done far worse in her life, and to kids as young as ten, but why call a spade a spade? Why fight fire with fire? No, this can't be happening. Gringo stood there and watched, as Mma Moruti begged for mercy, the men had their way with her. One shoved his gigantic, stiff dick into her vagina, the other one mercilessly propelled himself into her anus, while the other thrust his dick into her mouth.

It was honestly a sight for sore eyes, to say the least. I have seen rough porn briefly once or twice before, but this, this is just unjust. I felt pain in my stomach every time they pounded into her. She couldn't even scream, as she kept gagging the whole

time. The one in her mouth never even gave her time to gasp for air. I saw the veins protruding on her face, her eyes begging for forgiveness. I tried blinking a few times to check if whether or not this wasn't some sick movie, but unfortunately I became one of the spectators. I tried getting up to leave, but Vivian stopped me.

Vivian: "Sit."

I sat down, not knowing what to do. I tried shutting my eyes closed, but then her painful screams and gags forced my eyes to open up once more. Every time I opened my eyes, I saw a different expression on her face; a more pained expression arose each and every time they took turns on her. They raped her repeatedly, as if they were waiting on Gringo to tell them to stop. After what felt like forever, Gringo stopped them.

Gringo: "That's enough boys."

I saw them forcefully push her down, while they all rubbed their dicks and shot their loads on her face. I have never seen a woman get so degraded in my life. I respect Gringo, despite what he does for a living, I have the utmost respect and thanks for him because he took me in when he didn't have to.

But this, this is just something else. I saw Mma Moruti try and gasp for air, as the blood from her ripped anus tainted the already unashamed, wooden floor. I couldn't watch anymore, as my stomach turned bit by bit. I felt myself vomit profusely, hoping that they would console me, but they just kept looking at Mma Moruti until I was done.

Gringo: (raised eyebrow) "Finished?"

I nodded ashamedly. How do I look women in the face after witnessing such a horrifying deed? I have

become an accomplice. I have always heard how dangerous drug dealers were, but this, this is inhumane! Just when I thought it was all over, Gringo ordered us all to go outside, while Smally and the other bouncer dragged the worn-out Mma Moruti outside. She couldn't even walk anymore; her body had given into the pain, while her soul had died right there.

She had done a lot of bad things, but nothing compares to feeling the evil being done unto you. As we walked outside, I was met with horror that made me want to shriek. The other boys had already dug a grave which I assumed was meant for Mma Moruti. Oh, Lord, what have I gotten myself into? Rami is calm as fuck, while Vivian didn't even seem bothered. The inner me tried screaming, begging, pleading for Gringo to have mercy on her.

Does this mean that should I betray him as well, he will most definitely punish me in the worst way

possible? Mma Moruti was in so much pain, but she tried her best to speak up.

Gringo: "From dust we were made and to dust we shall return. Here you will be laid to rest, Glenda. This is the closest thing to dignified you will ever get in the flesh."

Mma Moruti: "Please... just listen to me."

At least Gringo paused to lend her his ear.

Mma Moruti: "You..... you should not have mercy on the mother of your child....."

Everyone of us looked at her stunned.

Gringo: (surprised) "Is this one of your tricks? What

the fuck are you talking about? You know, I despise people who don't want to die."

Mma Moruti: "Please.... Ask... Sophie... Sonto....
Who.... Your... daughter...."

Mma Moruti collapsed on the ground, but we could see her faintly breathing. I thought Gringo would try and revive her just so that she could speak and say her last words, but he heartlessly ended her right there and then.

Gringo: "Throw her in."

Rami walked closely towards the grave, most probably to see her perpetrator for one last time and to actually check that she is genuinely dying. Smally and the other guy mercilessly threw her into the deep grave. She tried to speak, but her voice was too faint. Just like that, Mma Moruti was buried

alive. We stood there and watched them throw the soil into the grave until the whole grave was covered. I don't even know where to look, or what to do, but one thing is for sure; Sonto and Sophie are next.

Chapter Fifty Five

Phillipians 4:13 – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

A few days later...

Thato

I haven't been able to sleep much nor look Gringo and Vivian in the eye after that horrific scene they forced me to watch. I mean how can they just force me to watch such a horrific act? Everyone is normal, expect for me. I even moved back to the flat a day later. Rami is chilled, and I have been avoiding everyone – including her.

Even though she has noticed, I just make sure I spend most of my time at the Campus Library. That way I get to study more, and get home late when she is in bed or out. I don't know what to say every time Vivian and Gringo call me, so I just let it ring unanswered until I text back and let them be.

They have probably noticed, and I feel terrible about acting this way, more especially since they paid all my fees, but I don't know how to face them. How do I even face them after they clearly showed me that they wouldn't hesitate to cut my throat or drown me alive should I betray them?

Today is Friday, and I spent four hours in the library. It is rather empty and most people are out. I haven't seen Khanyi in quite a while, which is a rather good thing. So, I decided to head back home, I mean it's 6pm and dark anyway since winter is approaching. As I walked towards the campus bus, I couldn't help

but feel like there's a shadow lurking over me, like someone was following me.

I kept staring back, but no one was behind me. As I approached the bus, I entered and put my earphones on, and closed my eyes. I felt like someone was literally sitting next to me, and as I opened my eyes I nearly died of shock.

Thato: (Shocked) "Mulalo."

Mulalo: (smiling) "Hey, Tee. I didn't mean to scare you."

Shit, he did scare me.

Thato: "What are you doing on Campus?"

Mulalo: "Oh, I give classes every now and then."

Hao, for someone who is rich and swimming in money, he didn't strike me as someone humble enough to take the bus to Rosebank. He lives in Northcliffe and this bus doesn't go there.

Thato: "Oh, okay. But why are you travelling via the bus?"

Mulalo: "Oh, I just felt like a fresh breather, you know. Life just gets too much at times, I mean we travel via cars everyday and we tend to forget what it is like to take a walk and breathe, watch nature and just inhale the beauty thereof."

I don't know, but the Mulalo I see before me seems a bit troubled, depressed if I can say so.

Thato: "Are you okay?"

Mulalo: (faking a smile) "Yes, I am okay."

I don't know, but seems like Mulalo could use a friend right now. The way he just keeps engaging in a conversation with me. I had to remove my earphones just so I don't seem rude. He is quite a nice guy, and we have a lot in common. Within ten minutes, I actually learnt a lot about him. He loves reading, loves watching romcoms, and adores ice cream and fine wine.

I don't know, but whenever I ask him about his personal life, he just changes the subject. He has every right to do so, of course, seeing as he owes me nothing and that we barely know each other. He is quite a gentle guy, although he comes across as hard. I just am so glad I never get to see Tiger or Rendani ever again. As I got off, he got off with me, but he was rather hesitant to go home.

Mulalo: "Do you mind if I take you out for some dinner? I parked my car at the mall."

I was hesitant, but I tried not showing him. I gave him a look, and then thought of an excuse.

Thato: "Uhm, Mulalo, I have some assignments to do and it's late and-"

Mulalo: (interrupting) "I just need someone to talk to, but if you're really not up to it, then I understand. Keep well, Mufumakadzi (Queen)."

He attempted to walk away with his head down. Wow, I just turned a guy down who might going through the most.

Thato: "Wait!"

He turned around slowly.

Thato: "I think I may have an hour or two to spare."

He gave me a glimmering smile while his eyes lit up. Our outing would do us a whole lot of good since I am avoiding Rami, Aunt Vivian and Gringo. We took a cab to the mall together.

Gringo

I don't get it, I don't get why Thato would all of a sudden be so distant, and blatantly ignore us. I am not saying she owes us anything, but I feel an immense bond with her. I would hate for her to land into the wrong person's arms. I still can't get Glenda's words out of my head, they have been ringing like an old, unwanted record.

She said I should punish the mother of my child. How on earth does she know Precious? I mean sure, they both come from Soweto, but sadly I had no picture of Precious anywhere. She was my one night stand and when she just couldn't get enough, she decided to make my life a living hell. She started stalking me, calling me non stop and even threatening to tell my wife about our little affair.

When I wanted to kill her, that's when she had confessed that she was pregnant. I love my children, born out of wedlock or not, I adore them and would do anything for them. That was the first time I had actually made another woman pregnant outside my marriage.

So, I had made a pact with her, that I would take care of her and the baby and that the baby would come live with me as soon as she delivered her, because Precious was a sippy mess. I had to keep an eye on her and make sure that she didn't drink while

pregnant, but she couldn't handle the fact that I had a wife and wasn't prepared to leave her, so she told my wife about the affair anyway.

That didn't change anything, my wife had accepted the pregnancy, but Precious couldn't get over the thought of another woman raising her child, not that she was even ready or fit enough to raise Isabella.

So, one day I went to see her to give her baby stuff as always, in preparation for the birth, I found that she had left the hotel room I had booked her. Stupid me, I was so stressed over my marriage, that I didn't even have the time to check where she came from, where she had lived.

I looked for her for months, years even up to no avail, until my wife even decided to commit suicide because she just couldn't bear the thought of me looking for my illegitimate child. It broke me to the core, the fact that my own love killed herself

because of me. It broke my two boys and they never forgave me – even though they act like they have.

I know they still hate and blame me for what happened. I just want to see my daughter, and I know for a fact that she is still alive. I have been restless ever since Thato decided to ignore my calls, both Viv and I's. I feel so bad, really. Perhaps I shouldn't have forced her into such a life, now look what has happened. She hates me, she probably even fears me.

A part of me really hopes she could be my daughter. I know, it would be too much of a coincidence, but her striking resemblance to my mother is just too alarming. I cannot even phathom having a stranger being my daughter. Vivian and I are on our way to Rockville as we speak, to talk to Sophie. She had better cough it all out or else I'm going to chop someone up into pieces today.

Anastacia

I can't believe everything is such a shitty mess. I am so broken, words cannot even describe what I am feeling. Later on that day, when Mama was being dragged away like a useless dog, Gringo sent us a video of them raping my mother like a bloody animal. They even filmed themselves burying her alive.

Who the fuck does that? I don't even know why Romeo doesn't just kill this motherfucker because he thinks he can rule the whole world. I didn't sign up for this, now Kg is just a weak bastard who doesn't even give me the attention and affection I need.

It's such a good thing that I went to Mama Belinda. She knows just the right muthi to keep a man. I cannot wait for Kg to officially be all of mine. As I lay in bed, thinking about my mother's tragic murder, I heard the door open. It was Kg, which is quite a

surprise.

Kg: "Hey, Ana. I brought you some food, I thought you and the baby might be hungry."

Anastacia: "Thank you."

Kg: "How are you feeling?"

Anastacia: (sigh) "I've had better days. Wolfe, you need to speak to Gringo. This is not how we operate."

Kg: "Ana, you know I cannot do that, he is my superior and besides, he is hosting a party for me soon. I am being promoted to his right hand man, remember?"

Oh, how could I forget? That's all he talks about. If it isn't his stupid jewelry designs, it's the business. Yes, we have comfortable life, but Kg and I have nothing in common. I only did this because Romeo promised me a good life. Now, here I am, pregnant and undesired by my so called husband. If only he found out how gullible he actually is.

Kg: "Speaking of which, I wonder if I will ever see Thato again."

I got so annoyed by hearing him say that. What's so special about Thato anyway?

Anastacia: "Why?"

Kg: "I don't know. There is just something about her, I just can't seem to pinpoint it. I feel like I have met her before, you know, like I had a dejavu moment or something."

He had better not start with this shit. Romeo promised me that the doctor knew his story. Now what is this shit that Wolfe is telling me now?

Anastacia: "Ag, it's probably all in your mind. You can't possibly know her."

Kg: "I guess, but that diamond necklace I saw on her. I have seen it somewhere."

Shit, this guy seems to be getting his memory back. I have to ensure that things stay the same, just as is before shit hits the fan.

Sophie

Business has been slow nowadays, more especially since Thato brought Gringo here in Rockville. I don't

know how the fuck a man like that can have such power over the whole drug business of South Africa. Now people are turning their backs on me, they don't even want to buy my product anymore. Mama, Kagiso and I have been ostracized from the church and the community, as people want nothing to do with us.

Whenever we approach shops or anything nearby, they threaten us with stones. These people forget how I have always been there for them. These low lives decide to turn their backs on me now that they have used up all my money and even drank all the alcohol I bought during all these bashes I have been hosting. They are pathetic and useless and once I get back on my feet, they will feel my wrath. As I was sitting on the stoep drinking black label, I saw a big car approaching the gate. Fuck, it's Gringo.

I felt myself tremble at the thought of him entering my house. Has he come for me too? I heard

Anastacia say that he tortured his mother with her sins and buried her alive. Yoh, Modimo (Oh, God), forgive me for all my sins, just please don't let me get killed. Not today and not by Gringo.

Gringo: "Sophie."

Sophie: (Trembling) "Hello, Mr. G."

Gringo: "Aren't you going to acknowledge my wife's presence?"

Sophie: "Forgive me, Mrs. G, I didn't mean to be rude."

She just ignored me and gave me a blank stare.

Sophie: "What can I do for you?"

Gringo: "Perhaps you should lead us into the house so that we can have a chat."

Sophie: (trembling) "I don't think-"

I didn't even get to finish my sentence when Gringo roughly grabbed me by my throat. I swiftly got up and rushed into the house as he let me go. Once we got in, I stood in the kitchen, near the sink, terrified like crazy.

Vivian: "We came to talk. If you don't comply, then we will kill you."

She wasn't kidding, really. I will die today if I don't give them what they want.

Sophie: (nodding profusely) "Okay".

Gringo: "Who is Thato's mother? Her biological mother? Think very clearly before you answer me because one wrong answer might cause you a tooth or two."

I nodded in panic.

Sophie: "Thato's mother is Nomasonto. Nomasonto Dlamini, she was married to Romeo Moloji."

I could see him frown at my statement.

Gringo: "How did Thato end up being adopted by Petunia?"

Sophie: "She... Sonto couldn't cope with being a mother. She lied to us all saying that you... her father abandoned her while pregnant. She... she

couldn't cope at all, so she decided to leave Thato in her shack and bury her alive. When she came back from a night of drinking, the people around Diepkloof had managed to get the fire to die out, but they said nothing could be salvaged. She was pleased with herself, only to hear the faint cry of a baby. Thato seemed unharmed, with only a scar on her back. She got so mad she dumped her in one of the community rubbish bins and left her there to die. That was when my sister, Petunia was doing her community rounds at the time and heard a baby cry in one of the bins. No one knew who Thato belonged to, until Nomasonto went to Petunia personally and begged her not to turn her in. She asked Petunia to take Thato and raise her as her own, of which Petunia gladly did. Everyone around Rockville knew that Thato looked a bit different from us, so they concluded their own story."

I had hoped deep down that he bought the bits and pieces I had added myself.

Gringo: "Glenda told us you have a letter written by Petunia to Thato. Where is it?"

Shit. Glenda told them about the letter. How the fuck could they be sloppy? How could I even be stupid enough not to burn it or something? Petunia revealed everything in that letter, and even spoke about my ill treatment towards Thato.

How the fuck could I be so stupid? I should have known better than to share my secrets with that evil bitch. All I know is that if I don't reveal it today, I'm most definitely going to die today.

Chapter Fifty Six

Hebrews 9:27 – "Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment."

Job 4:8 – "As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it."

Sophie

I was petrified to say the least, but I decided to go into my bedroom and give Gringo the letter. My shaky hand could barely hold it properly, but then it is too late to turn back now. He took the letter while he gave me his stern, evil look. I felt my heart race as he opened the letter, while Vivian stared me dead in the eyes. I said a silent prayer as they started reading the letter. I can recall the contents of the letter like it was just yesterday.

“Dear Thato

Moratuwa wa pelo ya ka (My heart’s keeper), words cannot explain how much I love you. I re-wrote this letter a million times and I just didn’t know where to start. First off, I’d like you to know that I raised you the best way I could. I made sure you lack nothing;

from food to shelter; to self-confidence and most importantly – Love.

I have been keeping a secret from you for many years, not because I felt that you didn't deserve to know, but that I was waiting for the right time to tell you. Now I know I might never get the chance to tell you because I am dying. I didn't want to worry you by telling you that I've got cervical cancer, because I just wanted you to remember me as the ever smiling person I always was.

I know you have heard a lot of rumours ever since you were growing up about your paternity and how you came about. I adopted you, Thato. I found you in a dumpster when you were just a week old. You were severely burnt by your mother, and when you didn't die, she left you to die. A lot of stories have been going around, but only three people know the truth – your biological mother, myself and God. Not even Sophie knows the whole truth, but I'll get to that

one a bit later.

I never wanted you to find out who your real mother was, simply because she is an evil woman and she does not love you. Your biological mother is Sonto Maake, Romeo's Maake's wife. The truth is she didn't burn her shack and leave you for dead, she actually set you on fire herself. She wrapped you in a cloth dipped in petrol and set you alight herself. The shack fire was just a cover up.

She was amazed when you didn't die, and were only left with that huge scar on your back. I found you on my way back to the hospital, when I heard you crying in the dustbin. I rushed you to the clinic, and miraculously they said you only suffered the burns on your back. You were a perfect and healthy little girl. I never could have children of my own, and I knew that you were Godsent.

When Sonto heard that you were taken by me, she

personally came to my house and begged me not to turn her into the police. She explained to me the whole truth, that she couldn't face the shame she had brought upon herself and her family. She said that her family refused to raise a child by a white man. She dumped you because she simply couldn't bear the thought of seeing you everyday.

You are the exact replica of your grandmother, your biological father's mother. You were just an innocent soul and had no one to look after you. She had no right to set you alight like that. I personally took an oath to take care of you and love you.

She knew all along that you were her child, she just acted like she didn't know you. I don't want you to feel like you don't belong or that you were not loved. I have loved you from the moment I saw you. You are my little girl, and I will forever love you. Sonto's heart turned to stone years ago and it is not your fault.

Your biological father's name is David Groen. He goes by the name of Gringo. You'll find him in Northcliffe, at Address 2456. He is married to Vivian Letswalo, who is Rami's aunt, your fellow school mate. I have waited this long because you will need all the assistance you can get especially when you leave this house. He has been searching for you all your life, and I had to get a Private Investigator to look for him. I don't want you to suffer, hence I left you the house and some money as a head start in life. I just want you to be happy.

As for Sophie, please be careful of her, my baby. I know she has never loved you and she might tell you this out of hate. She has abused you enough while I was alive, and now please do not hesitate to kick them out and live on your own. Gringo will help you with all of it. She forced me to sign a few papers and as weak as I am, I gathered the strength to write this letter to you. I still had a few months to live, my baby, but Sophie poisoned me.

I saw her put some poison in my porridge while I pretended to be asleep. It is by God's grace that I am able to write this letter, for I know my time to leave this earth has come. By tomorrow, I will be dead, my ancestors are calling me. Please know that I love you, and I always will love you. I'll be sure to be your guardian angel, my baby. Prayer is your weapon and may your life be filled with the eternal blessings you deserve. I love you.

Love

Your mother."

As he folded the letter immediately after reading it, I just knew that I was in deep shit. I saw Gringo's blue eyes become bloodshot, while Vivian was fuming, breathing heavily and unable to control her breathing. The next thing I knew, Vivian's firm hands were on my throat as she roughly pinned me against the wall.

Sophie: (panicky) "Please, Wa... nkgama (you're choking me)."

Vivian: (fuming) "Waitse Sophie o re tlwaela masepa (You're so full of shit, you know)! Give me one fucking good reason why I shouldn't kill you?!"

Sophie: (Panicking) "Please... I, I can fix this."

I could feel myself losing my breath , while Vivian shot daggers at me. I'm about to die, I can feel it.

Gringo: "Leave her, Viv. Let's save her for later. I think we can punish her without killing her."

Vivian roughly let go of me as I dropped to the ground, gasping for air and coughing profusely.

Sophie: (breathing heavily) "Thank you. Thank you."

Vivian: "Why did you never give her this fucking letter?!"

Sophie: (scared) "I was greedy, that's all what it was about. I just wanted money."

Gringo: "Which papers did you make her sign?"

Sophie: (hesitantly) "It... was... her pension money, she had more than one retirement policy."

Vivian: (Angered) "How much did you steal from Thato?"

Sophie: (ashamedly) "R500 000."

I felt Vivian's scorching hot hand land on my cheek as I lost my balance, but quickly got up. She didn't give me time to catch my breath, but instead she slapped me a few more times as I felt dizzy trying to get up. She took out a knife from the drawer in the speed of light and stabbed me in my left eye. I felt like I was in a dream, a horror movie actually. All along Gringo was just standing there, saying nothing.

Sophie: (screaming) "Yoh! Le ska mpolaya hle (Please don't kill me, I beg you)! Yoh, thusang (Help me, please)! My eye!"

The next thing I saw Mama storming in and shouting, but she quickly gathered herself when she saw the mighty Gringo and Vivian looking at her like they were ready to kill.

Maria: "Go diragalang mo (What's happening here)?! Le dira eng ka mo ntlong ya ka (What are you doing in my house)?!"

Gringo: “And there she is, the most useless mother in this household. Point of correction, this is my daughter’s house, Magogo (old woman). Give me one good reason why my wife shouldn’t slit your throat since you allowed this bitch to abuse my daughter for years?!”

Maria: (Fearful) “I... please... I did nothing wrong, Sophie can’t be controlled when she is angry.”

She didn’t even finish her sentence when Vivian slapped her so hard she fell onto the ground.

Vivian: “Be glad I don’t have time to kill you, Gog’Magosha (Prostitute granny).”

Gringo: “You, Sophie, you’re coming with us.”

I was being dragged out of the yard like a useless animal. People around were even cheering Gringo and Vivian on when they saw me being dragged out like an animal. Has my life come to this?

Chapter Fifty Seven

Acts 3:19 – “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

Thato

Mulalo and I ended up at Maboneng. I have actually never been here before. Rami always begs me to go with her, but I just never do. Apparently it's always vibey and busy here, hence I just never feel like coming. Perhaps I need to break out of my shell a little bit and explore new things. We ordered ourselves a few drinks and some food. Before I knew it, the guy started venting.

Mulalo: (sigh) "Thato, what would you do if you were in a situation where you were forced to do something you didn't want to do? I mean you had to do it for the family, simply because it is tradition and culture, but in all honesty it just didn't make you happy? Instead, it made you even more depressed than you already are."

Eh, I honestly have no idea how to answer such a question. It seems very deep-rooted, but I guess I have to try.

Thato: "Uhm, well, I think in all honesty, had it been me, I would have chosen myself, my happiness and my peace. I have to come first, no matter what."

Mulalo: "What if it isn't that easy?"

Thato: "Life is never easy, Mulalo. I mean, if it was

that easy then it wouldn't be this exciting. I think if you have tried all options and you still are depressed, then leave the situation. Take yourself out of that mess and just be you."

I could see that this was actually about him and that he was going through something deep, but I thought I shouldn't push for him to tell me anything. I mean, we're not even friends.

Mulalo: (faint smile) "Thank you for listening. I am sorry for burdening you with my depressing troubles on a Friday evening."

Thato: (smiling) "Don't worry about it, I mean I didn't really have any plans for tonight whatsoever."

As we were finishing off our drinks, Rami called me and I ignored it. I don't know what to say to her or any of them. I am too distraught. Call me selfish,

but it is how I feel. Mulalo and I ended up having a really good time as we drove around while he showed me some really nice places around Jo'burg. I actually realized I haven't lived, I mean a few months in Jozi and I only know Northcliff and Rosebank. Aowa (No), I need to get out more.

Sonto

I am seriously not okay, everything is such a mess and I had no choice but to go back home and hide out there. I left home a long time ago when my mother yelled at me for having a child with a white married man. Yes, she didn't actually kick me out per say, but I just couldn't live with all the negativity and I decided to leave.

I wonder now what life would have been like had I stayed and raised my daughter with everything I had. Now, I lost my husband and my children and I don't know where to turn to. I have to be stuck in this old,

rusty house.

Okay, I know I am partially to blame because I never even bothered to fix my mother's house when I had the chance. I didn't even bother to send them food or any money while I was married to Romeo, and now, he left without a dime. I had a million in my pocket, but I chose to blow it all within months.

I don't know what I am supposed to do, perhaps God is punishing me for everything I have done to Thato, of which I most probably deserve. I know that it is not too late to repent and ask God for forgiveness. I think I am ready to change my life and turn it around. I was sitting in my old bedroom on my worn-out bed, when my sister Kuli stormed in. I see she still has no manners.

Kuli: (annoyed) "Weh (hey), Sonto! It's bad enough you came back without warning and that caused us to have one more mouth to feed, kodwa se ufuna

ukuhlala nje unga yenzi lutho (but now you just want to make things worse by sitting around without doing anything)? Hayi (No), man. This is not Rockville and your diva days are over.”

Does she really have to rub in my downfall?

Sonto: (teary) “Yazini (you know what), Kuli? I know I was never the best sister, kodwa (but) rubbing my downfall in my face will not solve the problem and most certainly won’t make you feel any better.”

Kuli: “Oh, believe me, it most definitely will make me feel a whole lot better. Se ngiyabona ushesha ngokukohlwa (I see you’re quick to forget). Did you forget the time I called you in the middle of the night when my son got stabbed and I needed some money to send him to a private hospital? Do you remember what I said to you?”

I looked down in shame because I remember that night very well.

Kuli: “You said to me “Uzazibona ke (Make a plan), Kuli, ngoba wena ubalelwe iskolo (because you failed to finish school). That time I did get to matric, although I failed a few subjects, wena (what about you)? You failed Grade 11 three times! Three times, mntwana wa se khaya (sister), wa shada ne ndoda e ne mali (and you married a rich man), suddenly you felt that you were way better than us. You dumped your daughter in a dust bin, I mean you even set her on fire, Nomasonto! My son died that night on our way to the nearest hospital while I had to beg t the taxi driver to take us there. I remember calling you to tell you that Thamsanqa had passed on and you said to me that it’s one less problem to worry about and one less mouth to feed.”

I felt so crushed, like a knife was being turned over and over in my gut. Was I that cruel, though? I don’t

remember half of the things I have said to her, but I don't know what honestly had gone on in my head. I felt tears warming my dry eyes. It has been so long since I actually shed a tear.

Kuli: "You kept throwing insults in my face because I chose to keep all my four children, but the truth is, I am way of a better mother than you will ever be. I might not be rich, but I love my children. My eldest is about to finish University and graduate, all because I chose to teach her that a mother's love goes a long way. You are reaping what you have sown, Nomasonto, and I am honestly glad that your time has come. I hope and pray that Gringo slits your throat off so that my tears could fall for the last time because of you."

With that said, she just walked out and left me there. For the first time in years, I actually felt pain in my gut, so much pain, that it felt like I was being physically being stabbed. I shed more than a few

tears, I wailed like a child. My life is officially over, I will never be the queen I once was, I will never get a chance to redeem myself and I will never get a chance to rewind my choices.

I was so mean to my own daughter, but the truth is I never deserved to be a mother. My children are much better off without me. As I was about to pack the small bag I had with me, preparing to leave, I received a message on my WhatsApp. I checked the number and I don't recognize it. It was a video with the caption "YOU ARE NEXT".

I hesitated to open it, but then I decided to do so. I got so horrified, I wish I hadn't opened it. It was a video of Glenda being raped repeatedly, gang raped in fact by these three big men and then they buried her alive. I felt so numb, as I wished I could die right there and then. Suicide might be the only option right now. As I was about to switch on my phone, I received a WhatsApp video call from the very same

number.

I hesitated, but chose to answer it with my shaky, trembling hands. As I answered, Sophie's bloodied face appeared immediately on my screen. Oh, my goodness! She does not have a right eye anymore! I felt myself cringe at the thought of what they did to her, I knew immediately that it was Gringo.

Sophie: (crying) "Please, Sonto. Stop running, Gringo and Vivian know where you are. Please, he wants you to hand yourself in and says that if you do, he might have mercy on you."

I felt myself shake as I stood frozen in front of my phone. As I attempted to hang up, Gringo's face appeared on my screen.

Gringo: "Hello, Nomasonto, or should I say Precious?!"

His beautiful blue eyes were masked with the anger he felt, and were bloodshot. I could hardly see the colour of his eyes. I started trembling as I felt the huge knot in my throat refusing to go down.

Gringo: "You are one tough woman to track. I believe you owe me an explanation. Tell you what, let's meet at my house in Northcliff. I believe you still know the address. I'm giving you one week, Precious, one week to hand yourself into my hands and maybe, just maybe I might spare your life along with your dearest friend over here."

I immediately hung up and felt like I was about to shit myself. Oh, no. I am doomed!

Gringo

I am deeply upset, more at myself, really. I don't

know why it just didn't click in my head that Thato might be my daughter when I first saw her. I mean, sure, I saw the resemblance between her and my mother, but probably because of her curly hair. Even when my brother Louis told me he met a girl that has a striking resemblance to Mom's oddly curly hair, I just simply thought that it's one of those things. I didn't take much note of it when I saw her grey eyes, I mean she told me she was adopted.

I genuinely thought that she was mixed, of which she turned out to be. I just wondered why I felt such a strong bond and attachment towards her. I had hoped deep down that she would be my child, really. Now that I have exposed her to such a life, I don't even know if I can forgive myself for it.

Our first meeting was not supposed to be all about revenge, punishment and bloodshed, but instead I have shown her a whole other side of me – the dangerous side. She is probably shit scared of me, I

mean what kind of father am I to expose my own daughter to the gang rape of a woman above 50? Am I truly such a monster? Now that I know she is my daughter, it pains me that she had to go through all of that trouble without me, when I had enough money saved up for her from the moment she was conceived.

My Isabella is alive, and I can't even stop myself from dancing. I cannot believe this! I have to talk to her as soon as possible, before I introduce her officially as a member of the Groen family, and also, my one and only daughter.

As for Sophie, I think I should lie low with the killing for now and fix stuff with my daughter. This one, we will have to kill her slowly, with kindness first, and then I will make her pay for all her sins. As I sat on the couch in the lounge, deep in thought while sipping on my whiskey, Rami stormed in.

Rami: "Gman."

Gringo: "Rami, how are you?"

Rami: (sigh) "I've had better days. Where is Aunt V?"

Gringo: "She is taking a shower. She'll be down now-now. What brings you here? Where is Thato?"

Rami: "Ag, Thato has been avoiding me ever since the Glenda incident, I think she is just a bit shaken and traumatized, but that's not what brings me here."

Gringo: (puzzled) "What is it?"

Rami: "I heard a friend of mine tell me that Thato is busy painting the streets red with Mulalo. I know he

isn't as ruthless as his dad and brother, but I don't think we should trust him around her, especially with Rendani gone AWOL."

She is right about that. I don't know why I didn't even think of that. I have been sulking way too long, that I didn't even think of protecting my daughter. I mean, that motherfucker could be out to get her, while I'm busy overthinking and having whiskey!

Gringo: (Panicky) "Shit! I didn't think about that! That fucker could be after my daughter as we speak!"

Rami: (puzzled) "Daughter?"

Gringo: "Yes, Thato is my daughter."

Chapter Fifty Eight

Ecclesiastes 3:1 – “There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven.”

Thato

Petunia: “Thato, ngwanake (my child). I am so proud of you, my child, but You seem to have forgotten to pray, ngwanake (my child). I asked you to keep praying.”

Thato: (puzzled) “O ra bjang, Mama (What do you mean)? I have been praying as you told me.”

Petunia: “Yes, you have, but you haven’t been praying like I told you to. I asked you to pray for your husband, he is in as much grave danger as you are.”

Thato: (worried) “What is going to happen, Mama?”

Petunia: "Only time will tell. Pray and you will be fine. Your second Birthday wish has come true."

Thato: "What do you mean, Mama?"

Petunia: "I'll always be with you, just be vigilant. I love you..."

I woke up and realized that it was all a dream. I had such a good time with Mulalo that I didn't even keep track of time. By 9pm he took me home and when I saw Rami wasn't home, I decided to take a nap. I must have been really deep asleep because I had a pleasant yet worrying dream about my mom again.

I haven't had a dream of her in a short while. I wonder what she means because I have been praying. Perhaps I am not doing it properly. I seriously misunderstood her message. "Your

second birthday wish has come true”? What does she mean by that because I wished to meet Kg again of which came true, but was very unpleasant and very much unexpected. I also wished to meet my father, but that hasn’t happened. Mama is just as vague as Kgabo or perhaps I am not such a good listener.

Anyway, I got up and decided to get a glass of water, when I saw Rami, Aunt Vivian and Gringo walk through the door. They looked like they were ready for war or something, and I couldn’t help but become startled. Gringo’s eyes were bloodshot, and his face was covered in misery.

He looked like he had been crying or something, which is really unusual for a man like that. Aunt Vivian on the other hand looked like she was about to burst into tears, while Rami looked overwhelmed and wretched. They looked like they were going to a funeral, to be honest.

Thato: (worried) "What's wrong with you guys? Is everything okay?"

Rami couldn't even wait, she let the tears fall. I felt a bit dazed and confused, I mean I have no one else seriously close to me that could die right now, except for Rami's parents.

Thato: "Guys, you're scaring me."

Vivian: "Thato, baby. Why don't you sit for a minute. We'd like to talk to you."

I slowly sat down as I felt that perhaps they want to address my recent behaviour. Gringo walked up to me and held my hands. I literally felt my own hands shiver while in his.

Gringo: (teary) "Thato, I am so sorry you went through everything you did without me."

I gave him a puzzled look. What on earth is he talking about? He just handed me an envelope, with my name on it. I immediately recognized that handwriting. It belonged to my beloved mother. I felt my heart race so fast, I didn't have time to ask any questions. Could this be the letter I have been awaiting all these months? I quickly opened it and the contents of the letter immediately softened my heart.

As soon as I saw the part where Mama wrote that Gringo is my father, I felt like I was about to collapse. Sophie knew all along who my father was and so did Sonto, but they chose to make my life a living hell?! How dare they decide to play God with my life like that?! This hurts, it hurts so badly. Had I found this letter at that given time then my baby would still be in my tummy, perhaps even born right now. Perhaps

Kg wouldn't have disappeared only to pitch up with Anastacia.

My heart is bleeding, it is mourning something that never was, mourning what could have been, the possible future that arrived a minute too late. I looked up at Gringo and his face was so red, funny enough how I have seen him a few times and I never actually realized he kind of looks like me. I have grey eyes, he has blue, but his eyebrows were shaped exactly like mine.

I looked at Rami who looked at me with tears of joy, while Vivian looked at me with an achy heart. This is such a bitter sweet moment, it is actually the best moment of my life, yet the worst because I so wish I had experienced this months earlier.

Gringo: "I'm so sorry, Isabella. I have wanted to meet you all my life. I never gave hope that you were alive and now that I have found you, I am never

letting you go again. Please forgive me for introducing you to a life that wasn't in your plans. I didn't mean to push you away. Now you and Rami can be official sisters, because Viv and I cannot imagine a life without you two."

I have yearned for those words from my father all my life and now that I have heard them, I couldn't be happier.

Chapter Fifty Nine

Proverbs 28:13 - "Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy."

Thato

I feel a bit ecstatic about being Gringo's daughter. I can't even believe that it is actually true, w what's even more puzzling is that I cannot believe I never

saw the signs and resemblance between him and I. We actually have so much in common. I am just happy that my prayers didn't go to waste.

So, apparently he is supposed to introduce Kg or Wolfe if I should rather call him that to his world as his new right hand man. Apparently Kg is the most ruthless guy there is, straight after Gringo of course. He is fearless, of which I recall, but I don't see him as the ruthless guy they describe.

Gringo has told me a lot of crazy stuff about him which I actually doubt that he would do. Kg was never a violent guy, so I am confused as to what actually happened to him right after I was kidnapped. I mean, Romeo acted like such a father towards me, or perhaps it was all an act.

He didn't and still doesn't owe me anything, yes, but the least he could have done was just to tell me Kg was okay or something. It pains me to know that no

one bothered to look for me while Sonto held me captive.

Now I feel like a complete drama queen for ignoring their calls and stuff. Vivian and Gringo apologized profusely for exposing me to such. Now I feel like I have been acting like a spoilt brat. Gringo and I stayed up all night chatting away, as he showed me all his family photos. It stings a bit that I am in none of these pictures.

He is a bit of an old soul, much like me. He prefers to have photos printed out and still uses albums like back in the day. With every new photo that he takes, he creates a memory for it in the album. I scrolled through the bitter sweet pictures, until I came across the one picture we took together outside his private jet, the day Rami and I went to Cape Town. I paused a bit as I looked at it, and he was quite proud of that picture.

Gringo: (smiling) "You see this picture? This is actually the best picture I have in this album. I couldn't have asked for a better daughter."

Gringo though, we don't really know each other, but everything with him comes naturally. He asked me about my life and confessed to me saying that he is holding Sophie captive, and is keeping her as bait to lure Sonto closer to him.

Gringo: "So, what do you think I should do with Sophie?"

He's even asking me for advice. I like it."

That: "Honestly, I think you should give her a long rope to hang herself and let her go. I bet the community of Rockville want her dead, so they will fix her."

He paused and smiled at me, and for a moment I thought he would show me his angry side and tell me where to get off and that she has to die. In all honesty, I don't like what Sophie did to me, but she is the least of my worries right now. I don't know what to do with Sonto, though. I hate her, with every fibre of my being and I am struggling to forgive her.

I don't even know what I would do if I saw her. I just don't like what she did to me, I despise her choices. She could have just taken my money and left me in peace, but she chose to humiliate, break and demolish my soul and my body. Everytime I think of Kg, I ask myself if things would ever go back to the way they were? I don't know, but time will tell.

Gringo: "So, my daughter, since we're hosting Wolfe's party on Saturday, it would be a perfect way to introduce you to everyone. It is high time they know that I have a flower of my own and they had better not even think of touching it."

Yoh, now I know better than telling him about Kg.

Gringo: "Speaking of deflowering, I know I shouldn't be asking this, but, have you ever had a boyfriend?"

I blushed immediately. Yoh, how do I even go about telling him that I have already had sex? So, I decided to do what I don't do best – I lied.

Thato: (shaking head) "No, I have never dated."

How would he feel knowing that I was pregnant and my own mother aborted my baby?

Gringo: (smiling) "I know that look. My mom always gives me that look whenever she lies, but we will just pretend that you just told me the truth, okay?"

I couldn't help but laugh at his statement. This guy, though. He even asked Rami and I to move in, but we like our space. I think things are going to be a bit different from now on, Gringo is going to be super over-protective of us now that he knows I am his actual daughter.

He says he has a very nice surprise for me and although my birthday has passed, he had always hoped to give me the gift he is talking about. I guess we will have to see as time goes on.

A few days later

The rest of the week has been blissful. Gringo has been making us all breakfast before we headed for school, and Aunt Vivian refuses to let us call her Aunty now. She specifically wants to be called Mama or Mama V or whatever, as long as it has

Mama in it, she is all good. Gringo even took Rami and I for shopping yesterday, as he called it Shopping with the girls. We took so many pictures and he reminds me of Kg.

He used to love taking pictures whenever we were together. He bought me one expensive dress, a beautiful yellow rouched, backless dress with a long slit on the right side. I am so amazed since he doesn't want me wearing revealing clothes. Imagine, he has already started telling me what and what not to do. I kind of like it.

I still don't know why I am being the life of the party when it is Kg's night, but anyway. As the theme is black and Gold, which of course are two of his favourite colours, I get to blend in really well with my dress.

He even hired people to do our nails and hair, as well as our make-up. Mam'Vivian was just busy

organizing everything and making sure that the final touches were finalized. Rami has been so happy all along, she does not even hide her gladness. We both stared in the mirror and wow, this make-up artist is so good that I almost can't even recognize myself.

This bronzer and these lashes are just amazing. I can't believe that she managed to transform me like this. Gringo called us out as we headed out, he looked really handsome in his suit. This guy may be a bit old, but his drip is most definitely here to stay.

Gringo: (smiling) "You two look so gorgeous. I wouldn't possibly be able to keep these filthy dogs' eyes off you."

Rami and I couldn't help but laugh. As we approached the lounge, Mam' Vivian appeared from the bedroom. She looks so beautiful, words can't even explain. Mam' Vivian is very elegant, all the

time, so she pretty much looks beautiful all the time. She hardly wears any jeans, because she is forever draped in heels and gorgeous, tight dresses.

Now I see where Rami gets her voluptuous body from. They all have the same structure, her, her mother and Mam' Vivian. Her parents won't be here for the party, but are coming to visit soon during June holidays. It is a bit windy outside, hence we girls will be wearing our fur coats on top of our dresses.

Gringo: (smiling) "You look so beautiful, my wife."

Vivian: (smiling) "Of course, darling. You don't look too bad yourself. I love the new suit."

Gringo: "Thank you, I had it custom made just for you. See?"

He removed his jacket and we saw Viv sewed onto the inner back of his jacket. This guy is so smitten. I wonder if I will ever find love like this.

Vivian: "Are you ready, my girls? The girls have already arrived."

I feel a bit nervous, I mean most of the guests are probably Vivian's clients, but I know I have nothing to worry about.

Rami: "We are more than ready, Mommy V. Now, can we please go, I need some drinks."

We all laughed and headed out. Upon entering the garden, we saw lights – everywhere. The whole garden was filled with beautiful fairy lights of all colours, the fountains were splashing water in a way I have never seen before. Everything was decorated, the chairs and tables were so beautifully draped that

I even assumed that this was a wedding venue.

It seems as if the guests were paired according to their level of importance, because as we walked past them, I noticed Adesh, Pravesh and Rajesh, the Naidoo Moguls, sitting at the back. I mean, I heard that they were Vivian's biggest clients. Adesh gave me a very sexual look, but I don't have time for that. I won't allow him to make me feel like a piece of meat or a hooker. I don't know how Gringo will feel if he found out Adesh wanted to sleep with me one time.

I saw a few older men I don't recognize along with a few women who are draped in expensive clothes and jewelry. The hair and make-up is also on point, and then I saw Tiger, with his annoyed wife Constance, who looked even more annoyed as we walked past. Tiger had his eyes on me, but I managed to look past it. Thendo was right next to Mulalo, and he had his eyes on Rami.

Ai, I don't know why these two don't just date anyway, while Mulalo had a huge smile on his face as soon as he saw me. I couldn't help but smile back. He gave me a slight wave and Gringo gave me a sneer as soon as he saw that. Ai, this man. At the front, just in front of the big, empty table of which I assumed is ours, I saw Romeo, along with the smirky Anastacia and the very surprised Kg.

I mean, Kg looks really confused and out of it for a man who is about to be a father, while Romeo looked a bit rattled if I should say that. He had his eyes fixed on me the whole time, hoping I'd smile back. I don't even know what to say to him or how to even feel. Something tells me that he didn't even bother to find out about me or he probably knew what Sonto was doing to me and he just let her.

Something about this whole setup just doesn't seem right. Romeo has wanted Kg to run the drug

business with him, but Kg was never about that life. I am actually surprised Kg is now one of the big boys in the business. I don't know what this is, but only time will tell. We walked towards out table and Gringo pulled Viv's chair for her. Of course, he wanted to do that for Rami and I, but we don't need that.

We'll also get husbands to do that for us one day. Gringo walked up to the dramatic stage and put his hands on the mic. I trust Vivian to go all out with everything for a party. There were waiters all over, handing us all kinds of drinks, from bubbly to champagne, to cognac, this is an all expenses paid party and the price tag is nothing to even worry about.

Gringo: "Good evening, fellow ladies and gentlemen. As you all know, this party was hosted for the purpose of introducing my new right hand man. But, new information has come to light and I wanted to

make it extra special. Before we continue, I'd like to take this opportunity to speak about Wolfe.

He has been the number one go to guy around here, and even managed to get us connections from as far as Brazil and Italy. In a short space of six months, he has managed to ensure that all of us become millionaires. Not only is he young, but he has excellent expertise. With that being said, Wolfe will also be handling all of our finances starting immediately.”

I could see a few of them look at Gringo with displeased eyes. This is probably because they disapprove someone so young and new to the gang being promoted to a job that belonged to Tiger. However, a few of them, such as Tiger and Romeo, looked at Gringo with a tint of fear and panic in their eyes. I don't know, but they seemed a bit okay until Gringo mentioned the last part. I just hope for their sake, they don't betray Gringo at all before they see

flames.

Gringo: “Wolfe, welcome to our family. I hope that you out of all people will remain as loyal as you are. I love you like my own son, and I know that you would never harm our business in any way.”

I don’t know, but that felt like a bit of a hint.

Rami: (whispering) “Skempe seo (That hint). Papao ge a bolela tse so, gora gore o mo one o mpyeng (Whenever your father says such, it means one of them is in serious shit).”

Ai, knowing Gringo, one of them might be next on his punish list.

Gringo: “To Wolfe.”

He raised his glass while all of us raised ours and we toasted. As we took a sip of our beverages, Kg stood up and went onto the stage. He started giving us all in introduction to his speech. I don't know, but I felt sudden butterflies in my tummy.

I haven't seen him in so long, and seeing this new look of his makes me kind of miss him. Those beautiful, perfectly sparkly teeth and dimples are something I have missed for a very long time. I felt myself get smitten with him all over again.

Kg: (smiling) "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Yes, I won't say much, I just want to say that I hope that this will open doors for us and enable us to expand to bigger and even better business ventures."

He stared at me the whole time and frowned a bit as he looked at my necklace, which I kept touching. I don't know, but he paused for a minute while staring

at me and then all of a sudden all eyes were on me – including Gringo’s eyes. Anastacia was pissed as fuck, while Romeo was still in panic mode. Meanwhile, Gringo frowned and side-eyed me while I ignored him faintly.

Kg: “Enjoy your evening.”

They clapped hands as Gringo took the stage again.

Gringo: (smiling) “As I have said, I have one more surprise planned for this evening. I am about to introduce someone very special to me, someone I have been waiting for all my life – literally. A lot of you, well most of you know about my long lost daughter, Isabella. I have been looking for her way before she was born, and unfortunately, she was left with a very toxic family and got acquainted with people who trolled and belittled her just because of her skin colour. I am glad and I thank the Lord for bringing her back to me. Now that my one and only

daughter is back, I can officially be a father again. Ladies, and gentlemen, please welcome my daughter, Isabella, well known as Thato.”

As he held out his arm, most people were shocked, including Kg, but funny enough Romeo and Anastacia looked irritated rather than surprised. But, I got up the stage as they all clapped hands for me. From that evening onwards, my whole life changed once again – for the better though. I officially became Thato Isabella Groen.

Chapter Sixty

2 Corinthians 4:16-17 – “Therefore we do not lose heart. Through outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

Thato

Of course Gringo couldn't wait to finish the party with a loud bang before we started eating.

Gringo: "Before we eat because I know a lot of you are dying to taste the food. Especially, you Adesh."

We all laughed. Yes, Adesh is fat, really fat.

Gringo: "I have a very awesome surprise for my two girls."

He called Rami to join us on stage as well and he handed us two sets of keys. Gringo bought Rami and I matching Mercedes CLS. Mine is Dark Grey and Rami's is Red. I can't believe how dramatic my father is. It feels so nice to say that I actually have a father. Rami of course was so ecstatic, she wanted us to go test drive them first, but Vivian politely told us we'd go after the dinner. That way, they could

both accompany us since it's night time and our enemies might come after us.

Unfortunately we inherit enemies in this family. Even Rami's parents and brother are under 24/7 surveillance without them knowing. I guess it is just the way we do things. Finally, we were asked to proceed with the food. Since the main course is a buffet style, Adesh couldn't wait to be the first one to dish up so we let him be. Gringo went to greet a few people along with Vivian. Rami and I got a chance to catch up a bit and gossip.

Rami: "So? Did you see your hubby? He looks tasty, man. Did you see the way he kept looking at you? Gman is most definitely going to have a word with him."

I felt myself panic as I thought he would most probably torture the poor boy all because he kept looking at me. Rami gave me one look and started

laughing.

Rami: “Ka dlala (I’m joking) man. You should have seen your face.”

Thato: “Mxm, don’t be like that, man. You can see how dangerous Gringo is. What if he cuts Kg’s balls off or something?”

Rami: “And leave you hungry? He would never do that, ska wara (don’t worry). Oh, Khanyi is going to be so jealous when she sees our cars, bra.”

I haven’t seen that one since Cape Town. I wonder if she is still even alive. As we were talking, Kg walked up to me. I didn’t see him yet in front of me, but I recognized his powerful Dior cologne. Oh, this guy always managed to send shivers down my knees.

Kg: "Good evening, ladies."

Rami was all smiles while I suddenly felt nervous. I tried to speak, but I got tongue tied.

Rami: "Hi, Kg. O kae (How are you)?"

Kg: (staring at me) "I'm well, thanks how are you, Rami?"

Rami: (smiling) "I'm well thanks."

We had a short, awkward silence and I could see that Kg wanted a private moment with me. I don't know how Anastacia will feel about this since she is literally forever hanging on his arm like some sort of pet of his. I like how Rami isn't a dumb blonde, she gets the message very quickly and can read between the lines.

Rami: "Eish, let me go grab myself a plate of food. See you around, Kg."

Kg nodded while she walked away. I don't know what's happening to me. I felt my heart beat at a faster pace as he looked at me in the eyes. He used to look at me like this all the time, but now, I don't know how to go back to those moments.

Kg: "May I have a seat?"

He still asks for permission before doing something unless he surprises a person, I see. I nodded as he proceeded to sit.

Kg: "Thato, right?"

I forgot for a moment that he does not remember me at all. If only I also had amnesia just like him. I

wish I could forget everything that happened and maybe then life would be a lot more pleasant.

Thato: (shaky) "Yes..."

Kg: "I love your necklace. I have been staring at it since that day at church. I don't know what it is, but there is just something about it. I feel like I have seen it before. Do you mind me asking where you got it?"

I don't know what to tell him. Should I tell him the truth or leave him as is?

Thato: "I, I got it from someone I used to love dearly. I still do love him."

Kg: "Hmm, I see. May I ask what is inside of the heart?"

Thato: "Oh, it's two pictures; one of my mother and I and one of the man I used to love and I."

Kg looked so interested in this locket. Maybe this is one of those breakthroughs I have been waiting for.

Kg: "May I see the pictures?"

I contemplated it, but then I nodded. As his hand landed on my necklace and he attempted to open it, I saw a heavily pregnant Anastacia behind him.

Anastacia: (annoyed) "Excuse me, wena (you) Thato! It's bad enough you're the daughter of one of the biggest king pins in the world, but now you think you can steal my man? I'm not afraid of you just because le bolaile mmaka (you killed my mom)!"

Kg seemed very annoyed as he gently let go of my necklace, while his face suddenly changed. I don't remember shouting at Kg or even making him angry at all, but Ana is a real bitch.

Thato: "Yoh, Anastacia, ska nteka tumelo (don't test me), please."

Anastacia: (annoyed) "Wena (You) Kgaugelo! Let's go!"

Kg got so angry at her, I could see the veins making their appearance from his neck and face.

Kg: (irritated) "O reng (what did you just say), Ana? Did you forget who you're talking to?"

I saw Anastacia quickly change her tune. I mean I have never seen Kg being abusive or anything, but

something tells me he does not take kak from Anastacia at all.

Anastacia: (softly) "Ah, Kg, askies (sorry). I didn't mean to disrespect you like that."

Kg: "Before you gave me your lame apology, the least you could have done was to apologize to Thato for your rude behaviour. I was just talking to her, but of course you just had to act like a jealous, insecure woman. We're not even married yet and here you are acting like the jealous wife. Wa bora yoh (you're so annoying). Thato, please, forgive my fiancée for being so rude towards you. Perhaps we can speak at a better time? I do hope you enjoy your evening further."

He smiled at me as he roughly pulled the saddened Anastacia. I cannot help but feel slight pain in my chest as he walked away with her. I still don't know what the fuck happened, but I am tempted to find

out sooner than the desired time. I guess having faith is what I have to do even though it's just so hard. I was about to go join Rami at the queue, when Romeo imposed himself on me.

Romeo: (nervous) "Hi, Thato."

For someone named Gorilla by the underworld, he sure seems pretty fidgety.

Thato: (raised eyebrow) "Dumela, Ntate Moloji (Hello, Mr. Moloji)."

Romeo: "Uh, I'm so glad to see that you made it, hey. I mean that day still plays in my mind like a horrific movie."

Really? So he went all out just to tell me this shit?

Thato: (folding arms) “Nka go thus ka eng, Ntate Moloji (What can I do for you, Mr. Moloji)?”

Romeo: “Hao, Thato. You don’t have to be so formal, I have always asked that you call me Romeo or Papa (Dad).”

Thato: “Thanks, but I have my own dad. And by the way, real dads as you would like to be called don’t just throw away their kids or pack up and move after they have been kidnapped.”

I felt the rage creep up on me, with fluctuations making their presence yet again.

Romeo: “Bona (Look), Thato. I had no idea Sophie kidnapped you. I did look for you, believe me I did, but my son had to be my first priority. I’m sorry he does not remember you, but perhaps it is just God’s will. Maybe you two were not meant to be. He is in

a very good place now and is doing what he has always been destined to do. He loves his life now, and Anastacia is the right girl for him. I'm sorry, but you're too soft and you wanted him to follow his dead dream of being a jewelry designer. I'm honestly sorry, and as for losing the baby, perhaps you just weren't meant to carry his seed."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Romeo was spitting shit at me without an ounce of remorse.

Thato: "Excuse me?"

Romeo: "It's nothing personal, really. Please, I beg you, don't tell Gringo about your relationship with Kg and how you know me. It might end in tears and a lot of bloodshed. I sincerely hope you understand."

I looked at him and he flashed a smile at me, making me even more angry. I just couldn't function with

the shit he was spewing at me. Is he for real? So all that stuff he told me about us being family was a simple lie?

Thato: (fuming) “Nyoammao (Your mother’s cunt), Romeo, wa nkutlwa (you hear me)?! Fuck you!”

I didn’t even realize how loud I was, when Gringo appeared by my side, looking very displeased.

Gringo: “Is everything okay, here, Romeo? Why is my daughter so angry?”

Romeo: (panicking) “Oh, ag, it’s nothing major. I said she would look good in a BMW instead. She obviously didn’t take it very well. I humbly apologize, Isabella.”

Gringo didn’t buy his excuse one bit.

Gringo: "It's no wonder God neveBMW instead. She obviously didn't take it very well. I humbly apologize, Isabella."

Gringo didn't buy his excuse one bit.

Gringo: "It's no wonder God gave you a daughter, but you chose to turn your back on her. You most probably would have ended up fucking her, Gorilla."

I saw Romeo change his facial expression. He seemed pretty offended by the comment, but he most definitely deserved it.

Gringo: "Oh, by the way, you and the rest of the gang are all invited to the ceremony next week. I am about to execute your two exes. I trust that you will accept and adhere to my invitation."

Romeo looked so stunned that his eyes were wide open. He deserved it, really and I cannot wait to see Sonto suffer for everything she has done to me. I know, I said that I don't want to see anyone die ever again, but Sonto took life away from me. She deserves harsh punishment.

Romeo

I can't believe that this little girl has grown a pair of balls out of nowhere. I don't know why I never saw the resemblance between her and Gringo. I wouldn't have been able to anyway, since I had been dying to join his gang for years, and now he has decided to replace Tiger with my son instead of me. How the fuck is that even possible?

I mean Kg does not even like this life, I just had to reprogram him. Little did I know that he would do

such an excellent job at it and succeed me instead. He is practically living my dream, everyone wants to be him and women want to be with him. I used to be the big guy in Rockville, but it seems as if Jozi is not such a big pond for all us who are trying to swim in it.

If she tells Gringo about her and Kg, he might find out what I did to him and I can't handle that. Anastacia needs to up the dosage fast and very soon, since Kg has been asking me a lot about Thato. If he remembers who she is then I am doomed for life. Now that Kg is handling all the finances, I am in serious shit. I need to get him to be under my spell all over again before I die as well.

Chapter Sixty One

1 Corinthians 13:4 – “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.”

Thato

After Romeo's unpleasant choice of words, I couldn't help but feel annoyed at him. He is most definitely not the man I thought he was. I wonder where Tumisho is in all this. It must be painful to be him, your mother being a homeless whore, while your dad is just a power hungry drug lord who lies for a living and would probably do anything to eliminate him too if he chooses to disrespect him.

I enjoyed my food and I am quite glad Gringo didn't pester me about everything that has happened ever since the start of the party. Rami kept making eyes at Thendo, and I know she really wants to talk to him, but probably feels bad for me since I literally have no one else to talk to here. I mean, drinks are flowing, the food is great and so is the music, but I cannot help but keep staring at Anastacia and Kg.

It is quite funny how Romeo is literally always by Anastacia's side. I mean instead of mingling with

men his age, he is always sitting next to him. So she is pretty much forever in the between Kg and his father. This is just too odd of a setup. Tiger on the other hand has been glancing at me, but he knows better than to come to me right now.

Constance, is looking really depressed, even though she is masking it with all that make-up and the drinks she keeps forcing down her throat. Mulalo keeps smiling at me and I can't help but smile back. I figured that I'd make an escape, hoping Mulalo would follow me. At least he can keep me busy and take my mind out of the gutter that it is currently in.

Thato: "Rami weh, why don't you go talk to Thendo? I mean you two have been flirting and I see the way you look at each other."

Rami: "Hai, I don't know what you're talking about."

Thato: “oho, just know that not all of the Nembilwi men are evil. Thendo seems genuine enough not to purposefully break your heart. That’s all I’m going to say.”

I stood up as she stared at me.

Rami: “O ya kae (Where are you going)?”

Thato: “Ko shapela ke moya nyana, ka boa (I need some fresh air, I’ll be right back).”

I stood up and left her sitting there, as I walked towards the back of the yard, near the pool. I forgot to take my feather coat with me, and it’s rather breezy out here. I never actually took the time to admire the beauty of this house, really. The patio and poolside screams such peace at night, with these lights overshadowing the water.

I should actually sit here alone one of these days and just think or meditate or something. As I stood there deep in thought, I expected Mulalo to be standing behind me, but then I could smell it – the famous Dior cologne that tantalized my nostrils. I couldn't help but feel a bit hypnotized for a second.

Kg: "I didn't mean to startle you. You must think I'm stalking you or something."

Thato: (smiling) "No, not at all."

I felt my heartbeat fluctuate yet again as he stared deep into my eyes. I wonder where Anastacia is now.

Kg: "I hope you don't mind, but I am curious about your pendant."

Thato: (frowning) "You said you have seen it

before?”

Kg: “Well, not exactly. I had a car accident a few months ago. I don’t even recall the incident, and when I woke up in the hospital, I couldn’t remember much of the past few years. I found my father right next to me, and Anastacia. She told me she is my wife and that she was expecting my child. I didn’t know what to believe, though, however nothing made sense. From there onwards, I kept having flashbacks that don’t make sense.”

Thato: (puzzled) “What kind of flash backs?”

Kg: “Well, I would dream of a certain girl, but I cannot see her face. It seems as if she was my wife or something. I keep hoping and praying that I would see her face, but nothing comes up.”

My heart sank a bit as he said that. I was truly

hoping he would say something about me.

Thato: “Oh, I see. Now where does the necklace come in?”

Kg: “In the dream, I keep handing her the necklace. The very same one you’re wearing. Do you mind if I take a look at it?”

I was about to remove it and hand it over to him, but Mulalo appeared out of nowhere.

Mulalo: “Tee...”

I got a little bit bored, but I guess perhaps Kg is not supposed to see it yet. I mean why is it that everyone interrupts us whenever he has to see what is inside of the pendant?

Kg: "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to keep you away from your boyfriend."

Oh, does Kg really think that Mulalo is my boyfriend? Mulalo said nothing to correct him, but I felt the need to.

Thato: "Oh, no. We're just friends."

I saw a glimpse of disappointment in Mulalo's eyes, but right now I am not about to please someone else's feelings over mine.

Kg: "No need to explain to me. Enjoy the rest of your evening. We'll talk soon."

He flashed a smile at me, greeted Mulalo and left. When they were right in front of me, I could really see the resemblance a lot clearer. These two have

so many similarities. I might be crazy, but it doesn't take a genius to see it.

Mulalo: (disappointed) "Did you have to correct him, though? I mean I kind of like being called your boyfriend."

Thato: "Mulalo, I don't mean any offence, but you're married, aren't you?"

Mulalo: (sigh) "I never told you the real story behind my marriage. You see, Tee, I was forced to marry my wife because I am of royal blood. Apparently we are forced to marry those they choose for us."

I don't get it. If he and Kg look so much alike, and he is also from a royal family, how come he gets to be forced to marry when Kg told me he won't have to marry someone chosen for him should he become king? Ai, I am so confused.

Thato: "That still does not change the fact that you're still married. I think that if you weren't truly happy, then you could have just left her. At times you just need to choose you."

I saw him fiddle with his hands. I don't know but it takes a lot for Mulalo to act nervous. He is always so confident within himself, so I don't get why he gets so nervous around me.

Mulalo: "I hear you, even though it just isn't that easy."

Thato: "What do you mean?"

Mulalo changed the subject.

Mulalo: "I will tell you some other time. Anyway, do

you know Wolfe? He seems to be quite comfortable around you.”

Thato: “Oh, no, I only met him a few times. He seems like a nice guy.”

I had to lie somehow. I cannot trust Mulalo with my secrets like that especially now.

Mulalo: “Oho, just be careful of him, Mufumakhadzi (Queen).”

Thato: (frowning) “What do you mean?”

Mulalo: “Well, he just has a bit of a violent streak. Apparently he lays his hand on his wife a lot and he has killed a few people. He gets rid of anyone and everyone who gets in his way. I am telling you, he is one ruthless motherfucker.”

I couldn't help but listen to him with pointy ears and widened eyes. There is no way that Kg could be what Mulalo was describing to me. I don't know, but I know what kind of a man Kg is. No man who seems to have an interest in a woman would ever say nice things about her ex or another man either way. Unless he has changed over the months, but there is just no way Kg could ever be so brutally abusive and angry. Something just is not right. Perhaps I have to ask Kgabo about it when he gets here in the coming days. As we were talking, Constance appeared. Yoh, she had better not be mean to me because this time I will truly tell her shit.

Connie: (smiling) "Thato. How are you?"

I folded my hands and answered her.

Thato: "I am fine."

I didn't even bother to ask her how she is doing.

Connie: "Hai, I can see you're still angry at me. Bona (look), I just wanted to apologize for my rude behaviour. It really was not my intention to treat you like dirt, more especially now that you are Gringo's daughter."

Is she being for real right now? Is she seriously pretending to like me now that she knows I am the boss's daughter? Has she forgotten how she emphasized it to me that I deserve to be a maid and that I was trying to steal her husband from her?

Thato: "Bona (Look), Connie. I don't know what it is with the sudden change, but all I can say is that I truly don't see any genuine side of your apology. Now, if you will excuse me, I have other guests to greet. Mulalo, we will talk later."

I left them both standing there, staring at me in shock. I really don't think I have time for pretentious people right now. I am done being nice to everyone.

Mulalo

I don't know what is happening, but all I know that Wolfe can never take Thato away from me. Yes, I might be married, but I am not happy. I never asked to marry Olivia, it was all planned out for me. I don't even love her hence I don't even live with her. I don't know how I am going to tell Thato that Olivia is pregnant. I don't even believe that she is carrying my child,

I mean I haven't slept with her in weeks, and now all of a sudden she is pregnant? Women like taking chances, and I know for a fact that I want Thato as my wife. I will do everything in my power to protect and love Thato. I am not obsessed with her the way Rendani and my father are. I love her, and all I want

to do is show her that, if only she gives me the chance. How will I protect her against my father and brother when she won't even look at me twice? How do I protect her from what Rendani is planning?

Chapter Sixty Two

James 5:16 – “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

The following day

It has been quite an eventful night with everyone enjoying themselves. And of course, Tiger and Connie had to leave early. The rest of us partied away and we finally got a chance to try out our new cars this morning, since we were all a bit wasted. Gringo still insists that we move in, but I don't think Rami and I are ready for that.

We enjoy our freedom, even though we don't have boys coming around. I feel a bit of a headache coming my way and luckily Mam' Vivian has some good old remedies for hangovers. She made Rami and I some, while she and Gringo woke up feeling really blissful. One would swear that they weren't drinking last night.

Gringo made us a really nice breakfast as usual, along with his famous croissants. After a very tasty and greasy meal, we were all set for the day.

Gringo: "Next time, don't party so hard. Stick to cognac, whiskey or gin. I promise you, you won't wake up with the hangover you have now."

Ai, I doubt I will drink alcohol anymore after the pain I am experiencing right now.

Thato: "Hai, dad. I don't think I drink anytime soon."

Rami: (laughing) "That's what we all say after a hectic night, but we always go back to the bottle."

Rami rarely has a hangover, so I am surprised what went down last night, especially since she disappeared into the darkness with Thendo. I made a mental note to ask her later. We headed to our bedrooms and freshened up. We apparently have a family lunch today, with Rami's parents and her brother, along with Gringo's mother and his two sons who are supposed to be landing here around 11am.

I don't know what to expect from his mom and the sons, since I heard that the sons blame him for their mother's death. She apparently died from a heart attack due to stress. They have blamed him ever since and it took him quite a while to get over her death and that's when he met Vivian. She became the light in his life, and even though his sons were

not really part of his life anymore, she still told people that she was a mother to two boys.

She is one amazing woman. I dressed in something casual, a pair of jeans, sneakers, a top and a jersey. I don't think I need to dress up after my lavish evening last night. I headed downstairs and found Rami sitting on the patio, having a cocktail. Hao (wow), not so long ago, she was whining about a migraine and now she is sipping on a mojito?

Thato: "Hao, Rami. Babi e fedile na (Is the hangover gone now)?"

Rami: (chuckling) "Kgale, ngwaneso (Long ago, sis). I suggest you also have a drink or two since George and Robert are on their way here."

Thato: (puzzled) "Heh (Huh)?"

Rami: “Those two are a hard pill to swallow, and they literally have no filter. I am able to handle their insults, but you on the other hand, good luck.”

What Rami said gave me something to ponder my mind about. What if they actually reject me? But then do I really need their approval?

Thato: “How is Gringo’s mom though?”

Rami: “Oh, Nana is such a darling. She despises her two grandsons and refuses to give them a single dime. He says they are disrespectful, little shits of which is actually true. I don’t know how they are all going to cope driving here in one car.”

I felt my palms become a bit sweaty, while my heart started to race. A million thoughts started racing through my mind. I hadn’t actually processed the whole idea of meeting my half siblings and my

grandmother. It might either go really well or really bad.

Louis on the other hand, my uncle, has grown really fond of me. He is just always busy at the hospital, and he does not even have a wife or any kids. He is too much of a workaholic for my liking.

Thato: (nervous) "I think I might just take you up on that cocktail offer."

Rami got up and quickly mixed one for me, and I found myself downing it within seconds. I need some liquid courage today. Rami was very chilled and relaxed, while I just kept stressing. I kept thinking about my outfit, I mean what if they judge me based on my appearance?

So I might actually be labeled as the bastard child. Oh, this is just too stressful. As I was in panic mode,

I heard voices of people walking through the front door, it seemed as if though Gringo was reprimanding them.

Gringo: "I will not have any child of mine disrespect anyone under my roof. If you can't behave or cope with life – then you get the fuck out!"

I heard a moment of silence, as I stood there frozen in the middle of the lounge, staring at all these people. Gringo was fuming, with his face all red, while Vivian was standing right next to him. In the forefront was an elderly white woman, probably in her sixties or seventies, while behind Gringo was two men, in their thirties or so, who look a lot like Gringo.

They look so well-built, well-kept and totally handsome for white guys. As I stood there, the old woman whom I assume is Gringo's mother, saw me and her face lit up in an instant.

Nana: “Oh, David! You didn’t say she is such a spitting image of my younger self! Isabella! Oh, Isabella!”

She walked up to me, held my face gently with both her hands and started crying. I didn’t know what to say or do, but she made me feel a lot of emotions. She held my face for quite some time and started praying.

Nana: “Oh, Dear Lord, Father God, I thank you for answering my prayers. Indeed after so many years, I have finally met my granddaughter. Please give her the strength and wisdom to be exactly like me. Help her get rid of her naivety, and her soft attitude. Most importantly, oh, lord, help her to be the great queen she is meant to be. She was born a leader, for you know why you designed her destiny as such. Help her turn out to be the exact opposite of the two other losers you gave my son. We’re told not to question,

oh, Lord, but please, help her get through the difficult time she is about to encounter and most importantly, remind her to heed the call of a warning. I thank you, Oh, Lord. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen."

That was a very funny, but odd prayer. Why do I get the feeling she knows what Kgabo said to me? Is she some kind of a fortune teller? I frowned as I looked at her, confused as fuck.

Nana: (chuckling) "Don't be so surprised, Isabella, I'm a gipsy. I am able to see the future most of the times. So, I told David about this day, that it would come and I am so glad that it did. You are such a blessing, Isabella, more than you will ever know. All you need is to grow a t hick skin and be like me."

Okay, I am going to be surrounded by prophets and gipsies or mediums. Yay, I can't wait.

Nana: "Come, let's go outside for a minute. Let's leave these ones for a moment."

She held me by my arm as we walked towards the patio, leaving Vivian, Gringo and my two supposed brothers. As we headed out, Nana greeted Rami with the warmest smile and hug.

Nana: (smiling) "Rami, my baby. How are you? Are you still a prostitute?"

I actually felt offended by that question even though it was not directed towards me. I even thought Rami would be offended as well, but in actual fact she wasn't even bother. They both burst out in great laughter as they hugged one another.

Rami: "Gogo bathong (Gosh, Granny). I was an escort and not a prostitute."

Nana: (chuckling) "Was, huh? I am so glad you left

that life. So, when are you giving Thendo a chance at loving you?”

Rami looked at her in great shock.

Nana: “You forget I can see pretty much everything. Give him a chance, he won’t hurt you – at least not intentionally.”

I saw Rami looking at her deep in thought. Rami hardly goes through such, as she always takes everything lightly. She most probably likes Thendo, hence she is thinking long and hard about what Nana just said.

Nana: “You, my dear, Isabella. Let’s sit down.”

I sat down next to her as Rami focused on her drink, with her mind slightly drifted away.

Nana: "So, tell me, why haven't you been listening to your mother's words?"

I looked at her puzzled.

Nana: "I believe Kgabo also told you what to do, but for some reason you haven't been listening. Why do you have so much doubt and fear within you?"

This woman can see right through me, it is actually quite scary. I felt myself start to shake a little bit.

Nana: "You see what I mean? Just a few words from me and you're already shivering. What kind of Queen will you be if you show people what is inside of you? You see, the moment you start shaking all because of a person's words, you will never succeed. Your power lies in your knees, your tongue is a lot stronger than you realize. Your husband is waiting

on you to save him, and because of your delay, danger is lurking and is much closer than anticipated.”

All this confusion and riddles is just making me dizzy. And what’s this she keeps reiterating about me being a Queen?

Nana: “Start speaking things into existence, and you will see miracles. God has bigger plans for you, my baby. You were supposed to meet your destiny a lot sooner, but thanks to Sophie and Sonto, everything is delayed, but not denied. Come, enough depressive talk, let’s go eat with those two idiots.”

She keeps referring to George and Robert as idiots. I wonder if they actually are as bad as she says. Rami followed suit and we headed to the dining area. As we got there, we found all the food already prepared, with Vivian sitting right next to Gringo, George and Robert sitting next to each other, while Nana, Rami

and I came to sit. A few minutes later, we heard Rami's mom, dad and Kgabo walk in.

Rami's Mom: (Excited) "So sorry, we're late, my family! I hope we haven't missed the famous wine!"

Rami's dad just shook his head as always. They walked in and started hugging us all one by one, except for George and Robert, who didn't even seem bothered. Both of them were stiff and very awkward, they actually looked like they were forced to be here. I don't know, but I guess this is about to be an interesting day.

Chapter Sixty Three

Proverbs 15:1 – "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Thato

As Rami's parents and brother walked in, the mood became even more relaxed, but George and Robert were still quite stiff and not participating to the banter around the table.

Rami's mom: "And then, Vivy? Are these two still sour as always?"

Vivian: "Ah, you know how it is."

George: (annoyed) "We're still here, you know."

Gringo: (pissed) "George, I didn't invite you all the way from England for you to come and ruin our lovely family weekend."

I saw George roll his eyes while Robert sighed in disinterest.

Nana: "Let us pray for the food, please."

Nana raised her hands slightly as we all held hands. Since Rami's mom was seated next to Robert, and George next to Vivian, they were kind of forced to hold hands. We all closed our eyes as Nana started saying another hilarious prayer.

Nana: "Dear Lord, Oh, Father God. We thank you for this wonderful, blessed day. We thank you for everything you have done for us, more especially that you managed to spare two useless people's lives. If it hadn't been for your mercy and grace, they would not have been able to make it here today. Without my dear son's money, they wouldn't be this clean today.

Because of you, oh, Lord, they know what Sushi tastes like and what a masculine manicure and

pedicure is. You ask us not to judge and not to bear grudges, dear Lord, so I put them both in your hands. I pray that they grant us this opportunity to enjoy our weekend in peace. I pray this in Jesus' name, Amen."

We all said Amen, and I could see George and Robert look at her in disbelief, while the rest of us chuckled.

Vivian: "Oh, Nana, you always know just what to say."

Nana: "When God speaks to me, I have to deliver His message, my dear Viv."

As we started eating, Rami's mom was her candid self, while we carried on eating. As we were about to eat dessert, Gringo decided to speak.

Gringo: “So, since the whole family is here, well except for the workaholic Louis, I feel like it is about time to go on a family trip – all of us – including Louis. I think it is high time we officially introduce Isabella to the whole family in England.”

Nana: (smiling) “I love that idea, son. It is high time.”

Robert: “But dad, do we have to have a party every week for her? What are you trying to do? Are you trying to overcompensate for not being there for her all those years?”

George: “She is a product of an extra-marital affair! Does she actually have to get all the special treatment?!”

Wow, clearly these two aren't happy about my presence, not to mention Robert referring to me as 'her' instead of Thato or Isabella or something. Rami

sure didn't lie about them being sour as fuck. I felt myself shake a bit with tears building up, as I was about to let them drop, Nana firmly squeezed my hand, reminding me about her words.

I have a serious problem of not listening to what is being told to me. I really need to grow an even thicker skin, I mean words are just words, right? If they can spit fire, then I can sure as fuck spit venom right back at them. Gringo looked agitated and started turning red immediately. As he was about to reprimand them, I felt like it was my time to speak up.

Gringo: "That's enough!"

Thato: "It's okay, dad. May I speak?"

He was a bit taken aback by my request, but he let me.

Thato: "George, Robert, I am very saddened that you chose to behave like this before even giving yourselves a chance to know me. You didn't even bother to greet me and yet you look at me with eyes full of disgust as if you loathe me. I get it, I am a product of an affair, but I didn't choose to be on this earth. All I know is that I do deserve to be a part of my father's life since he also wants me in his. I don't expect you to love me nor accept me, but I do expect you to respect me as a human being and as a your half sister. Neither of you are perfect, I'm sure, but all I know is that life is too short to be angry and to hold grudges. Now, I don't expect your humble response to my plea, but I do expect you to let us to finish this lunch in peace."

They both were quite surprised by my words, but I am glad it made them shut up. I sat back down and enjoyed the rest of my lunch. I don't know how bitter a person can be to even refuse to enjoy all this food, but right now, I don't give a flying fuck. We ended up

having so much fun, and moved the party to the lunch, where we had a few more drinks.

Nana showed us pictures of her parents and showed me pictures of her when she was a lot younger. I actually see the resemblance between her and I now. As we were talking and enjoying a moment of history and Nana's stories of how she became a gipsy / medium, Robert decided to ruin a perfect moment.

Robert: "I'm sorry, dad, but I don't think I have to sit and pretend like everything is okay. You allowed this girl to walk into our lives like nothing ever happened!"

George was about to speak as well, but seems as if Gringo had had enough of their little tantrums.

George: "I couldn't agree with you – "

Gringo: "If you allow me to speak, please. Since you both feel like your trip abroad all the way to meet your sister was in vain, let me spare you the trouble. You have been insulting my daughter from the moment I told you about her. I have been patient and praying for you two, hoping that we would finally be a family, but my efforts seem to have been in vain. It is funny how you feel the need to tell me shit and insult me, yet you can take my money with an open heart. You both know how I feel about hypocrites."

As he was about to speak again, I could see those two look at each other. Now I get it, they both are little blood suckers, enjoying daddy's money, but throwing tantrums at their age. Quite disgusting if you ask me.

George: "Dad, we didn't mean it like that."

Gringo: (raising hand) "Let me finish. As I was saying, I hate hypocrites and childish people, hence I never allowed you two to be involved in any of my businesses. It is because of me that you two can live your lavish lifestyles, and even disrespect your wives by buying prostitutes with MY hard earned money. I am tired of being bullied by you two. You never cared about my well-being, even when Vivian was there to lift me up, you didn't give a shit. You didn't even come to the wedding, so I will make things much simpler for you. From now on, the both of you get nothing from me. You are on your own now, since you are big boys, with big balls and big mouths, you can fend for yourselves."

That was quite a huge bomb dropped, but I see that the bomb hit on the two of them the hardest. It must be hard to be stripped off your father's money when you're over the age of 30 and married with kids. No wonder Nana calls them idiots.

Robert: (panicky) “But dad – “

Gringo: “I think we have all heard enough from the both of you for tonight. We would like to enjoy our evening in peace. May you two please excuse us so that we can enjoy the rest of our evening, please?”

I saw George and Robert slowly get up, with their shoulders down and their heads sunk. I cannot believe men as old as them are saddened by being written off. I just hope they don't blame me, but I don't give a shit right now. I deserve some happiness, just as they got all these years.

Chapter Sixty Four

Ephesians 4:26-31 – “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that

they may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”

Thato

Today was such a good day. We even played some poker and monopoly, you know how rich people love playing games over a stiff drink or two. For the first time in my life I feel like everything is starting to make sense. Everything is slowly coming together, even though I don't know what half of Nana and Kgabo's words mean. I have been praying all along, just not the way they have been telling me to, but I felt that I needed to do something about it.

I got up to my bedroom, the one I use whenever I am at my father's house and found a nice corner. I lit my candle, and burnt some incense. I felt a bit worried, like my shoulders felt heavy for some reason. Usually when that happens, it means my spirit is troubled and I need to pray the burden away. I knelt down and gave my all to the Lord.

"Dear Lord, Modimo wa ka o a rategang (My loving God). I thank you for your mercy, grace, for allowing me this new chance at life. I thank you for finally letting my life take its natural course. I thank you for the amazing people in my life, for the good health I am in and for keeping my friends and family and I safe throughout each and every day. Dear Lord, I know that everyone in life has a challenge, and that some undergo bigger ones than others.

I ask that you preserve me long enough to be happy and loved, I ask you to protect Kg with whatever he

may be going through and that should he be my chosen one, that he may come back to me. I ask that you help my brothers forgive me for whatever hurt I have caused unto them. I ask that you please let me reel in this excitement and joy of finally finding my father, and finally having a peaceful life. Ease the pain in my heart of what I have endured and help me forgive those who have wronged me. It is you who commands us in Matthew 7:7-8 "Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For everyone that asks receives and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened." In Proverbs 4:25, you command "Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you."

I am trying my level best to do what is asked of me, but everything is so confusing and overwhelming. Whenever I try to do something to please myself, there is always someone stepping on my toes who dislikes me and my actions. In Ephesians 4:31-32 you say "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and

clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Have I not been kind to anyone, oh, God? Have I not trusted in you all my life?

Yes, one is sure bound to be led astray every now and then since we live in a world of flesh, but have I not done what is asked? It pains me that I have to fight for literally everything before I become happy, but I trust in you, Lord. My job is not to question, but it is for me to have faith in your doings. You are the driver of my ship, please steer me into the right direction and deter me from the darkness. I pray in Jesus’ Mighty Name. Amen.”

I stood up feeling much, much lighter. As I was about to get into bed, my phone beeped with a message from Mulalo. “Mufumakhadzi (Queen), I hope that you sleep very well tonight. I can’t stop thinking about you. Stay blessed. Love, Mulalo.”

Ai, I honestly don't know what to say or even do about Mulalo. Does this mean that I have captured a married man's heart? He is surely one to disappoint me if he can do it to poor Olivia. I don't know her, but I am pretty sure she would be scorned if she found out about his doings. I got in bed and dozed off almost immediately.

Anastacia

Everything is such a fucked up mess, already. I mean, that sangoma Sophie took me to is supposed to be the best of the best! Why the fuck hasn't this potion been working now? I mean I have been putting it into Kg's food, but fuck man, I can't be struggling this much for so long! Sophie hasn't been answering her phone either, that bloody bitch. Once I get my hands on her, she will be toast.

I mean, how can Kg still resist me after all the effort I put into my looking like a million dollars?! Ever since he saw Thato, he has been offish towards Romeo and I and I cannot afford that especially when I am going to give birth soon. He refuses to set a wedding date, and I need things to be sped up as soon as possible. He even dropped me off and left without telling me where he is going.

Perhaps I should call that useless sangoma (witch doctor) Masango, so he can explain why his shit isn't working anymore. I dialed his number and he picked up immediately. He had better, especially after I paid him over 10k for his useless muthi.

Masango: "Ke (It's) Masango."

Anastacia: (fuming) "Hey, wena (you), Masango. Ga wa re dihlare tsa gao tsa masepa di tlo bereka mo matsatsing (Didn't you say your fucking herbs would be working within days)?! Why di sa bereke le

bjanong (Why aren't they not working even now)?"

Masango: (sigh) "Dumela (Hello) Anastacia. A na o siame (Are you well)?"

Anastacia: (Angered) "Ke lla ka dihlare tsa gao o mpotsisa gore ke siame (I am complaining about your herbs and you're asking me if I'm well)?!"

Masango: (sigh) "Anastacia, o nale mathata, mosetsana (you have serious problems, girly). Sa ma thomo, o bue le nna ka hlompo ge o batla thusa yame (Firstly, you had better address me with respect if you want my help). Sa bo bedi, ke go boditswe ka taba e, ke rileng go wena (Secondly, I told you about this issue, what did I say to you)? Ke rile o tshameka ka maphelo a batho (I said you're messing with people's lives) hence you are trying to play God by messing with fate. Kg is really in love with that girl, and even if I give you the strongest muthi there is, he still won't love you. It will all be

fake.”

Anastacia: (livid) “I don’t care if he will love me for real or not! All I want is for him to be mine and mine alone!”

Masango: “Go siame (Okay then). I must warn you, if you do go ahead with this next phase, then you might lose this baby.”

Anastacia: “Go shap (It’s fine). It’s not his child anyway. I’m ready, we can have our own baby when the time is right.”

Masango: “Go lokile (It’s fine), but everything comes at a price –“

This man is seriously annoying me right now.
Money is really not a problem.

Anastacia: (Interrupting) "Money is not a problem, you know that."

Masango: (chuckling) "I'm not talking about money. If you actually had brains and patience, you would actually pay attention to what I am trying to say."

Anastacia: (fuming) "Bolela (Talk)!"

Masango: "When I say everything comes at a price, I mean that you might lose this child and never have children ever again. That in turn, will make Kg yours just the way you want things to be."

I contemplated his statement for a while as it played over and over in my head for a few seconds. Mxm, he is insane. God is the only one who can make such decisions. I want to up things a notch. Everyone including Thato and her ruthless father and

his whoring wife must pay for everything they have done to me and my mother.

Anastacia: “Do it. How much should I top up your fee with if I want Thato and her father and stepfather to pay for what they did to my mother?”

Masango: “That will be R20 000, but if it backfires, you will be the one to suffer – not me.”

Anastacia: “Whatever, just get it done. Tell me what I have to do.”

Masango: “Okay. At midnight, wake up and mix the herbs I gave you with your urine and put it inside of your vagina. Exactly at 6am, urinate in a cup and use that urine sample and put it in his food or drink. Anything you can get your hands on and anything he can consume until that cup runs dry. By night time tomorrow, he will be putty in your hands. Once he sleeps with you, he will carry all that love you want

him to have for you. He will not even see this Thato you are crying about. In the meantime, I will cast a spell on the Groen's, but I will need your urine as well, so you had better come here around 1pm so we can get started."

I don't care what is at stake, all I want is Kg and I will make sure that I get him. As I hung up from my phone call, Romeo walked in. Ag, this man is really annoying. I curse the day I fucked him, I mean he is not even that great in bed and on top of that he just wants to be around me all the time. He is seriously starting to become a problem.

Romeo: (smiling) "How is my son doing?"

Anastacia: (rolling eyes) "Romeo, you're starting to bore me. You have your own house, I mean why do you feel the need to pop in whenever you feel like it? Besides, it is literally 10pm right now. Don't you have bitches to fuck or something?"

Romeo: "The only bitch I want to fuck right now is you."

He tried coming at me, and attempted to kiss me and hold my waist, but I rejected him flat.

Anastacia: "Romeo, I am not your wife!"

Romeo: (chuckling) "You're nobody's wife. You seem to have forgotten that I made you, Anastacia and I can easily break you. I can tell Kg everything and you would be tickets."

Anastacia: (chuckling) "And you think Kg would let you go scott free? What do you think he will do once he finds out you recruited me and made me act like his wife? What do you think he will do to poor daddy once he finds out you actually knew where Thato was? You found out exactly on the day she got

kidnapped, and once you saw that Kg woke up and had amnesia, you told Sonto to keep Thato away from him and far away from Rockville?”

I saw the smirk from his face slowly disappear and I knew I had him right where I wanted him.

Anastacia: “You think I’m stupid, wena (you) Romeo. I am not Sophie, or Sonto or Thato. I’m not a weakling. If I go down, I am gladly taking you with me. Kg will rip you to pieces once he finds out that you made me suppress his memories of Thato; that everytime he has a memory, a dream or a flashback of her, I have to up his dosage.”

Romeo: (Fuming) “You wouldn’t dare.”

Anastacia: “Try me. From now on, you will not be barging into my house like you own me. We only fucked a few times and that was just a business transaction. So, don’t get too comfortable,

grandpa.”

Romeo: “But you’re carrying me child.”

Anastacia: “A child you agreed to conceive for Kg and not for you. If you don’t listen, Romeo, I’ll kill this child.”

I saw him tear up but I don’t care.

Anastacia: “Back off if you know what is good for you.”

With that said, I left him standing there defeated. It is high time he learns to behave like a real father-in-law.”

Chapter Sixty Five

Proverbs 29:2 – “When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.”

Thato

Petunia: “Thato, ngwanaka (my child), danger is lurking, coming ahead from many directions. You need to be strong and pray, my child. Pray like you have never prayed before.”

Thato: (scared) “Mama, o ra bjang (what do you mean)?”

Petunia: “The time to be slacking off from prayer and being filled with doubt is over. Danger is coming; from all angles and in all forms; both from the physical world and from the spiritual world. I have your back, my baby and so do your rightful ancestors, but you have to do your part.”

Thato: “Mama... Mama...”

I felt myself sweating as I quickly opened my eyes and realized I just had a dream about my mom. This is the umpteenth time that she has told me about the danger that is lurking around me. I checked my phone and it is just after 3am. I quickly knelt down and started praying. After that, I felt a bit thirsty and decided to get some water, so I headed downstairs to the kitchen.

I opened the fridge and took a bottle of water and emptied the contents thereof within two minutes. I didn't even realize how thirsty I was. As I closed the fridge door, I nearly screamed as I found Robert staring at me with enraged eyes.

Thato: (frightened) “You scared me, Robert.”

He literally did, I mean who behaves in such a creepy manner, though?

Robert: (seething) “Hmm, it must be nice being you, neh?”

Thato: (frowning) “Excuse me?”

Robert: “I mean you moved from your little tin house in Soweto to the burbs in Northcliffe, and now you scored yourself free tuition, a Mercedes for a first car when you don’t even have a license yet, you are now forever draped in Rich Mnisi and you eat Bacon and croissants pretty much every day of your life now. From home girl to rich girl, wow.”

Ag, here we go again. What is this guy’s problem? I am actually starting to think that his problem is not with the actual fact that I am his father’s daughter, but that I am his father’s black illegitimate child.

Thato: "Robert, I know you don't like me, so please spare me the insults and tell me what your actual problem is with me."

Robert: "You are the problem, Thato, Isabella or whatever your name is! It's bad enough your kaffir mother seduced my father and you came about. Your charcoal mother is the cause of my mother's death and now you are here living the American dream in my father's house! You're even the cause of everything being ripped apart. He has officially disowned George and I for refusing to accept the little black girl who is now an unfortunate part of our family."

Wow, I should actually feel hurt, but I am seething in rage instead. So this guy has a problem with people of colour? Wow, this is quite a sad story.

Thato: (annoyed) “Robert, I am truly sorry that you feel out of your element, but I too am David’s child and if anything, you should get to know me. It’s just saddening that one can’t change your racist heart and turn it pure. It’s also not my fault that your dad has decided to disown you. You are evil for hating someone you don’t even know. I will put you in my prayers.”

I didn’t see Robert’s next move coming. He honestly blind-sided me. He took one big step ahead towards me and grabbed my tiny throat with his huge, bare hands. He slammed me against the fridge as I let the glass water bottle drop from my hands and heard it break. I couldn’t even feel myself breathe, as I watched him try to squeeze the life out of me while he turned pink in the process. Could he truly have so much rage for me?

Robert: (angered) “I want you to die! You’re not even a real white girl, you are just a product of an evil

affair and for that you must die!”

I tried to fight with everything in me, but I failed. The more I tried to fight him off while I felt my feet up in the air, the faster I felt myself drift away. I couldn't feel myself breathe anymore, and I slowly felt my eyes close and his voice become fainter by the minute. I finally closed my eyes and I was about to give up. I felt myself drop down and his hands become loose from my throat.

As I slowly opened my eyes, I coughed vigorously, gasping for air. I tried swallowing some saliva, but it kept coming up. I felt Vivian's hands harshly pat my back as she tried to help me regain my consciousness. While I heard loud, groaning voices in front of me, I saw Gringo and Robert at each other's throats. Robert was physically fighting with Gringo, while I was down on the cold floor. My foot was a bit bloodied, as a few of the broken glasses, cut my foot open.

Gringo: (shouting) “Wie de fok dink jy is jy (Who the fuck do you think you are)?!”

Robert: (angry) “Jy gaan hierdie kaffir kies in plaas van my (You’re going to choose this kaffir instead of me)?! Ek is jou seun, pa (I’m your son, dad)!”

Gringo: “I didn’t raise a murderer for a son!”

Gringo punched him so hard that Robert lost his balance. As he was about to drop on the floor, Gringo roughly picked him up and hit him with one of the glass souvenirs from the kitchen table. I saw blood oozing from Robert’s forehead, as his eyebrow was slightly cut open. Everyone came rushing downstairs and headed to the kitchen, except for Rami’s parents, shouting as Gringo had his bare hands on Robert’s throat.

George: (shocked) "Pa (dad)! Wat doen jy (What are you doing)?"

Oh, so Afrikaans comes out of their mouths whenever they're angry. I get it. Nana was unbothered, really. I don't get how this woman can remain so calm in such a situation.

Nana: "Finish him off, then you can finish George off later."

George looked at Nana with such fright on his face, but she really seemed unbothered, meanwhile Gringo was trying to squeeze the life out of Robert's body.

Gringo: "Give me one good reason why I shouldn't kill you, you fuck!"

Kgabo: (softly) "Let him go, David."

I don't know what it is with Kgabo's calmness, but he demands authority just by talking without even having to speak with force. Gringo slowly let Robert go, as he coughed on the floor trying to regain his consciousness.

Gringo: "You two, I want you out of my house with immediate effect!"

He was so angry as Vivian picked me up and I couldn't even walk as my left foot was bleeding.

Rami: "I'll get the first aid kit."

Kgabo, Nana, Gringo, Vivian and I headed to the lounge, as George was consoling his beaten brother. Gringo was fuming and had so much hurt in his eyes. Everytime he heard me squeal from the pain I felt as Vivian put the antiseptic on my foot, I saw a tear fall

down on his face. This family is so dramatic, I wonder if there was ever such drama before I joined. Perhaps I should leave.

Thato: "I'm sorry for everything that is happening. If I hadn't come into this family, none of this would be happening.

Nana: "Nonsense. You are not the problem, those two are. If you want to feel better about yourself, then you should know the real truth about your two useless brothers. They have always been a pain in the ass, with their mother spoiling them rotten. David was just a sweet father and gave them everything they needed.

Whenever he tried to groom them to be responsible and better men by scolding them whenever they were wrong and putting them on the right path, their mother would always say Dave was too harsh on them. She would not even hear of him reprimanding

them – even when they ended up in rehab at the age of 16 and 17. They are one year apart – homemade twins as we called them. They have always been inseparably stupid, even with all the money and resources that came with their family. So, my child, unfortunately God can't give you everything in life.

Dave had everything, but God gave him two incredibly stupid sons. They keep blaming Dave for their mother's heart attack, but the truth is Robert tried hiding his addiction from his father, and put cocaine in the juice and put it in the fridge. Stella, their mother, was thirsty one day – poor bitch drank almost all of that juice. She overdosed on that idiot's cocaine and died on the spot.

Dave was and has always been such a good father to those two idiots, that he never told them the truth. It broke my son so much, as he blamed himself for his wife's death. He felt like he should have been more vigilant, harsher towards those two, but then I

guess such is life.”

Seems like everyone around me knew about this story because they weren't even surprised. George and Robert were standing there, listening and we only saw them afterwards. I saw tears in George's eyes, but rage in Robert's eyes. Gringo just gave them both a blank stare.

George: “Is this true, Nana?”

Nana: “What do you think, Georgie?”

Robert: “You're lying! You have always favoured your son!”

Nana: “Child, not even my own husband called me that. The day he called me that was his last day on earth. I suggest you take your vuil gat (dirty ass) and fuck off before all hell breaks loose.”

I saw George look at Robert with different eyes that evening, it was as if he was in disbelief, but he sort of looked like he believed Nana. Robert on the other hand was fuming. George let go of Robert, and took his bag with him. Robert limped out of the house as they left, leaving the rest of us in the lounge. Wow, I guess those two boys have always been troublesome. Sins of the parents always have a way of catching up with you at one point.

Chapter Sixty Six

Exodus 22:18 – “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.”

Thato

I managed to wake up feeling a lot better, just genuinely tired. Since it is also Saturday, I thought I would sleep in for the day, but apparently Gringo has

a nice surprise for us all. Kgabo had to leave, along with Rami's parents, leaving Nana, Gringo, Vivian, Rami and I alone. It was a very good day with them and well, even though we'll be seeing each other soon on our family vacation, I really do miss having them around.

It is very nice having a full house, with everyone around – except for George and Robert of course. I got up and felt my throat still painful and those hideous marks caused by his coarse hands still remain. Hopefully they will disappear. It is pretty much officially winter now, since it is May month, so we have to dress warmly. He asked that we not waste much time getting dressed, as we won't even have time to eat any breakfast.

I did as told, knowing that I tend to spend quite a lot of time in the bathroom. I got finished and dressed in a pair of jeans, with long boots, a warm top and a trench coat. As I headed out, everyone even Rami

was waiting for me. Ag, man. I can never be on time.

Rami: “Even I beat you today, sis.”

I looked at them and they were all dressed in black – even Nana. Haibo (Goodness), did I miss the memo?

Thato: (frowning) “Am I missing something?”

Vivian: “You are supposed to wear black today, but instead you’re wearing something white. We’re going to a double funeral today, so I don’t know how you will still wear that outfit after we come back.”

We always burn the clothes we wear whenever we go to the warehouse. My question is, why didn’t they tell me?

Thato: "Okay, let me go change."

Gringo: "No need. We're already late. Let's move."

We walked out swiftly, and I started panicking a little bit because my last memory of that warehouse is a painful one. I don't think I want to relive that. Luckily I was sitting next to Nana, and she had her Rosary in her hand, and squeezed my hand.

Nana: (whispering) "Don't worry, no one is going to die today, but a firm message will be sent out to your enemies. Whatever you do, don't tell your father about your husband."

By my husband she means Kg, right? I just took her advice, said a silent prayer and we arrived. As we walked out we saw more cars than usual, about five or six of them. Perhaps I forgot about this meeting of ours. As we walked out of the car and proceeded

into the warehouse, we were met with a lot more people than usual. Tiger, Constance, Mulalo, Thendo, Adesh, Rajesh, Pravesh, Romeo, Kg and Anastacia were seated. The rest of the chairs were left open for us. I see they got the memo as they were fully dressed in black. The rest of us sat down, leaving Gringo and Vivian to sit in the middle as usual. I looked over at Kg, who gave me a brief smile, while Anastacia squeezed his hand and he squeezed it right back. I must say it stung me a little bit, but life has to go on. As I looked forward, Gringo began with his introduction.

Gringo: "Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining us today. We are about to punish those who do not deserve to live, who have made the innocent suffer all because of the love they had for greed and power. Those who can even sacrifice their own blood for money. 1 Timothy 6:10 says "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."

Proverbs 10:12 says “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.” Proverbs 12:25 says “Let your father and mother have joy, and let her who gave birth to you rejoice.” You see, these two women are a disgrace to woman kind. Many woman have been denied the chance to conceive and yet they chose to be poor excuses and put their wombs to shame. Smally, let them out.”

My heart started beating faster as I knew what was about to happen. Sophie was brought out first. She looked so frail, thin, and malnourished. Sonto on the other hand was brought out second, and she looked like she hadn't bathed in days. I looked around at the rest of the people, and noticed Romeo and Tiger tense up a little bit.

Gringo: “As you know, our dearest Sophie, Romeo's ex side chick and baby mama was held captive by us. We made sure to feed her – dog food that is, since she has behaved like a dog all her life. She abused

my daughter, and kept the secret of me being her father for years, and worst of all, she killed Thato's mother, by poisoning her. Now, I personally live by the saying "you live by the sword, you die by the sword."

As Gringo said those words, I remember the painful contents of that letter. I cannot believe Sophie actually killed my mother and denied her a fair chance at beating cancer. She is so evil, however I am not sure if killing her is the way out.

Gringo: "How do you plead Sophie?"

Sophie: (weakly) "G... Guilty."

Gringo: (smiling) "Then we have Nomasonto, who has lied to me all her life, pretty much. She set my daughter alight as an infant, and got rid of her like she was nothing but trash. Even when she had the

chance to inform me of my daughter's whereabouts, she chose to make me live a life of misery and regrets. She also kidnapped her own daughter!"

I saw him getting really angry and his famous veins making their appearance.

Gringo: "Sonto, how do you plead?"

Nomasonto: "Before I plead, G, may I please say something, please?"

I saw Romeo tense up, while I felt all the rage in me stir up again.

Gringo: "This changes nothing about your fate, but you may speak."

Nomasonto: (tearing up) “Firstly, I would like to apologize for everything I have done. I am sorry G for hiding your baby from you. Thato, I know I don’t deserve your kindness, but I am so sorry. I am sorry for kidnapping you, for getting Kg shot, and for killing your unborn child. I know no one can ease that pain but for what it is worth, I am sorry.”

I saw Gringo look at me, and I felt myself tense up, while Nana squeezed my hand in affirmation.

Gringo: (fuming) “What is she talking about, Thato?”

I felt so scared. I didn’t know what to tell him. That moment just flashed back right at me as I started crying. I looked at Kg, who looked at me with a bit of pity, while Romeo looked at me full of distress.

Gringo: “I won’t ask you again, my daughter. What did she do?”

Thato: (crying) “She had me kidnapped and when she found out I was pregnant, she.... She forcefully aborted my baby.”

I felt like someone stabbed me at the pit of my stomach after I said the last part. I don't recall ever saying it out so loudly. I looked at Kg, who just looked at me with pure pity. Gringo was too upset to even notice me looking at Kg. He turned around, and looked at Sonto.

Gringo: “You felt the need to rip my grandchild right out of my own daughter's body, Sonto?”

Sonto: (scared) “I am sorry...”

Gringo was about to step down the podium, but Vivian held him back.

Vivian: "I'll take care of this one, love."

Gringo nodded as he stood behind me and gently placed his hands on my shoulders. Vivian stepped down and looked at me.

Vivian: "Explain to me what she did to you that day, Thato. Every gruesome detail."

I have to relive that moment today, but fuck it, if it means that Sonto will get her punishment, then so be it.

Thato: "She... she got her two men to pour cold water on me."

Vivian: "Smally, bring a bucket of ice cold water."

Smally nodded and did as told. I thought that Vivian would splash the water on her, but instead, she placed a cloth bag over Sonto's head and since her hands were both tied to her back, she couldn't do much. She slowly poured the water over her head as we heard her literally suffocating and trying to catch her breath. This feels like a horror movie. She repeated the process until the whole contents of the bucket were emptied.

Vivian: "Then what?"

Thato: "I told her I was pregnant and she asked those two men to remove my clothes, tie me up and spread my legs."

I felt so much rage and pain all at the same time as I recalled those moments. Vivian got Smally to rip her clothes apart and her vagina was exposed to all of

us. This is exactly how I felt that day, when she exposed me to those two guys I didn't even know. Smally was big enough to pin her down alone.

Vivian: "Then what?"

Thato: (crying) "Then, she... she shoved two big pills inside of me and left me to bleed there. I had to endure the pain until I couldn't even feel myself anymore."

Vivian: "You live by the sword, you die by the sword, Sonto."

Vivian put on a pair of gloves, while all of us were watching and she put some spirit on the gloves. She didn't even hesitate or listen to Sonto's cries. Her cries and begging are nothing compared to what I felt that day. Vivian shoved her whole hand deep inside of Sonto, and ripped out her whole cervix.

Sonto cried out, she wailed, she screamed, she begged, she cried, but I didn't feel an ounce of remorse or pity for her. Kg gave her a blank stare, while Romeo and Tiger looked scared as fuck.

Vivian: "Take her away, make sure you dump her at the nearest hospital. I want her to relive this moment until her dying days."

Smally nodded and took a bleeding Sonto away. She looked at the frightened Sophie, who had her eyes widely open and didn't dare say a word.

Vivian: "What did this one do to you?"

I told her everything Sophie used to do to me, from the insults to the curses, along with her daughter, but I felt like she had been punished already with her eye being removed, but of course Vivian had other ideas. She looked at Sophie, took a knife and cut off

both her breasts and let Biggie take her away. Seems like Anastacia couldn't remain as strong as she felt and she vomited right there and then. Usually Kg doesn't bother with her, Romeo does it. But today, I observed a different Kg, he was into it. He took care of her, took out a serviette from his pocket and wiped her vomit off and gently patted her back. I felt like I had been stabbed in the gut yet again. The pain I felt right there compared to nothing Anastacia had done to me before.

Kg: "Are you okay, baby?"

Anastacia just nodded while he gently rubbed her back. Wow, she wasn't kidding when she said she was living my dream. It should have been me with that belly right next to Kg, but then, I guess I will have to wait and see.

Vivian: "And that ladies and Gentlemen, is what happens to you when you fuck with us. One of you

might not be so lucky to live to tell the tale.”

I could see Romeo wipe the sweat off his face.

Gringo: “Gorilla, Are you okay, my brother?”

Romeo: “Yes... I’m okay, actually, no. I think I need to lie down. So, perhaps I should excuse myself.”

Gringo: “Nonsense, we’re all having a business lunch together in case you forgot. Besides, Wolfe has to give us an update on the businesses.”

I saw Tiger tap his foot in agitation. Something is not right with these two. They are so nervous and it is hard to even look past it.

Chapter Sixty Seven

Jeremiah 17 v 9 -"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

Thato

After what felt like a horror movie, we all drove out of the warehouse and headed to Gringo's house. I like this house and yet I have just never given myself the time and chance to venerate the splendid magnificence thereof.

I never actually took the time to see how many rooms there even are in this house to start off with. Everything just happened so fast, and Gringo just wants me near him. They both want Rami and I around all the time, and Rami and I are literally always together. I feel like I have a complete family for the first time in my entire life. We always have dinner in the dining area, but apparently there is one room I have never entered. It is on the top floor, at

the very end of the floor.

We have to walk a while to get there, and while we did that Nana just kept holding my hand and literally dragging me besides her for some reason. She must have probably noticed how my eyes keep wandering off to Kg and Anastacia's direction. Every time I tried to look at him, she would be by his side, and would deliberately rub her stomach just to make me jealous.

I won't lie, I am not the jealous type, but watching her rub her belly like that, knowing I never even got the chance to experience that with my baby aches like hell. I tried though with everything in me to just be optimistic about everything. While we were walking, Mulalo would occasionally wave and smile at me. I really need to ask bastard Romeo about Mulalo. I have a serious hunch that he and Kg are related. I might as well ponder Nana's mind about it since she seems to know everything.

I sometimes feel like she can read my mind, much like Kgabo. We entered the room and food was already set for us. Ag man, Mam' Grace is such a sweet lady. She usually makes sure the dishes are ready for us whenever Gringo doesn't cook. She is one humble lady, much like Ausi Mavis, the woman who works for Constance and Tiger.

This room has a long, crystal table, with about 20 chairs all round. I have never seen such a huge room and such a huge table, it must be custom made. This kind of reminds me of the Sopranos, when Tony Soprano would always have dinner with his family. This feels like we're about to have a mafia meeting or something. All of us were pleased that we'd finally get some food in our stomach, but I couldn't say the same for Romeo and Tiger. They were so nervous, and I think the fact that they didn't even have a chance to speak, made them even more jumpy.

We sat down as each and everyone took a drink from the bottle of their choice. I feel like some cognac today, and funny enough Kg went for the same thing, his favourite. I decided to play a little game in my own head. Since Mulao and Kg were both in the same room, I figured I would look at each of them and figure out if there are actually more similarities between the two other than them looking alike. I noticed Mulalo also pouring the whiskey the same way Kg has always done it.

Kg has always had a habit of turning the glass, wiping the whole top of it before pouring himself a shot or two. He would always add the ice afterwards, instead of before he poured the whiskey. I looked at Mulalo and he did the same thing. Fuck, this is just too weird. I looked at Rami, who just gave me a look and chuckled. Gringo was being a humble guest as always, welcoming everyone and telling them what we're about to feast on, but I was so hooked at how similar Mulalo and Kg did things.

As we dished up, Mulalo started adding his veggies first, just like Kg. He always said that he wanted to leave space for the meat, but health comes first. Come to think of it, Mulalo is also a fitness fanatic, just like Kg. Kg always had a bit of a habit when it came to hygiene, he is just too clean, but it never really bothered me. I would just always tell him not to do it in front of people as it would seem a bit rude.

He would always wipe his cutlery off with a serviette or a cloth, before eating. I always suggested that he do it underneath the table, to avoid looking boogey. Funny enough I saw him take his fork and knife and quickly put it on his lap as he did that, and Mulalo even did the same. I couldn't help but widen my eyes as I kept staring at the two of them. Anastacia was even annoyed, looking at me like she was about to kill me, but I didn't give a fuck. I actually didn't realize how much I had been staring at them, until Nana whispered in my ear.

Nana: (whispering) "It's rude to stare, you know. Whatever you're thinking, it's true. Now let's eat, we'll talk later."

I quickly came back to my senses as I started eating. Romeo and Tiger didn't even have much of an appetite. Instead of eating like us, they kept pouring themselves more alcohol. Connie on the other hand looks so depressed and frail, she seems to be losing more and more weight the more I see her. I actually kind of pity her, to be honest. We finished eating, and then it was only time for drinks.

Gringo: "So, Wolfe, now that there isn't any blood being shed before us, how about you enlighten us on what you have been working on so far."

Kg: (nodding) "Well, G, I went through all the accounts and I went through all the books as well. It

seems that we haven't been making as much profit as we were supposed to have been making."

Everyone, except for Tiger and Romeo looked at him puzzled.

Kg: "Let me rather be blunt about it."

Gringo: "Please."

Kg: "Someone, well, rather some few people have been stealing money from the business."

My inner instinct told me to look at Tiger and Romeo and I saw them looking at each other really quickly. Ah, ah, these two are the culprits. No wonder they have been edgy ever since the night of my party. This is going to be fun.

Gringo: (frowning) "How much money are we talking about?"

Kg: "About R4 million per month."

I couldn't help but gasp. Are people that greedy? I looked at Tiger and Romeo and they looked like they were about to shit themselves, while Vivian looked like she was about to kill someone.

Gringo: (calmly) "Interesting. How do they steal this money if I may ask?"

Kg: "Well, with all the profits from the drugs that rotates around South Africa, it always seems to have come back short. I checked the books way back from last year, before I joined and it just didn't make sense, so I traced it back to about five years ago. So, the person has been doing it for a very long time, just now with extra help, he is able to steal more.

I'm talking about money being taken everywhere, the restaurants, the club, the drugs. These people were basically looting."

Tiger: (uneasy) "May I please be excused?"

Gringo: (frowning) "Hey wena (you) Todani, we're in the middle of a crisis and you want to be excused? Have you ever seen a Tiger run away from an ambush?"

That seemed like a straight up hint directed straight at Tiger. Gringo never even refers to them by using their real names. Something deep is about to go down tonight. Tiger sat back down looking deeply pressed.

Gringo: "Carry on, Wolfe."

Kg: “Well, it is obviously an inside job, and as we speak, these people were planning to ambush us altogether with the Italians, and take over the business on their own.”

Vivian: “Who are these fucks?”

Kg: (calmly) “They are right amongst us, well, two of them are actually dining here with us. Why don’t they reveal themselves?”

We all looked at each other, and saw Romeo sweating like crazy, with Tiger looking like he is about to land a big pile of shit where he is seated. The Naidoo’s looked so chilled, in fact they looked quite lost.

Gringo: “Well? Are we going to get a voluntary confession, or am I going to shoot it out of you?”

Adesh: "Gringo, you know me and my boys do nothing to harm business. Never!"

Gringo: "Okay then, it seems like we're going to have to start playing Russian roulette. Better yet, V, my love, why don't you grab the steak knife. Your hand is a lot steadier than mine."

Vivian: (smiling) "You're speaking my language."

Mam'V grabbed the steak knife and just as she was about to speak, Tiger confessed first, leaving Romeo to fend for himself.

Tiger: (pointing at Romeo) "He made me do it!"

We all stared at him in shock, while Kg seemed really untouched.

Gringo: "We're going to need more than that, Tiger."

Tiger: "Look, The accountant started doing it and when I caught him out he said he did it because he needed to pay for his mother's surgery and medical expenses. After a while, it became easy to do it, a lot easier, and so I continued doing it. But I felt so guilty afterwards that I wanted to stop, believe me, G, I wanted to stop. Then Romeo came and he also noticed that funds were beginning to go amiss. When he found out, he made me steal more. I really wanted to quit, but he made me continue. A few months down the line, we were managing really well and we would take about R5 million from the business. He convinced me saying that he could get us to work with the Italians on our own and cut you out, and when I said no, he had already gone ahead and pitched the idea to them. I didn't want to it, I swear."

As Tiger was about to finish his little speech, Gringo

shot him right in the shoulder and he screamed out in pain. Romeo froze in his seat, as my ears started ringing from the loud, unexpected gunshot noise. We were all too shocked to speak, while even Mulalo remained quiet.

Adesh: “(shocked) “Ah! Tiger, how could you, brother?”

Gringo: “Well? Are you going to say anything?”

Romeo: (Scared) “Please, I... It’s not what you think –
“

Gringo didn’t even wait for him to finish talking, instead he also shot him in the shoulder, as he also wailed out in pain. Connie was so scared, she remained stiffened to her chair.

Gringo: “Tiger, did you honestly think that I never knew that you stole from me the moment you started doing it? I knew you would end up being greedy and start stealing more. I let you be because I wanted to take it all away from you when you started making big money. Romeo, I let you into my business, my family with open arms, but you betrayed me. You made sure that you made a deal with the Italians before letting me know. Well, today is your day, both of you are fired with immediate effect. As of today, you are officially not in the gang anymore. And don’t worry, all the money you stole from me, I took it back – all of it. As we speak now, you both have R100 000 left in your bank accounts. That is more than enough to start afresh, right?”

I saw the disappointment in their eyes. Imagine, two grown men weeping in pain over being shot and all they are ever worried about is the money they lost.

Gringo: “Constance, you’re a pain in the ass, but I

can't leave you dry, so I will leave you with R10 million. That is more than enough to take of your uneducated self. Your children are old enough, so they will be fine. Please escort your husband along with his cockroach friend out of my house, please. They are bleeding all over my wife's white, fur carpet and she loves these carpets."

Constance stood up in embarrassment and aided Tiger, while Romeo helped himself up. I don't understand why such rich men would want to get even richer. I guess it is true what they say about the love of money being the root of all evil.

Chapter Sixty Eight

Deutoronomy 31:6 – "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the one who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

Thato

Dinner ended on a rather unpleasant note if I should rather say. Blood was shed, unpleasant words were exchanged and unscrupulous disputes were had. Ultimately, the main goal was achieved – to take out the two corrupt thieves. Now that they are out of the game, I still feel like the gang is becoming smaller, and although it is a good thing, it seems as if we're starting to miss out on a few good people.

Why am I even including myself in the business as if I am a part of it? Anyway, I don't even know why Gringo decided not to kill those two bastards. When asked, he said he was getting tired of bloodshed and felt a bit bad because they were both fathers and Romeo was about to be a grandfather.

Poor Tumisho, he has a useless mother and an even more useless father. With all the wealth he had, he chose to turn his back on both his crews – I don't

even know how he slept at night. I still feel like Gringo has been dying to address the issue of me being pregnant.

I don't even know how I am going to tell him that Kg was the father of my baby. I was about to pray before heading to bed, as I heard a solid knock on my bedroom door. Speaking of bedroom, I terribly miss my own bed at the flat.

Thato: "Come in."

The door opened and Nana walked through with her usual, pleasant smile.

Nana: (smiling) "I'm so sorry for bothering you right now, Isa. I just wanted to find out if you were okay."

I tried faking a smile, but knowing her she might

already be knowing what on earth I am thinking.

Thato: "I think so."

She sat down next to me and held my hand.

Nana: "You don't have to pretend, you know. Losing a child is not easy, it is something that stays with you until you die."

Thato: (frowning) "Why does it seem like you're speaking from experience?"

Nana: (nodding) "I lost two children during my marriage. At that time I was 23. David's father and I had been married for three years. Imagine, at that age, we assume everyone is fertile and is more than capable of carrying a baby. By the time we had given up, David's father was very much open and

willing to spend the rest of our lives without kids. I received a miracle and I fell pregnant at the age of 32. By that time, it happened so unexpectedly, so out of the blue.

To make things even weirder, I was about four months pregnant and had no idea. My husband and I had gone on a trip to Rome, where we were having the time of our lives. We were the childless couple, everyone wanted to be around. We were the cool aunt and uncle, the rich uncle and aunt, rather, who would take all our nieces and nephews on an all-expenses paid trip, giving their parents a pleasantly long time out.

We had always wanted kids, and I remember how I used to party up a storm and drink like a fish. I fell ill one of those mornings, and we both assumed it was just a hangover. When it prolonged to three days, we knew something was not right with me, since I never fell ill. When we got to the doctor, he decided to

perform an ultrasound. We both even laughed because we had already given up at the thought of us ever having children, and we were oddly okay with it.

I gladly permitted him to do so, and then we heard a heartbeat. I will never forget that day, it was such a huge shock, and immediately we both wept in each other's arms. We couldn't believe how amazing God's favour truly was. My son had endured all the heartbreak and tears we succumbed to and when we eventually accepted our fate, he surprised us. I was once sitting in the house reading my Bible, when I came across Psalm 62:5 when David said "Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from Him." That is when I knew I had to name my son David."

I felt myself getting teary as Nana told me this story. I never actually had a grandmother who would sit down with me and tell me ancient stories about her family, bloodline or her life and pass on some

wisdom unto me. This makes me feel so emotional.

Thato: (emotional) “What happened to your husband if I may ask?”

Nana: “He was shot by a thief who had come into our house and robbed us of our belongings. It was a terrible time for me as the robber shot at me, but he kept missing. He shot at me, five times until his case got emptied. If I wasn’t a prayerful woman even then, I would have probably died. Funny enough I had a premonition about his death a few nights before and it happened exactly as I had dreamt.

I knew then that it was not time for me to die, and I had to have my son. So, when I was sitting alone in my lounge, praying and asking God for guidance, I opened the Bible and stumbled across Psalm 62:5, and I knew I had to name him David. And indeed he became a king, a warrior.”

Wow, so Nana went through so much and yet she still managed to smile and pull through like this.

Thato: "How did you get over his death?"

Nana: "I didn't. He was and will always be the love of my life. I never remarried ever since his death."

Is she seriously telling me that she had no boyfriend or anything after her husband passed?

Thato: "Do you mean to tell me you never dated after his passing?"

Nana: (laughing) "Don't be silly, of course I did. I did all of that underground, as David had no idea. Even now he has no idea who I am dating. I just felt like no one will ever have a place in my heart like my

husband ever did.”

Yoh, that must be tough. I wonder what I would do if Kg died. He would probably die as Anastacia’s husband and his child would most probably be a constant reminder of him.

Nana: “My point is, Isa, life is unpredictable, but that’s the whole beauty of it all. You and your husband will be together again in due time. Unfortunately, you are just one of the people who just has to endure a lot of hardship and heartbreak before reaching your destiny. You are destined to be a Queen; your destiny was already written before you were born.

You are so blessed, I cannot even begin to describe it. One day you will be a true leader, and you are destined for far greater riches than you think. Your life doesn’t end here, Isa, it has only just begun. You are not only going to lead a nation; but you are going

to lead them and change their whole customs. You just wait and see.”

She is so confusing, though, much like Kgabo.

Thato: “I hear you, Nana. I just have a question: Are Mulalo and Kg related?”

Nana: (chuckling) “Yes, they are.”

Thato: “How?”

Nana: “Believe me when I say it’s complicated. You will find out soon enough. Why are you asking?
(raising eyebrow) Are you asking because you feel a tiny spark arising inside of your tummy?”

I couldn’t help but laugh at her statement. Why

would she say such? I don't like Mulalo like that, do I?

Thato: "Don't be silly, Nana, I don't like him like that."

Nana: "Oh, believe me you will fall for him involuntarily because he will be there for you at your darkest hour. Don't worry, he won't replace the love you have for Kg, but he will just love you and be there for you at a specific time in your life. Things are going to get rough, so he will be your rock because all the rocks in your life will not be there."

What is she trying to say? Is she talking about death or what?

Thato: "What do you mean, Nana?"

Nana: "You will know soon enough, my baby. No matter what happens, don't tell David about Kg and

that he was the father of your child. You will know when to tell him, but right now the timing is not right.”

Thato: “What do I tell him when he asks?”

Nana: “Spin a story, or say it was some guy from school or something.”

Tjo (Wow), so she decides to teach me how to be a liar at this very moment. My grandmother though.

Thato: “I see.”

She kissed my cheek and greeted me goodnight. I prayed and fell asleep almost instantly.

Nana

I am so happy to finally meet my granddaughter, but I am so saddened because the worst is yet to come. I have been praying and fasting, but even that cannot stop my disheartening dreams and visions. I cannot stop the massacre that is about to come, and I know that it is God's will, I just cannot find it in my heart to accept the coming situation. All my life I have devoted to God and to being one of God's messengers, and now that the message I have received affects my family and I directly, I can only hope and pray that this fate gets overturned. My poor Isabella won't take this news well. How can one child go through so much pain even before she reaches the age of 21? Yes, I know that she has to go through such, but how can the world be so cruel? God help her throughout this horrible upcoming situation because already I am too defeated to accept it.

Chapter Sixty Nine

Proverbs 23:17 – 18 – “Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.”

5 James 3:14-16 – “But if you have bitter envy, don’t brag and deny the truth.”

Four weeks later

Thato

Ever since that night Nana and I spoke, I have been praying, meditating as needed just the way she taught me. As I feared, Gringo came to me the following day and asked me who got me pregnant, and as I was coached, I lied and said it was a high school love. I must say, I never believed I would ever be this good in lying. I was extremely nervous, but he was way okay with all of it.

It is finally June holidays, and the end of the first Semester has come. We can now finally go on a family vacation soon, but only after a week, as some still need to get their stuff sorted, such as leave and so on. Gringo organized passports for us, so I am extremely happy about that. We will finally be able to go on a family vacation. He did however ask George and Robert to come along with us despite their shit, but they declined. Well, George politely declined with a reason, while Robert didn't even bother to respond.

He just let them be and we just continued with life as normal. After that day at Gringo's house, he begged Rami and I to stay with him, but right now I don't think we need to go live with him and Mam'V. We like our space and privacy. Perhaps next year or something, but right now, we are pretty much fine on our own.

So, I have been praying and fasting every now and then, but still I haven't gotten any message or dream regarding Kg, so I just put everything in God's hands. I decided it is time to do me and be happy, and that should Kg come back to me then he would come back. Kg on the other hand, seems to have fallen for Anastacia. I mean, they post a lot of pictures together now on social media, and we even got a surprising wedding invitation to their fairy tale themed wedding.

My heart sunk and I was depressed for two days, but I picked myself up and decided to just let it be. Nana still insists that I need to pray and just forget about Kg for now, but it is just so hard to do that, especially when he comes to Gringo's house every now and then.

I myself don't even get the chance to show him my pendant, when he doesn't even seem interested anymore. Romeo and Tiger have been AWOL ever

since, while Mulalo and I have been spending quite a lot of time together. He is really such a nice guy and I enjoy his company. I just wish that I was spending this much time with Kg instead of Mulalo.

It seems as if him spending time with me has made him glow even further, because he has just become a whole new person. I actually feel so bad, since he is married and all, and ask myself what kind of woman I am spending time with a man who is expecting a child. He doesn't even talk about Olivia and the baby and I just wonder what she would do if she finds us.

I have been feeling quite weird the past week, almost like someone has been following me or something. My spirit isn't at peace, and my soul literally feels heavy. I recently got my license, but even then, I feel like someone is following me, I just can't explain it. Every time I tell Nana about it, she just tells me about danger approaching and says she

can't seem to see what's happening, almost like the universe won't allow her to see it.

She does say that some things are preventable, so I guess such is life. Rami asked if we could go to the movies and hang out for lunch today, so we are on our way as we speak. I'm not really having such a pleasant day, because it is also Kg's birthday – the 25th of June. I never forget such days as I find Birthdays very sentimental.

I guess I will always think of Kg on this day, since it was the first day we ever made love and the day he took my virginity. If only I had been told that you literally never forget your first, I would have been more cautious or something. I was in such profound thought that I didn't see Rami emerging from her bedroom. Even the tv was now watching me instead of the other way round.

Rami: "Whooowee! Aowa (No), Tee! I can't let you

drown yourself like this. O bjang na (What kind of person are you)?”

Thato: “Huh?”

Rami: “Bona o bjang (Look at you). You are staring at the tv, literally and you didn’t even hear a word I said. Stop moping and let’s go.”

Thato: “Oh, ja. Ag, man sorry sis, I was just deep in thought.”

Rami: “No kidding. Do you want to tell me what you were thinking about?”

Thato: (shaking head) “Maybe later, let’s go.”

Rami: “Ai, okay. But I think I must warn you about

letswai (salt). Lack of sex is really not good for you.”

Thato: (chuckling) “Oho, so now you’re telling me such because Thendo has been giving you some good, old Venda D.”

She couldn’t help it. She just had to burst out in laughter.

Rami: (lauging) “Jealousy makes you nasty.”

I chuckled as we walked out. Yes, Thendo and Rami have been quite busy ever since Nana spoke some sense into her. I really don’t know what this means for their relationship, but it seems as if they are truly into one another. Things are so hectic, though, that they have to hide their relationship from Gringo. Of course Mam’ V knows, since she just has to know everything, but she assured not to tell Gringo until the time is right.

We headed out and Rami is driving as usual whenever we go out together. I don't know, I am just not very comfortable driving around Jozi. These streets are too busy for my liking. As we walked around the Mall, it seems as if we were just too early, as the movie we wanted to watch, was only going to start showing two hours later. So, I suggested we walk around before going to eat out at a restaurant. I really feel like a whole new change, so as we walked around, we spotted a few clothing items, and knowing us we bought quite a few.

Especially now that Gringo and Mam'V give us an allowance of R5000 every month. They keep saying they don't want us to get spoiled, but they seem to be doing just that. As we were walking around, we came across one of the famous salons there. For some odd reason, I felt like going in and getting a fresh, new look. I am quite tired of my long, curly hair.

Thato: "Sis, let's go into the salon. I think it's high time I got a makeover."

Rami: (smiling) "Hehe, Tee. Kgante love e nyesa so (So love makes people go mad like this)? I really don't want to reach the stage you're at right now. Just tell me; are you doing this for you, or for Kg or for Mulalo?"

I don't know why Rami would think that of me, but I am genuinely doing this for me.

Thato: "I am doing this for me, come on. I know I still love Kg, but I am purely doing this for me."

Rami: "Hmm, okay then."

We walked in and knowing Rami, she asked for a

whole new weave. I don't really know what I want, so I just asked Flavour, the hair stylist to hook me up with a great, new look. I want to look colourful and unique for a change.

Flavour: "Oh, girl! Where have you been all my life? I love clients like you, because you let me experiment and show you the kind of talent I have."

I felt a bit nervous thinking he would actually do shit on my head and make me look like a tsunami, but seeing how all these people don't even mind queuing up for his service, I think he does a pretty good job. So, I decided to put my trust in him. I felt every inch of my beautiful curls drop to my shoulder, and I cannot wait to see what I look like. Within an hour, he was officially done. I had my eyes closed all along, since I am just afraid of what I look like now.

Flavour: "Open your eyes and tell me what you think, baby girl."

I slowly opened my eyes and I almost didn't represent myself. Flavour is really good at what he does. He cut my hair quite short, and dye-ed it blonde. I have never tried colour in my life, but wow. This one is really for keeps. I cannot believe I myself decided to finally do the big chop on my hair. I am absolutely delighted, that I even feel like crying.

Flavour: (smiling) "So? What do you think?"

Thato: (excited) "This is the very first time in my life that I have ever cut my hair, Flavour. Thank you so much."

Flavour: "Oh, no, honey. Thank you, for giving me a chance to express myself. You know. A wise lady once said; "when a lady cuts her hair, she is about to change her life." I don't know what you might have been going through, but take this as an opportunity

for a new beginning, babe. Enjoy this new you and embrace it. You are about to re-introduce yourself.”

I smiled as I made my payment. Even Rami was extremely impressed and excited.

Rami: “Yoh, Tee! You are motivating me. I wish I could also be bold enough to cut my hair.”

Thato: (chuckling) “Then why don’t you do it?”

Rami: “Hello?! Haven’t you seen my big head? I’d probably be the laughing stock with my forehead.”

Ai, Rami, though. The movie finally showed and we bought our popcorn and snacks and went into the theatre. I haven’t been to the movies in a very long time. The last time I went was with Kg, eish (wow). Suddenly everything reminds me of that guy, again.

While we were watching the movie, that creepy feeling overwhelmed me yet again – I felt like someone was hovering over me.

Mama would always tell me that intuition wasn't given to us for fun, we should always trust it as God gave it to us as a superpower. I felt very uneasy, and I tried to look behind me, but with the very high movie chairs, it was impossible for me to see what was happening behind me. I don't know what I expected to see, but something most definitely doesn't seem right. The rest of the movie was rather awkward and unpleasant for me. After the movie played, I seemed totally different from the person I was a few minutes ago.

Rami: "Sis, are you okay?"

Thato: "I am fine, love. I am just having one of those days."

Rami just nodded and we headed to one of the restaurants in the mall. We went to Bugatti's. It happens to be one of Kg's favourite restaurants. Everything and everyone is making me think of Kg today, this is just such torture.

Rami: "Is this about Kg's birthday?"

I nodded.

Rami: "Hang in there, babe. Your time is coming. It is genuinely okay to be sad every once in a while."

I guess she is right about that. While we were eating and talking about random things, Thendo and Mulalo appeared out of nowhere and saw us.

Thendo: (smiling) "Hey, beautiful ladies. Ni khodota

mini apha (What are you doing here)?”

Ai, Thendo can ask some pretty random and obvious questions at times. I looked at Rami who was blushing immediately when she heard Thendo’s voice. I love love, really.

Thato: (smiling) “Hi, Thendo. Hi Mulalo. We’re having some lunch.”

I looked at Mulalo who was glowing and smiling really widely when he saw me. I couldn’t help but see a glimpse of Kg in him. That dimpled smile and those perfectly carved teeth. These guys have some really good genes. Even Tiger was a bit handsome, just a real pig.

Rami: “What are you two doing here? Are you stalking us?”

Thendo: (chuckling) “Well, if stalking you is a crime,

then I am guilty as charged.”

I looked at these two and thought just how Rami has come a long way. It took her a while to open her heart and she found love in a very awkward guy. Thendo is really cute, adorable, sweet. The list is just endless. These Venda guys don't play when it comes to romance. Rami always tells me how Thendo gets her in the mood before they have sex and I just can't help but become horny at times whenever she tells me of such. I actually miss sex. It has been nearly a year since I had some, and salt does not do anyone justice, really.

Mulalo: “May we join you?”

I am not sure, but I think it is loneliness speaking to me from the pit of my stomach, or the fact that he is just a clear copy of Kg. I suddenly saw Mulalo in another light, I looked at him dressed in ripped, skinny jeans and a very tight top. He had a male

blazer on and he just looks so hot. I felt a bit sexually attracted to him, which does not even happen at all. Maybe it is these cocktails I have been having, man, really.

Thato: (smiling) "Yes, you may."

Those two joined us and I actually managed to forget all about Kg throughout our lunch date. My day with Rami ended up being a sort of double date, and I must say I didn't feel like going back home to an empty bed. Of course Thendo and Rami went back to our flat, since he does visit often. It even becomes a bit of a norm since he stays alone in the flat he used to share with Rendani. Apparently no one knows where he is, he didn't even say goodbye to him or leave a note or anything.

His phone has been off for months apparently, so they just hope and pray he is okay. This is one of the obvious reasons why we just don't want to move in

with Gringo, since we would like to get laid in peace – well, Rami that is. I am just a sore loser and an even bigger sucker for love. Mulalo followed us, while Rami and I drove in front of them. I still kind of felt like someone was tailing us. I kept looking behind uneasily, even Rami noticed.

Rami: “Are you okay?”

I really don’t want to worry her, especially not today.

Thato: “Yes, I am fine. I am just checking to see if they can actually follow directions.”

I lied, well, I made up a stupid, weak lie, but that is okay. Rami just chuckled, and I could tell she knew that something wasn’t right with me but she decided not to push it. We arrived at our flat and Rami immediately went to her bedroom along with Thendo. They probably always have sex, but I love the fact

that they never make it uncomfortable for me and I never hear any noises coming from their bedroom.

I went to get one of our expensive bottles of wine, yes, Gringo and Mam' V have taught us a thing or two about wines. Well, they always complain about drinking cheap wine whenever they are here to visit, so we made sure to get them some Cabernet Sauvignon and the likes. The nice thing about wine is that you don't even have to know how to pronounce it.

After a few glasses, I think Mulalo and I were a bit tipsy. I started feeling very hot down there, with my clit twerking and feeling sexual vibes. I kept looking down and staring at Mulalo's pants, trying to see if the myth about Venda men is indeed real.

Mulalo: "I think I should head home."

I felt so bummed, I didn't even try to hide it.

Thato: "You don't have to leave if you don't want to."

Mulalo: (surprised) "Tee, I really don't think it's a good idea, I mean it is getting pretty late. Besides, I don't want you to do something out of impulse or under the influence of alcohol and regret it later on."

Yoh, Mulalo likes lectures. At this point in time, I just need to feel good. I need him to make me feel good. I just have to feel good. I don't know what came over me, but I found myself landing my lips right on Mulalo's soft, lips and gave him a subtle kiss. As expected, he didn't refuse or reject me, but instead, he leaned in and gave me one, hot and passionate kiss. I felt myself moan slightly in his mouth as his tongue gently went over my bottom lip as he pulled out of the kiss. I felt myself being overwhelmed with a sexual heat wave and I love it. Kg is probably ramming into Anastacia's fake pussy as we speak,

so why can't I get some satisfaction?

Mulalo: (softly) "Tee.."

Thato: "Mulalo, please, I need you..."

He gave me one look and I actually had my fingers crossed hoping he would not say no.

Mulalo: "Okay."

And so, we got up from the couch and headed straight to my bedroom. I don't really care if I am about to make the worst mistake of my life, but all I know is I need some sexual healing.

Chapter Seventy

Proverbs 3:5-6 – "Trust in the Lord with all your heart,

and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

Thato

Mulalo gently dragged me my bedroom. I didn't even hesitate. Alcohol just has a very bad way of making one forget all about their inhibitions. Funny enough, I don't feel drunk, I actually want to do this. He is just as tall as Kg, just as handsome as he is, and my goodness he smells so good. How funny is it that I am about to have sex on the very same day that I lost my virginity? Mulalo pulled me closer to him, stared deeply into my eyes.

Mulalo: (softly) “Are you sure you want to do this?”

Thato: (nodding) “Yes, I am sure.”

Hmm, he is asking for permission, I like that in a man. Or maybe he wants to make sure I don't cry rape tomorrow, who knows? He slowly laid me on my bed, and finally I got to taste his juicy lips. He gently kissed me and I responded, immediately my whole body responded, as I felt my clit vibrate, Goosebumps all over my body and my heart jumping for joy. He pulled out of the kiss and started sucking on my neck. I really loved what he was doing, and I didn't hesitate touching his back, his arms and moving my hands all the way down to his buttocks. I even let out a few moans in the process.

Thato: (moaning) "Oh, Mulalo..."

Mulalo: (Moaning heavily) "Mufumakadzi (Queen). Ndikhou nitoda nga maanda (I want you so badly)..."

Yoh, I don't even know what he is saying to me, but fuck! I love it! His kisses progressed from slow, to faster and more passionate. I actually realize how

long I have been craving sex. Mulalo is passionate, but a bit too slow for me. I get it, he is trying to be polite and make a good impression on me because it is our first time, but I want to get fucked passionately if there is even such a thing.

Thato: “Mulalo, please, I need you. I know you want to be nice and subtle, but please – fuck me passionately, I beg you.”

I don't know if he was dying to hear that from me or if I unleashed his inner beast, but he just changed drastically, and came for me just the way I wanted him to. He immediately took off my top, and then my jeans. I didn't even waste time, I went straight for his top and then for his jeans. He unclipped my bra in a split second, damn, this guy is skilled. He licked my neck, and went all the way down to my nipples, circling each one like he was twirling his tongue on some cold, ice cream. He then sucked them both and gently bit them. I just couldn't help but let out an involuntary moan.

Thato: (moaning) “Aaah, Mu...”

Mulalo didn't waste any more time, he kissed my abdomen, all the way down to my bikini area. He slowly, licked me from left to right, while my toes curled as I gently scratched his back. I felt like I was in heaven. He removed my underwear, and looked at my pussy for a minute. I kind of felt embarrassed, I don't know. Kg also used to do that before going down on me. Mulalo looked up at me and smiled. I felt a bit shy and could feel my cheeks become warm. I tried hiding my face in my hands, but he gently told me not to.

Mulalo: “Don't do that, gorgeous. You have such a magnificent pussy, I can't wait to eat it.”

I blushed, thinking he was going to do it right away.

Mulalo: “Stay put, I’ll be right back.”

I became a bit bummed as I huffed in frustration. I mean, why would Mulalo get me so warmed up yet leave me like this in winter?! It is cold, man. Yes, we have air cons in our bedrooms, but still. I lay there counting the seconds while he was gone, and funny enough he didn’t even take a minute, but it felt like forever. He walked in with a bowl full of ice cubes. What the hell are we going to do with all these ice cubes in winter?! I gave him a look and he returned it with a smile.

Mulalo: (smiling) “Do you trust me?”

Usually when men say that to women, especially on tv is when they are about to do something immensely untrustworthy to them.

Thato: “Yes, I do.”

Mulalo just nodded, and went back down on his elbows, as he took an ice cube and sucked on it. He then gently slid it on my clit, all the way down to the entrance of my pussy. I couldn't help but moan. The hot-cold effect brings so much pleasure to my body.

Thato: (moaning) "Aah, Mu..."

He smiled as I was looking at him. He gently placed his hot-cold tongue on my clit as he gently proceeded to lick it. He occasionally put an ice cube on my clit and licked it afterwards. I felt like he was performing a magic trick. I didn't know which direction to turn or look anymore, as I gently grabbed onto his head. He doesn't have hair like Kg, his head is bald. The more I moaned, the faster he licked and sucked my clit. He went up and down, in circular motions, and even gently bit it. I felt myself overwhelmed with pleasure and yet he hadn't even penetrated me yet. As he sucked on me, he gently

slid his finger into my entrance.

Thato: (moaning) “Mu... I can’t hold it anymore... I’m about to cum.”

Mulalo: “Fuck, your pussy tastes so good, Tee. Come for me, come for daddy.”

This feels so odd, as Kg used to make me call him daddy. He sucked harder and faster and I felt myself getting close. I found myself grabbing onto his head and I came on his face. I felt myself shake and twitch involuntarily. Fuck, I don’t know who is better at muffing between him and Kg, but all I can say is that was fucking amazing. I just have to get Kg out of my mind, at least for now.

Mulalo: (smiling) “Damn, you taste so good, Tee.”

He wasted no time and took off his briefs, but I felt overly confident, as I wanted to return the favour. I pushed him onto the bed, and went down on my knees. I headed straight for his dick, as I gently caressed it in circular motions with both my hands, and I started licking the tip of his penis. I didn't even allow him to feel weird or even try to convince me not to do it. I heard him moan and as he gently grabbed my head, I knew I had him right where I wanted him. I put an ice cube in my mouth and sucked him off with it running down his dick.

Mulalo: (moaning) "Ah, fuck.... Tee, what are you doing to me?"

I like it when he curses, so I went down harder and faster. I also went on in circular motions and he pulled me up. He kissed me roughly, but passionately. I wasted no time as I got on top of him. It hurt a bit at first, I mean it has been a year, but after a few strokes it was magical. As he stared

deep into my eyes, I couldn't help but do it too. It felt as if our souls connected at that point, no wonder a lot of people say that sex is spiritual. They weren't kidding. The more I went back and forth on him, up and down, the more I felt him grab onto my breasts, and occasionally onto my bums.

Mulalo: (moaning) "Fuck... Tee... I have been waiting for this moment...."

I went faster and faster as I felt myself getting close. After a short while, I collapsed on top of him, as he let out a loud groan and one deep breath. I stayed on top of him for a while, as he gently pulled my face and kissed me.

Mulalo: "Thank you."

I smiled as I got off him, he went to my cupboard, butt naked and went to fetch a towel to gently wipe

me. Yoh, the similarities between Mulalo and Kg are just too scary. His dick is slightly bigger than Kg's, okay, a lot bigger than his, but damn he can give a woman good pleasure. He came back into bed and placed my head onto his chest and then I remembered. Fuck! We didn't even use a condom! I felt myself tense up.

Thato: "Shit."

Mulalo: (puzzled) "What is it? Do you regret this? I'm so sorry."

I don't regret this at all, I just regret the way we did it.

Thato: "It's not that, it's just that... We didn't use a condom."

I saw him immediately tense up and freak out.

Mulalo: "Tee, I am so sorry, I mean I just got caught up in the moment. I really didn't meant to sleep with you without a condom. It really wasn't my intention. I will take you to a doctor first thing in the morning and I will make sure that you get a morning after pill."

Wow, I just ruined a good moment by stating the obvious. Maybe I should have waited in the morning.

Thato: "It's okay, Mu, come sleep. We can deal with it tomorrow morning."

I looked at him and I could see that he wasn't comfortable anymore.

Mulalo: "Perhaps it is better if I sleep on the couch."

He didn't even wait for me to try and convince him to

sleep in the same bed as me, but instead, he carried his clothes out with him and closed the door behind him. What the fuck just happened?

Chapter Seventy One

James 1:5 – “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”

One week later

Thato

I slept with a very heavy heart thinking that Mulalo would actually apologize or something, but ever since that night, things were just awkward between us. I got up and he greeted me in shame, like he couldn't even look at me. I don't know, maybe he just didn't like the sex or something, but I have been feeling like total shit ever since. I mean he is literally

the first guy I have ever slept with ever since Kg and now he does this?

Mxm, I didn't even have the energy to even ask him why he was behaving so funny towards me. I don't like what he did at all, but I have too much pride. I won't go after a man, I refuse. I got tested and I was cleared for pregnancy, HIV and STD's. I know what we did was pretty stupid, but we learn from our mistakes. I did get the morning after pill, just to be safe and that was the last time I spoke to Mulalo.

He would be online on WhatsApp and I would see him typing and then I'd end up receiving no message whatsoever, so in all honesty, I really don't know what to say or even how to feel. Sometimes, I feel enraged, and just purely pissed at him for just ignoring me like this, and at other times I feel rather sad and heartbroken.

I have mixed emotions everytime I think about that

night, I mean how can he give me such good sex and then leave me hanging like that. To make matters worse, it's Kg's wedding today, and yep, all of us are invited. Not only are we all invited – Rami and I are the bridesmaids while Thendo and Mulalo are the groomsmen.

I don't even know why Anastacia did this shit, but I am guessing it is most probably to prove a tasteless point. Ana and I aren't even close to begin with, so she is just spiting me. I couldn't exactly say no because Gringo would have been suspicious. He and Mam'V have grown so fond of Kg, although they don't like Anastacia, they have accepted that Kg "loves" her.

I hate this shit – I honestly do. I struggled keeping a straight face when we were busy with fittings throughout the week. It was bad enough being there, but it was much worse when Anastacia kept flaunting Kg in my face. She deliberately kissed him

every chance she got.

It really cut deep and I couldn't exactly vent to Mulalo because he just wasn't even talking to me. All he said was hi. I don't even want to explore the further end of that conversation. Anastacia decided to go all out for this wedding, with a whole fairytale ice queen theme, I don't even know what kind of theme that is, but she is going to wear a really big wedding dress, with an awefully long veil. It does not even suit her since she is heavily pregnant. I haven't seen Kg's look, but I know he will look good in his suit, as always.

Rami and I decided to go to Gringo's house to get dressed there and from there we will meet up with Anastacia and the rest of her wedding party at the venue. They decided to get married at Shepstone Gardens, well I am pretty sure that was Anastacia's idea. It is one of the most elegant venues in the country, and you can only get a reservation once in

six months.

I really don't feel like going anywhere, and I have been purposefully dragging my feet. I really don't want anyone to dampen my mood more than it already is. As I was hoping and praying for a way out of this wedding, Nana knocked on my door and entered before I could allow her in.

Nana: "Baby, why are you not getting dressed?"

Thato: (deep sigh) "I think you know why."

Nana: (Chuckling) "Life is too short to live the same day twice, you do know that, don't you?"

Thato: "Not really."

Nana: "You mope around and cry all day, every day. You never give yourself the opportunity to live life and explore and actually be happy. Let me tell you about my best friend Sue. She wanted my husband back in the day before we even got married. Mind you my husband was about five years older than me and I was still in school. Knowing Sue, she went for Greg knowing very well Greg wanted to be with me."

Thato: (frowning) "So what did you do? Please don't tell me you beat her up."

Nana: (laughing) "No, baby. I did what I do best – I dressed to impress. I went and got myself a very hot outfit, and I simply walked past him. I knew then that he wanted me instead of Sue. The following day, he was my boyfriend and Sue's ex."

I couldn't help but laugh out loud.

Nana: "My point is, Baby, you never give people a reason to make you unhappy. Do you and make yourself happy. Get up, get dressed in that dress, and show Anastacia that no evil will prosper against you. You can do this, because you are a Groen. We are not weaklings, Thato, and the sooner you grow a thicker skin, the better and longer you will survive."

She is right, I have to do this. I have to try.

Thato: "I hear you, Nana. You always know what to say."

Nana: "Grannies are there for a reason, my baby."

She hugged me and left as I got into the dress. These dresses aren't hideous, at least. Ruth is the matron of honour, what's new? I said a prayer, and asked God for guidance in order to get through this day. I know that everything will work out fine, I just

need to be strong and hang in there. I headed downstairs and found everyone waiting on me. Yep, once again I am the last one to get ready. I need to get punctual, really.

Gringo: "I know you most definitely didn't get this lack of punctuality from me."

They all laughed, causing me to chuckle as well.

Thato: "It's such an old habit, but I will work on it."

Vivian: "Let's get going, my people, we don't want to keep the hideous bride waiting."

We laughed once again and got into the Vito. It is always better to drive in one car when we are more than one. Once we got to the venue, almost everyone was already there. I dreaded the whole

thing, hence I got a bottle of champagne before going into the Bride's room.

Nana: (whispering) "Remember what I told you."

She winked at me and left. Gringo side-eyed me, but he will survive. Upon entering the room, Rami stopped me.

Rami: "Now, I know you have kept me in the dark for too long. Spill it."

Thato: "Rami, we have to go, mos."

Rami: "Summarize."

I knew she wasn't going to let me leave it as is, so I decided to spit it out.

Thato: "Mulalo and I fucked."

Rami: (shocked) "I knew it! Ke tsibile (I knew it)!"

Thato: "Ska rasa so (Not so loud)."

Rami: "Aowa (No), you owe me the juicy details. Phela I see the weird vibes between you two."

Thato: "Eish, things are awkward now. Let's finish this and I will tell you all about it."

Rami: "You'd better."

I took a deep breath and walked in. Mind you these bitches kept making funny remarks about my hair saying my hairstyle choice was a bad one. But Kg

has been looking at me every chance he gets. I don't know why the universe keeps torturing me like this. Even Thendo and Rami have a better relationship than I do with any guy. As we walked in, we saw Ruth helping the frantic Anastacia into her dress. I don't know, but she doesn't look okay for a pregnant woman. Her face looks half swollen, while she is literally hyperventilating and sweating.

Ruth: "Ana, calm down le wena man! You will upset the baby! You need to look like a real bride!"

Anastacia: (hyperventilating) "How can I, wena Ruth! I am not feeling well and the pains are not going away."

Ruth: "Le wena Masango warned you! Bona nou o itoketse meroto le dihlare ka mo nyong (Look now, you put muthi and urine into your pussy)! What did you expect?"

Both Rami and I were shocked as they didn't even hear us walk in, let alone see us staring at them. Only when Ruth was about to turn around, she saw us and got a huge fright.

Ruth: "And then lena (you two)?! Why le re tomoletse mahlo (Why are you staring at us like that)?"

I know better than to spill the beans. I think they both wanted to see if we actually heard them or not. Anastacia looked like she was in serious pain, but she forgot all about the pain for a moment as she stared at us with baffled eyes.

Rami: "Ah, sorry, man, Ruth. Ne re checka if le hloka something na (We just wanted to check if you needed anything)."

Ruth: "No, go get us some water or something."

Rami and I both saw the few bottles of water behind them. They were just probably dying for us to leave them alone.

Rami: "Sho, Ruth."

We walked out and closed the door and made our way to one of the balconies. As we approached, we took four champagne glasses from one of the waiters, so we could have two glasses each. I really need a drink if I am going to watch my fiancée marry another bitch.

Thato: "Did you hear what Ruth said? Was she actually talking about Masango the sangoma?"

Rami: "Forget those two bitches, tell me about

Mulalo. What happened? Was he bad in bed? Does he have a small dick?"

Thato: "No, far from it, actually. He decided to suddenly stop talking to me."

I explained everything that progressed that night from us having unprotected sex, to Mulalo acting strangely upon realizing we didn't use a condom. Rami was rather shocked and disappointed that I had first time sex with Mulalo without a condom, but at least she didn't judge me. In fact, she gave me rather surprising advice about Mulalo.

Rami: "Sis, you know, I don't promote unprotected sex, more especially when you both don't even know each other, but what I can tell you is that Mulalo isn't such a bad guy. He probably feels like shit for fucking you while he is still married to Olivia. And besides, I know for a fact he feels like whore shit for ignoring you all these days."

Thato: (frowning) "How do you know?"

Rami: "Well, he has been texting me and asking me how he could approach you after what he did. I actually knew everything, I was just waiting for you to tell me."

But Rami is so sly, though. How could she?

Thato: "How could you keep me in such misery when you knew the whole time? And you acted so surprised when I told you a few minutes ago."

Rami: (laughing) "That's my talent, boo. I didn't want to force anything out of you. I actually thought he gave you bad sex, but I am glad he has a good D-game."

We both laughed and as we did, Kg emerged looking

so damn fine. That beautiful, Italian Grey suit of his matches perfectly with the theme. He had a pink shirt underneath. I just wanted to melt right there and then. I am so proud of the man he has become, even though I really hate the kind of business they are in. He has emerged into such a gorgeous, head strong and handsome man. I still don't know why they call him Wolfe, but anyway.

Kg: (smiling) "Ladies."

Rami: (smiling) "Hey, Kg."

Thato: "Hey..."

Kg: "Rami, do you mind-"

Rami: (interrupting) "Ofcourse not, see you later, Tee. Kg..."

She left while Kg chuckled alone before me. He paused and stared at me. I felt like we had a moment, the last time he stared at me like that was just before we got married. Fuck, this guy still makes me weak to the knees.

Kg: "How are you?"

Thato: (nervously) "I'm well, thanks, how are you?"

Kg: "I am okay. Why do you get so nervous whenever I am around you?"

Talk about straight forward.

Thato: "I... I don't know..."

Kg: "May I ask you a question?"

Thato: "Yes, you may."

Kg: "Why have I been dreaming about you lately?"

I froze for a second. My heart excitedly jumped for joy. Could this be the breakthrough I have been hoping for?

Chapter Seventy Two

Luke 12:2 – "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known."

Thato

I felt my heart beating too fast as I stared at Kg. I was hoping he would say he remembers all the good

times we have shared, even though we didn't even make it to a year of being together. Yes, he may be my first, but wow, he is just the one.

Thato: "I don't follow."

Kg: "I have been having recurring dreams about you."

Thato: "What kind of dreams?"

Kg: "I don't really know, but we keep laughing in the dream, while I brush your tummy in the dream. We always appear to be on the bed in a room that is very unfamiliar to me."

It must be his old place. So, that's it? That's all he remembers?"

Thato: "Is that it?"

Kg: "Well, one particularly odd part of the dream that keeps puzzling me is when I give you the diamond pendant you're wearing. May you please show me what is inside?"

I didn't even hesitate this time, I put the glasses down on one of the tables on the balcony, as I took it off, and handed it to him. He opened the pendant, and once he saw the two pictures, he gave me quite a shocked expression. For a moment my heart was so jovial, I thought I had finally won my man back and this stupid wedding wouldn't happen. He looked at it for a while, and then he shocked me with his reaction.

Kg: (pissed) "Is this some kind of sick joke?"

Thato: (shocked) "Excuse me?"

Kg: “Why do you have a picture of you and I in your pendant? What the fuck is this, Thato?”

Wow, Kg has never raised his voice at me let alone been mad at me.

Thato: (panicky) “I don’t understand Kg. That is the pendant you gave me. We were in love and about to get married. You gave me that as a present for my 17th birthday. I was pregnant and – “

He didn’t even give me a chance to explain. It seems as if the more I try to explain, the more agitated he got.

Kg: (fuming) “You’re not serious, Thato! Are you honestly trying to sabotage me on my wedding day with your lies?!”

Wow, I have never been so hurt in my life before. I felt like my heart was literally being ripped apart piece by piece. Who the fuck does Kg think he is?! I feel like I don't know the person I am talking to is not the Kg I know. Kg would never be this rude towards a woman – ever.

Thato: “Kg, I – “

Kg didn't even give me a few seconds to think or speak, but instead, he threw my diamond necklace at me and I caught it in shock. He didn't even say anything to me, but instead he left me standing there, humiliated as fuck. I could feel the coarse tears ripping through my cheeks. Is this really what my life has become?

Am I now a joke? Am I supposed to endure such embarrassment and humiliation from men all the

fucking time?! I forgot for a second that I am a bridesmaid at a wedding as I drowned in my tears. Rami came to fetch me.

Rami: "Tee, the wedding is about to st –"

She looked at me shocked.

Rami: (shocked) "Keng (What is it)?! What happened?"

I explained everything Kg did and she was fuming so much, she even wanted to go confront him, but I stopped her. That would only make things worse.

Thato: "No, leave it."

Rami: "Mxm, o go tlwaela masepa, waitse (he is full

of shit, you know). Don't worry, when the priest asks who objects, I will gladly shoot up."

I managed to laugh a little at my statement, as she wiped my tears off. My face is still red and a bit swollen, but well, the show must go on.

Thato: "Let's do this."

Rami: (nodded) "Let's."

We went behind Ruth and the worried Anastacia. Ruth gave us one look, but Rami quickly put her in her place and she decided not to ask anything further. Ntate Moruti (Pastor) is walking Anastacia down the aisle and he is also going to officiate the wedding. A bit odd, but I guess it is how she wanted it. Anastacia looks really ill, but I guess she wants to do this before Kg most likely changes his mind. I feel like something between them is not right.

All along Kg was fine, but now he is just someone else, someone completely different. As I walked down the aisle, I tried to scan Kg's eyes, but instead he looked at me like he was ready to murder me, so I shifted my focus elsewhere. Gringo and Mam'V gave me one look and they could immediately see that something just wasn't right. As I walked on further, I saw Romeo and Tiger seated next to each other, looking far different from what they looked like the last time I saw them. Ahead of me, next to Kg, was Mulalo. He looked at me with such a saddened look on his face. I don't know what is up with him, but I walked on.

At times like these I really miss Soks. He was crazy as fuck, but he knew just how to lighten the mood. I wonder if he is okay wherever he is. I finally got to my spot, as Rami gave Kg a death stare and came next to me. Ruth decided to walk down the aisle last, and then it was finally time for Little Ms. Sunshine. I could see she was struggling to walk and the veil

over her face was seriously hiding the immense sweat dripping from her face.

One could even see her bleached skin tone right underneath it. Her make up was wearing off, but she didn't care. She just wanted to get married. Even Kg looked at her and started worrying, but fuck him right now. He can go to hell. As Anastacia walked up to Kg, she held his hand even though she looked like she was struggling.

Ntate Moruti: "We re gathered here today, to witness a beautiful union between my daughter and my wonderful son in law."

Anastacia seemed like she was really hasty and couldn't wait any longer.

Anastacia: "Could we please skip right to the I do's."

Kg: (surprised) “Ana, baby, what’s wrong? You really don’t look okay.”

I decided to mess with these two.

Thato: “Perhaps we should take a break and give the mom to be some water.”

Kg shot me a death stare, while Anastacia couldn’t wait to throw her usual insults at me.

Anastacia: “Shut up, wena (you)! You’re just a bitter bitch trying to ruin my marriage!”

Thato: “Yoh (wow), okay. Sorry, ngwana Masango (Masango’s child).”

She raised her eyebrows and widened her eyes as

soon as she heard me say that. I gave her a smirk as I could see she was in serious pain. She started touching her belly, and most probably couldn't take it any longer.

Anastacia: (Screaming) "Aaaah!"

Kg held her so quickly, before she fell down. The guests were surprised, as her father was scared and panicky. Mulalo kept staring at me from his side, while the guests were murmuring and gasping.

Kg: "Are you okay?"

Anastacia: (Screaming) "Yoooh! Kg! Ngwana (The baby)..."

The next thing we saw blood gushing down from her dress as Kg held her. I have never seen so much

blood coming from a woman's legs before. I have seen it spilling from a person's brains, but this – this does not even look like a normal miscarriage, but what do I know?

Kg: (frantic) "Someone, call an ambulance!"

Romeo surprised us all by being the first one from the guests to jump up and help Kg with Anastacia.

Romeo: (worried) "Anastacia! O shap (Are you okay)?"

Ntate Moruti: (Wailing) "Yoh, ngwanaka (Oh, my child)! I can't lose my child and grandchild right after losing my wife! Yoh, Modimo o ntahletseng (Oh, God, why have you deserted me)?!"

Tiger: "I think we should take her to the hospital. The ambulance won't make it in time."

Romeo surprised us all yet again.

Romeo: “Anastacia, what did you do to my child?!”

The crowd gasped, along with us and Ntate Moruti. Kg on the other hand seemed to have switched to Wolfe mode.

Ntate Moruti: “Wa reng (What did you just say)?!”

Romeo realized he had a slip of the tongue and tried to change his statement, while Kg looked at him with bloodshot eyes.

Romeo: “Uhm, I mean, uh... my grandson.”

Kg: (fuming) “Papa, what the fuck?!”

I saw Romeo move away in panic and fear. I guess Wolfe is as dangerous as they say.

Romeo: "It's not what you think, son."

Kg: "Then explain before I blow your fucking brains off!"

Romeo: "It wasn't supposed to be like this."

Anastacia: (screaming) "Romeo! Stop spitting those lies out of your mouth!"

Romeo: "Well, I am tired of pretending. Son, Anastacia is carrying my child."

Everyone including Rami and I gasped.

Romeo: "I am sorry you had to find out this way. But right now she needs medical attention."

Kg: "Fuck you, Papa! And wena (you), Anastacia, you clearly forgot who the fuck I am! After that bastard gets ripped from your vagina, I am most definitely coming for you! I will rip your useless womb from you myself!"

Anastacia looked more scared than in pain. Tiger helped Romeo carry Anastacia out, while Ntate Moruti and Ruth hurried behind them. There was so much blood on the floor, but I didn't care less. I mean the food and drinks still have to be enjoyed, right?

Thato: "Well, that was rather dramatic. The food and drinks cannot go to waste, guys!"

Okay, I didn't mean to sound insensitive, but I actually wanted Kg to feel horrible about himself. I looked at him and smirked, as Mulalo tried to comfort him. Rami walked behind me, as I left Gringo and Mam'V in shock. Of course Nana was bursting in laughter as always. There is never a dull moment when we have to attend a function. I headed to the reception venue, while everyone seemed to have followed behind me.

Tonight, I am about to turn into a dangerous lady. I am tired of keeping my mouth shut about Kg. He will know the new me today. Who the fuck does he think he is? I didn't even have the chance to mourn my baby, meanwhile he was on top of Anastacia while I was crying my lungs out. I headed straight for the bar and got myself a Corona, and Gringo and Mam' V were surprised, but they let me be. I wanted Kg to remember each and every part of what we shared. Even if it means it has to be in a humiliating way. No man has ever spoken to me the way he did a few minutes ago. Fuck him, fuck Wolfe!

Thato: "DJ, Please play the music!"

The DJ did as instructed, since he got paid to be here anyway. There was no time for speeches, thank goodness for that. Everyone started eating and enjoying their free round of drinks. Oddly, I see a few people from Diepkloof who seemed rather shocked to see me. One of them, Mokgadi, one of the township drunks walked up to me while I was dishing up.

Mogkadi: "Hao (Wow), Thato. Kgante di ntshitseng between wena le Kg (What happened between you and Kg)? Gape you were the it-couple (You were the it-couple)."

Thato: "Life happened, Mokgadi."

Mokgadi: "Tjo (Wow). And Bophelo ba nyesa ka

nnete (Life is really tough, hey).”

I left her standing there and went back to Rami.

Rami: “Tee, o shap (are you okay)?”

Thato: “To be honest, I am not okay, Rami. My heart is bleeding, but right now, I just want to enjoy myself.”

Rami: (smiling) “I like the sound of that.”

Thendo came up to us and kissed Rami on the cheek. I just love the way they behave around one another. It reminds me so much of Kg and I back in the day.

Thendo: “Tee.”

Thato: (smiling) "Thendo. How are you?"

Thendo: "I'm well, how are you?"

Thato: "I am alive, that's all that matters."

Thendo: (chuckling) "My brother has been dying to talk to you. Please talk to him. I beg of you."

I looked behind Thendo and there was Mulalo standing there, fiddling his hands. Ai.

Thato: "Okay."

Thendo then signaled for Mulalo to come and he rushed over to our table like a child. Thendo pulled Rami for a dance.

Mulalo: (nervously) "Hi."

I was internally rolling my eyes.

Thato: "Hi."

Mulalo: "Look, Tee. I am really sorry about the way I have been treating you. To be honest, I feel like shit. I just felt so horrible for putting you in a position like that. I really didn't mean to be rude towards you like that. I didn't want you to think that I was treating you like a side chick. I am really sorry, Tee. Please forgive me."

Thato: "It's okay, really. Apology accepted."

Mulalo: (smiling) "Yoh, you don't know how much that makes me happy, Mufumakadzi (Queen). Truly speaking, I have been nervous, because well, I am

planning to leave Olivia for you.”

To be honest, that was a bombshell I really didn't expect. I don't think I even love Mulalo. I don't know what exactly I am doing with him. But leaving his wife is not something I am willing to allow him to do. I don't think this would be the right moment to burst his bubble, so I had to think quick.

Thato: “Come, let's dance.”

I pulled him to my direction as we headed to the dance floor. I kept glancing to Kg's direction, who was next to Nana. She has been keeping him company for far too long, but fuck it. I am having the time of my life.

Kg

I can't believe my whole marriage was a lie. Anastacia along with my father took me for a fucking fool! How could he impregnate my own wife right under my nose without me suspecting a thing! To make matters worse I basically insulted Thato and I don't even know the girl. I don't know why I reacted the way I did, but something tells me I was horribly wrong. How do I even go about apologizing? As I was deep in thought, I saw Gringo's mom approaching me.

Nana: "Of all the words of mice and men, the saddest are, "It might have been" – Kurt Vonnegut."

I looked at her puzzled.

Nana: "It basically means that most of the men along with mice have been saying those words over the centuries. It is never too late to try, you know."

Kg: "My marriage is over before it began. I would rather try before trying anything with her again."

Nana: "You know, for such a wealthy and strong men you sure can be stupid. I am not talking about Anastacia. I am talking about Thato."

Kg: (puzzled) "I don't get what you mean, Nana."

Nana: "Time is not on your side, Wolfe. You have been slacking way too long and you haven't been praying. As a result she has lost hope and has stopped praying for you too. Danger is lurking and you know you are the only one who can help her."

I don't understand what she means. Has she gone insane?

Kg: "Nana, I really don't know what you are talking

about.”

Nana: “Why do you think you have been dreaming about her and the necklace you gave her? You have always been her pillar of strength. Your step mother and your own father fucked with your fate when you got shot that day. She sadly lost your baby and now everything is fucked up.”

Baby? What is she talking about? As I was pondering my mind, trying really hard to think, she placed her fingers on both my hands and stared me deep in the eyes.

Nana: “Take a good look at me, right now. Focus, breathe slowly, close your eyes and force your brain to remember. You cannot give up right now, Wolfe, you have a wife to protect tonight.”

I closed my eyes and did as she said. I tried my best

to focus and breathe, and then it slowly started coming back to me. I suddenly had flash backs of Thato and I, making love for the very first time in Durban, the day I gave her the necklace, when Palesa killed herself at the Kruger National Park, and then finally I remember the day I got shot as she got grabbed from the car, while I rested my eyes helplessly. I slowly opened my eyes and I looked at her dancing with Mulalo. Then I heard the song “Khetile Khetile by Kwesta”. That used to be our favourite song. I stood up in haste.

Kg: (Shouting) “TT!”

Thato looked at me firmly and so did Mulalo. Upon staring at her I suddenly remembered everything! We were supposed to get married that day, she was dressed so beautifully and she was carrying my by. I felt myself smile as painful tears of joy streamed down my cheeks.

Kg: (shouting) “TT! I remember everything, baby! I remember!”

As she was about to let go of Mulalo and rush to me, we all saw Tear gas and gun shots followed. Everything was such a haze, as I swiftly tried to run towards her, but I couldn’t see her.

Kg: (shouting frantically) “TT! Where are you?!”

I didn’t even care whether there were people shooting or not.

Kg: “TT!”

As I squirmed around, trying to look for my TT, I felt myself slowly drop down. I suddenly felt immense pain on my abdomen. I placed my hand on my abdomen, and realized I was bleeding. I got shot.

Mulalo: "Fuck! Kg is shot! Someone call the ambulance! Help!"

Chapter Seventy Three

Romans 12: 17-21 - "Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Anastacia

I can't believe Masango didn't warn me about his

stupid herbs! He said to me that I would lose my child, but not in such a drastically humiliating way! I feel like utter shit, my whole body feels numb. I had to get operated on and have my baby removed from me. I lost my womb in the process, one thing I can never get replaced.

Apparently my womb and fallopian tubes were so badly damaged, I am lucky to be alive. I can't even feel myself, I'm numb and distraught, what I fail to understand the most is the fact that Kg never bothered to even follow us. He hasn't even called or even made an appearance here to visit me. As I lay in my cold, hospital bed, Romeo walked in. The fucking reason I am here.

Romeo: (fuming) "Ana, what the fuck did you do?! You killed my child?!"

Anastacia: (annoyed) "Romeo, only family is allowed here. What do you want?"

Romeo: "Don't fuck with me, Ana! You killed my son?! What the fuck is wrong with you?!"

Anastacia: "In case you haven't noticed, you are the reason for all this mess. Had you not claimed your child to your own son, we wouldn't even be having this conversation. Say your say and fuck off!"

As I said that he attempted to choke me, but I held my panic button up in the air.

Anastacia: "Dare it, and I swear, I will get you arrested! I swear, if you do it, I will make sure Tiger finds out you are Princess' father, and the father of Olivia's unborn baby!"

He looked at me and started breathing heavily.

Anastacia: “Yes, dear Romeo. You think you can turn every little girl you meet into your perfect Juliet by shooting your load up their pussies. Every woman you impregnate that gives birth to a girl child, you neglect and throw away like trash. I can’t wait to see what Kg will do to you, he will rip you to shreds.”

Romeo: (fuming) “That’s okay, Anastacia. Since you think you are so clever, let me tell you how you failed to see that I am actually one step ahead of everyone. You think the Mighty Wolfe won’t fall along with Gringo and his disrespectful wife, but I already have a plan. You might be surprised that so many people want them dead – me included.”

I felt a surge of fear rush through my body.

Anastacia: (shocked) “So, you would actually kill your own flesh and blood all because he exposed your dirty dealings?”

Romeo: (chuckling) “Yes, why not? I have worked way too hard to get where I am today. No one, not even Kg will stop me from achieving my goals. I will make sure he lives to regret it – you included.”

I felt myself being overcome with fear. I don't get scared normally, but the look I saw in Romeo's eyes scream something else. I can't believe he is really this evil. What the fuck does he mean by a lot of people want Gringo and Kg dead?

Mulalo

I can't believe we were ambushed like that even with so much security detail. Someone needs to come clean – this was obviously a setup, an inside job more like it. I was dancing with Thato and the next thing bullets were flying, teargas was all over the place. I ducked in the process, for literally two

minutes and then I couldn't see Thato anymore. I feel like shit. I should have protected the woman I love. I can't believe that such has happened yet again. I looked around and heard Kg's voice nearing me.

When I saw him drop down on his knees, I knew that he had been shot. The blood-soaked hand confirmed it. We managed to get a first aid team in here, and once the smoke died, a few of us went out to check what was happening outside, but even then, there were no people in sight. All our men even Smally were unconscious on the floor. This was carefully planned, and most definitely by someone we know. As I went back to the reception area, I heard Nana screaming.

Nana: (screaming) "Noo! Please, God, no!"

I rushed over to her and saw Gringo and Vivian lying on the floor with blood oozing out of their mouths.

Gringo was shot in the stomach, while Vivian was shot in the head. Whoever did this had an intention of killing us – more especially those who were shot. I looked over the other side and Rendani had Rami in his arms, she was also bleeding, but conscious fortunately. She was bleeding in the shoulder. What the fuck happened and why did they take Thato only? It can only mean one thing and one thing only. The person who did this is probably a pro and did this to target Gringo. This person is also a coward to ambush us like this. Fuck, Rendani!

Rami

I was having the time of my life and the next thing I felt immense pain in my shoulder, and the next thing it felt numb. I felt my whole body feel cold, but Thendo helped me stay awake. I must have dozed off after the surgery because I woke up in the ward with drips and machines connected to me. Thendo was right by my side when I woke up.

Thendo: (smiling) "Hey."

Rami: (softly) "Hey."

My throat feels so hoarse and dry, as if I had been sleeping for days.

Thendo: "How are you feeling?"

I was about to answer but then I remembered that Thato was nowhere to be found after all that commotion. I started crying.

Rami: (crying) "Thendo... my sister... Thato..."

Thendo came rushing towards my side.

Thendo: "Hey, it's going to be okay. The police are

going to find the person who did this.”

Rami: “We both know we don’t do police. Those people are useless. Where is Gringo? Mam’V?”

I saw him lower his head in an instant and I knew that was a sign for bad news.

Rami: (panicky) “Thendo, tell me. What is it?”

Thendo: (sigh) “Vivian got shot... in the head.”

I felt my heart getting crushed in an instant, as if someone was literally placing a solid, heavy object on top of me. I felt like I was struggling to breathe while my head was about to spin.

Rami: “What about Gringo?”

Thendo: "He is in ICU. He was shot three times."

I felt myself wail out loud. This can't be happening. Why is everything turning out to be such a fucking mess?! My aunt can't be dead, no. Gringo can't die on me, Thato still needs him. I still need him. Fuck, no!

Thato

I remember dancing away all my troubles when I heard gunshots followed by an immediate blow to my head. I must have passed out immediately, because I woke up with a massive headache, hearing people argue. I couldn't see anything nor move, as I felt my hands were tied together, and I had a bag or something over my face. It was hard for me not to panic, but I tried to stay calm. It felt as if I was indeed in a moving car, because I could feel

that the road we were on wasn't as smooth as I am used to. It seems like we are on a gravel road, with bumps and humps every two seconds. I heard the voices of the men, even though they were faint due to the bag being over my head, I could at least hear what they were saying.

Man1: "No, man! You shouldn't have gone in like that. We were perfectly instructed to kill no one and take the girl only."

Man2: "You idiot, I did what I had to, besides, the big boss said that if we kill the white man and his precious loved ones, we would get a bonus. If anything, you should be thanking me."

Man1: "You really didn't have to shoot the lady in the head, you know."

What the fuck?! Did they actually kill my father? Did

they shoot Mam'V in the head?! Oh, no! Why am I going through such again?!

Man1: "Okay, but at least let's stop somewhere and rape her. Uyabonile amathanga lawana, mfwethu (Did you see those thighs, bro)?"

Man2: "Wa bona nou, Stix (You see now)? O tla ka masepa (You're starting with your shit). I told you we don't rape."

Man1: "Mxm, ,aha."

I felt tears streaming down my face. Am I seriously reliving all this again? I said a silent prayer. "Dear God, Modimo wa ka yo a rategang (My loving God). I don't know why you put me in such a position, but all I know is that you know best. I trust firmly in you, my God. I believe you can turn this situation around and heal my heart. Please protect me, oh, God, help me

get reunited with my family once again. Amen.”

I prayed but I still didn't feel any better. I can only pray that these guys won't harm me. After what felt like forever, the car stopped. I didn't hear any cars or moving things around, so I know they probably brought me to a deserted location. What the fuck is up with people kidnapping me? Maybe I should just die. Then I remembered, what is the point of wishing death upon myself when Kg remembers me. I saw him and heard him call me out. He even called me TT. That was the moment I had been praying for all these months. Oh, My Kg is back, at such an odd time. I heard the two guys open the car door.

Man1: “Here she is, boss. Alive and unharmed as you requested.”

Voice: “Good. Bring her in.”

I recognize that voice, but I can't pin point it exactly. The two guys picked me up and forced me to walk. I felt my heart race a million beats per second. I don't know what's going to happen, but all I know is that I need God right now. I can't handle another person ruining my life the way Sonto did to me. Fear crept in as we walked for about five minutes. I felt us walk into a building of some sort and I had to climb up the stairs. Everytime I fell down or attempted to, the guy would scold them.

Voice: "Not like that, you idiots!"

That voice, man. There it is again. It rings a vivid bell in my head, but I just can't pin point it.

Voice: "The next time you drop her, I will make sure to deducted 10k from your salaries! Bloody fucks!"

And then, only then, I managed to recognize that

voice. Fuck, no! This can't be happening! No ways, I refuse to believe it. We walked into one of the bedrooms, which smelled really foul. They placed me on one of the couches and said nothing.

Voice: "Remove her cover, slowly."

One of the guys removed the bag over my head, slowly as instructed and I couldn't believe my eyes.

Rendani: (smiling) "Hello, beautiful. We meet again."

Chapter Seventy Four

Matthew 5:38-39 – "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

Thato

I couldn't believe my eyes. I felt like it was a horrible dream, while my head was terribly painful, my ears ringing, and my eyes felt like they were deceiving me. I kept blinking a few times just to check if I wasn't in a horrible nightmare.

Rendani: (chuckling) "You don't have to blink so much. It is me, your one and only love."

Thato: (shaky) "Re... Rendani... why?"

Rendani: "Why?! I will tell you why. It is because I love you and if you concentrate really hard, you might just love me back too."

This is not happening – it just can't be happening.

Thato: “Did you shoot my parents?”

Rendani: “Oh, you mean that cold, rotten bitch along with your cold-hearted father?”

I stared at him with a huge lump in my throat. I anxiously awaited his answer while I dreaded it at the same time. He gave me such an evil look, with blood-shot eyes. His eyes were immediately filled with hatred.

Rendani: “If you must know, I had them shot – both of them. It was rather difficult at first getting to them, but when you have the right amount of money, you can get the job done. You might actually be amazed how many people would betray those they know for a mere few hundred grand.”

But how could Rendani do this to me? To my family? I felt the tears building up from the pit of my

stomach.

Thato: "Are they dead?"

Rendani: "Well, I hope so. Word is that your dear Vivian was shot in the head. That shot was aimed right at Gringo, but she took the bait. Your father on the other hand was shot three times. I hope they are both dead, though."

I felt like my whole head was spinning, like I was losing control of my entire body. I saw everything spin around, including Rendani. To top it all off I was still tied up, on my knees on the cold floor. I nearly fell over to the side, but Rendani chose to hold me with his cold-blooded killer hands. He is so evil, I have no idea how he managed to fool us all like this.

My Mam'V is dead, while my father could be dead too. Why the fuck is this happening to me?! Is this the danger Kgabo and Nana were warning me

about?! They can see everything, so surely they could have seen this coming, but why didn't they tell me?! I don't know what to do right now. I saw Rendani in front of me and even though I felt like ripping out his throat, I couldn't since I was tied up.

Rendani: "Don't worry, baby. I will take good care of you. I promise."

I felt my body give in as I slowly closed my eyes and drifted away.

Kg

Everything is such a fucked up mess. How can we all be so blindsided by all this? Had I seen all the signs I could have done something. Only now I remember my TT, why did I have to go through all that fucked up mess of remembering her at a time when I even fucked Anastacia?! How do I even

forgive myself for all this?!

I vowed to protect her and now she has become a victim of my enemies. I swear on my life, the moment I find the motherfucker who kidnapped my wife, I will make sure it ends in blood spilled and I will leave no stone unturned! As I lay in my bed after my surgery, Mulalo walked in looking rather dreadful.

Mulalo: "Wolfe."

Kg: (frowning) "What is it? Please tell me you have good news."

Mulalo: (sigh) "I come bearing awful news."

I don't like the sound of that.

Kg: "Tell me."

Mulalo: "Vivian didn't make it. She died on the spot."

I felt my rage rise up from within me. What the fuck?!

Kg: "And G?"

Mulalo: "He is in ICU. They managed to remove the bullets, but he is in a coma."

Kg: "What about Rami?"

Mulalo: "She is stable, just in shock."

I can't lie here and mope while Thato is missing. I have to find the motherfucker who did this as soon as possible.

Mulalo: "I don't like what's happening, Wolfe. Seems like this was an inside job."

Kg: "Are you suspecting who I am?"

Mulalo: (nodding) "This is most definitely something Rendani would do. I managed to get my IT guy to trace the cars used from the footage. He paid someone to wipe it, but we managed to retrieve it. Smally and Biggie are on their way to the warehouse with two of the guys who were hired by Rendani."

Kg: (clenching fist) "I see."

Mulalo: "There's more."

Kg: "Yes?"

Mulalo: "It seems as if Rendani was not the only one who was involved in this."

Kg: "Then who else is behind all this?"

Mulalo: "My father and your father."

Kg: (wide eyed) "What?! No!"

Mulalo: "I'm afraid so. Romeo came to see Anastacia soon after she was admitted here. She might give us answers before I go sort out those two guys."

Kg: "Okay, but I am coming with you."

Mulalo: (shocked) "You are injured. You have just had surgery."

Kg: “Kg: “Shark, I can’t sit around all day knowing my wife is somewhere out there with your sick brother. I have to do something.”

I can see that something isn’t right with him. I think he has feelings for Thato or something, but I don’t blame him. She is such a rare gem, hence I also fell for her. I truly love her and I will fight for her every step of the way.

Mulalo: “Okay. I will meet you outside.”

He left my room while I popped a few pain killers and got out of my bed. I changed into my suit, and headed out.

Kg: “Let’s go check on Rami first.”

Mulalo nodded and followed me to her ward. When

we got there her eyes were swollen and she looks like she had been crying all day. Fortunately Thendo was by her side.

Kg: "Rami..."

Rami: (crying) "Kg. Please tell me you'll find her and that fucking killer, please."

Kg: "I swear on my life."

Mulalo: "Thendo, look after her. We will be back soon."

Thendo nodded as he consoled Rami. This is just fucked up, it is even worse than a normal funeral. I proceeded to Gringo's room and found him hooked to all kinds of machines. As I was about to enter with Mulalo, one of the nurses stopped us.

Nurse: "Excuse me, you cannot just barge in here. Are you family?"

I am usually not a rude person at all, but today, she chose to pick on the wrong person.

Kg: (frowning) "Hey, wena (you). Ska ntlwaela masepa (Don't come here with shit)! That is my father in law and wena (you) you have the guts to talk to us like that. Entlek (Actually) fuck off!"

She moved out of the way hastily without saying a word. Mulalo also shot her a deadly look. As we proceeded to his bed, I felt like I was about to cry. Now everything makes sense, how I was made to meet this amazing man. He has been more than a father to me in just a short space of time, than my own father ever was in all my 27 years of life.

I couldn't help but shed a tear looking at how helpless he is. Gringo is a big guy, he has always been the protector of the group and now with everything falling apart, those two fuckers chose to use it to their advantage.

Kg: "G, I will make sure they pay for this – they will all pay for this. Mark my words. When I come back I would like to officially ask for your daughter's hand in marriage. Please survive so you can be there to witness the birth of our children. I love you, G."

I let go of his hand and slowly proceeded out of the room. As I was about to walk out, Nana appeared looked really drained and heart-wrenched. She gave me one look and walked towards me. She held both my hands and looked up to me since I am quite tall.

Nana: "Kg, you do know that all your life you were never Wolfe, but right now comes the toughest test yet. You need to fight with all you have and get your

wife back. Wolfe needs to come out right now – not Kg. Go deal with those two fuckers you caught first and then come deal with Anastacia. She has all the answers you need in terms of what happened to you. Act fast before shit happens.”

I have known Nana for a very short while and she has never seemed like a weakling or someone who cries easily. Her son is staring death in the face, so shit is about to go down. We made one last stop to the mortuary, I need to see Vivian. I need to see the damage done to her. As we walked in, they led us to her body and uncovered it. I am not one to fear dead bodies as I have seen a few, but what I saw was just gruesome.

When it is your loved one, it just hits home. Vivian’s whole head was severely swollen, with the bullet stuck right in the forehead and her eyes protruding out of her head. In a way I am glad Gringo is not awake and not able to witness this, otherwise, he

would also not make it. I shed a tear and I saw Mulalo wipe his off quickly.

Kg: "Mulalo, let's go get those three mother-fuckers!"

Mulalo: "Sho."

Chapter Seventy Five

1 Thessalonians 5:15 – "Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else."

Kg

Mulalo drove us to the warehouse, and even though I am in a lot of physical pain, it does not comprehend to the mental and emotional pain I am in. I would rather bear the physical pain, knowing that someone has a lot of explaining to do. I just kept popping pain

killers every time I felt pain.

Mulalo: "O grand (Are you okay)?"

Kg: "Sho Sho. I'll get better. Let's do this."

He nodded as he parked his car in the driveway of the warehouse. As we walked out, Smally and Biggie came to us.

Smally: "Bozza's (Bosses), they are chained as we speak."

Biggie: "We gave them a good beating and took out one eye and a few fingers each."

Mulalo: (nodding) "Good job, boys."

Smally: “Make them suffer for what they did to Bozza and the Queen.”

We both nodded as we walked in. Fuck, Smally and Biggie really euphemized the situation. They didn't just give them a little beating, they made sure that they bleed and suffer. They handcuffed them towards the tables, and they really did take out one eye each, cut off a few toes and fingers. This is going to be fun. I would love to participate, but if I do, I might find myself in hospital again.

Kg: “Shark, this job is yours.”

Mulalo: (nodding) “Well, well, well. If it isn't the two idiots who crashed a whole wedding, killed our Queen, injured a few very important people in the process. Ja, neh. Bafanas (Boys), if I were you, I had better start talking.”

They both look really badly beaten and scared shitless.

Guy1: “Look, Grootman (boss), Mina angazi niks (I know nothing). Ngilethwe ngu lona (This guy brought me on the job).”

Mulalo: (furious) “So, you are selling your friend out so that you can look clean in the process?!”

Guy1: (frightened) “No... No, it’s not like that. Bona (look), I have already lost an eye and a few toes and fingers. I won’t lie to you. I got a call a month ago from my friend over here. He said to me that we had a big job to do and that the guy pays 100k. I had no idea we were going to kidnap a girl in the process.”

Mulalo: “Now we’re getting somewhere. Keep talking.”

Guy1: "That's all I know. I don't even know the guy who hired me. I only knew yesterday that we had to kidnap the girl. My friend is the one who got all the instructions and who knew the boss personally."

He seemed really frightened, but it seems as if he was being truthful.

Guy2: "And then wena (you)? What do they call you?"

Guy1: "Sl... Slender."

Mulalo: "Okay, Slender. Let's talk. Who is the guy that hired you and where is he?"

The guy didn't seem like he wanted to talk. I see he is one of those die hard guys. He kept quiet as Mulalo asked him that, and knowing him he just flips

at the slightest thought of silent treatment.

Mulalo: "Okay, seems to me that you just don't want to speak. So how about I give you a little motivation."

Shark went straight for the torture tools, he took a pair of pliers and didn't hesitate. He forced Slender's mouth open, while the second guy watched in abundant horror. Slender screamed as his teeth were ripped out of his mouth, one by one, and none of us were bothered by the oozing blood, but the second guy started vomiting profusely. I wonder how they can have a conscience and fear at this time, but killed a woman in cold blood.

Mulalo: "Now are you ready to talk?"

Slender: "I... I don't know anything, bozza (boss), I swear."

I didn't see the next move coming. Mulalo took a saw from the tools table, and started cutting Slender's neck off in such acceleration and fury. It made me cringe watching him literally cutting off another man's veins, arteries and bones like that with his bare hands. He didn't even flinch a bit as the blood started squirting out of Slender's neck.

Even when Slender was lifeless he still carried on cutting until his head fell off. I saw the second guy regurgitate, since he had most probably vomited all of his food and water out of his system. There seems to be nothing left from his stomach. Once Shark was done, he gave the second guy one look filled with fury.

Mulalo: (wiping off the blood) "Are you ready to talk now?"

The second guy nodded profusely.

Chapter Seventy Six

Proverbs 20:22 – “Do not say, “I will repay evil”; wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you.”

Rendani

As I stared at my Queen while she was deeply and fast asleep, I can't believe that I finally have her right here before me. She is truly a Godsent and I can't wait to see what more we are going to achieve together. I had this whole plan laid out for the past few months and I am not willing to risk it failing all because of someone useless.

I had Tiger and Romeo at the tip of my fingers. It wasn't difficult to let them get in on the plan, I was about to waste a whole half a year executing the perfect plan, but they both made it much easier for

me. I was about to wake her up to eat, when Tiger and Romeo both stormed in here.

Rendani: "And then Nina (you two)? Who gave you permission to barge in here like that?"

Romeo: (fuming) "Eh, Tiger, kgala mpya e ya gao (Warn this dog of yours)."

Tiger: "Rendani, how many times must I tell you not to speak to your elders like that?"

Rendani: (annoyed) "Say your piece and fuck off."

Romeo: "Mxm, sa tella selo se (This thing is disrespectful)."

Tiger: "We have bigger problems. Shark and Wolfe

are way ahead of us. They have taken Slender and Fresh as hostages. How could you let them out of your sight like that?!”

I suddenly got fearful. How the fuck did they do that? I mean I was with Slender and Fresh not so long ago.

Rendani: “I have no time to waste, Tiger. I have to get Thato out of here before they find me.”

Tiger: “Perhaps we should just let her go. I mean you killed Vivian, and Gringo is in a coma. Once he wakes up we’re all in serious shit.”

He must be out of his fucking mind.

Rendani: “Excuse me?! Leave her?! You must be out of your fucking mind! I am nowhere near ready to give her up. I have to get out of here as in

yesterday.”

Tiger: “You have no shame, Rendani. They will hunt you down and kill you.”

Rendani: “Shame?! You are a fine one to talk. You know that you want her for yourself, and I will be damned if I let you get her!”

Tiger was about to stop me from leaving, but I acted swiftly. I took out my gun from my jeans and I shot them both in the legs. I carried Thato in my arms and I rushed out, leaving them screaming on the floor.

Kg

After Mulalo cut off Slender’s head, we proceeded to go look for Rendani along with the only guy left,

Fresh. Mulalo was driving fast, so I could tell Thato means more to him than I actually thought. Fresh was in a severe state of shock, hence we even offered him a shot of whiskey to calm his ass down. We arrived at an abandoned building. It is a very tall building, now why would Rendani bring my wife here?

Kg: "Eh, Fresh, ke mo teng mo (Is this the place)?"

Fresh: "Y... Yes."

Mulalo: "Let's waste no time, let's go in."

Mulalo and I took both our guns, along with Fresh. Luckily he told us that no one lives in this building, so we had to take the stairs to the top floor. Mulalo and I are both fit, so we have no reason to worry about the long flight of stairs. As we got to the supposed room, Mulalo wasted no time and kicked it open. The both of us were deeply saddened as we

didn't find anyone in there. What alarmed us both the most is that there was a few trails of blood on the floor.

My heart started racing at a million beats per minute, thinking that it could be Thato's blood. Why the fuck would someone shoot an innocent woman?! I felt my blood boiling, as I clenched my fist. I rubbed my left eyebrow and surprisingly Mulalo did the same. I usually do that unaware whenever I am angry. TT always used to tell me that, but now it seems as if Mulalo and I have a few similarities.

Mulalo: "Let's search around the room, maybe we might find something."

I nodded as I put Fresh on the blood stained couch, while Mulalo went to search the bathroom. I saw a plate of food which wasn't so cold, so it tells me that Rendani didn't leave very long ago. As I looked around, I heard Mulalo shouting and slapping

someone.

Mulalo: "Come! Why would you do such a thing, though?!"

Voice: (pleading) Please, please don't hurt me."

I recognize that big, bold voice, as Mulalo dragged him out.

Kg: (infuriated) "Romeo."

Romeo looked like he had lost quite a lot of blood, he was almost turning pale. It seems as if age has finally caught up with him. Now it is time for karma to pay him a visit.

Romeo: (scared) "Please, I have nothing to do with

this – I swear.”

Kg: “Don’t fuck with me, Romeo! First you fucked my wife, and got her pregnant and now you are part of a whole kidnapping that involves my wife!”

Romeo: (weak) “Please....”

He passed out before we could even teach him a lesson. Mulalo checked for his pulse.

Mulalo: “He still has a pulse, but it is very faint. I think we should take him to the house and get Louis to check on him.”

Kg: (nodding) “I like the way you think.”

Mulalo: “What do we do with this guy now? He is

useless to us.”

Kg: “You choose.”

Mulalo wasted no time as he let go of Romeo and walked up to the frightened Fresh.

Mulalo: “This is to make sure that you never ever turn to a life of crime, bro. O lahle masepao (You need to stop that shit).”

Fresh nodded profusely.

Fresh: “Yes. I swear on my mother’s life, I will never do such.”

Mulalo took out a pocket knife and stabbed his other eye, leaving Fresh screaming his lungs out. I didn’t feel sorry for him, instead I dragged him down the flight of stairs, while Mulalo dragged Romeo down.

Romeo was thrown into the boot, while Fresh was thrown onto the back seat. We threw Fresh out at the nearest hospital, as we called Louis. He sounded very devastated, I mean I would also be. Yes, he and Gringo are like brothers, even though they are actually cousins.

They grew up together and have always been two peas in a pod. They would do anything for each other and he was so fond of Vivian, and with her gone now, everything is a filthy mess. Louis told us we would find him at the house along with Nana. After what felt like the longest half and hour of my life, we finally arrived in Northcliffe at Gringo's house. Walking into this house right now is just too bitter-sweet.

I can't imagine Sunday brunch without Vivian's crazy and warm presence. I can't imagine what this would do to her sister, and Rami, oh, people can be so cruel. Mulalo carried Romeo out since I still feel a bit weak.

We found Louis waiting for us and he got the shock of his life when he looked at me.

Louis: (shocked) "Wolfe! You should be in bed by now! Look at you! Let me see that wound."

I felt a bit light-headed and sat down. He wasted no time and pulled up my shirt.

Louis: (furious) "You see now?! You never listen, man. Do you want this wound to become sceptic?!"

Kg: (shaking head) "Eish, Hade (sorry), Doc. Deal with Romeo first, then with me. After that I promise I will behave."

Louis walked up infuriated while he checked on Romeo.

Louis: "Let me get my first aid kit. I'll be right back, just lay him on that couch."

Mulalo did as told, and Nana walked in.

Nana: "Wolfe, you need to take it easy. You have just been shot."

KG: (sigh) "I can't, Nana. My wife is out there."

Nana looked at me and then at Mulalo.

Nana: "Shark, sit. I think it is high time that I address both of you."

Mulalo sat down anxiously.

Nana: "We all know what is going on here. Kg,

Romeo will explain everything to you once he wakes up, but for now, Anastacia holds all the answers you need. Mulalo, you know very well that Thato's heart belongs to Kg, right?"

Mulalo looked down and nodded.

Nana: "I know, you love her deeply, but Olivia won't let you off the hook so easily."

Mulalo: "I am not even sure if the baby is mine."

Nana: "Relax, the child is not yours, but you are the one who has to be strong for both Thato and your brother."

Mulalo: (wide eyed) "How can you expect me to be strong for Rendani when he is the one who kidnapped Thato?"

Nana: “There are so many secrets roaming amongst the both of you of which neither of you are even aware of. When I speak of your brother, I mean Wolfe – not Rendani.”

Mulalo and I stared at each other taken aback. What is she talking about?

Kg: “What do you mean, Nana?”

Nana: “The answers lie with this half dead idiot lying on my son’s expensive couches. Look at each other, I am even amazed you didn’t connect the dots.

Thato even beat you to it. She saw the resemblance between you two long ago. You are brothers, blood brothers, in fact. Mulalo, you are not a Nembilwi – you have never been. I know, all your life you have been asking yourself why you were the only different one amongst your other brothers.

You and your father never even got along, you have always been a lot stronger than him. Your whole life story is known by Romeo, give him time to recover, ask him anything you want and then – kill him. Don't even waste another breath – kill him."

I don't know how to feel about this, this is just too much to take in. Mulalo and I are actually brothers? How the fuck is this possible?

Mulalo: "Why didn't you tell me, Nana?"

Nana: "Some things aren't meant to be told – you are meant to find your own path here on earth. It wasn't my place to tell you – at least not at that time. Now everything hangs in the balance, secrets are going to be revealed, blood will be spilled and some happiness will be short lived. Embrace each other while you still have the time. Excuse me while I got

freshen up. The Letswalo's will be here soon.”

She left us staring at each other deep in thought.
How evil is my father, really?

Chapter Seventy Seven

Matthew 26:52-54 – “Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”

Kg

Louis gave me a stern warning and told me that I need to relax, otherwise I won't endure another

shooting. I have to rest, but that doesn't mean I can't let people pay for what they did. Romeo was given a blood transfusion and Louis had to take the bullet out right here at home. We can't risk taking him to the hospital, besides, his days are numbered. I just need him to wake up so that I can send him to hell myself. I must have passed out on the couch, because I woke up with Mulalo staring at me from right across the couch.

Mulalo: "Sho, Wolfe. You're finally awake."

Kg: "Sho, Shark. Did I miss anything?"

Mulalo: "Nah, I made you some soup."

Kg: (chuckling) "Dude, you made a grown man like me soup?"

Mulalo: (chuckling) “My mother – Constance used to make it for me whenever I was unwell. It is very good, you will be up and running in a few days.”

I can see this bombshell Nana dropped on us isn't treating him very well. He has a lot of doubts and even more questions, as do I.

Kg: “Do you want to talk about it?”

Mulalo: (sigh) “Well, I don't know.”

It's funny how I never noticed the resemblance between us, really. We do a lot of things the same way.

Kg: “Well, why are you doubting your mom being your mom?”

Mulalo: “I have been thinking while you were asleep.

Believe me, I am actually more relieved than shocked that you and I are brothers. I just have so many questions, you know. Like is Tiger my father, is Constance my mother, and all that.”

Honestly, I have the same questions too. I ask myself if Romeo is indeed my own father, with the shit he has put me through. I lost TT all because of him. Speaking of which, I need to get that bitch Anastacia to tell me the truth.

Kg: “I get you, but I think Romeo will be able to tell us what is what as soon as his ass wakes up. In the mean time, I think we should get Anastacia. Since I can’t move around much, she should be brought to us.”

Mulalo: (chuckling) “I see great minds think alike. I already had Smally get her from the hospital. They are on their way as we speak.”

I couldn't help but chuckle as well. I see we both think alike. It is almost as if we are twins.

Kg: "Great minds think alike indeed."

Mulalo: (laughing) "Let me get myself a glass of whiskey in the mean time, while we wait for Smally."

Kg: "Ntshelle le nna kao kopa (Please pour me some as well)."

Mulalo: "No, you are sick, remember?"

Kg: "Just a tot fela (only)."

Mulalo: "Okay, only because I want you to be happy when Thato comes back."

He said that with a smile that seemed genuine, but I think it is high time I address the issue now.

Kg: “On that note, Shark, I think – “

Mulalo: (Interrupting) “Don’t worry, Wolfe. I already knew that her heart wasn’t mine when we met. There was just something about her that screamed broken, and when she told me what she went through after the kidnapping and all, I just knew she wasn’t mine. I won’t lie – I love her, believe me I do. But I also love her enough to let her be happy with the one she loves. I honestly messed up with Olivia by marrying her, and now I just don’t know how to get out of it.”

This thing with him and Olivia sounds pretty deep. I can only hope he finds happiness and closure. But I am glad he spoke frankly about Thato and his

feelings. I wouldn't want us to have secrets amongst us in the long run.

Kg: "Mulalo, I appreciate your honesty, really. In the short time I have known you, I always used to ask myself how come Tiger fathered such a good guy like you. I mean he lacks morals, principles and everything good."

We both just had to laugh.

Mulalo: "Well, wait until we find him. He proposed to Thato, asking her to be his mistress."

Kg: (Frowning) "What the fuck?!"

Mulalo: "I know, he is obsessed with her just like Rendani, but I just hope we find her in due time. This will be a huge set back for her, especially since she

endured that shit when Sonto had her kidnapped.”

Wait a minute. The time we tortured Sonto and Sophie, she wanted to say something and then Romeo stopped her from speaking further. Thato explained everything that happened to her during the kidnapping; if I recall correctly she mentioned Sonto forcefully aborting her child. My eyes grew wider as I thought of what that actually meant.

Mulalo: “Wolfe. Are you okay?”

Kg: (hyperventilating) “Thato... Did she ever tell you what happened during the kidnapping after I got shot?”

Mulalo: “Oh, yes. She said that Sonto took her mother’s money from her and even aborted her unborn child. She’s sick as fuck, I don’t even know why Gringo didn’t bury her alive just like Glenda.”

Now everything came rushing back to me. The doctor did say that at times when my memory comes back, I would get a bit dizzy my eyes would feel painful, hence I would get migraines every now and then. At times I would be so insomniac, it is just horrible. Fuck, I remember that day clearly now, Thato and I were on our way to her house for the lobola negotiations. I even remember the dress she was dressed in. Out of nowhere, a car came and crashed into mine and I got shot. I remember vividly what happened, but I saw her being dragged away and everything became dark afterwards.

I woke up in the hospital, weeks later, only to have forgotten all those memories. Sonto killed my child?! MY child?! Thato went through all that without me. Where the fuck was I when she was screaming out in pain as Sonto killed our child?! Fuck this hurts even more than the moment I remembered everything.

Tears were streaming down my face without me even realizing that I was actually crying. I feel so hopeless, I wasn't there to hold her hand, to console her and to ensure that everything was going to be okay. Instead, everything turned out to be a lie – my whole life in fact. Romeo made me believe I was a ruthless, cold-hearted man, married to Anastacia. How the fuck did he manage that?

Mulalo: "Wolfe, are you okay?"

Kg: "Now it makes sense, Mulalo. Everything makes sense now and I didn't know anything. I am such a failure, I wasn't there for my wife when she lost our child at the hands of her own mother. Someone is going to die tonight."

Mulalo nodded with his clenched fist and hardened face as Smally walked in dragging Anastacia into the

house. We normally don't question and torture people in this house, and we would like to keep it like that. Mam'V's memory has to be kept alive – she never wanted anyone to bleed on her white fur carpets and white couches.

Rendani, Romeo and Tiger and everyone involved will sing even in death at how cruel their own deaths were. They just killed the wrong woman. Anastacia looked so scared, but it is high time. This bitch is so disrespectful, she isn't even my type. I can't believe I allowed my precious dick to get into those fake thighs.

Kg: "Ja, Anastacia. We meet again."

Anastacia: (frightened) "Please, Kg. I don't know anything."

Kg: "Sit."

She sat down anxiously looking around.

Kg: "If you comply, I might just let you go."

Anastacia nodded profusely.

Mulalo: "Where did you find her, Smally?"

Smally: "We found her already trying to run away from the hospital. She was on her way to Rockville."

Kg: (frowning) "Well, Anastacia, do you have anything you would like to confess?"

Anastacia: (shaking her head) "No... No. I have nothing to hide."

Mulalo: "Then why were you trying run away to Rockville?"

Anastacia: "There is nothing left for me here. I thought that it was high time I went back home."

KG: (chuckling) "Ana, you know me very well, don't you? You remember that night I rejected you and you went and ran your mouth about me to everyone in Rockville? Do you remember what I said to you?"

Ana: (nervous) "Ye... yes."

Kg: "I don't make empty threats, Ana. I told you that if you ever pulled such a stunt again that I would skin you alive. Now look where we are – my wife is missing, and I almost became your husband."

Mulalo: "I think that deserves a mean punishment."

Kg: "I second that."

Anastacia: "Please... Please I know nothing."

Kg: "Are you ready to tell me what actually happened to me? Tell me how I ended up with you instead of Thato."

Anastacia: (nervously) I... It was Romeo's plan – all of it. He said you woke up and couldn't remember anything, and that is when he called me. He offered me good money to be your woman, and take care of you. So since you didn't even want to touch me, he suggested I get pregnant, so we fucked a few times and I fell pregnant. We both knew that a baby is something you wouldn't give up on, so we did that. He made me give you memory suppressants, which he got from a doctor back in Soweto. They are expensive, but they did the trick. Whenever you would get a breakthrough in terms of Thato, I had to give you that medicine."

How evil can a person be? I found myself being consumed with rage. I got up and charged at her. I grabbed her throat with both my hands, as I tried to squeeze the life out of her. At that moment, no one mattered, but Thato. Ana deserves to die.

Mulalo: “Kg! Wolfe! No!”

I found myself back on earth again as I let go of her. She dropped on the floor, coughing as she tried to catch her breath.

Kg: “What do you know about Mulalo and I being brothers?”

Anastacia: (shocked) “I know nothing of the sort, I swear. The only thing I am guilty of was keeping you away from Thato and sleeping with your father. I never meant to hurt you, I just wanted you to be

mine and mine only.”

I gave her one look and she instantly made me sick. To think I was sleeping next to this thing every night sickens me. I waited no further, as I grabbed her neck and snapped it in the blink of an eye. Just like that Anastacia was gone.

Chapter Seventy Eight

2 Corinthians-1:11 – “Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.”

A few days later

Kg

Yes, I know, I shouldn't have killed Anastacia just like

that, but to be honest, she was not going to be useful enough. I am glad she is just gone, because the only person who holds the truth like Nana said, is Romeo. He has been out for a few days, and I have had enough with being in the dark about Mulalo and I's resemblance. It is time for the truth to come out.

To make matters worse, Gringo has been unconscious ever since the shooting, and is still in a coma. We have been dreading burying Mam'V without his presence, but we can't have her in the mortuary for weeks on end as we don't know when Gringo will wake up.

Letswalos also believe that it is time to bury her, as it is unnatural to leave her cold in that mortuary for so long. So, we have agreed to bury her tomorrow, and even with Thato and Gringo not present, it breaks my heart that we won't have the desired funeral. Ever since the shooting, we have tightened security; Rami has been living here and pretty much

all of us have been here. Thendo has been right by Rami's side ever since, as she finds it hard to sleep. She refuses to get any therapeutic help, which is really stressful as she was supposed to have been back at school two days ago.

We couldn't even go on the family trip Gringo had organized for all of us; I mean how nice is that guy – I was not his blood son, yet he treated me like one. I am now so fed up with Romeo being unconscious for so long, that I have decided to get Louis to try something on him to speed up the process. I haven't seen my wife ever since that horrific day of my wedding, and I really need her to be okay.

Nana keeps saying she is okay – for now, but knowing that she is in the hands of that motherfucker, does not put my mind at ease. Luckily Mulalo has been by my side and I must say, I have recovered really well. Perhaps I should stay away from Guns since I get shot a lot. The

migraines have been coming and going, but Louis says it will take time for my system to wean itself off the pills Romeo and Ana used to feed me.

Kg: “Louis, can’t you try anything? I mean for all we know this fucker could be pretending to be unconscious.”

Louis: “Well, I could try some shock therapy, but if it fails, it could have some serious repercussions, such as brain damage.”

Kg: “I don’t care, Louis. Do what you have to do.”

Louis nodded as he went to fetch his equipment. It is high time that we got the answers we need. Smally and Biggie carried the unconscious Romeo down to the lounge, while he had his drips connected to him. This fucker must be faking or else his ancestors must really love him. Along with

Nana, came Rami, Rami's sobbing Mother, accompanied by her supportive husband, along with Rami's brother, Kgabo. I am guessing they are hoping Romeo would tell us the truth, more especially as to why they had to kill Vivian.

Louis set up everything as we sat down and anxiously waited. Looking at him, I feel absolutely nothing – no remorse whatsoever. All I feel is rage and deep seethed hatred for the man I once called my father. There is no way a father could ever do such to his own son. When I introduced Thato to him, I generally hoped that he would change his mind about me joining the gang. Now I feel so sorry for Tumisho, having to grow up such a spoilt brat all because of this guy.

Louis got his machine ready, he charged it and put both those body shock devices on Romeo's chest. As soon as they met with his bare chest, we all saw Romeo's body shake and move up and down a bit,

much like on tv whenever they try and revive someone. After the first time, there was still no response, so Louis increased the voltage and tried again. After the second time, it still didn't work.

Kgabo: "Louis, put it on maximum voltage. He needs to wake up now."

I panicked a bit as he said that. Was he seeing something that we didn't see? Is Thato in even more danger? I swear, when I find Rendani I will make him chew his own balls after I burn them off him. Louis hesitated a bit, but did as told. After he increased the voltage, Romeo almost jumped up, gasping for air.

Romeo: (gasping) "Whe... where am I?"

Finally, the bitch is awake.

He looked around and saw us and became a little bit startled. If he is scared, he should put himself in my wife's shoes and imagine how she feels right now.

Kg: "Hi, Papa (Dad). Or should I say Romeo?"

Romeo: (frightened) "Kgaugelo, son, how on earth did I get here? The last thing I remember was – "

Kg: (interrupting) "Was when you let Rendani walk away with my wife, right?!"

I felt my skin burning with rage.

Romeo: (softly) "It's not like that. I... I tried to warn him, I tried to tell him to let her go, because you were onto us – him."

Kg: "Tell me, Romeo, what on earth were you planning to do with us? Who initiated the plan?"

What is Rendani's plan with Thato?"

Romeo: "Please... I don't know much, okay. I was just infuriated after being humiliated by Gringo. I just wanted to teach him a little lesson, but Tiger had other ideas."

Mulalo: "Keep going."

Romeo: "He... he said we should kill him, but I refused. I mean, you know me, Kg, I could never be able to go against a big guy like Gringo. And besides, it wouldn't have been easy to get to him since he has such tight security detail."

Mulalo: "Then how did you do it?"

Romeo: (sigh) "Tony, the accountant was furious that he got kicked out of the gang as well, so since

he had some money stashed away – he managed to bribe one of the guards.”

Mulalo and I both looked at each other and thought for a second. The only guards who could be bribed like that as they are literally closest to the gang is either Biggie or Smally. We then turned our attention towards the two of them. Smally is someone very transparent – what you see is what you get. He has been with Gringo for years and would never do such a thing to us. Biggie on the other hand, looked like he was about to piss himself.

Kg: “Care to explain, Biggie?”

Biggie: (panciking) “Look, Bozza, I had to do it. My mom, she needed a heart transplant and you know how expensive private hospitals are.”

Smally gave him one dirty look and became

immediately angered,

Smally: (angry) "You had the boss shot and his wife killed?! You had his wife kidnapped?! Right under our noses?!"

Biggie: "Look, it is nothing personal, okay. Besides, no one told me that Bozza would get hurt and that someone would die."

Kg: "I don't have time for this bullshit, Smally, take him away please."

Smally: "With pleasure, bozza. (To Biggie) A re vaye wena (Let's go you)."

Biggie was dragged out of the house begging and screaming. Smally is actually huge while Biggie is not so big. I am honestly tired of traitors.

Kg: "Now, carry on."

Romeo: "Well, Rendani managed to hack into the security cameras and distract the security detail. Biggie was instructed to give them all coffee and slip sleeping pills into their drinks. It didn't take them very long since the pills are quite strong and before we knew it –they were out. So, that is when the two guys stormed in and did the job for Rendani. They couldn't take Biggie with as he had to look like he was on your team."

This motherfucker.

Kg: "SO, bjanong (now), what is Rendani's role in all this? What are his plans with Thato?"

Romeo: "He... he says he loves her and wants her to be his wife. All I know that Tiger wanted her as well,

but Rendani beat him to it. He took her and I don't know where to, believe me."

This means that Rendani is out of the country, my question is how did he get it right to fly out right under our noses?

Kg: "So, Rendani must be working with someone who knows us very well."

Romeo: "I swear, Kgaugelo, I know nothing. I wouldn't lie to you when my own life hangs in the balance. My only biggest regret is what I did to you with Anastacia, and now look where we are. Please forgive me son."

Kg: "Too late for that now. Now, tell us exactly why Mulalo and I look so familiar."

I saw him swallow hard and I knew that big news was coming. What is so big that he managed to hide from us for so long?

Chapter Seventy Nine

Deutorony 24:16 – “Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin.”

Kg

I looked at this bastard in front of me and swore to myself; if he doesn't tell me the truth, I will rip off his limbs one by one. Aunt Vivian will have to forgive me on this one – he needs to pay for his actions.

Kg: “Speak!”

Romeo: (frightened) "Okay, your mother, was pregnant with twins. So, when she gave birth there were a lot of complications; I am not sure what kind of complications, but what I can tell you is that you and Mulalo are twins."

Everyone was so shocked that we just had to gasp. I kind of expected it, but it just doesn't make any sense. I mean Mulalo is older than me, isn't he?

Mulalo: "That's not possible. I am older than Wolfe."

Kgabo: "I'm afraid it is true."

I can't believe it, so our whole lives were based on a lie and we both were pulled away from each other. They robbed us from being together?!

Kg: "So, how did I end up with you and Mulalo with

Tiger and Constance?”

Romeo: “Tiger is actually your uncle – distant uncle of some sort. He is also from a royal family, but I don’t know the whole story as to how it came about that the two of you be separated from each other. All I know is that your mother died knowing that the other baby didn’t make it – of which it is you – Mulalo.”

But this is just too confusing. I mean, Mama told me about the baby she lost but didn’t mention that I was a twin. All she said was that the baby was buried back home. We hardly went back home because Mama and her sister hardly got along.

Mulalo: “You mean to tell us that you don’t know anything more and that that is all you fucking know?!”

Romeo: “Yes, I swear. That is all I know. I raised you – Kg, even though biologically you weren’t my own. But I raised you.”

So if Romeo isn’t our father and Tiger isn’t our father either, who is?

Kg: “Then who is my father?”

Romeo: “That question can only be answered by Tiger. I swear, I know nothing.”

Mulalo: “What about Constance? Does she know?”

Romeo: “Yes, she has known all along. She said Tiger came home and said that his cousin died during childbirth and that you had no one else to take care of you. His royal family knew of you hence you were no secret. I swear, that is all I

know.”

I can't believe people can actually be so cruel to hide such things from us. They decided to play God with our lives just like that.

Kg: “Now, Romeo, why did you let Thato go through what she did? Why couldn't you just let me be happy?”

I felt the tears building up again as soon as I thought of Thato losing our precious baby all over again. I have been having sleepless nights ever since finding that out. It wasn't fair at all especially since she had to go through that.

Romeo: “I... I'm sorry, son. I just did it out of greed. I saw you had lost your memory and jumped at the chance. I knew that I just had to do it otherwise you would just go back to being the weakling Thato

turned you into. Please forgive me, son. Give me another chance, I promise I can change for the better.”

This fucker thinks I am insane, really. How can I forgive such? He knew what Sonto was doing to my wife and child and he allowed her to continue with it. I am not a violent person by nature, but all of this is just turning me into a violent person. I have failed my wife, I failed my unborn child. If anything then I guess I am a weakling.

Kg: “Smally, take him away and make sure he dies a slow, painful death. Bury him alive or drown him alive if you have to.”

Smally: “Sho, bozza.”

Romeo: (frightened) “Please, Kgaugelo! I am begging you. Please, don’t do this!”

We all watched as Smally took him away. I made a vow ever since Thato went missing that everyone who had a hand in her disappearance, and anyone who had a hand in Vivian's death, would follow suit. They should die a slow, painful death. I was very lenient with Anastacia, but from now on, everyone responsible will die a very slow, agonizing death.

Rendani

I have had to run and never look back. Thank goodness my contacts which I actually took from Gringo came through for me. I managed to get myself a quick flight out of South Africa, and even if Kg finds out where I am – they can't touch me. Luigi is officially done with the Groens.

Rendani is in the building now and it is time for me to make my mark. We have been here for a few days

and Thato has been out of it ever since. Apparently she was seriously dehydrated and suffered severe shock, but with Luigi's medical team, she is covered right here in his house. I found him eating breakfast along with his wife downstairs and I decided to join them.

Rendani: "Luigi, Mrs. Martinelli."

Luigi: "Rendani, you have been here long now. When are we going to discuss business?"

Rendani: "What's the rush, Luigi? I mean you agreed to be there for me provided I give you all Gringo's contacts. Besides, the South African cartel is basically yours now since he and his wife is dead. No one can touch you with all your power and money."

I thought Luigi would be very impressed, but instead

he looked rather annoyed.

Luigi: “Rendani, you come here in middle of night with girl you claim is wife; you sleep in my house, eat my food, pay no rent, no income. I need money; no money – no stay.”

Luigi is really about to piss me off, I mean I gave him Gringo and Vivian on a silver platter and now he is acting like I didn't do shit for him.

Rendani: (annoyed) “Luigi, I gave you the business, why are you acting like I am living off you for free?”

Luigi: “Wolfe blocked all my access to South Africa. I had my guys ready with my supply; on the plane and even shipped. Do you know what he did? He had my guys arrested! The cops were waiting for them right there and even now they are still detained!”

Shit, Kg is on a mission to stop me. But he won't find Thato either way.

Luigi: "Fix it before I let him know you brought his wife to Italy."

Fuck, just when I thought that everything was falling into place, another setback. I had to pay Luigi for all his efforts and I am running out of money. I have to think of something fast if I want to stay here and live a comfortable life. Luigi got up and removed himself from the table. Mxm, fat fuck. I was left with Luigi's wife Selena.

Selena: (smiling) "Don't worry, Rendani. All will be well. I will put in good word for you. Just don't mess it up again."

Rendani: (nodding) "I would really appreciate that,

Selena.”

Selena: “Let me go give that beautiful girl you brought with you some soup. It is high time she woke up.”

Selena got up and went upstairs to Thato’s room. The sooner I get married to her, the better. I can’t wait any longer now.

Thato

Petunia: “Thato, Ngwanake (my child). Be strong, please. The worst is almost over. You will be reunited with your husband again and you will be saved by someone you least expect. Hang in there and never forget to pray.”

I got up in such a huge fright, and only realized that it

was just a dream. I felt my head a bit heavy, my eyes a bit drowsy, and my lips extremely dry. I looked around the room and didn't even recognize the room itself. This room is so beautiful, full of white colours everywhere.

It just reminds me of Mam'V's house. As I was trying to scan the room, an unfamiliar white woman walked in. She looks like she is in her mid-50's or so, with really dark, black hair and full eyebrows. Her face is so gorgeous, with flawless skin, she reminds me of Nairobi from the money heist.

Selena: (smiling) "Hello, Thato. My name is Selena Martinelli."

I don't even recognize that name, but that surname sounds so familiar. I have heard it before. I am too distraught to remember where I heard it from.

Thato: (frightened) "Where am I?"

Selena: "Don't worry, I won't bite. I just came to bring you some soup."

I don't know this woman, but the amazing aroma of the soup brings music to my nostrils. I stared at the big plate of soup in front of me, and my stomach growled instantly. I gladly took the plate of soup and dug in. I didn't even realize how hungry I was until some of it dripped on my shirt. I looked at myself and realized I was still dressed in my bridesmaid dress. Oh, fuck, Rendani took me! What if he sold me to become a slave or something?! I immediately paused in fear as I looked at this woman in front of me.

Selena: (frowning) "Is something wrong, dear?"

Thato: (teary) "Where am I?"

Selena: “You are in Italy, my dear. You were so out of it, it has been nearly a week. Apparently you were involved in an accident of some sort and that’s when Rendani brought you here.”

I suddenly panicked as I placed the bowl of soup on the bedside. This can’t be happening. Who the fuck do I know in Italy and how will I get home? Is my mom okay? Oh, Mam’V! Is she really dead?! Rami must be devastated. I don’t even have a phone or anything with me. How will Kg find me? Why am I in such a mess, oh, lord.

Thato: (crying) “You don’t understand, Selena. Rendani is not my husband, he kidnapped me, okay. My real husband is Kg. He is in South Africa – you have to help me.”

Selena gave me one sad look, like she really took me

seriously. She looked at me with pain in her eyes and I actually thought she would help me, but then Rendani barged into the room and all my hopes were crushed in an instant.

Rendani: (smiling) "Sorry to interrupt, Selena. Is everything okay, here?"

Selena: (fake smile) "Yes, yes, everything okay. See you later, dear. After eating your soup, you can go take a shower. Your clothes will be here laid out for you."

She gave me one saddened look with a fake smile and left. I mean what the fuck? I looked at Rendani and suddenly remembered that unfateful day. How dare he kidnap me?

Rendani: (Smiling) "My wife."

He tried getting closer to me, but I cringed at the thought and jumped.

Thato: "Don't you dare come near me!"

Rendnai: "Relax, Thato. I won't hurt you – I could never hurt you."

Thato: "You kidnapped me, Rendani! Who in their right mind does that?! What are you planning on doing with me?! Feeding me to the lions and dogs?! Turning me into a prostitute?!"

Rendani: (sigh) "I love you, Tee. Why can't you see that? I have loved you ever since the moment I saw you."

This guy is seriously obsessed with me. I have seen some shows about obsession, it just ends in tears

and mostly in blood.

Rendani: "I will never give up on you, Thato. You are mine and will forever be mine. I will be waiting for you downstairs."

He looked at me with a smile and left. How the fuck does he expect me to be happy when he is literally keeping me here against my will?

Chapter Eighty

Ezekiel 18:20 – "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."

Kg

Everything has been just stressful and upsetting. Gringo is still in a comatose state, despite us praying and lighting candles in his ward, Mulalo has been so down, since he feels like everything in his life has been an absolute lie. Even Connie confirmed what Romeo said to us. He has been such a mess, I feel that it is time for me to lighten his mood and be there for him.

Today is Vivian's funeral, and it has been so tough without Gringo's presence. Vivian simply instructed her lawyer that should she die we had to bury her as soon as possible. It is really disheartening, but what can we do? We were all instructed by Vivian in a letter addressed to all her loved ones that we should not even be dressed in black – we should rather be dressed in her favourite colour which is white.

Everyone is sad, but out of respect for her wishes, we chose to give her one memorable sendoff.

Before the funeral, we all stopped by the ICU, even though the nurses are tired of us, we went anyway, as a group. All of us are dressed in expensively white clothes, just as Vivian would wish. We found Gringo still unconscious, but decided to speak to him. We let Nana do the honours as the mother.

Nana: "David, my seun, di's ek, jou ma (it's me, your mother). Ons gaan jou vrou vandag begrawe (We are going to bury your wife today). Wees net sterk, my seun (Just be strong, my son). Know that she will always be with you in spirit. You and her were two peas in a pod, and I doubt you will survive this heavy blow to your heart, but just try please."

She said a heartfelt prayer and we all proceeded to the gravesite. A few days ago, Nana and Kgabo went to the mortuary and cleansed her body, so that Vivian would leave earth in peace, without doubt and worry. It is just sad, and reminds me about the painful memory of my mother's funeral. How I wish

Mulalo got a chance to know her kind heart and got to feel her gentle touch and warm hugs.

I loved my mother, and I know she is looking down on me even now. When we all looked at Vivian's body in that casket one last time, it looked like she was smiling – despite the bullet hole through her head. Call me crazy, but it feels like she is really at peace. I am so amazed that so many people came from Rockville and even adhered to the dresscode. They all came dressed in white, and we all have a white lilly in our hands, as a symbol of peace. I will have peace in my heart the day I punish those who did this to us.

Priest: "We are gathered here today, to say goodbye to one of our angels. She was an angel even in Rockville, she was an angel. Vivian Letswalo-Groen was a very loveable and loving person. Being childless herself, she really loved everyone around her. She had that spirit that would just calm a

person down even with her crazy personality. She was truly a Godsent, and she served her purpose just as all of us came here on earth to do. Ecclesiastes 3 says: "Earth to Earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

The lord says from dust we arose and to dust we shall return. Death and bereavement is never pleasant to the soul nor the body, for one can end up being emotionally depressed and physically captive from all the pain one endures from all the hurt. Take heed in the following verses: "1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 'So will it be the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; and it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.'"

Romans 14:8 – "If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." For God promises us in

the book of Revelation that he will wipe every tear from our eyes as he promises us everlasting life. Take pride in the joyous moments you have shared with Vivian, for God knows best. Life is only lend to us, for we need to repay the Lord with everlasting, spiritual life.”

The Priest prayed one last time and asked us all to come and throw some soil into the ground. Rami’s mom started wailing as soon as the casket dropped into the grave. Her crying pierced my heart so deeply, as I also was very fond of Vivian. I can only imagine losing your only sister. Vivian was no saint, but she didn’t deserve a bullet through her skull. As the men covered her grave, it brought such rage to me thinking that the person who initiated all this has my one and only treasure – Thato.

How do we move on with life and rejoice knowing very well she is out there somewhere and we don’t know if she is okay or not? After everything, we

released a few doves and made our way back to Northcliffe. We even invited everyone from Rockville to come and enjoy the feast with us. The yard is way too big anyway. These white people from around here don't like noise, but today – it is all about Vivian.

As we stood there, Mrs. Letswalo, Rami's mom went upstairs to sleep and Rami also didn't feel very well. I am so glad Thendo has been her rock and pillar. People were enjoying themselves, with cocktails, wine and lots of food and great music, just as Viv would have wanted it. As we watched them enjoy themselves, I took this as an opportunity to speak to my newly found twin brother, Mulalo.

Kg: "O grand (Are you okay)?"

Mulalo: "Ja, sho. Wena (You)?"

I see ever since he heard the news that we were related, he has been doubting and questioning a lot of things. He has even stopped speaking in Venda, and it is really painful to see him wash off years of existence, and try to be someone who don't even know or even recognize in the mirror.

Kg: "Look Mulalo, I know you are as confused as I am, but truly speaking I am actually glad to have found a brother in someone like you. You are one of a kind, a man of true stature, and your nature actually reminds me of my – our mother."

Mulalo: (softly) "What was she like, Wolfe?"

Kg: (smiling) "She was such a beautiful soul, Shark. I wish you had met her. She was very humble, soft-spoken, but once she got angry, she would explode, much like you. You took a lot of her personality traits and she was also intelligent just like you and I."

We both chuckled.

Mulalo: "Do you perhaps have some of her pictures?"

Kg: "I was hoping you would ask. I compiled a digital album of all her hard copy photos. I was a bit young when she passed on, but I surely remember quite a lot."

I took out my phone and logged into my Cloud. Mulalo smiled and wiped a few tears off his face as he looked at our mother's pictures. I am actually glad that for once in my life I can relate to someone who gets me, someone who is actually a part of me.

Mulalo: "She was really beautiful."

Kg: "I mean, you should have known that you never

got your looks from Tiger, bra.”

We both laughed as we enjoyed our whiskey. Now I see the similarities, how we unwittingly wipe our glasses before we pour in it; how we smell our drinks before we have them. I am quite glad that I actually have someone I can share my fears and thoughts with without being judged.

Mulalo: “Can I tell you something, Kg?”

Kg: ‘Shoot.’”

Mulalo: “For the first time in my life, I actually feel like I belong and it scares the shit out of me. Yes, Tiger and Constance have never made me feel weird or unloved, but I never felt a sense of belonging, you know? The universe has a strange way of bringing people together, and all I can say is that you are someone I always envisioned in a brother.”

Mulalo gives me such peace of mind. I have never even felt an ounce of what I feel for Mulalo for Tumisho. We just never clicked and that just hurt.

Kg: "I don't know, but I feel like going to see Gringo."

Mulalo: "Let's go. We can tell him all about our newly found relationship. I have a twin brother now, scary shit."

We both laughed as we headed out and arrived at the hospital. The nurses don't even bother to scold us, instead they even try to flirt with us. I don't even bother, I mean I am a married man. As we walked in, we still found Gringo in a comatose state. We felt like we just wanted to be happy today and speak to him about our newly found happiness.

Kg: "Sho, Gman. You had better wake up, since you owe me a party man. I have some good news for

you, Mulalo and I are brothers. Can you believe that?”

Mulalo: “I bet you kept asking yourself why Kg was almost as hot as I am.”

We both chuckled forgetting that we were even supposed to be quiet.

Mulalo: “You know, G. If you don’t wake up, I’m taking your Mustang – I mean your sons don’t want it so I am taking dips on it.”

Kg: (laughing) “In your dreams, Mulalo.”

As we played around our usual banter, Gringo startled us both as he suddenly opened his eyes. Finally!

Kg: (smiling) "G! You're awake!"

Gringo: "Where is my wife?! Where is she Wolfe? I dreamt her saying she is gone and that I shouldn't mourn her death. Please tell me that it was just a dream."

Yep, now we have to tell a recently comatose man that his wife died and we buried her today. What kind of life is this?

Chapter Eighty One

Romans 8:25 – "But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

Corinthians 4:16-18 – "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day."

Kg

I looked at Gringo with so much agony in my heart. He and Vivian were literally so close, I don't think he would make it. He is such a stubborn man, I doubt he would let Mulalo and I leave here without revealing the truth to him. I looked at Mulalo who looked like the tears were threatening to leave his eyes.

Gringo: (Anxious) "I'm waiting Wolfe, silence is not always golden. Where is my wife?"

Kg: (hesitant) "I... I'm sorry G. She.. She didn't make it. The bullet hit her skull right away and she died on the way to hospital."

I myself felt my heart literally skipping a few beats as I told him the tragic news. I saw his face turn pink; with tears already threatening to fall down his

face. As he hardened his face, he tightened his fists.

Gringo: "Where is Isabella?"

I keep forgetting that Thato has a new name now.

Kg: "She... Eish, she is missing. Rendani had her kidnapped."

I saw the machines starting to beep as he was slowly being consumed with rage. The nurses rushed to us and only then started yelling at us.

Nurse: "You upset him! What did you say to him?"

We just looked at them as they slowly tried to get him stable again. We refused to move as we watched them stabilize Gringo. My heart is bleeding

profusely, instead of pumping blood out of pure joy and peace, it is instead pumping blood of sorrow, agony and worry. I am saddened and drowning in sorrow because my own wife is missing; the agony I feel is caused by not knowing if she is safe or not and I can't even do anything to help her. The worry I have is for Gringo. Will he even make it after suffering double loss?

Thato

Yesterday was very thought provoking. Even though I am being held captive, Selena and Luigi have been very nice to me. I don't even know what to do since I am not even allowed to go out. I am pretty much confined to this house, although it is very big and gorgeous; I can't enjoy anything since I know no one here. I am not here by choice either. I am glad I slept alone last night, and I even managed to lock my room just in case Rendani walked in while I was asleep. He hasn't even told me why I am here,

although I recall this Martinelli name from somewhere. Selena apparently went shopping for me a few days ago while I was still unconscious, and managed to get me some really nice clothes. I prayed so hard last night and asked Mama, God, my ancestors for a miracle and yet no one managed to answer me. I hoped and prayed that I would wake up in my own bed back in South Africa, but I woke up in Italy. Men like Rendani are absolute trash and seriously deranged. It is morning now and I don't even know what to do. While deep in thought, I heard a faint knock on the door. I sat on the bed quietly, thinking it might be Rendani.

Selena: (knocking) "Thato, dear. It is me, Selena. Sorry to bother you, I just thought you could open for me so we could talk."

I hesitated for a little while.

Selena: "Please."

I got up and reluctantly opened the door for her. I checked behind her and realized she was indeed alone.

Selena: "Relax, it is just me. May I come in?"

I nodded without saying a word, but she just walked in with a broad smile on her face.

Selena: (smiling) "Slept well?"

Thato: (nodding) "Yes, thank you."

Selena: (nodding) "Look, dear. I know the whole story. I overheard Rendani tell Luigi about him kidnapping you. I know that he killed your stepmother and shot your father in the process."

Wait, did she just say Vivian is dead?

Thato: "Wait a minute. Are you saying Vivian is dead?"

Selena: (frowning) "You didn't know? Oh, dear. I am so sorry."

I felt like a sharp object was drilled right into my abdomen. How cruel is Rendani really? Could he really just kill Vivian like that?! What the fuck? I felt myself drop to the ground with tears streaming down my face.

Selena: "Oh, dear. Please don't cry. I am really sorry. I didn't mean to upset you, but please don't cry. You will get us both into trouble."

I don't know what kind of fucked up family I have been brought into, but this is just sickening. What does she mean by me getting us both into trouble?

Thato: "Is my father okay?"

Selena: "I am not sure, but I find out for you. Just please, stop crying. I explain everything later, okay?"

I looked at her and she had a genuine look on her face, almost like she really cared. I nodded as she gave me a hug. She left my room while I just stared out the window. This city is so beautiful, but I can't even enjoy the magnificence. Mam'V is gone, and here I am being forced to smile at the monster that killed her. I took a bath and put on a maxi dress with sandals. I'm amazed how Selena managed to pick outfits my exact size. It is so hot here, so my body had to adjust a bit since it was still winter back in South Africa. I headed downstairs and found Luigi, Selena and Rendani having breakfast. Selena smiled

as soon as she saw me, while Rendani quickly stood up and held out his hand for me, but I ignore him flatly.

Luigi: (smiling) “Good morning, Mrs. Nembilwi.”

This fat fuck must be kidding me. Rendani sat back down with a huge frown on his face and a tightened jaw. He gave me one death stare, leaving me unbothered.

Thato: “Actually, it’s Mrs. Moloji. I’m sure you have heard of the Mighty Wolfe, Mr. Martinelli, isn’t it so?”

Luigi’s smile immediately dissolved and became a frown, while Rendani looked at me like he was about to murder me. Selena on the other hand looked so nervous, almost as if she was silently trying to signal me to shut up. I am tired of being a doormat. If anything, I would rather make it out of here fighting rather than silent and submissive.

Luigi: (fuming) "Excuse me? Do you know who I am?"

I actually don't even recall who the fuck he is, but I had to look like I did know him. I was not about to let these men drag me all the way from South Africa; walk all over me and probably kill me once they are done with me.

Thato: "Yes, I do. I know that you are one of the biggest kingpins in Italy, but my father is the biggest one in the world."

Luigi: (surprised) "What are you talking about? Who is your father?"

Thato: "David Gringo Groen is my father. Didn't you see the resemblance?"

Luigi looked like he was about to piss himself right there.

Luigi: (angered) "Rendani, you not tell me that this is Gringo's daughter!"

Luigi was spitting fire, while Rendani looked scared. Usually he is cocky as fuck, but now it is almost as if he can't even speak up. Selena was even scared to speak, while I was enjoying the whole show in front of me. Perhaps this is my gateway; perhaps he will get me back home after he finds out he fucked up big time.

Luigi: "Spigare, stronzo (Explain, asshole)!"

I don't even know what that means, but judging by how red his face is, he must be insulting Rendani.

Rendani: (worried) "Look, Luigi, I can explain, okay. It is not that deep, though."

Luigi stood up and gave Rendani one big smack across the face. Rendani nearly toppled over, but he quickly regained his balance. I sat there shocked, while Rendani looked really pissed and embarrassed.

Luigi: "You have until end of day to fix your mess! Do you realize what you have done?! Gringo will be coming for me. It is bad enough you convince me to steal business from him, now you steal daughter too!"

Luigi walked away infuriated. Only then it hit me – Luigi Martinelli – King of the Italian Cartell! Did Rendani really persuade him to go against someone whom he has been working with for so many years? If I remember correctly, Luigi and Gringo go way

back – as far as Varsity days. it is amazing what greed can do to a person. I mean after all this money and fancy life, Luigi still felt he could do better. I just hope he will be able to take me back home. Rendani looked at me as he held his burning cheek.

Rendnai: (fuming) “Thato, I want to speak to you.”

I kept quiet and looked at him.

Rendani: “Now!”

Selena probably noticed how angry Rendani was hence she quickly took me away.

Selena: (Smiling) “Rendani, she will speak to you later on. Right now, she and I have shopping to do.”

Rendani: (bewildered) “She has to come speak to me – Now!”

It seems as if Rendani hit a nerve because Selena didn't take his very well.

Selena: (infuriated) “Not even my own husband speaks to me like that. You know how he is when he gets angry, Rendani. Should I tell him you're starting to become out of hand?”

I saw Rendani quickly reserve his statement and change his tone.

Rendani: “No, of course not. I'm sorry.”

He looked down just after Selena reprimanded him. She actually looked pissed and that warm smile of hers quickly diminished. She gently pulled me

towards her as she grabbed her handbag and we were out. As we left the house, we got into a white Lamborghini. I am in total awe – a woman her age driving a Lamborghini. She reminds me so much of my Mam’V. She probably noticed how I was admiring the car and the beautiful, white leather interior.

Selena: (chuckling) “You like? Luigi custom make for me.”

And there she was – the Selena I met. The warm and fuzzy Selena. I didn’t expect her to even take me out. I am grateful though.

Selena: “I know Rendani took you without permission. He is a naughty boy, just like his father.”

Thato: “Then why can’t you help me?”

Selena: "It's not that easy, dear. I want to, but I can't go against husband's wishes. I will try my best, but now I have to make sure Rendani does not hurt you. He is very obsessed."

At least she noticed. As she was driving she started frowning as she looked at her side mirrors.

Selena: "Looks like lover boy can't stay away from you."

I got puzzled as she said that and I looked at my side mirror. Ai, Rendani is following us. What the fuck does this guy want from me?

Selena: "Relax, I am going to take us to church and he won't be able to follow us. I get Luigi to put him in his place."

She smiled as she indeed took a turn to a church. The churches and buildings in Italy, are even more beautiful than on tv. The moment she got to the gate she gave the guards an instruction.

Selena: “Non farlo entrare. Di a Luigi che mi sta seguendo (Don’t let him in. Tell Luigi he has been following me).”

I don’t even know what she said, but the guy just nodded. As we drove in, we clearly saw Rendani rush out of the car in frustration as the guards closed the big gates behind them. I am quite relieved to be away from him. This church is so beautiful, the atmosphere is so serene, it just calls you to peace as you walk in.

Thato: “Thank you, Selena.”

Selena: “Don’t worry.”

She parked the car and we got out. I don't mind her taking me to church, since I could use all the prayers I can get. As we walked in we saw so many statues of the Virgin Mary, Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Joseph and so many icons of the Bible. This is a Roman Catholic Church, so before we entered we had to dip our fingers into the holy water and signify a cross on ourselves. I felt at peace the moment I walked in and forgot all about my troubles. As we walked in, there weren't a few people here – as it is during the week and some came here to pray. Selena sat down and I went forward to the pulpit. I don't know, maybe I was just drawn to the candles before me. I saw someone light one of them and I chose to do the same. I just felt like praying and letting it all out. I prayed and asked for guidance, after what felt like forever, I felt a warm hand on my shoulder.

Voice: "You have finally come. I have been waiting for you."

I recognize that voice. I slowly turned around and I couldn't believe it! Is this really him?

Chapter Eighty Two

Isaiah 55:8-9 – “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Thato

I couldn't believe what I was seeing right in front of me. I'm flabbergasted to say the least.

Voice: “It's good to see you again.”

I stood up in shock, I just can't believe it.

Thato: "Soks?"

Soks: (laughing) "In the flesh."

Thato: "Heh banna (my goodness) "O moruti na (Are you a pastor)?"

Soks: (chuckling) "Yes, are you doubting the work of the Lord?"

I'm actually stunned. I never figured him to be a priest let alone a priest right here in Italy. He looks so clean, so handsome, so – so holy.

Thato: "It's not that, it's just that I never thought hey."

Soks: "Well, our thoughts are not His thoughts."

Thato: (chuckling) "Isaiah 55."

Soks: (smiling) "It's good to see that you still know your Bible."

Thato: "Aren't you going to ask me what I am doing here?"

Soks: "I already know why you are here. I saw you in my dreams. Everything has a time and reason, Thato. How have you been?"

Thato: (sigh) "To be honest, Soks, I don't know."

Soks: (smiling) "My name is Solomon, but for you I will make an exception because we go way back."

Thato: (smiling) “okay.”

Soks: “You know, Thato, you have a bigger destiny than you actually realize. Why do you think Mulalo kept calling you Queen? Why haven’t you been listening to Kgabo and Nana’s warnings?”

I looked at him puzzled.

Soks: “You have been warned many times before, yet you failed to be steadfast in prayer. Don’t get me wrong – I am not saying that this is all your fault. I am saying that things could have ended in a different way. Kg would have remembered you sooner, had you been stronger and prayed harder. Vivian was still going to die, just not in such a horrible way.”

Now I feel like complete shit. I really shouldn’t have been that relaxed. I felt all the tears building up

again.

Soks: “Now is not the time to cry, Thato. You will leave this place soon – but you won’t be in Kg’s arms just yet. You have a bigger project to complete. Your destiny awaits you and you have to lead a nation, change all their negative rules, and expose Kg’s mother’s killer.”

Why is Soks speaking in such riddles now?

Soks: “There is a reason why you came here out of all places. I will help you, just as your mother told you in the dream you had yesterday.”

Oh, now it all makes sense. “You will be rescued by someone you least expect.”

Soks saw me smile to myself.

Soks: "See what happens when we listen to our dreams?"

I laughed slightly. For a moment I actually forgot that I was kidnapped. Soks told me all about his journey from that night Palesa shot herself to how he ended up here.

Soks: "I was in a very bad space, Thato. I knew from way back that I wasn't meant to be the ruthless junkie I was, but poverty and desperation forced me to become Soks instead of Solomon. I have healed ever since Palesa passed on. It was a very difficult time for me, but God led me into the right direction and I got baptized. I found a few missionaries who brought me here, and I have been a pastor ever since."

Amazing.

Thato: "So are you like a prophet?"

Soks: (chuckling) "Yes, I see the future before it even occurs, mostly in dreams but at times through visions. I saw myself burn my own father alive before I did it, and just as Palesa shot herself, I saw the whole thing in my dreams. I also saw what Rendani did to you before he did it, and now, I saw what he is planning for you and we can't let that happen."

My mind started growing weary of what Soks just said, and it literally sent shivers down my spine.

Thato: "What do you mean you saw what he has planned for me?"

Soks: "I'd rather not tell you, but the good news is Selena is actually a good woman. She loves God and church, so don't fret. She and I will get you out

of here soon.”

I felt my heart jump for joy.

Thato: “Finally, I can be with my family and Kg.”

Soks: “No, you’re not going to your family and Kg, you’re going to where your destiny is leading you. You really have to start paying attention to all the things you get told, you know.”

I felt my heart sank immediately. What a way to blow my candle.

Thato: (teary) “But, can’t I at least just see my father? Please, Soks.”

Soks: (sigh) “Once you get flown out of here, I’ll see what I can do. But a war is about to break out between brothers and you need to be gone within

days.”

I nodded and thought of hugging him, but that would probably be deemed as inappropriate.

Thato: “Thank you, Soks.”

Soks: (nodding) “Don’t worry, all will be well.”

Thato: “When will I see you again? I don’t even have a phone.”

Soks: “Matters of God don’t require a phone. I’ll find you.”

As I was about to go back to Selena, she walked up to us smiling.

Selena: (smiling) "Oh, dear, I see you have met our Pastor Solomon."

Soks: (smiling) "Actually, we go way back, Selena. I know her from back home. She is the troubled girl I told you about."

Okay, now I am confused.

Selena: "Oh, thank goodness. You know, when I saw Rendani bring her home, I immediately thought of you. I didn't want to do any rush job, you see?"

Soks: (chuckling) "I understand. Just please do me a favour, Selena."

Selena: "Anything, Pastor."

Soks: "Please, make sure he doesn't get near her especially at night."

Selena: “No problem, I will do my best.”

We greeted Soks goodbye and even though he reassured me that everything was going to be okay, I couldn't help but feel a bit doubtful. What if Rendani has other plans and decides to kill me? I can't even go straight home after being rescued, but anything is better than being here. I like Selena a lot – but I would rather be at home around people who love and know me. I thought we were heading back to Selena's house after visiting the church, but instead she was kind enough to take me out for lunch.

We went to one of the nicest, coziest restaurant in Sicily. Italy is quite big, but the places aren't overpopulated. You don't see lots of people in every corner like back home. It is quite peaceful here, but I would be happier had I been around my family. Selena ordered us some food, and I ordered a glass of wine, since she said it is okay. I need to calm my

nerves and be a bit at ease.

Selena: (smiling) "Thato, my dear, I hope you don't hate me, no?"

Thato: "How could I possibly hate you, Selena?"

Selena: "It's just that, when you arrived at the house, I knew you were the girl Solomon was talking about. I just had to make sure. The moment you told me about Rendani kidnapping you, believe me, I wanted to help you, but I can't go against my husband's wishes."

I decided to listen to her and let her finish.

Selena: "You see, Pastor Sol is one of a kind. He can see the future, of which I am sure he told you. He told me about his vision; that a war would break out

between brothers. I couldn't understand, until Luigi told me that he had gone against Gringo and taken over a part of his business with Rendani. I immediately knew that it was a bad idea, he is inviting bad blood into our lives, and I don't know what to do. It is nearer that we think, but believe me, you will be freed. Just give me a few days to devise a good plan and you will be out of here."

I feel so elated to hear Selena say that to me. I want nothing more than to go home.

Thato: (teary) "Selena, you have no idea how much it means to me to hear you say that. I don't know how I can possibly thank you."

Selena: (chuckling) "Don't be silly, it is what mothers do."

Thato: "You remind me a lot of my Step mother Vivian."

Selena: (laughing) "That friend of mine. We were so close, she actually made me fall in love with the colour white. Who knew white could look so good in so many different ways? I miss her so much, dear. God bless her soul and may she rest in peace."

Thato: (frowning) "Why didn't you go to her funeral?"

Selena: "I wanted to, but Luigi said no. Ever since Rendani came, Luigi has just been making bad decisions. That boy is a curse and does not deserve to have a Dea (Goddess) like you."

Thato: "What is a Dea?"

Selena: "It means Goddess. You are beautiful, dear. Don't let anyone take that away from you."

I smiled and I just couldn't help but compare her to Vivian. They are so much alike; the bold clothing choices, the love for the colour white, their interests in food and drinks. I just can't help but miss Mam'V. I just met her and now she is gone. Life can be so unfair at times.

Selena: "Oh, no. I make you think of bad things, no?"

Thato: "No, not at all. I just miss Vivian. I didn't even get a chance to say goodbye."

Selena: "I know how you feel. My madre (mother) died when I was two and my padre (father) raised me. He was killed by Luigi's enemy and I didn't even get to bury him."

Wow, people actually go through the most, man. This is such a heartbreaking story, honestly.

Thato: "I am so sorry."

Selena: "Don't be, dear. I made peace long ago. Dios a meglio (God knows best). He will never forsake me."

Selena's words of comfort bring peace of mind to me. We ate and had some more wine, and after two glasses of real red wine, I was quite ready to go. She told me a lot about Italy, and the history thereof. Not once, did she sound boring to me.

She just has this really motherly way of making a person feel so welcome and interested and of course, entertained. She took me around as we viewed some of the historic monuments in Sicily, and she bought me a really nice bracelet. By 6pm, we headed home. I am amazed that her husband hardly calls her whenever she's out.

Thato: “Selena, apologies for being nosy, but how come Luigi never called you whenever we were out?”

Selena: (laughing) “You’re not nosy at all. It is just the way our marriage has evolved. See, when young, you call your husband all the time, you want to know what they are doing, who they are with, what they are eating and so on. Once you get older, you become relaxed and you end up knowing what they are doing, who they are, what they are eating. Luigi is very complex man, but loves me very much. He would kill for me.”

I love it when people talk about love. I just can’t wait for Kg and I to reach that level of intimacy. We arrived at her house and I kind of dreaded going in. Rendani gives me the creeps, especially when I see him.

Selena: “Don’t worry, you will be fine. Come.”

We walked out hand in hand. Selena is such a wonderful woman and she only has one daughter, but four grandchildren. We walked in and found Rendani's eyes bloodshot, like he was ready to kill. Luigi was nowhere to be seen, most probably upstairs in his study as usual. As soon as we landed into the house, Rendani didn't even give me ample time to explain, he just gave me one fat smack across the face.

I fell onto the ground immediately, and as I was trying to absorb the pain inflicted on my cheek, Rendani grabbed me by the throat and slammed against the wall. I became dizzy instantly, but I quickly regained myself, although I couldn't breathe as he was trying to squeeze the life out of me. Selena's screams started becoming fainter.

Selena: (screaming) "What are you doing?! No!"

Rendani: (livid) “Where the fuck have you been, bitch?”

As I tried to remove his tight grip from my aching throat, he tightened it even more.

Selena: “No! Luigi! Luigi!”

At that moment, Rendani didn't even seem bothered by the fact that Luigi was being called down.

Luigi: “Che cos'è mia vita (What is it, my love)?!”

Selena: “Guarda cosa sta facendo questo stronzo (Look at what this fucker is doing)?!”

Rendani was so wrapped up into killing me or teaching me lesson, or whatever it is he was doing,

that he didn't even hear Luigi come down the stairs. Luigi got so pissed, he dragged Rendani away from me. I coughed and gasped for air as I dropped to the ground, with Selena comforting me. She brought me a glass of water, as Luigi pinned Rendani against the wall.

Luigi: (angered) "You think you smart, destroy (right)?! I show you what we do here in Italy with coward men like you! Man don't touch woman!"

He gave him a few punches and slaps.

Luigi: "I'm sick of your empty promises. You are becoming a liability, Rendani. I'm afraid you are of no use to me."

Rendani suddenly became remorseful after hearing Luigi's last statement.

Rendani: "Oh, please, forgive me, Luigi. I don't know what came over me. Please, grant me another chance."

Luigi: "You brought me nothing, but trouble. You took Gringo's daughter and killed his wife. If you could do that to him, what can you do to me?"

Rendani looked like his whole world came crushing down. I don't even give a shit about the pain he has inflicted on me right now. I just need to get the fuck out of here.

Luigi: "Selena, my love, call Stefano to come and get rid of this mess. Venda boy is just like father."

Selena took me with her, thank God, as she sat me down in her bedroom and made a quick phone call.

Selena: "Stefano, it's Selena. Luigi is calling for you. Si (yes)."

Just like that she hung up.

Selena: “Let me see what that coglione (fucker) did to you.”

I don't even know what coglione means, but I am guessing it's a bad word. As soon as I removed my hand from my cheek, I felt it burning, along with my throat. How dare Rendani lay a hand on me. Does he even know my father?

Selena: (angered) “Oh, dear. He will pay dearly for this. Let me get something for that. Stay here.”

I nodded as she rushed out to get me something for the swelling and pain. I seriously can't wait to get out of here.

Rendani

I am losing my mind. How the fuck could I be so soft? Since when am I such a weakling? I always get everything I want and I wish I had just shoved my dick into Thato when I had the chance. Maybe then she would have more respect for me than she does now. I am not Kg, and she needs to respect me. I'm a Venda prince, and I demand respect – I don't ask for it. I brought her here so she could see how much I love her, but instead she decided to go AWOL with Selena. Who knows just what she got up to with that old fuck?

She probably gave my wife a new white man or something. Now Luigi is chasing me away?! Imagine that – a whole me! After everything I have done for him?! If anything, he should thank me. He owes me a great deal. I helped him make a shit load of money in a very short space of time. I don't have a choice, but to form an alliance with his enemies.

How dare he decide to get rid of Me?!

And as for Thato – she will learn how to respect a man. Perhaps I should sell her off to Luca, plus he would love fresh meat like her. It's a pity I never even got to taste that pink pussy of hers, but should Luca allow me – I'd like one night with her just to tear her pussy apart. Kg would never want her after I would be done with her. She doesn't know that when all else fails – I am a man of my word, I always have a plan B.

Chapter Eighty Three

2 Corinthians 3:12-4 – “Therefore, since we have a hope, we are very bold.”

Kg

Things have been quite somber every since we went to visit Gringo. The nurses and his doctor are so

upset with us for distressing him apparently – so we are temporarily banned from visiting the hospital.

Mulalo and I decided to go and have a beer somewhere quiet since the yard and house is rather busy today. We decided to go to Newscafe, and since it is during the week and also during the day, it isn't loud and crowded. We sat down and ordered ourselves a few beers.

Mulalo: "You know, Kg, something has been pondering my mind lately."

Kg: "What?"

Mulalo: "I have something to tell you, and I don't want to die without you knowing."

Kg: (frowning) "What do you mean? Why are you acting like you're going to die or something?"

Mulalo: (sigh) "I don't know, for some reason I feel like my days here on earth are limited, almost like I am going to die very soon."

I looked at him and he looked genuinely serious. Why on earth would he think so? Surely Nana or Kgabo would have told us if Danger was lurking. He can't be saying such, no man.

Kg: "Mulalo, I just found you, brother. You are not going to die – at least not yet. You are going to live a long and fruitful life, and you will have many children."

Mulalo: (sigh) "Thato and I slept together a while ago."

For some reason that statement didn't hurt me much. I mean yes, I can't picture Thato with another man, but surely she was lonely. I slept with

Anastacia, unfortunately as well and that eats me up every day. I looked at Mulalo and he seemed really regretful.

Kg: "Mulalo, my brother, that is all in the past. I don't blame you for anything."

Mulalo looked up at me in great shock.

Mulalo: "So, you're not angry?"

Kg: (laughing) "No, not at all. I understand. Let's let bygones be bygones, please. I would hate to waste every minute you and I have to catch up on with sad stories and anger. Let us make a toast to new beginnings and true brotherhood."

Mulalo: (smiling) "Cheers."

We raised our beer bottles and made a toast. As we were about to eat the food we ordered, out of nowhere came a very infuriated, heavily pregnant woman.

Olivia: "Mulalo?! So this is where you have been hiding yourself?! How can you do this to me?!"

Oh, so this is the infamous Olivia, ai.

Mulalo: (bored) "Olivia, what are you doing here?"

Olivia: "Heh! What am I doing here?! I came to get some last minute stuff for the baby since my husband won't even do it! Angithi (Of course) you don't give a damn about us?!"

Mulalo: (annoyed) "Yoh, Olivia, give me a damn break! And where are your manners? You didn't even greet

us. This is my twin brother, Kg.”

Kg: “Hi.”

Olivia burst out in laughter. Dammit, her laughter is so annoying for such a beautiful, melanin woman. I guess it is true what they say – God can’t bless you with everything.

Olivia: (laughing) “You can be so funny at times. So, you disappear on me and you come back with some random guy and you call him your twin? Wow. Asihambe (Let’s go).”

Mulalo: (frowning) “I am going nowhere with you.”

Olivia: “If you don’t come with me, I am going to tell my father what you are doing to me – “

Mulalo didn't take that statement really well, I mean I wouldn't have either.

Mulalo: (angered) "Dammit, man, Olivia! For someone who is carrying another man's child, you sure can be persistent! Fok, man!"

Olivia: (shocked) "How did you... Mulalo, I can explain, baby please."

Mulalo: "Get out of my face."

Olivia: "But, I-"

Mulalo shot her one death stare without saying anything further and I guess she knew right there and then that he meant business. I doubt he would even hit her, though. Olivia left with her tail between her legs.

Kg: "So, she really is pregnant by another guy? Who is it?"

Mulalo: "I don't know. I have been suspecting, but I never actually confronted her."

We both stared at each other for a few seconds and burst out in laughter.

Kg: "Please tell me you're joking."

Mulalo: "I wish I was. I mean I was just calling her bluff and what do you know? It is actually true."

Kg: "So, you're not angry at her or anything?"

Mulalo: "Not even. I am actually quite relieved. I

think it has to do with the utmost important fact that I just never loved her. I mean Tiger forced me to marry her out of obligation to the royal family and now that I know I am not one of them, I can finally live my life.”

I am proud of Mulalo for taking this like a true man.

Kg: “I get you, hey. I totally do, I mean I can’t imagine my life without Thato. Already these past few days have been hell on earth. I have been unable to sleep, thinking of what she had endured while I was in Jo’burg and while I had lost my memory. I recall the good times with her, how we used to play with names for our unborn child. I had hoped for a girl, you know. I mean it happened unexpectedly, but I was ecstatic, and I was prepared to do everything for her. I would literally die for her, Mulalo.”

Mulalo: (smiling) “I wish I had that. I mean, I have never really experienced the kind of love you and

Thato share.”

Kg: “You mean to tell me that you have never been in love?”

Mulalo: “I have, but sadly she passed on while we were in Varsity. We were also planning to get married, have kids and all that.”

Kg: “I’m so sorry. How did she die?”

Mulalo: “Someone broke into her flat and killed her. It took me a while to get over that, but once I tried to get over her, I thought Olivia would fill that void even when I didn’t love her. I thought I would learn to love her, but sadly, that didn’t happen.”

My heart breaks for my brother. I can only hope he does find someone who will love him the way he is

capable of loving. Love is so scarce in this day and age, and I suppose when people experience even a mere drop of it – they decide to hang on, even when they are not actually loved. Mulalo and I carried on having our lunch and drinks, catching up on life before we headed back home. Upon entering the yard, everyone was gone already, thank goodness.

The yard wasn't even messy, apparently everyone cleaned up before they left. They said that Vivian was such a clean lady, she would probably torture them in death for leaving her house dirty. That was Vivian for you, one amazing character. Mulalo and I froze a bit before entering the house as we saw Smally's car outside. I wonder who summoned him because we usually do that when we want to take care of someone. As we were about to open the door, he walked out and met us on the way.

Smally: "Sho Sho, bozzas (bosses)."

Kg: "Hola (Hey)."

Mulalo: "Sho, go vayang (What's happening)?"

Smally: "We have Tiger in the lounge."

Mulalo and I looked at each other both surprised.

Kg: "Where did you find him? And why didn't you call us?"

Smally: "We found him right outside the gate. Someone just rang the bell without saying anything and left a note. We found him tied up and his mouth taped. He is bruised as fuck."

Mulalo and I walked in as Smally led us to where Tiger was. Thank goodness everyone wasn't around,

so we could enjoy him a bit. He was indeed badly bruised, with his left eye completely shut closed, a bleeding nose and a split lip. I also saw a few teeth missing. The person who did this to him wasn't playing at all.

Mulalo: "Remove the tape from his mouth. Smally did as instructed and Tiger wailed even before we said anything.

Tiger: (wailing) "Please.... Please, my boy. I don't know what I did wrong but for that I am so sorry. Just don't kill me."

Mulalo: "Shut up, man! Who did this to you?"

Tiger: "I... I don't know, I was in hiding and the next thing these unknown men with balaclavas on their faces dressed in all black came into my room and started beating me up. They said that I am about to

meet my maker.”

I decided to let Mulalo handle this because it seems as if they both had some unresolved issues.

Mulalo: “I have a few questions for you and if you answer them correctly, I might just let you go.”

We both know that is not true. I have a feeling Tiger is going to spill some serious shit and Mulalo will just cut his head off.

Tiger: “Okay.”

Mulalo: “How did I end up in your care?”

Tiger: (astonished) “How do you – “

Mulalo: (annoyed) "Romeo told us. We know the truth. Are you going to answer or not?"

Tiger: "Your mother gave birth to you first, Mulalo, apparently her sister, was – is a very evil woman. She got you swapped and gave you to the village witch as an offering, you know, a sacrifice. In turn she told your mother that you died since she was assisting her with the birth when the both of you were born. The village witch got another dead baby from someone who recently gave birth and decided to give that boy to your mother. So the wrong baby was buried as you."

What kind of sick world do we live in?

Mulalo: "So, what was supposed to happen to me? Since I wasn't sacrificed?"

Tiger: "Well, the witch was supposed to kill you –

she was even about to cut you open, but miraculously the knife broke right on your skin. She was shocked so she tried again with an even sharper knife, but it still broke. She tried to burn you alive, but in turn, she herself got burnt. She couldn't sacrifice you since your ancestors didn't want you dead – you come from a very rich and very powerful royal family.

So, she wrapped you in a blanket and placed you in a basket and decided to put you near a river. She vowed since that day to never do witchcraft again. Even though everyone is still afraid of her – even now. Whenever she goes to the market or church – they all run away from her. She used to be the most powerful witch back in the day and that night, she saw the power of God, so she stopped practicing witchcraft.”

What a powerful story. It reminds me of how Thato only got burned on her back instead of dying in that shack fire caused by Sonto.

Mulalo: “So, how did you and Constance get hold of me?”

Tiger: “Back then, Constance and I were newlyweds and she was still a new makoti and had to perform her makoti duties, so she went to fetch some water at the river. That is when she discovered you crying in the basket. She couldn’t leave you there, as you looked so fragile and beautiful. She brought you to me, and we told my father about it. We all agreed along with my mother that you would be our first born and we had to lie to the villagers and say you were older, and that she had you while we were in Varsity.

That way, they wouldn’t think you were a product of infidelity or something. Our family witch doctor, saw the mark behind your neck. Apparently all the sons from your mother’s family are born with that mark. She immediately knew you didn’t belong to us, but

we couldn't return you. We loved you so much, Mulalo, and also, your life was in grave danger. Had your mother's sister found out about you being alive, she was going to order people to finish you off. So that is why we only went back home to visit once a year."

Wow, my family is fucked up. How can they want to kill an innocent child? That all explains why Mama never went to visit her family. Mulalo on the other hand seemed so helpless, he was just too eager to know more, to find out the truth.

Mulalo: "Where is this village you speak of?"

As Tiger was about to answer, he looked like he was about to have convulsions. He started shaking and his eyes were rolling into his head. Mulalo and I both stood up, as we were shocked. They must have hit him pretty hard.

Mulalo: (shaking Tiger) “Todani! Todani! Focus!
Where is this village?!”

Tiger couldn't respond any further and just like that he took his last breath right on Vivian's bright white fur carpet. Mulalo wailed like a helpless child, causing me great pain. Involuntary tears streamed down my face as I firmly held him back.

Kg: “It's okay, Mulalo. He is gone.”

Mulalo: “I just wanted to know where I come from, Kg. Is it such a bad thing that the Universe denies me such?”

My poor brother. Now I get what people talk of when they say twins share an incredibly deep bond. When he is happy – I'm happy. When he cries – so do I.

Kg: "It will be okay."

Thato

My day went well and I could finally pray in the bedroom allocated to me by Selena. Rendani is out of my face and the swelling on my face is starting to die down, although I am still quite red in the face. Selena came back to sit with me and show me her family album, telling me all about her family history and how she grew up. I really like her honesty and her affection. She has something special about her.

We sat and chatted away until about 11pm, when she finally bid me goodnight. I slept with a peaceful heart knowing that I would soon see my father. I was woken up by my faint footsteps into the bedroom, and when I raised my head and tried to speak, I felt a small hand on my lips. I panicked a little, but I

realized it was Selena when she switched on the side lamp.

Selena: "Shhh."

I nodded as I carefully watched and listened to her instruct me on what to do. She whispered of which I didn't understand, but I felt I could trust her. She told me to get dressed in black clothes, with a black coat. We headed downstairs and made our way out of the house. Upon leaving, I saw a black Mercedes Viano waiting outside. Soks came out of the car and I was so relieved. As I was about to approach him, Selena held me with both hands.

Selena: "Dear, you have made my life incredibly whole past few days. I will miss you."

Thato: "I will miss you too, Selena."

Selena: "Here. Take this."

She handed me a beautiful rosary, draped in diamonds, much like the pendant Kg gave to me on my birthday last year."

Selena: "Keep it with you wherever you go. Whenever you don't feel safe, pray with it. I will be with you always."

I smiled with tears in my eyes as I hugged her.

Selena: "Go now, we don't have much time."

I nodded as I proceeded to the car along with Soks.

Selena: "Take good care of her, Solomon."

Soks nodded as we said our goodbyes. There was another person driving, but I couldn't see his face. He sped off like we were rushing off to a heist or something. I don't even know what time it is since I don't even have a phone.

Thato: "What time is it, Soks?"

Soks: "It's midnight."

I don't know why he is taking me away at this witchful hour, but I gave him the benefit of the doubt. My heart smiled with joy as I could feel that home is nearing.

Thato: (smiling) "Can I go see my father before you take me where I am supposed to go?"

Soks looked down in sorrow, like he was sad or

something. I don't know, but I feel like he is hiding some bad news from me. He kept quiet, while fiddling with his rosary.

Thato: "Soks?"

Soks: "I'm sorry, Thato. You can't go see him now. You can see him soon, but just not tonight."

My heart sank right at the pit of my stomach. I knew it was for the best, but I just wanted to see him. We drove for a while until we got to an unknown location, but there was a big jet parked right in the warehouse.

Soks: "This is where I leave you."

Thato: (scared) "Soks? Where am I going? Can't you go with me?"

Soks: "I'm afraid if I go with you we will both die. Hang in there, like I said, you're going to where your destiny meets you."

Thato: (teary) "I'm scared, Soks."

Soks: "Now is the time to pray and believe, Thato. All will be well. You're going with Tman. He will take you to where you need to be. Don't worry, I trust him."

By Tman he meant the guy who drove us here, since he was the one who walked me to the Jet. Tman swiftly walked with me and I kept looking at Soks with tears in my eyes until I saw him disappear in the Viano. My heart felt like it was breaking into a million pieces yet again. I am going to an undisclosed and unknown location all alone with an unknown guy. I have lost my Mam'V and my father is in hospital. I can only hope I see him soon. I decided to pray as the Jet took off.

Chapter Eighty Four

Psalm 46:5 – “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.”

Thato

I fell asleep with a heavy heart, with this Tman guy making everything tons worse. He hardly says a word, so I didn't bother asking him any questions. I didn't know where I was going, so the only thing I had in mind was the little faith and hope I had in me. I kept reciting silent prayers whenever I woke up, but no words and answers came to mind. I eventually dozed off again.

Petunia: “Welcome to your new home, Queen Isabella.”

I woke up immediately after that. I saw my mother and she welcomed me home. I was hoping that perhaps the Jet made its way to Jo'burg, but nope. I found us at a deserted warehouse with a Mercedes Viano waiting for us. I feel like I am part of a spy family or something like that.

Tman: "Let's go."

That's all he has been doing – giving out instructions. I did as told and followed him, I don't even recall packing any clothes, but he walked out holding a small, black traveling bag. I guess black must be their favourite colour. At least the sun is out, so I am guessing it is probably midday or so. We got into the Viano and he drove off. I had to sit in the front seat as instructed by him.

Tman: "I know you're scared, but you will be alright. I will be watching you from a distance. The Princess is a bit of a bitch, but the Queen and King are very

nice.”

Wow, he speaks and now that he speaks, he is speaking in riddles.

Thato: “I don’t understand.”

Tman: “You are here as a disguise; please remember that it is utmost key to tell everyone your name is Isabella – not Thato. Your name is Isabella Mokoena, and your CV is in that bag. You come from Limpopo.”

Ja, I feel like I am indeed in a spy movie.

Thato: “Okay, but can’t I get a cell phone or something? Just to tell everyone I am safe?”

Tman: "They will be notified. You will get a cellphone soon, just not now."

This is tougher than I thought.

Thato: "What kind of job is this?"

Tman: "You will be the Royal servant. I hate the word maid."

Wow, just when I thought my life couldn't get any worse. I mean, I am supposed to have returned to Varsity by now. What have I done to deserve this?"

Tman: "Don't look so sad, it is only temporary. Trust me, bigger things await. Solomon is never wrong."

He stopped in front of one of the biggest houses

around here. It truly looks like a fancy village here. I looked at Tman hoping he would say this was all one big, fat joke.

Tman: "Go, they are expecting you."

I took a deep breath and tried not to cry. I remembered Soks telling me that I needed to be strong, and that crying can wait. I just have to try. I can't be afraid of the unknown, I mean it's of no use. I slowly got out and took the luggage bag out of the car. As I walked ahead of the gate, with high walls, I can't even see what is behind them. Tman drove off without checking if I was safe or not.

I am so used to being spoiled and babied. Now I have no phone, no one I know around here, and absolutely no clue why I am even here, but I just have to try. As I walked ahead of the gate, I felt myself sweating from this heat. I haven't even walked a mere 5km and already I am feeling this

heat. I can't even recognize this place, but well, this is where I am meant to be as they said. I pressed the intercom and a rude woman answered.

Woman: "Ja?"

She reminds me of Constance, the day I arrived at her house.

Thato: (Deep breath) "My name is T... Isabella Moloji. I am here for the servant position."

Woman: (chuckling) "Oh, you mean you're the new maid? Alright, Come right in."

Yep, another Constance on my case. As soon as the big gates opened up, I was met with a very large yard, even larger than Gringo's house back in Northcliffe. There are quite a few Rondavels around, about ten or

so, far apart from one another. There are a few men herding cattle; as some are busy doing gardening and a few other women doing laundry; sweeping the yard and some caring for children.

As I walked along further towards the entrance of the house, a lot of them stared at me like I was someone weird or so, but I am so used to the stares. I finally made my way to the entrance – even though it felt like I was walking forever. The yard is truly beautiful, but the statues and many fountains are a bit too much. I found a guard at the door, and I wasn't sure what to do so I bowed down.

Thato: (bowing) "Good afternoon, my name is Isabella. I am here to see the King and Queen."

Guard: (smiling) "Sukuma, Ntombenhle (Get up, pretty lady). Awusemhle (You're so beautiful)."

I looked up and he smiled at me. I know a bit of Zulu, so I don't know how I will survive here. As I was about to respond to the guard, a young girl, more or less my age walked up to him and spoke to him in a very rude manner.

Girl: "Hayi, man, Beki. Awuboni ukuthi lo muntu uzele umsebenzi lana (Can't you see this girl came to look for work)? Usimoshela isikhathi (You're waisting our time)."

Shame, poor Beki was about to respond, but this girl completely shut him down.

Beki: "Ngiyaxolisa (I'm sorry), Nkosazana (Princess)
– "

Girl: "Hayi (No)! Move! Wena (You), follow me."

I followed her while I stared at Beki and returned a faint smile to him. He didn't deserve any rudeness she was giving him at all. I am guessing she is one of the princesses around here. As we walked what felt like forever again, she took it upon herself to ask me a few questions.

Girl: "And then? Why umhlope so (Why are you so light)? Yini, uyicoloured (What, are you coloured)? Uyableacher (Do you bleach your skin)?"

Ai, I don't have time for another Anastacia, but I guess I have to stick it out since I don't even know for how long I have to be here.

Thato: "No, I-"

She rudely interrupted me before I could finish my statement.

Girl: “Yoooh, hayi, hayi, hayi (no, no, no)! Se ukhuluma nesingisi (You even speak English)?! Hayibo (No)! Kuse Natal, lana, girl (this is Kwazulu-Natal, girl). If you want to survive, you had better get that white girl mentality out of your head – more especially if you want to work here.”

Mxm, she is acting like she has money whereas it is her father’s money. Bitch. I sighed deeply and kept all that in. We got to the lounge and we found a very beautiful lady, probably in her forties or so, much like Mam’V. She has gorgeous long hair, and a fair complexion. She was dressed in beautiful Zulu attire, I guess it is royal attire. I stood there as the rude princess gave me one stare.

Princess: “Hawu (Gosh) Bow, phela!”

I bowed as told and waited for the woman to speak.

Woman: "You may rise."

I raised my head slowly as I looked at her.

Woman: "You may be seated."

I sat down as told.

Thato: "Thank you."

She gave me one of those filthy looks, and analyzed me like I was a filthy rodent of some sort. It kind of hurt, but I kept myself serious.

Woman: "You are?"

Thato: "I am Isabella Moloji, I am from Limpopo. I came here looking for work, and I – "

She is just as rude as her daughter.

Woman: "Let me see your CV."

She stretched out her arm, and kept flicking her fingers like she was literally waiting for a servant to make it snappy. That hurt me a little – did Soks honestly think that lowering my life to servant status would make me a better person? I took out my CV out of the bag in haste and handed it to her. She flipped through a few pages, and I don't even know what is on those pages. She didn't even seem impressed at all.

Woman: "Hmm, I am sorry, but I don't even think you meet our criteria. I'm afraid, the job isn't yours."

What the actual fuck?! Is this bitch serious? Does she know I come all the way from Italy and I am

jetlagged and tired as hell only for her to tell me such shit?! Did Soks even plan this? I have no phone, so where will I go?

Thato: "I don't understand, I-"

Woman: Ag, you white girl wannabes. Ngithe akuna msebenzi for wena (I said there is no job for you)! Now Phuma (Out)!"

I was slowly about to leave, but another woman, fairly older who looks much like this woman in front of me walked down the mansion stairs.

Woman2: "Yini kodwa Nomsa (What is it?! Utheni urasa kangaka (Why are you making so much noise)?!"

Woman: "Bengi sa tshela lento ukuthi akuna

umsebenzi (I was just telling this thing that there is no work)!”

As soon as she said that, I saw the elder woman’s face change and become hardened.

Woman2: “You will not speak to anyone like that, more especially someone we don’t even know!”

Woman: “Kodwa (But), Mama. You always have a soft spot for poor people.”

Woman2: “I will not listen to this, more especially in my own house!”

Woman: “Kodwa (But) Mama – “

Woman2: (angered) “You failed to build your own

kingdom and now you want to collapse mine right into the ground?! Give me those papers!"

She gave her my CV in defeat. The elder woman looked at it and then at me and smiled broadly.

Woman2: "Forgive her, my child. She is just going through one of those "in my times" moments. My name is Queen Nombulelo Ncube, Queen of Empangeni."

She extended her hand and gave me an even warmer smile, I just had to shake it.

Thato: "Pleased to meet you, Queen."

Queen Nombu: "Please, call me, Mama. You are Isabella, I have been expecting you. Once again, please forgive my daughter for her placid rudeness.

I think she fell and dropped her head after birth.”

I smiled as she chuckled, while the daughter and her daughter both looked at me like I am crazy.

Queen Nombu: “Come, let me show you to your room as we will discuss your job requirements, that is if you still want the job?”

Is she kidding me? I don't have much of a choice.

Thato: (smiling) “Yes, I still do, Queen – Mama.”

She smiled as she took me by hand while we walked towards the far end of the house. The interior décor is so beautiful here, so unique, with lots of red and black colours and ornaments. I see a lot of portraits, much like the ones I saw back at Tiger's house. All of these portraits are hand drawn, and I only

recognize a few of the Queen, the rude princess daughter as well as the rude young princess.

The other people I haven't seen before, and they look rather odd, almost like I have seen a few of them before – more especially the painting of one of the other women. I don't know, but she seems like a very warm woman, I can imagine myself calling her Mama. I can't wait to find out more about this peculiar family.

Chapter Eighty Five

Deuteronomy 31:6 – “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the one who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”

Kg

Something just doesn't feel right, I mean after the

whole scene with Olivia, we just couldn't feel at ease, so I asked Mulalo if we could head back to the hospital to check on Gringo. I know we hired a few boys to keep an eye on him, but after what happened at my wedding, I don't think we should trust anyone right now. We headed there and everyone was frantic in his ward, I knew immediately something was not right. I was right to trust my gut.

Mulalo and I immediately drew out our guns, and rushed straight into the ward. We found two armed men, with balaclava's on their faces. One was containing the situation, aiming the gun at the terrified nurses, while the other one had a gun pointed straight at Gringo.

We both wasted no time, I shot the one who was aiming at Gringo, while Mulalo shot the one who had the Nurses on their knees. Immediately after two gunshots went off, they were all screaming and shouting. I rushed to the guy I shot and immediately

took off his balaclava. I don't fucking recognize him at all. He was bleeding profusely, but he was still alive.

Kg: "Who sent you?!"

I tried shaking him as he gasped and tried to speak.

Guy: (weakly) "M... Martinelli."

And just like that, the fucker took his last breath. This is so fucking frustrating. I looked at Mulalo and luckily he said the other guy was still conscious, with a weak pulse. I looked around and those fucking nurses were still on the floor.

Aren't they taught how to deal with such situations?! And how the fuck did two armed men dressed in all black make it through the doors without anyone

noticing?! These fucking guys we hired are useless. The only guy with brains around here is Smally.

Kg: "Don't just stand there! Get this fucker some assistance! I need him alive!"

They rushed to him and got him onto a stretcher, while Mulalo and I rushed to Gringo's side. Luckily he wasn't armed and was still asleep.

Kg: "Mulalo, we can't have G here. His life is in grave danger – all of our lives are in danger."

Mulalo: (nodding) "I agree. I will call Smally and ask him to tighten security around the house. No one can leave the house."

Kg: "Also get Louis to set up his bedroom as a hospital room. We should rather pay for him to

recover from home, since these useless people failed to keep him safe.”

Mulalo: “I’m on it.”

As Mulalo went out, I looked at G with a broken heart. It is time for us to toughen up. We have to form an alliance with the Naidoo’s. We need all the help we can get. I don’t like suspecting, but if I am correct then the person who ordered the hit could either be Luigi or Luca Martinelli. They are blood brothers, but have never gotten along. Luca stole from Luigi and he remained loyal to his father and vowed to not kill him.

So, Luca runs his own operation in Italy. How the fuck could we miss that? I need Gringo’s passwords. I need all the information I can get. As I was about to call Smally and ask him to start digging in the house, I received a call from an unfamiliar number. My Truecaller states that it is a number from Italy.

What are the odds? Perhaps it is that fucker Luigi telling me that the worst is not over yet. I decided to answer.

Kg: "Wolfe."

Voice: "Mfanaka (My Boy)."

I felt instant goosebumps as soon as I heard his voice.

Kg: (Surprised) "Soks?"

Soks: (chuckling) "Ke nna owe (That is me)."

Kg: "Wow, man. Long time, dintshang (What's up)?
O shap (Are you okay)?"

Soks: “Ke shap (I’m okay), and you?”

Kg: “I’m a lot better now that you decided to prove to me that you aren’t dead. Now what are you doing in Italy?”

Soks: “I wish this was a social call, but I am afraid this is a business call.”

He sounded serious and more mature, actually.

Kg: “I’m all ears.”

Soks: “Rendani messed up. He brought your wife here to Italy, but I managed to get her away. He has formed an alliance with Luca all based on lies, and basically your lives are now all in danger. You need to act fast.”

Fuck that motherfucker had taken my wife to Italy?

How come I missed that?

Kg: "Send me their co-ordinates."

Soks: "No, Kg. I know you are a lot smarter than that. The only way to defeat the enemy is on your own home ground. You can't come to Italy, they will kill you. Wait for them to come to you. Get your men ready and once you have outnumbered them all – you can come for the big guys, Luca and Luigi."

Kg: (frowning) "What does Luigi have to do with all this?"

Soks: "He took the business from Gringo, with Rendani's help and now that he knows it backfired because of you – you have become his next target I am afraid. You along with everyone else closest to you, hence I had to get Thato away."

Kg: "Where is she? Is she okay?"

Soks: "She is safe and well, dealing with something else you should have sorted out a long time ago. One problem at a time. Once you sort out the Martinelli's, you and Thato can be together again. I have to go, I'll be in touch. Be safe, Kg."

He hung up just like that. Just when I thought things couldn't get any worse, this happens. The Lord works in mysterious ways, indeed. I am just glad that Soks was there to be able to save her. Now, I can't wait to finish this off. I will do this with every bit of power in me for Thato.

Thato

I felt much more at ease when the Queen took me to my room. Wow, it's such a beautiful room, with a big and comfortable bed, a small bedside table and

chair, and surprisingly I have my own bathroom. There is even a small plasma TV pinned against the wall, with a DSTV decoder. At least I will be living in comfort.

Queen Nombu: "I hope this is okay for you."

Thato: "Oh, this is great, Mama, thank you."

She sat on the bed and pulled me next to her.

Queen Nombu: "Tell me, why are you here? I mean you look so young and beautiful and you don't seem like you belong as a helper, if you get what I mean."

I get what she means, but Tman didn't brief me on this. Think Thato, Think. She was looking at me anxiously, so I told her the first thing that came to mind.

Thato: “Well, Ma, my parents passed away, so I am trying to save up funds to study.”

Queen Nombu: (smiling) “Wow, you are an ambitious and smart girl. What is it you would like to study?”

Thato: “Mechanical Engineering.”

Queen Nombu: “Well, my husband is a very charitable man. Perhaps he can get you into one of the top Universities next year.”

I smiled briefly. Eish, I hate lying to elders.

Queen Nombu: “Well, I think you should rest. You do look tired. You will resume duty tomorrow first thing at 6am. Our Head Servant Gloria, will be of assistance. She will guide you on what to do, and

please, if you need any help or you would like to brief me with your concerns, do not be afraid to talk to me. Don't let my daughter get to you, she just has issues because her life hasn't worked out the way she needed it to."

I wonder what the deal is with the bitter Princess, but I decided not to pry. I came here for work and that's it. She said her goodbyes and I looked at the time. It is exactly 2pm, but the long flight and the torture my body has endured the past few days is finally taking its toll on me. I decided to take a quick bath, and I opened the travel bag, and I became tearful all of a sudden. There were such beautiful clothes packed in, exactly my size, and mostly labeled and expensively new.

I even had a whole brand new towel set and a new toothbrush, a few pairs of different shoes. There was even a thick envelope neatly folded into one of the towels. I took out the envelope and I saw tons of

dollars in the envelope. How on earth will I be able to explain this should they search my room or something? A note was right next to the notes, so I decided to read it.

“My dear Thato, you are such a beautiful and bright young woman. I wish you were my daughter. Please keep well and I hope we see each other soon. I will keep praying for you. Please don’t be alarmed at the amount of money I gave you as it comes from a good place. You can treat yourself to something nice, and spoil yourself every now and then. Take care of yourself. Love, Selena.”

I felt my tears stream down my face. Tears of joy rather than heartache. I know I will meet Selena again soon. I can’t even thank her properly for this, but I will just have to hide the money before I get kicked out of here. I took a bath and got into bed. I woke up in the middle of the night, feeling pressed. I must have been seriously tired. I didn’t even get the

time to eat.

I got startled when I saw a beautiful woman dressed in white clothing standing in front of me. I thought of screaming, but then what good would that do? She saw me staring at her and she smiled at me without saying a word. My heart beat faster and faster, as I immediately got down on my knees and started praying. I felt a cold breeze rush through my hair, and give me goosebumps on my neck.

After I finished praying I slowly opened my eyes and the woman was gone. I quickly switched on the light, and there was no woman. Perhaps I was dreaming, but it felt so real. I switched on the tv to check the time, and it is exactly 3am. I made a mental note to buy myself a small phone or watch just to keep track of time. I went to my en suite bathroom to pee and then I got back into bed. I still felt uneasy after seeing that woman. No, man, Thato, are you seeing ghosts now? I have to buy Mphepho (incense) and

candles before I start seeing weirder shit.

Chapter Eighty Six

Psalm 27:1 – “The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of Whom shall I be afraid?”

Thato

I woke up feeling very relaxed and well-rested. I got up at 5am, and even though it is still August month, it is quite hot here. The sun rises way before six pm. I can get used to this because I am not a winter fan at all. I remembered that the Queen did say that I needed to be up at 6am, so that Gloria could show me my rounds. I made my way to my bathroom and took a bath, then I went to my closet. She showed me my uniform last night before leaving my room.

She is very nice, we get four sets it seems – but I

am not sure how many days I will have to work. I got dressed in my uniform; red shirt with a red shirt and a red doek, with black imprints and a very unique design on the edges. It looks really nice, actually. I must say, Queen Nombulelo has some style. I was about to leave my room and go look for Gloria. It might seem like a very stupid idea since I don't even know her nor what she looks like.

Luckily, I heard a stern knock on my bedroom door. I opened it and I was met with a very beautiful, dark skinned lady. I say lady because I am not quite sure how old she is. She had the same uniform on, but her and I are more or less the same height. She has a beautiful body, with big bums and curves, much like Rami.

Her skin is so flawless, I mean wow. I only see women as beautiful as her on tv. She is what I would call a Melanin Goddess. She would genuinely look good on the cover on Vogue Magazine or

something. She has the most beautiful smile ever and her teeth are so perfect, she reminds me of Kg and Mulalo.

Gloria: (smiling) "Sawubona (Hello). Ngi uGloria (I'm Gloria). I will be guiding you today."

Thank goodness she can speak English, because I could never be able to cope with Zulu.

Thato: (smiling) "Hi, Gloria, pleased to meet you. My name is T – Isabella."

Gloria: (smiling) "Well, Isabella, we ought to get going. We cannot waste another moment as the King is home today, so we have to prepare a big feast."

She is so eloquently spoken, I wonder what

happened for her to end up here. She doesn't even look stupid either. I smiled as I headed on out. I made sure to lock my bedroom door, because a lady never leaves her bedroom unlocked as my mother taught me. I followed Gloria to the kitchen, and we met a few other women who were cooking some nice food.

Oh, the smell is so divine and just then I realized how hungry I was. I thought we were going to prepare the food ourselves and decorate the table or something, but I saw Gloria dish up two plates and hand me one as she sat next to me.

Thato: (puzzled) "And then?"

Gloria: "Oh, when we serve the Queen we are allowed to eat before we serve them, but when we serve Princess Nomsa and her exasperating husband, we have to wait for them to finish eating – unless we get up extra early. I swear, she and that ill-mannered

husband of hers make it a mission to make others' lives a living hell. But I will tell you about that later."

She speaks so well, my goodness. She doesn't even have to ask for respect – she commands it with her beautiful linguistic nature, not forgetting her beauty.

Gloria: "Let us pray."

She held my hands, as the other ladies came to join us and we all held hands.

Gloria: "Father God, Baba Wethu wa sezulwini (Our father who art in heaven), we thank you for this beautiful day which was specially allocated to us who could witness it. Give us this day, our daily bread, help us be more appreciative of what we have for others have far less in this cruel world. Help us enjoy this meal, in Jesus' name I pray. Amen."

Everyone: "Amen."

We dug in while I just couldn't help but stare at her in awe. There is just something about her, I just wish for her to go far in life. I cannot wait to get these duties done, so she can tell me more about herself. After eating one of the ladies washed the dishes while the other wiped them clean. I guess this is routine. Looking at these ladies, they are all not very old, and they don't have much but they are happy.

Gloria: "Okay, Isabella. Masihambe, Ndlovukazi (Let's go, Queen)."

I don't know much Zulu, but I do know what Ndhlovukazi (Queen) means.

Thato: (Frowning) "Gloria, why would you call me a Queen?"

Gloria: (Chuckling) “That’s because you are going to be a queen one day. Let’s move, we don’t have much time.”

I nodded in confusion but I let her be. She was nice enough take me through the routine. We place all the dishes on the table and wait on the side for the Royal family to arrive. Once they walk in, we slightly bow our heads until they are all seated. Then we wait for them to tell us if we may go, otherwise we remain standing. From there, we can wait nearby like in the kitchen or so, for them to finish eating and then the other ladies wash the dishes.

Gloria and I are in charge of the house, so we get to clean all the rooms. I hate cleaning with a passion, but with Gloria around, I don’t think I will have a problem with the chore. So, indeed we went to stand in the dining area as we heard footsteps approaching.

Gloria: (Whispering) "Remember, you can smile at everyone except the Prince. Princess Nomsa will think you want to bewitch him or trap him into making you pregnant."

I had to chuckle a bit but I quickly kept my composure. The Queen walked in first before her husband with a broad smile on her face.

Queen Nombulelo: (smiling) "Greetings, Gloria, Isabella."

Gloria: (head bowed) "Greetings, Mama."

I see, all of us are supposed to call her mama.

Isabella: "Good morning, Mama."

A big man walked right behind her. I couldn't see his face, I only his big stature and his big legs and feet.

King Ntsika: "Greetings Gloria, Hello Isabella. Please, stand at ease, mantombazana (girls)."

I didn't know what exactly he meant, but I looked at Gloria and she faced up, so I did the same. Hmm, so the King and Queen are nice to the servants. That's a start. Princess Nomsa walked alongside this big bellied man, whom I assumed is her husband. She looked rather annoyed when she looked at us, but I kept a smile on my face as Gloria taught me this morning.

Princess Nomsa: "Mxm, Kanti (But) Mama, why aren't these two bowing? Am I not important enough?"

Queen Nombulelo: "Nomsa, ungangidiki ekuseni

kanje, please (Don't annoy me this early in the morning)."

She clicked her tongue and sat right next to her husband. Princess Nomsa's daughter, Zenande, walked past us rolling her eyes without even greeting. She was even dressed in a crop top and jeans. I don't get this girl, but I suppose she is one spoilt girl. After her came one handsome man.

He has such a beautiful skin, chocolate complexion and very well built. He looks like he works out a lot. He reminds me a lot of my Kg with his confident walk and perfectly shaped eyebrows. He smiled as he looked at us and stopped to greet.

Prince Zweli: (smiling) "Greetings, Gloria. Who is this lovely lady next to you?"

Gloria: (blushing) "This is Isabella, she just joined

us.”

I could swear Gloria was blushing, but let me not jump to conclusions just yet. I was shocked as the young Prince extended his hand for me to shake. I didn't know what to do, as Gloria said I shouldn't smile at him.

Gloria: (whispering) “It's okay, you may shake his hand. It would be rude not to.”

I looked at the Prince who was anxiously awaiting my handshake. I gladly accepted his friendly gesture and placed mine in his as he shook it gently.

Prince Zweli: “Pleased to meet you, Isabella. My name is Zweli.”

Princess Nomsa: (annoyed) “Prince Zweli to you.”

Prince Zweli: “Ma, you don’t have to flaunt your title to everyone. It is just a title after all.”

I saw the King and Queen smile in pride as Princess Nomsa clicked her tongue as she stared at me in a filthy way. Prince Zweli made his way to his chair, as the Queen finally dismissed us.

Queen Nombu: “You may leave, girls. Thank you for the food. Please thank the cooks on all our behalf.”

We nodded and left for the kitchen.

Gloria: “So, how was it?”

Thato: “It was okay, but you owe me a lot of news after this.”

Gloria: "I will tell you all about it when we're alone. Come, let's go clean. The cooks can call for us if needed."

Gloria and I proceeded to go into the bedrooms to clean. Luckily she had done some spring cleaning the other day, so all we need to do is just some touch ups. I did say cleaning is not my strong point, but I won't show Gloria that. I did my best to help her and she is so efficient and energetic, I have no idea how on earth she manages. We first went into the Queen and King's bedroom. It is the biggest bedroom of them all, with a walk-in closet and an en-suite bathroom with a shower and bath tub.

Her bathroom is so beautiful, covered in black marble. I have never seen such a stylish bathroom in my life. She has such beautiful clothes and no jeans or pants in sight. It seems as if all her clothes are custom made, along with the King's suits. He hardly wears jeans so it seems. I listened to Gloria

tell me all about the King and Queen and how they do so much for the community.

Gloria: “King Ntsika and Queen Nombulelo are very good to the community, you know. They have done so much to help children from orphanages get an opportunity to go to school. They run their own private school right here in Enande. I will show you one day when we are off. I do hope we get to have off days on the same days. I would love to show you around.”

Thato: “What’s Prince Zweli like?”

I saw her facial expression change and she started to blush immediately. Yep, I wanted to see what was actually happening and my suspicions confirmed it. She either has a crush on the guy, or she is in love with him.

Gloria: (blushing) “Well, he is one of the most humble people I have ever met, much like his father. He is so soft spoken, and not easily angered. He does not demand respect – he commands it. I think he would be a great king one day, but apparently they await on the late Princess’s son to come and take his rightful place on the throne.”

Thato: (puzzled) “They had another daughter?”

Gloria: “Yes, Princess Nandi. She passed on years ago shame. They never even got to bury her on royal grounds because of her husband. They never even saw her son ever again. The Queen is a very stern woman, but at times she would speak to me about her.”

Shame. This is just sad. I made a mental note to ask her about Zweli later on. Where there is smoke, there is indeed fire. We went out and proceeded to walk to the next bedrooms. I stood in front of the

bedroom next to the King and Queen's, but she quickly stopped me.

Gloria: "Hayi (No)! Do not ever – I mean ever go in there!"

I looked at her puzzled.

Gloria: "That is Nomsa's bedroom. Please, if you want a peaceful night's sleep do not ever go in there."

I nodded as she really looked bewildered and frightened to even think about the bedroom. We proceeded to clean the rest of the bedrooms before we headed out for our lunch break. I was surprised as we weren't called as Gloria said, but she says whenever the King and Zweli are around, we don't get called back. They get others to clean the table and wash the dishes.

I am not complaining, I mean I am already tired. My feet feel so achy, but I guess I will have to get used to this. During lunch, Gloria got us some left over muffins and juice as we proceeded to her bedroom. She says she likes the peace of quiet during her lunch break since it is always so busy outside. She prayed for our food and we started eating.

Thato: "So, Gloria, how old are you and what is a beautiful and intelligent girl like you doing here?"

Gloria: (deep sigh) "I am 22."

I gasped in shock.

Gloria: "My mother died when I was 7, and I was raised by my father and stepmother ever since then. Life was tough right from the moment my mother died, Isabella. I never really had a normal life. My

stepmother would always pretend to love me whenever my father was around, but he used to work nightshift a lot since he was a policeman, so she would find every reason there is to abuse me. Even though he only remarried when I was 13, she made my life a living hell. One day, she brought her brother to our house while my father was away due to work. I was 18 at the time and still a virgin, and I remember how he stormed into my bedroom and forced himself on me. I never recovered, Isabella, I told her and you know what she said to me?"

I looked at her with tears forcing their way out of my eyes.

Gloria: "She said I deserved it. I cried so much, Isabella, especially when her daughter, my half sister, was not as intelligent as I was. I wanted to tell my father so badly, I really did. I told him what happened, and he wasted no time. He took his gun and was about to go out to shoot the bastard, but

my stepmother shot him in the head right in front of me. She claimed self-defense and I was beyond traumatized. To make matters worse – she took all his money and left me with nothing. I had to move in with my grandmother, whom I look after. I got a job here and I have been working here ever since.”

I couldn't help but hug her, and she was teary but wasn't in so much tears as I was. It hurts me to think that such a beautiful and innocent young girl's innocence was taken from her and there was nothing she could do about it.

Thato: “I am so sorry, Gloria.”

Gloria: “Don't be. I am healed, Isabella. I really am. I had put all my faith in the Lord and you know what? He saw me at the market a few months after he raped me. He looked like hell on earth, and could barely even walk. His own sister, my stepmother, chased him out of my father's house for having Aids.

He begged me for forgiveness, Isabella. That was when I knew that the Lord had favoured me. I had asked the Lord time and time again to help me find peace in my heart. That day, I told him that I forgave him, and later on in the evening, I heard he had died.”

Some people actually go through the most. Here we are crying over our boyfriends having amnesia, while their whole lives were stolen from them.

Chapter Eighty Seven

Joshua 1:6 – “Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.”

Two days later

Kg

I am glad that we finally got Gringo to come home. I don't know what Nana did to Gringo, but after burning a lot of incense, praying and fasting these past few days, he miraculously woke up. Louis managed to get us through to Gringo's laptop, so we did managed to track down Luigi and Luca. The other guy whom Mulalo shot, confirmed everything Soks told me before he succumbed to his injuries. That was a start, but at least now I know that Thato is safe. Not being able to speak to her brings such heartache to me, but we have bigger fish to fry.

Luca and Luigi haven't made a move yet, and we can't get into their country as they already made everyone aware of us. They are both against one another – yet Rendani managed to turn them both against us here in South Africa. It's bad enough fighting a war right here on home ground, but fighting one across the world, is another thing. I just hope and pray that we beat those fuckers.

As for Rendani, I want him for lunch. He has to pay for what he did to my Thato. Mulalo and I have been growing so close to one another, and I honestly don't regret finding him at all. He is such a breeze and being able to share my thoughts, fears and ambitions with my own twin, brings me peace of mind. We decided to go check on Gringo since Nana was feeding him her delicious soup.

Nana: (smiling) "Boys, I am glad you are here. This son of mine has been calling for you."

I wonder why.

Nana: "I will leave you to it, but take it easy David. Life is not a game."

Gringo: (softly) "Yes, Mom."

She kissed his cheek and left. Gringo is up, but he is still not his usual self. The bullets must have hit him harder than we all thought. If anything, he is rather lucky to be alive.

Gringo: "Boys, any news on my daughter?"

Kg: "Soks told me that she is safe, although I don't have a location for her."

Gringo: "Have you tried our IT guys? I just need to know if she is safe."

Kg: "We have, and surprisingly he also can't find her."

Gringo: (shocked) "How come?! He's the best!"

He started coughing and I knew then we shouldn't

anger him as it might take its toll on his health.

Mulalo: "G, take it easy, please."

Gringo: (coughing) "Okay, I hear you. It's just that, I don't know for how much longer I can hold onto this life. My wife is no more. How will I be able to continue without her?"

I felt his pain, and for me it would also have been unbearable, believe me.

Kg: "We'll get through this, G. At least do this for Thato."

Gringo: (sigh) "I guess you're right. Was the funeral really just as she asked?"

Kg: (smiling) "It was even better. She was probably smiling and laughing up in heaven."

Gringo: (teary) "That's my Viv. I think you can let the lawyer come and read the will since I am awake. We don't know for how much longer I might be breathing."

Why does it seem like he is saying his last goodbye's?
Gringo shouldn't even do this us. Not now.

Mulalo: "You have a whole life ahead of you, G."

Gringo: (laughing softly) "Whole life? You are one funny guy. Now, back to business. What have you been doing to get to the Martinelli's?"

Kg: "Not much. Security is tight. We can't get to Italy, and they can't get here for now."

Gringo: (frowning) “Wolfe, since when are you so sloppy and slow? Who got you so whipped?”

I smiled as I felt like I was actually blushing. How do I tell my big boss that his daughter is actually my wife?

Kg: (scratching head) “Well, eish...”

Mulalo: “Breathe, brother.”

In my mind I was chuckling, but in person, I was scared shitless. Gringo is one scary guy even when he is in a fragile state.

Gringo: (raised eyebrow) “Well?”

Kg: (sigh) "I would like to confess, G. Firstly, it was never my intention to disrespect you or harm her or even ruin her future by getting her pregnant. It happened, but I was and still am man enough to love and protect her. I love her so much, I just hope you understand."

Gringo looked at me so seriously, and I couldn't help but feel nervous. I felt my palms become sweaty out of fear. It takes a lot to scare me and G is one of the few lot that can get that right. Gringo laughed at me so hard, but he tried not to cough.

Gringo: (laughing) "You should have seen your face. Wolfe, it's okay, man, really. I knew long ago."

Kg: (frowning) "How?"

Gringo: "I saw the way you looked at her the first time you "met" her. So, I did some digging. I found

out that you were the long lost love she was talking about, so I never asked her about it as I didn't want to pry."

I felt so much relief.

Kg: "So, you're not angry?"

Gringo: "Believe me, I would rather her be with someone sane than anyone else."

I looked at Mulalo who also scratched his head.

Gringo: "Relax, Shark. I know what you and her did as well. I'd rather not go into it, but I am not angry. That is life, we all make our own choices, and I wish you two were my sons so I could have raised you way better than your useless fathers could ever have. Despite everything, you two turned out better

than alright. I want you to know that I love you both even more than my own sons.”

That brought actual tears in my eyes. I have known G for a short while, but the bond I have with him is incomparable with the one I had with Romeo. It is true what they say; blood makes you related, but loyalty makes you family.

Gringo: “On a serious note, I think I have a plan on how to get to those fuckers, but for now, I think I have to recover first and get better in order for us all to be fully recovered. Just make sure they don’t set foot here. In the mean time, make sure that Rami gets all the support she needs.”

Thato

It has an amazing yet rather challenging two days here. I am loving it, although I don’t know what

exactly Princess Nomsa's problem with me is. Gloria says she has a problem with everyone, but it seems as if whenever she is home, she just calls for me to demand ridiculous shit from me. The other day she called for me and asked me to make her some tea, of which I did, then she spilled it on me and said it was an accident. Yesterday she asked me to rub her feet, of which I refused. I am a servant maid – not a slave. She wasn't too happy about it and even went to complain to her mother, who told her where to get off in the process.

Ever since then she has been giving me very uneasy looks that just leave me with a cold shiver down my spine. So, I started working here on Wednesday, apparently Gloria and I get to have weekends off and since it is Saturday today, I offered to take her out provided she shows me around the town. It is not like I need the money in any case, and besides, she has been saving to get into varsity and for some odd reason she can't get a bursary. I don't know how I am going to explain the dollars in my envelope, but I

feel like I trust Gloria enough to be honest with her. I have been seeing that ghost woman every night ever since I moved here.

I don't know her, but I think she has a message for me. I still feel afraid whenever she appears, even when she is just smiling, but I have to try and communicate with her. I have asked Gloria about seeing ghosts in passing, and she said that there are good spirits and bad spirits, but the good ones always come in a happy form and never want to harm. Most of the time, they would like to use you as a vessel to carry out a message for them. She says whenever you see a deceased person in the flesh instead of dreams, you are truly blessed and highly favoured. She says she used to see her father's spirit every now and then and that it pleases her even though most of the time he is crying because of how her life planned out.

She is so optimistic, despite her tribulations and I

admire that so much. She has taught me how to be more grateful for what I have. She also has some nice clothes and has apparently never worn branded clothing, so since we are more or less the same size, she is just slightly bigger, I gave her one of my Gucci dresses. It's long and very flowey, so size won't be a problem. As we were in my room, she was too excited to show me around.

Gloria: (excited) "Isabella, I can't wait to show you around, especially the local market. They have a lot of exquisite souvenirs that you can buy."

Thato: (smiling) "Gloria, I have something for you."

I went to my closet and took out that gorgeous Gucci dress. She was in awe and literally had sparkles in her eyes. She couldn't stop looking at it and gasping.

Gloria: (shocked) "Sister, I have never worn a Gucci item in my life!"

Thato: (smiling) "Well, you deserve it because it is the start of many."

Gloria: (frowning) "Forgive me for asking this, but where did you get these clothes? I mean you are not an escort or anything, are you?"

I didn't even find the question offensive at all.

Thato: (laughing) "No, silly. I can assure you, I am not an escort."

Gloria: "Then where did you get the money to buy all this?"

Thato: “Okay, let’s make a deal. Let’s go out and have some fun and I promise to tell you all about my life when we come back. Deal?”

Gloria was a bit skeptical at first of which I understand. I mean I just started working here and yet here I am with brand new branded clothing.

Gloria: “Okay, deal.”

We changed and got dressed and the dress really suited her. It accentuated her gorgeous bust and curves. I wore my Versace dress, which is a lot similar to hers. I really miss Rami at times like these. I decided to put some of Rami’s skills of which she passed onto me to good use. I did a bit of Gloria’s make up and she has never even worn any before in her life.

Gloria: (teary) “Isabella, I have never looked so beautiful in my whole entire life.”

The truth is, I knew why I was doing it. I wanted The Prince to see her extra beauty today and perhaps he would find the courage to ask her out. I see the way he looks at her, but I chose to keep quiet about it.

Thato: “Well, it is time for you to meet your future husband.”

Gloria: (blushing) “Oh, I don’t think anybody would ever be interested in me. I’m too boring for them.”

Thato: “You would actually be surprised at how many men would kill for someone like you. Now, come, let’s go.”

As we walked out of my bedroom and proceeded to walk out of the house, we were met with Princess Nomsa and Prince Zweli. I could tell they were both overwhelmed with shock; Nomsa was probably

asking herself where we got such nice outfits, while Zweli was low-key drooling over my friend Gloria. We bowed out of respect, but Prince Zweli reprimanded us immediately.

Prince Zweli: "Please, I am just human like you. No need to bow in my presence, in fact if I had it my way, I would not let any human being bow for anyone."

Apparently he has no interest in being the King, even though Nomsa keeps pushing for it to happen.

Gloria: "Glady, my Prince."

Princess Nomsa: "And then? Where are you two off to?"

Gloria was about to answer, but Prince Zweli humbly interrupted her.

Prince Zweli: “Gloria, my apologies for interrupting you. Ma weh, they don’t owe you any explanation on where they are going. They are employees, going out on their day off.”

I could see Gloria overwhelmed with pride, while Nomsa was annoyed as fuck. If she had it her way, she would have probably ripped off our clothes.

Nomsa: (annoyed) “Very well then.”

Thato: “Keep well, My Prince, My Princess.”

Zweli: “Go well, my dear ladies. By the way, you both look exceptional today.”

We both walked out feeling quite chuffed. It is always nice whenever someone compliments a lady. As we walked out, we both greeted Beki, the guard.

Gloria: "Sawubona (Hello, Bekumuzi.)"

Beki: (smiling) "Sanibonani (Hello, mantombazana amahle (beautiful ladies). Ninanji (How are you)?"

Gloria: Si right (We're okay), how are you?"

Beki: "Ngiyaphila (I'm alright). Niyaphi ni bahle kanje (Where are you off to looking so beautiful)?"

Gloria: "We're off to the market."

Thato: "Shall we bring you something?"

Beki: "Oh, hayi (no), ngiyabonga (thank you). Please, don't spend your hard earned money on me."

Thato: "Please, I insist."

Beki: "Well, in that case, I would like some KFC.
Kudala ngaigcina (I haven't had some in forever)."

Thato: (smiling) "Coming right up. Enjoy your day."

Beki: "Go well and keep safe."+

Chapter Eighty Eight

1 Chronicles 28:20 – "David also said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished."

Thato

Gloria and I got into a taxi and I wasn't even bothered at all. I wasn't born rich, but the heat here is flipping ridiculous. I always end up pink at the end of the day if I spend too much time in the sun. We didn't drive that long, though, perhaps about ten to fifteen minutes or so. We started at the bank, as I pleaded with her that we start there. I don't know if I should use my bank account, as Tman strictly instructed me to keep a low profile.

So, I decided to exchange the dollars and keep the money in cash. I will have to get Gloria to keep some for me in her bank account, should she agree. Eish, Selena gave me about 3000 dollars, which amounted to R49 719.90. Shit. I can't be walking around with so much money. We might get robbed or something. Since well, Gloria is seated on one of the couches with me, I have no choice but to ask her to keep it in her account for me.

Thato: "Gloria, would it be possible for you to keep some money for me in your bank account?"

Gloria: "Why can't you use yours? You do have one, don't you?"

Thato: "It's not that easy. It's complicated."

Gloria: (frowning) "How much are we talking about?"

Thato: "About close to R50 000."

Gloria: (gasping) "What?! Where did you get so much money, Isabella?"

Thato: "I can't tell you right now."

Gloria: "I don't know, I am not comfortable with this."

I can't have any evil money in my bank account. I wouldn't want Princess Nomsa to think I am stealing from her."

I took a deep sigh as I decided it was time to tell her the truth – well, half of it.

Thato: (sigh) "Your phone is a smartphone, isn't it?"

Gloria: (nodding) "Yes."

Thato: "Please give it here, so I can show you."

She handed me her phone as I logged onto my Instagram. I showed her a few of my pictures, along with my profile. I briefly explained who I really am and why I am here exactly. Of course she was in a deep state of shock, like she just couldn't believe that such things actually happened. If more than

anything, really, she felt so much pity for me afterwards.

Gloria: (saddened) “Oh, no, sisi (sis). I am so sorry you had to go through such.”

If only she knew that is only half of what I had endured.

Gloria: “Come, you can use my account anytime.”

On second thought, I think it would be best to deposit some of the money into a fixed account for Gloria. That way, she could use it to save up for her studies. I managed to convince her to open another investment account and I deposited R35000 into her account. The rest would be for her and I to spend. I would love to spoil her. She just reminds me of Rami, who welcomed me with open arms. I am so tempted to buy a phone and check on her without

making everyone suspicious.

Perhaps I should just buy a cheap Mobitel though. I mean, it would really look weird for me to be the only one walking around without a phone at this time of the century. So, Gloria and I headed out and of course she took me to the nearest cellphone shop. I bought myself a phone, while she showed me the market. I love how the people here invest in tradition.

There is so much beadwork and amazing traditional attire, that I just had to buy myself one outfit and some beadwork. I see myself wearing this one day, so I guess we will have to see. I took her out to mall and we went to Cupaccino's. She was very skeptical at first.

Gloria: "No, Isabella, I don't think we should go in. I mean, we have to save all our money."

Thato: “Will you relax? I would like to spoil you, so please allow me the chance.”

She nodded as we walked in. She looked so worried and stiff, but I knew what would do the trick. She looked at the menu and I could tell she didn't know what to order. She was more than skeptical.

Thato: “Glo, can you just relax, please? I just want you to let go and be happy.”

Gloria: “This is too much, Isabella. I am not used to spending so much on food.”

Thato: “There is a reason why I am in your life, Glo, please allow me the chance to thank you.”

She nodded after a while as we ordered some cocktails. After a few sips, she seemed so relaxed.

Gloria: “Yoh, sisi (sis), azange ngaphuza into emnandi so (I have never had such a lovely drink).”

Thato: (chuckling) “That is nothing, you should have some proper wine, you know. Wine that won’t give you any hangovers.”

Gloria: “Hayi (No), I never drink, I mean Princess Nomsa might just decide to bother me along with Zenande.”

Thato: (frowning) “You’re human, aren’t you? Besides, you’re employed by them – not owned by them.”

Gloria: “I guess you are right, but I do whatever I can to ensure I don’t stay in their bad books. I don’t want to lose my job. It pays me really well and my grandmother can be able to get her medication from

the chemist instead of waiting in queues at the local clinic.”

Last she told me that the clinic was run by the Ncube’s, but why is she complaining about it so much? I mean surely the King and Queen would not want their business or anything they own to be associated with bad mouthing.

Thato: “I thought the King and Queen are doing a good job at running the clinic?”

Gloria: “Yebo (Yes) kunjalo (they are), but ever since Nomsa took over the running thereof, nothing has been coming right. People are dying right at the gate and at the hands of other nurses. She decided to employ her friends and I heard that some of them aren’t even qualified.”

Wow, what a shocker.

Thato: “But surely they must have heard about this?”

Gloria: “Yes, they have, but people are afraid to go against Nomsa. Whenever the King and Queen come for inspection on Thursdays, they find everything spotless, even the books make sense. No one will ever dare complain about Nomsa and her husband.”

Something just doesn't seem right with the whole Nomsa and her husband thing. Why are people so afraid of her, though?

Thato: “Do people fear her because she could actually be capable of getting rid of someone?”

Gloria was surprisingly open and honest about everything. I am guessing it must be the cocktails, or the mere fact that we are away from the Royal

Palace and she can be free to talk here.

Gloria: "Yes, she is indeed capable of killing."

I was a bit surprised. By the sound of Gloria's tone, Nomsa has done it before.

Thato: "What do you mean?"

Gloria: "Nomsa's husband, Derick, is from a Royal family, but his family is not as well-known as the Ncube's. They were basically bankrupt when he married Nomsa. Apparently he had a lot of scandalous deeds, and his family had to pay off another girl's family so that she wouldn't get him arrested for raping her. The girl claimed she was pregnant by Derick, but Nomsa insisted that the girl was lying. The girl eventually gave birth and the child was a spitting image of Derick. The girl threatened to go public with the news, but she never

made it to the papers.”

I looked at Gloria in such defeat. What kind of family has Soks brought me to?

Gloria: “Hence I tell you to be careful and stay out of Derick’s way. He tends to harass the women who work in the palace, as some fell pregnant by him out of rape, but he has managed to keep them quiet by paying them off and looking after their families.”

This is one sick family.

Thato: “Surely the King and Queen know about this?”

Gloria: “They are blind to whatever is happening around there. Derick makes sure the girls abort the children. Nomsa knows about it all, but claims they are all after her man. It’s crazy hey.”

I sat there trying to process it all. I can't believe it. I received a message from my new phone. That's odd because I never gave anyone my number, I mean I literally just bought it a few hours ago. I opened the message and it read "Be careful. Tall, dark man dressed in red hoody following you. Be aware of your surroundings, act normal. I will get rid of him. Tman. P.S. Delete this message after reading."

My heart started racing after reading that message. I slowly looked around and saw a tall, dark man dressed in a red hoody sitting right across us in the restaurant. He gave me one strange yet spine-chilling look, but I quickly looked down and deleted the message. Tman said I should act normal, although it is a bit hard for me to do so. I continued having my lunch with Gloria, and then a few minutes later, security walked towards the guy in the red hoody.

Security guard: "Excuse me, sir, but the boss is asking for you."

Guy: (puzzled) "Why?! I am busy having lunch!"

The idiot was so guilty it was quite obvious by the way he reacted. He didn't even order anything, but a glass of water. How come I didn't notice him following us?

Security guard: "I am afraid if you do not come with us, we will have to drag you out of here."

The guy was so irritated as he looked at me in frustration. He tried to argue with the security guard, but he seemed to have overpowered him. He was led out by the guard, and I have no idea where he went. Tman must be a spy or something. How on earth did he get my number? And why is that guy following me? I felt uneasy, but then if we go back

home now, it would raise suspicion and Tman would probably give me one huge lecture. After lunch, we decided to walk around the area.

As we were walking through the market stalls, where they sell amazing items from clothing to handmade jewelry, I kept looking back without showing Gloria that I was a bit puzzled. I stopped in front of one of the stalls that just caught my eye. An unfamiliar old woman came to stand next to me. She looked at one of the items, a beautiful, long custom made dress. The woman who was selling became instantly awkward when the old woman arrived.

Old woman: “Malini lena (How much is this)?”

Seller: “Hayi cha (No, no), angicabangi ukuthi ungayikhona (I don’t think you would be able to afford this).”

I saw the old woman looking down in such disappointment. I mean, the seller is rather rude, more especially to an old woman. I couldn't see the old woman's face, as she was wearing a long, black cape that looked rather worn out. I could only notice she was old by her crooked walk and her wrinkled hands. Gloria was also dumbfounded by the seller's attitude, but it seemed as if she was a bit scared of the woman as well.

Thato: (frowning) "I'm sorry, but that was rather rude, don't you think?"

The seller immediately regretted her actions as soon as I called her to order, but I was just getting started.

Seller: "Oh, ngiyaxolisa (I'm sorry), ukuthi nje (it's just that)... I didn't mean it like that."

Thato: “Then how did you mean it, Ma? This woman is old enough to be your grandmother, and you couldn’t even be decent enough to answer her appropriately? Tell me, had you gone to buy the material you use to make the beautiful items you make and someone answered you in the same manner, would you be okay with it?”

She looked at me and then looked down in shame, while the old woman next to me looked at me and held my hand.

Old woma: “Kulungile, Ndhlovukazi (It’s okay, Queen). Ngizozihambela ke mina (I will be on my way), ngiyabonga (thank you).”

She had a half burnt face with one grey eye, which I assumed was damaged by the fire or something, but I wasn’t even scared of her. For all I know, she could have been badly bruised like this by a perpetrator or something. In fact, I had so much pity for her, that

my heart became instantly pained.

Thato: "No, Mama, please wait.."

She stood there looking at me with so much sadness in her eyes. I looked at the seller.

Thato: "Malini (How much)?"

I learnt a few words for the past few days, all thanks to Glo.

Seller: (Ashamedly) "R350."

I grabbed my purse and took out R500 and handed it to the seller.

Thato: "Please pack it away for her in a plastic bag."

I looked at the woman who was at the brink of crying.

Thato: "Mama, what is your shoe size?"

Old woman: "Ngigzoka iSize 4 (I wear a size 4)."

Thato: "Please give her one pair of your most beautiful shoes and pack those for her as well."

The seller picked one of her best pairs and put them in the plastic bag as she handed them to me. I looked at the old woman, who looked a bit frail, and perhaps she might be a bit hungry. She does not seem like she is well taken care of, so I took out an extra R200 note and handed it to her along with the plastic bag.

Old woman: "Oh, no, Ndhlovukazi (Queen), please, I

cannot accept this kind gesture of yours.”

People were oddly staring and pointing at us, but I didn't care. I assume people call me a Queen probably because I look white or for some other odd reason. I don't even take much note of that.

Thato: “Please Ma, take it. You shouldn't be treated any differently just because you look different.”

She took the plastic bag along with the money, and looked at me in the eye.

Old woman: “My vision was correct. You came a bit later than expected, but you have come to the right place. You have come to save our people. Thank you so much, my Queen. Please, continue to be so kind to others.”

She let go of my hands and walked away. As she walked past the people, I noticed how ostracized she actually was. People refused to even be near her, some didn't even want her to touch them, while others didn't even want to look at her. Who is this woman?

Gloria: (surprised) "Isabella, you are too kind for your own good. Do you know who that is?"

Thato: "No, who is she?"

Gloria: "uMamlambo (that's Mrs. Mlambo), one of the greatest witches that ever lived."

I don't understand. I looked her confused.

Gloria: "Apparently she was a great witch a long, long time ago. She says she is healed through

Jesus' name and she stopped practicing witchcraft, but people don't believe her, hence they are so scared of her."

Thato: "What do you believe?"

Gloria: "I believe that everyone deserves a second chance, much like her, although I am very scared of her."

Gloria's statement is rather hypocritical, I mean how can you be scared of something you are not even sure of?

Thato: "Glo, have you even seen her in action?"

Gloria: "No."

Thato: "Yet you are scared of her?"

She looked down after she realized what I was actually insinuating.

Thato: "My point is we have all been through a lot, and all of us get gossiped about, but let us not be stereotypical and judge a woman we don't even know, hey."

Gloria: "I guess you are right, Isabella. I didn't mean to sound judgmental."

Thato: "No one is perfect, it's okay. Come, let's go buy ourselves a bottle of proper wine and some snacks."

We went to the local Woolworths food and bought ourselves a bottle of wine, some delicious snacks

and dessert. It is time we ate some nice food for a change.

Chapter Eighty Nine

Matthew 7:1-5 – “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye’, when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

Princess Nomsa

I am frustrated now, I can’t fucking believe it. I knew the moment that white girl walked in here that she

was up to no good. I can't find anything about her online. My gut is telling me that someone sent her here to come spy on me or something. I will just have to get rid of her the same way I get rid of anyone who stands in my way. It is such a pity MaMasango does not practice witchcraft anymore, because she was the best. Now, Behngu is good, but not that good. I will have to go see him if all else fails.

I sent Slovo to spy on that bloody girl and Gloria, I mean she hasn't even gotten paid yet and already they are both dressed in Gucci and Versace. I know fake brands when I see them and what they were wearing is 100% real. There is no way this Isabella girl is just a random maid, there is more than meets the eye here and I am never wrong. I have been trying to call Slovo for hours, but his phone takes me straight to voicemail.

He had better not be planning on going AWOL on me,

otherwise I swear, I will kill him. He has been working for me for years and now this that is happening is just so new to me. Slovo never leaves his phone off – especially when out on a mission. As I was about to dial his number again, Beki walked in.

Beki: Ngiyaxolisa ukuk'hlupa Nkosazana (Sorry to bother you, Princess), kodwa une'sivakashi (but you have a visitor)."

Princess Nomsa: "Let them in."

I was stunned as Slovo walked in with his face bruised, his lips and cheeks and one eye swollen with a bloody shirt.

Princess Nomsa: (shocked): "And then wena (you)?"

Slovo: “Eish, ou lady (old woman), hade (sorry), kodwa (but) ngihlangene ne flop (I ran into some problems).”

Princess Nomsa: (livid) “I send you and you come back with a whole list of problems?!”

Slovo: “Eish, I can no longer do this job. Hade (Sorry), kodwa (but) you have to look for someone else to do it.”

Since when is Slovo such a wanker?

Princess Nomsa: “Heh (What)?! Utheni (What did you just say)?!”

Slovo: “Bona ou lady (Look, old woman), that girl is protected. They just said I must give you a message.”

He took out a note from his pockets and handed it to me. “Stay away from her if you know what is good for you. Your whole dealings will be exposed, and the truth shall be revealed about what you did to your sister. Be Warned, Nomsa. Stay away from Isabella.” I ripped the letter apart fuming with anger from the pit of my gut. Who the fuck is this threatening the mighty Nomsa? Do they know who I am?

Princess Nomsa: “Slovo, a few beatings here and there and you suddenly want to quit the job? I pay you a lot of money.”

Slovo: “You can keep your money, ou lady (old woman). I can no longer work for you in total. You don’t get it. These people will ruin you and everyone who work for you. They have everything – all the information that would be enough for your parents to skin you alive.”

Mxm, Slovo is such a wimp. Whoever it is must be bluffing and I don't take kindly to threats.

Princess Nomsa: "You're not serious. So now you're quitting your job? What are you going to eat?"

Slovo: "I'd rather go hungry than get killed."

As he said that, that little white bitch walked in along with Gloria. They were even carrying plastic bags from Woolworths. Who the fuck is this girl?

Slovo: (nervous) "Hade again (Sorry again)."

He stood up, greeted those two and walked out. They both bowed before me, and I stood there for a few seconds, analyzing this girl. She doesn't even look black at all, I mean that curly hair can't be from

black genes. Is she a spy or something? I figured I would have to play nice to get her to give me what I need. Little girls are always that naïve.

Princess Nomsa: (smiling) "You may rise."

They rose their heads and looked at me.

Princess Nomsa: "Did you have some fun today, girls?"

They both looked at each other shocked, it seems like they are just not buying my fake kindness at all.

Gloria: "Yebo, Ma (Yes), siyabonga (thank you)."

Princess Nomsa: "I was thinking, Isabella, we never gave you a proper welcoming when you arrived here."

So, how about I order us some nice food and get us a few drinks then you, Gloria and I and the rest of the servants can have us a good time?”

I thought she would even hesitate or think about it for a second, but she answered me immediately.

Thato: “No, thank you, Princess Nomsa. We have our own plans. We’ll see you on Monday.”

They left me standing there in pure defeat. No one has ever said no to my gustures - well except Gloria, but she is just as uptight as a bloody broomstick, but this one seems feisty, like she knows too much. I doubt she is from Limpopo even. She even has a big mouth. I’ll find her weak spot, I will just have to.

Thato

Mxm, Princess Nomsa thinks we are stupid, I guess. How on earth does she expect Gloria and I to fall for her sudden kindness? I know a snake when I see one and Sophie used to do that to me whenever she wanted something from me. I must say I actually don't miss Rockville at all. Glo and I arrived in my bedroom, as we unpacked the plastic bags we had. She put the clothes I bought for her in my closet, as we started preparing the food we bought.

We need a refrigerator in here, really. We can't be having warm beverages. I will have to ask for permission to buy myself a fridge when I get paid. Speaking of getting paid, apparently we get paid R7500. That is quite something, more especially when you don't have children. Glo took a bath first and then I followed, as we got dressed in our matching gowns and slippers which I bought for us at Whoolworths.

Gloria: "You know, Isabella, I never had siblings or

much friends while growing up. In the few days I have known you, you have taught me a lot about myself and about life. I think there is a reason why you are here, Ndhlovukazi (Queen).”

There she goes again.

Thato: “Why do you call me that?”

Gloria: “I don’t know, I feel like you’re going to be a queen one day. You just have those qualities, you know. Those qualities of a good ruler.”

Ai, perhaps I am reading too much into things. We started having ourselves some wine, and then the conversation started flowing.

Gloria: “You told me a very brief story about you at the bank, but not everything. Care to tell me what

really happened?”

I took a deep sigh, and one big sip from my glass, as I started telling her everything from the beginning; from growing up in Rockville, to being raised by my wonderful mother, to losing her, to losing Palesa, to losing my baby and the million rand she left me to my biological mother, to losing Kg and now I am here. The whole time she had tears flowing down her face and for the first time ever since I told someone this story, it really didn't hurt me much. I am just glad that I am finally on the road to recovery and healing.

Gloria: “Yoh, Nkosiyami (My goodness), you have been through so much, Isabella. So your grandmother named you Isabella?”

Thato: (nodding) “yes.”

Gloria: "I can't imagine what they must be going through not knowing where you are right now."

Thato: "I know, hey. I just can't wait for all this to be over."

Gloria: (saddened) "When it is all over you will be going back to Jo'burg, leaving me here."

Thato: "Don't be silly, I will gladly take you with me. You will explore life and finally be able to enroll in University."

Gloria: "I don't like being a burden, Isabella, you know that."

Thato: "A sister of mine, can never be a burden, Glo."

She gave me a brief smile.

Thato: “In other news, are you ready to tell me what exactly is going on between you and Prince Zweli?”

She started blushing instantly, just as she always does at the sight of him or hearing his name.

Gloria: “Eish, you are so observant. But promise me you won’t tell anyone.”

Thato: “I promise.”

Gloria: “Well, Prince Zweli fancies me and I like him back. Well, he said he loves me.”

Okay, this is big news, bigger than I actually expected.

Thato: "Then what is the problem?"

Gloria: (sigh) "I told him I could never let him settle for less and be with a servant girl, Isabella. His mother would never have it and they don't really allow royals to marry commoners."

I didn't know we still had such practices and beliefs in South Africa, though. But I doubt the King and Queen would ever be against their union.

Thato: "How does he feel regarding this?"

Gloria: "He says he is willing to wait for me for as long as it takes. He really loves me Isabella, I have had to hide the gifts he buys for me. He is such an intellectual, he manages to find time to read books in his spare time despite being a very busy lawyer. He really is a good guy, a humble soul and has major

respect for everyone and most importantly women and children. He does a lot for the community around here.”

Thato: “Well, I think you should give him a chance. I mean we are in the 21st century, Glo. When you find love, you grab it with both hands and never let it go.”

Gloria: “I’m scared, Isabella. I don’t know if I will ever be able to handle all the drama that comes with his family. I wouldn’t want to tear his family apart.”

Thato: “Life is a risk, rather die trying knowing you did experience love. Just give him the time to get to show you how much he actually loves you and we will take it from there.”

I saw her contemplating it and she took out her phone.

Thato: "What are you doing now?"

Gloria: "I am finally saying yes to him. He sent me this message and said that whenever I am ready, I should respond to him."

Hehe, I just love love, really. I can't wait to see how their love story evolves. We continued to talk about life and Prince Zweli, more especially after he sent her a beautiful message "My Gloria, finally you have decided to accept my proposal. I have been praying for this day and I don't know who to thank – your new friend or God for finally talking some sense into you. I can't wait to make you the happiest woman in the world.

No woman of mine will be scrubbing pots and cleaning after people. You deserve all the love in the world as you are the perfect description of royalty itself. You need no title, Gloria. I love you, I have always loved you, my Melanin Goddess. How I wish

you could have accepted this sooner, but better late than never. I can't wait to prove to you that you deserve to be my wife. Love, Zweli."

It seems as the Prince does not like this title much, as he hardly refers to himself as royalty or the Prince. Wow, this is just amazing. We slowly dozed off after finishing the whole bottle of wine. I got up in the middle of the night, as I felt pressed. I now have a phone at least so I am able to check the time. It is indeed just after midnight. I was about to go the toilet, when I saw the beautiful light beaming from my window when my unusual visitor appeared again. I looked at Gloria, who was fast asleep and couldn't even feel the light. The woman was smiling again, and I decided to finally speak.

Thato: "Hello."

Woman: (smiling) "Finally, Isabella. You decided to speak to me."

Thato: "Apologies for being rude whenever you appeared. I didn't know how to react."

Woman: "It's okay. I don't bite."

Thato: "What are you? I mean are you a ghost? An angel?"

Woman: (chuckling) "Something like that. I am an ancestor, your mother asked me to greet you by the way, along with your mother Vivian. They told me to tell you to keep doing the good work you always do and that they are so proud of you who are and most importantly, they are even more proud of the woman you are becoming."

I felt chills down my spine as she said that.

Thato: "You know them?"

Woman: "We are all in the spiritual world, your ancestors are connected to mine so ofcourse I know them."

Thato: "I see. I miss them so much. Please tell them I love them."

Woman: "Don't worry, they know that very well."

Thato: "May I ask you something?"

Woman: "Yes."

Thato: "What do you want from me?"

Woman: "I want you to get to the truth, it is time for the truth to come out. You are the only one that can

expose it before this kingdom collapses.”

Thato: (frowning) “I don’t understand.”

Woman: “Tomorrow when you get up, wake up before everyone else in this house and go stare at that painting you saw of me when you first walked in here. The answers shall reveal themselves as I come to visit you often. Don’t worry, nothing bad will happen to you. I am with you every step of the way, Isabella. You just need to have courage and be strong.”

Thato: “Okay.”

Woman: “A very special guest is coming to visit in the coming few days. She is expecting you. Do not tell anyone about my visits, not even your friend. When this guest arrives, tell her everything I told you.”

Thato: (nodding) “Okay.”

Woman: “This kingdom will one day be yours to rule, Isabella, keep praying for my son.”

With that said, she disappeared. Who is she and who is her son?

Chapter Ninety

1 Corinthians 16:13 – “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.”

Thato

I woke up first, before Glo. I checked the time on my phone and indeed it is quite early. It is about 4:30 am and I don't know how I managed to get up at this

time without even setting an alarm. Then I remembered my reoccurring guest. I got into my gown, and headed out. I slowly checked who might be awake, luckily no one was awake so I headed to the corridors. I looked at all the portraits and paintings on the wall; I see one big one with a lot of people in it.

I see King Ntsika sitting on his royal chair; with his wife standing by his side; along with Nomsa who had two kids next to her and her weird husband. I am guessing those must have been Zweli and Zenande. I looked closer at the woman standing right next to Queen Nombulelo and I ignored everyone else standing behind them. I realized that it is the very same woman who appears in my bedroom after midnight. She had a toddler in her arms, most probably about 4 or 5 years of age.

What puzzled me is that the man standing right next to this very woman looks a lot like Romeo, just that

he had cornrows and looked a lot thinner than he is now. I stared at him and looked closely. Indeed, it is Romeo. Could this woman be? No... it can't be. As I stood there, covering my mouth in utter shock, I became startled by an unexpected voice.

King Ntsika: "Beautiful picture, isn't it?"

I nearly fell onto the ground and he apologized the moment he realized he had startled me.

King Ntsika: "My apologies, I didn't mean to startle you."

As my heartbeat returned back to normal, I calmed down.

Thato: "It's okay, my king."

I immediately remembered that my head wasn't bowed, so I attempted to bow, but he stopped me.

King Ntsika: "Please, don't."

I looked at him and nodded. I thought he would head out and go wherever he was headed to, but he initiated a conversation with me out of the blue.

King Ntsika: "I see you're intrigued by this painting."

Maybe this is what the woman meant when she said I should look at the painting. Perhaps this is where I get to find out if my suspicions fit the scenario painted in my mind.

Thato: "Well, yes, I mean, I see and recognize almost everyone in this picture – except for this particular woman."

I carefully pointed at her and I saw pain and hurt arise on his face.

Thato: "Pardon me, I didn't mean to upset you."

King Ntsika: "You have done nothing wrong, my child. You didn't upset me at all. I know it is your day off, but would you please bring me a glass of water before I tell you all about her?"

Thato: "I would be delighted to, my King."

I swiftly stood up and headed to the kitchen. Thankfully no one else was around, so it is nice and peacefully quiet. I got him a glass of water and found him seated on the couch.

King Ntsika: (smiling) "Thank you."

He gulped the contents of that glass in such severity, I thought he was about to pass out. He really does not look very well. He exhaled as proof that he was really enjoying that glass.

King Ntsika: “The woman you were pointing at in the painting is my late daughter Nonkanyezi.”

That was a beautiful name, but I can’t recall Kg calling her by that name.

King Ntsika: “She was such a beautiful woman, and had so much fire and zest in her. We knew from the start moment she was born that she would be the light of our family.”

This is news, I can’t imagine raising your child only to lose her.

Thato: "What happened to her?"

King Ntsika: "She died when her son was only 9 years old. She died in her home due to food poisoning. Her ill-mannered husband never contacted us. We never liked him for her, we just knew he was a bad man, but we accepted him but as soon as the cracks in her marriage started to show, she vanished with him and we could never find them ever since."

Wow, this is just saddening. I do remember Kg telling me that his mom had a lot of beef with her family and that he never went to visit.

Thato: "Did you at least manage to find her son?"

King Ntsika: "No, we only heard from my mother that she had died. The thing that hurts us so much

is that we never could bury her as we don't know where they even lived. We don't even know where Nkosinathi is, but she keeps saying he is alive."

So this woman died when her son was 9, but so did Kg's mom. He is calling the boy Nkosinathi, and I don't recall Kg ever having used a second name.

Thato: "Did he perhaps have another name?"

King Ntsika: "His second name was Kgaugelo, given to him by that bastard Romeo."

I felt myself get dizzy for a second. What the actual fuck?! So it all makes perfect sense. Why I had to go to Italy, to meet Soks so that he could bring me here. He did say that I am going to where I will meet my destiny. Wow, this is just overwhelming. I feel so much hurt because I wish I could actually share this news with Kg.

Thato: "I am sorry you had to experience such, King Ntsika, however I do have hope that you will find her son soon."

King Ntsika: "I hope so, because my health is ailing, my child. I am not well."

Thato: (frowning) "What seems to be the matter?"

King Ntsika: "I have been having stomach cramps, and whenever I eat my dinner, I vomit most of the time. I haven't told my wife, because I really do not want to stress her out."

This does not sound right. Why do I get the feeling he is being poisoned?

Thato: "What is the colour of the vomit, my King?"

King Ntsika: "It is mostly black."

That sounds just like poison.

Thato: "Do you vomit every night or on certain nights?"

King Ntsika: "I vomit on Tuesdays and Thursdays only."

This is just odd.

Thato: "May I share my thoughts with you, my king?"

King Ntsika: "Of course."

Thato: “Would it be too far-fetched for me to think that you are being poisoned? I mean only you out of everyone else vomits whenever you eat on certain nights. We also eat the food yet nothing happens to us. I know I am new here, but I beg of you to consider that fact.”

King Ntsika: (smiling) “You remind me of my Nonkanyiso. She was just as smart as you are. Truly speaking, I started suspecting it, but then I haven’t been feeling very well for a while now. Maybe I need to consult Bhengu.”

For some odd reason, I feel like he shouldn’t even go to this Bhengu person.

Thato: “Is he your family healer?”

King Ntsika nodded. He must probably be the one who administered the poison to one of the royal

family members. I bet it is Nomsa, but I don't want to suggest that. It can't be Gloria who spikes the food because she never cooks.

Thato: "Pardon me, My King, but don't you think that if you were poisoned, it could have been one of your closest family? I mean, why would one of your employees poison you? If you die then they basically have no income, but if one of your family members kill you then they stand to gain something out of it like an inheritance of some sort. And truly speaking, if that is the case then you are not safe with Bhengu."

He kept quiet for a while as if he was analyzing my statement.

King Ntsika: "I haven't thought that far yet, but you are right."

Thato: "I can get someone else to get you some herbs, if you wish, my King. I promise you, I am no witch."

King Ntsika: (smiling) "I don't know what it is, but I feel like you were meant to be here, Isabella."

I get that a lot.

Thato: "For now, I shall prepare warm water with Aloe Vera for you. It will ease the pain in your stomach and stop the vomiting. If there is anything harmful inside of your body, then it will excrete itself naturally. For now, I think you should be mindful of who cooks on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and also, you might want to have the palace searched for any poison or muthi (evil herbs) before things get out of hand."

King Ntsika: "Thank you so much, Isabella, for

allowing me to trust you with this. You shall bring the Aloe water to my bedroom later on. I shall notify my wife that you will be making it for me.”

I nodded as he stood up and walked back to his bedroom. I feel so much better, but on the other hand, I can't shake the feeling that something is bound to happen in this house. This house has way too many secrets. All rich people have something to hide.

Princess Nomsa

I listened attentively from upstairs on the balcony. That bitch is really up to something. I just knew it. Why on earth is she in her robe next to my father on the couch? I can't even hear what they are saying as they are quite far from me. Perhaps I can claim that she is trying to seduce him and maybe Mama will chase her away from here. She is trying to disrupt my plans. I can't have her ruin my plans of finally

being the sole heir of this kingdom. If they refuse to give me the reign, I will take it myself.

I am so glad that the poison is starting to work slowly on the old man. This is not how I had planned everything, but such is life. I have always been the black sheep of this family, even when Nonka was alive. I mean, it was bad enough that she was still the favourite even when she left this house.

Now even after death she is still the favourite and I am tired of it. It is high time my husband and I got recognized for the good things we do for this kingdom. I cannot wait the day people hail Queen Nomsa Ncube-Gqwala.

Chapter Ninety One

Isaiah 43:18 – “Remember not the former things, nor consider things of the old.”

Thato

I headed straight to the kitchen and boiled water for the aloe, I wasted no time and went to the garden to pick some fresh Aloe, I put the leaves in the boiled water and even added some Cayenne Pepper to stop his cramping and diarrhea, and took it to my room. I found Glo already up and done bathing.

Gloria: "Hey, sis. Where were you?"

Thato: "Oh, I just went out to get some fresh air. I didn't mean to worry you."

Gloria: "That's okay. And that?"

She was pointing at the bottle I had in my hands.

Thato: "Oh, this. The King asked me to make for him. He says he has been having some stomach pains."

Gloria: (smiling) "You are too kind, sisi (sis)."

Thato: "Why are you dressed to impress?"

Gloria: "Oh, it is Church day today, and besides, Prince Zweli asked me to meet him after church. He says he has a special day planned for me."

I love how things are progressing between these two, I mean if Zweli is serious about her then he has no reason to waste his time and hers on top of it all.

Thato: (smiling) "Do you mind waiting for me as well? I haven't been to church in a really long time, and I would love to go."

Gloria: "I was hoping you would say that. Of course, I will watch some tv while you bathe."

I nodded as I did my business. I got dressed in one of the Prada dresses Isabella bought me. Ai, I really need to shop at Mr. Price and stuff before people start suspecting weird shit about me. I finished just in time, as I asked Glo to give the Queen the bottle of water. We made our way out and we didn't find Beki at the door this time. He must be off today, so we headed to church looking our best. We got there and the church was quite full.

Black people never want to miss church, even though most of them go to hide their evil deeds and wash away their sins, while some take this as an opportunity to find a husband or wife. We managed to find a spot right in the front, I am guessing Glo likes to sit here because the pastor even gave her a slight wave.

People started whispering and gasping in between worship songs, when Prince Zweli walked past. I saw a lot of the ladies, some who even came with their husbands drooling over him. He looks so gorgeous in his Italian suit, oh, he reminds me of my Kg.

Prince Zweli: (smiling) "Sanibonani mantombazana amahle (Hello, beautiful ladies)."

I am guessing he and Beki are friends.

Gloria: (blushing) "Hey."

Thato: "Hello."

I saw a lot of the woman stare at us rudely once he walked up to us. He sat in between us and he wasted no time, holding her hand. Wow, now that is

how a man claims his woman. We ignored all the funny comments and rude stares and I actually enjoyed the sermon. The pastor spoke about second chances. I like the specific verse from 1 John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all righteousness.”

Indeed, this reminds me of a lot of people who really need second chances more than some of us. After the church service, Glo didn't even have to explain to me, I just had to go somewhere, so that I avoid questions at the palace about where she is. Prince Zweli said goodbye to me and confidently walked out with his new love. I have never seen a man blush like that. As I was about to leave, one of the ladies stopped me.

Woman: “Excuse me, is Prince Zweli dating her? I mean can you imagine all the charcoal babies that would come from them?”

She laughed along with her friend. I looked at them and they were dressed like prostitutes. They don't even know Glo and already they are talking shit about her just because Zweli chose her. Indeed women don't love one another.

Thato: "You don't even know me, you don't even know her and you don't even know the Prince, yet you have the audacity to talk about a person you don't even know in such a foul manner especially in church. Didn't you even learn anything after that service? You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Girl: "Hawu (Wow), girl. I didn't mean it like that. Nawe..."

I didn't even listen to anything further as I proceeded to walk out. As I was walking along the small river, I was deep in thought and out of the blue, I saw the

old woman I saw yesterday at the stall market. She was dressed in the dress I bought her and the pair of shoes. I could see all her scars and she looks so beautiful. I am not even one to care about scars as I have a burn scar of my own. She looked at me with a smile as I approached her.

Thato: "Hello, Ma."

Old woman: "Sawubona (Hello), Isabella. How are you?"

I frowned a bit. How does she know my name?

Old woman: "Don't worry, God hasn't completely given up on me. I can still see visions and help people even though they don't want me to go anywhere near them."

I pity her so much. I bet even her children want nothing to do with her.

Thato: "Don't worry, Ma. I don't judge you at all. As the pastor said, we all need second chances."

Old woman: "Don't worry, I saw your heart before I spoke to you. I saw your destiny when I saw your husband as a small baby. Back then I was evil and I played God with people's lives."

Thato: "Do you mind telling me your story?"

Old woman: "Only if you don't mind coming to my house. It is not a palace, but it is a roof over my head."

I nodded. I am not picky in any case. I took a short walk with her and surprisingly she lives on the hill

overlooking the church. No wonder she was sitting on the tree, I don't get how this Mfundisi (pastor) preaches about second chances, yet he does not allow her into his church. Something needs to be done about this.

I walked into her yard and I wanted to cry instantly. The fence was hardly even a fence to begin with; no paving in sight and the house looks in a very bad state. It seems as if she never got it fixed from the time it got burnt. Some windows were half broken with the roofing hanging onto dear life. I shed a tear but wiped it off quickly.

Old woman: "Don't pity me, my child. At least God gave me a second chance."

I nodded as she brought me a glass of water and we sat under the tree in her yard.

Old woman: "I am Martha Masango, but people call me MaMasango."

I nodded.

MaMasango: "I started witchcraft at an early age. I was introduced to it by my grandmother, and when she taught me how to cheat life, I couldn't stop. I took people's husbands, I even cheated my way through school all in the name of witchcraft. I remember this one time I was 9 and one of the neighbourhood kids used to mock me calling me ugly.

I told her and she said to him that he would never live to see another day if he refuses to apologize. He never did, and he died the next day. His grandmother moved far away from our neighbourhood as from that day onwards, everyone knew my granny as the most powerful witch.

I also gained fame because soon after she died, I took over her legacy. I was untouchable; I mean what happens when you literally ingrain something in a child's mind? It sticks until it becomes a natural habit. I couldn't stop, I refused to. And even though God warned me, I still continued. One day, the Princess came to me with a request that would change both our lives forever.

She had told me that her sister, the first born princess and the future reigning queen was carrying twin boys, but if we sacrifice the first born son and shed his blood, all riches would be ours. I agreed without even thinking twice. We did the unthinkable – we swapped the babies with one dead one.

I took the first born twin and I tried to stab him right in the heart, but the knife broke. I couldn't believe it. His ancestors are so powerful, they spoke to me that night. They warned me to stay away from him, but I

tried burning him and in turn, I got set alight. I felt so hot, my flesh literally peeled off from my face and I lost my left eyesight on that terrible night. I took him to the river and left him there hoping someone would come rescue him. I stopped practicing witchcraft ever since and I prayed for salvation. No one believed me from that day, even though I hardly go out. They still believe I am that witch.”

I became a bit frightened as she told me that. Wow, she must have been really evil back in the day.

Thato: “By Princess you mean Nomsa?”

MaMasango: (nodding) “Yes, dear child. She is dangerous, hence you were brought here to defeat her. You are more powerful than you think, Isabella. Nkosinathi’s ancestors chose you long before you were even born.”

Now I am really puzzled and curious. Where is the other twin?

Thato: "What happened to the other twin?"

MaMasango: "He is very much alive, and you have met him."

I frowned as I stared at her in confusion.

MaMasango: "I will tell you some other time about him, for now you have to give this to the King. He trusts you. You see, I saw the poisoning long before it happened. Nomsa has become so evil, that nothing will stand in her way. She wants the kingdom and if she has to kill her own father, then so be it."

She took out a small, black plastic bag.

MaMasango: "I know you have no reason to trust me, but believe me when I say this; if the king dies under Nomsa's spell, all will be doomed. It is just natural herbs that will eliminate the poison out of his system. Your special guest as your mother in law told you will be arriving tonight instead of tomorrow. She saw that her son's life is in grave danger. Go now, she is expecting you. You can ask her to analyze the herbs for safety before you give them to King Ntsika."

Thato: "Oh, MaMasango. I don't know how I can thank you for this."

MaMasango: "A simple thank you will do, my child. I don't want anything in return."

I took out a R200 note from my bag and handed it to her.

MaMasango: (shaking her head) "I am not your charity case, my child. I am just living my life the way God intended at first."

Thato: "Please take this, Ma. Buy yourself some food. I promise you, I will come back for you and help you change your life. I will give you a better house."

MaMasango: "I know you will. Go save your king. I shall see you soon."

I nodded as I rushed off in haste.

Gloria

I couldn't believe that Prince Zweli actually came to church and claimed me in front of everyone. I don't

know how to feel about this, especially knowing Nomsa won't like this one bit. He opened the car door for me and I have never been inside a German machine before. He is such a hopeless romantic, and he didn't even bother to worry about the rude stares and comments.

He took me to a nearby lodge, where we had a nice picnic set up for us, with strawberries, champagne and lots and lots of food. I recall Isabella telling me that picnics are so nice. She says Kg used to create picnics for her at his place. I have never had one before, so I am glad I actually took her advice. We sat down as he popped a bottle of champagne open and poured us both a glass.

Prince Zweli: "Gloria, words cannot explain how much you mean to me. My grandfather has always taught me that actions mean everything and words mean nothing. I don't want to say much, but I would like to show you how serious I am as long as you

grant me the chance. So, do you give me permission?"

I nodded in suspense. He got up and then went down on one knee in front of me leaving me speechless. He took out a small, black ring box and opened it. I saw the most beautiful diamond ring I had ever seen in my life. Actually it is the only diamond ring I have ever seen. I kept blinking thinking that perhaps it is a dream.

Prince Zweli: "My dear Gloria, you are the sunshine to my mornings, your smile warms my heart so much that it literally skips a beat whenever I don't see you smile. Your beautiful eyes remind me that there is indeed truth in this life. Your beautiful and kind nature show me that you were truly mine to have.

Your innocence brings such joy to my heart because I know that we will grow old together. Your humble

nature shows me that you will indeed be a good mother to our children. You were born a Queen, Gloria, you just need me to show you that. Please, make me the happiest man on earth and agree to be my wife.”

I didn't know what to say – except say the only thing that my heart agreed to.

Gloria: “Yes, Yes, Zweli I will marry you.”

He smiled and placed the ring on my finger and slowly kissed me so passionately. I am even surprised that I can kiss at all. His lips guided me and thankfully I didn't bite him or anything. The only thing standing in my way is my past. I don't know if he will still love me after I tell him I was raped.

Chapter Ninety Two

Isaiah 41:10 – “So do not fear, for I am with you; do

not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Princess Nomsa

Since Sporo literally quit his job, I have no one else to count on. So, what better way to do a job than to do it yourself? I decided to follow this albino bitch. She might as well be albino with that complexion. I am sure she thinks that she is such a hit, but what kind of animal gives birth to someone like her?

I followed her and had parked my car a bit further from the church. She went to church along with Gloria. I am not too bothered about Gloria, I mean she is way too stupid and she is way too naïve. All of these servants are naïve. They think they earn R7500, when in fact I handle all their salaries.

My parents are even way too stupid to realize I have been taking R2500 from their salaries. No servant deserves to get paid 10k, not under my watch no ways. I just have to get Bhengu to up my dosage, because it seems as if Ma and Baba (Dad) are going to be a bit of a problem.

They don't know me just yet and they are starting to become too clever for my liking. If they find out what I have been up to and just how many secrets I have been covering up, I am screwed. I must have been too busy on my phone to even realize that Zweli was gone.

I noticed Isabella walking out alone, without Zweli and Gloria. He had better not be fucking Gloria, I do not want to have charcoaled babies and have a Prince impregnate a mere servant. The embarrassment. I decided to park a bit closer to the church entrance, and I saw her walk up the mountain. I knew it! I knew she was up to no good.

She walked straight towards MaMasango's house up the hill. She is concocting a plan with the witch herself. I decided to take a picture, even though I was far from them, it was close enough to zoom and take a clear picture. It is high time I get rid of this little pest. They don't call me Princess Nomsa Ncube-Gqwala for nothing.

Gloria

I lay my head on Zweli's chest and listened to his heart beat intertwined with mine. I took a deep breath and decided to come clean. I was raised to be an honest woman and face troubles head on, no matter what.

Gloria: "Zweli, there is something I have to tell you."

He sat up and held my hand.

Zweli: "I am all ears, Sthandwa sami (My love)."

I felt myself tremble in fear, but my father always said that when you meet a man and he runs at the first sight of trouble, forget about him immediately because he is just not the one for you.

Gloria: "I... a few years ago, my stepmother's brother raped me while he was at work. He took my virginity."

I felt like a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders, even though I felt the salty tears stream down my face. He looked at me and gently wiped my tears off.

Zweli: "I know."

Gloria: (puzzled) "Huh?"

Zweli: "I know. I knew all along, Glo. That made me love you even more. The fact that you managed to carry yourself with such dignity and self-respect even though you were violated. If anything, you are a survivor, and not a victim. That bastard should be glad he is not alive anymore, otherwise I would have killed him myself."

Gloria: (relieved) "So this does not change the way you feel about me?"

Zweli: (shaking head) "Glo, I love you and I always have. This changes nothing about my love for you."

I felt myself smiling as he kissed me gently.

Gloria: "We have to head back to the palace before it becomes too late."

Zweli: "It's your day off today, however, there is someone special I would like you to meet tonight. Will you please avail yourself?"

Gloria: "Okay."

Thato

I took a taxi back to the palace, and thankfully it is not that far away. I greeted Beki as I found him on duty. It is about 6pm and the sun is only setting now. I saw a few other cars I don't recognize in the driveway, it must be some guests or something. I walked in and found a few other new faces along with the Queen and King in the lounge, as I was heading to my room. I was about to rush past them, but the King saw me and called me.

King Ntsika: "Isabella, my child. Do you mind

coming here for a minute?”

I fixed myself and walked up to them. I was about to bow, but he stopped me immediately.

King Ntsika: “Please, you will do no such.”

I looked up and smiled. I saw a very beautiful woman, with a fair skin tone and no spot in sight. These people must have good genes. Could she now be the guest I have been warned about? She looked at me with such a warm smile on her face.

Prince Ntsika: “Isabella, I would like you to meet my mother, Queen Nandi.”

Thato: “Pleased to meet you, Mama.”

Queen Nandi: (smiling) "Please come here."

She opened her arms as I nervously walked up to her. She held both my hands, analyzed them and then looked me in the eye without saying a word. She then looked at the Queen and King.

Queen Nandi: "It's her."

What is happening now?

Queen Nandi: "Nombulelo, would you be so kind as to lock the door, please? We don't want any disturbances."

Queen Nombulelo walked up while nodding and she went to lock the entrance door and came back. I looked at Queen Nandi nervously.

Queen Nandi: "Do not be nervous, child. Please, sit."

I sat down next to her.

Queen Nandi: "Why do you look so nervous when you were expecting me?"

I frowned in confusion.

Queen Nandi: "You are quick to forget, dear child. Your mother in law favours you a lot. You should be grateful."

Oh, now I get it. She is Kg's great-grandmother. She is the special guest I was told about. I smiled a bit.

Queen Nandi: "You need to be more observant, Thato."

She called me by that and I just chuckled. She and Nana would get along like a house on fire.

Queen Nandi: “Now, the reason why I asked your queen to lock the door is because we all know the King’s life is in danger. We are not sure who did this to him, even I have my suspicions, but my ancestors won’t tell me. They told me you would be the one to expose the culprit.”

Me? Hao.

Queen Nandi: “You are highly blessed, Isabella, but we will talk about that later. Tell them what Nonkanyiso told you.”

Oh, Kg’s mother.

Thato: “Well, she started appearing in my room

without saying anything. At first I got scared, but then I decided to speak to her. She said that she is not really at peace and that I have to expose the truth. She even said that I was the chosen one and that I was born to lead here.”

Queen Nandi: (nodding) “Now, give me the parcel MaMasango gave you.”

Yoh, another real life Nana. I took it out of my bag and handed it to her. She took one look at it and came back to me.

Queen Nandi: “Yes, it is right. My son, this is the medicine I told you about. It should excrete the poison from your system almost immediately.”

I saw the King looked very pleased and didn't seem to have a problem with it, but the Queen on the other hand, seemed rather displeased if I should put it

lightly.

Queen Nombulelo: (frowning) “But is it a good idea to take herbs from an old witch?”

I don't get why she is so picky in a time of need. Surely even after I told her everything about Nonkanyiso, she should at least have faith, but judging from how everyone feels about MaMasango, I guess her reaction is pretty normal. Queen Nandi on the other hand seemed rather annoyed by her question.

Queen Nandi: “Would you rather have him die and your useless daughter force her way onto the throne?”

Queen Nombulelo: (looking down) “No, Ma.”

Queen Nandi: “Instead of being negative, go get us a jug of warm water.”

I saw Queen Nombulelo standing up even though she was rather annoyed, so I offered. I don't get their mini-beef, but I don't want any part of it.

Thato: “No, Ma, it is okay, I'll go.”

Queen Nandi looked at Queen Nombu in annoyance, as I swiftly moved to the kitchen. Yoh, had I known there would be so much drama here, I really would have asked Soks and Tman to prepare me a lot better. I got warm water in a jug as instructed, and I went back to the lounge, and handed it to Queen Nandi.

Queen Nandi: “Thank you, child. Nombulelo, let's go upstairs, take the jug. I'll be right there.”

Queen Nombu held the jug as she helped her husband up the stairs with her other arm. I thought Queen Nandi looked at me and smiled broadly.

Queen Nandi: “When Gloria comes, may you two please prepare the food for us? I know it is a lot to ask of you since it is your last day off, but considering the situation is escalating pretty fast, I do not trust anyone else with my food. Will you be able to?”

Thato: “Of course, Ma.”

Queen Nandi: “Good, I will speak to you later. We seemingly have a lot to talk about. I have been awaiting your arrival, Thato.”

She called me Thato again. Ja, neh. My life is rather interesting. She went upstairs, while I quickly went to unlock the door. Upon unlocking it, Princess

Nomsa rushed into the house, shouting and insulting me.

Princess Nomsa: (Shouting) “How dare you lock the doors of this palace?! Do you know who I am?! What are you plotting against us here and who gave you permission to lock this door?!”

I really hate noise, and I really hate it even more when I get shouted at. I am not her child, really.

Thato: (annoyed) “Princess Nomsa, I was not the one who locked this door. It was your mother, instructed by your grandmother.”

Suddenly, the enraged look she had on her face turned into weary.

Princess Nomsa: “My grandmother?”

I just left her standing there and approached my room to change my heels into more comfortable shoes. I wanted to head to the kitchen and start cooking immediately. As I was on my way to the kitchen, I found Princess Nomsa sitting on the couch, biting her fingernails and looking really terrified. A few seconds later, in walked Prince Zweli hand in hand with the beaming Glo. I am so happy for her, really. I decided to stand right where I was because I know that Princess Nomsa was about to blow a fuse.

Zweli: (smiling) "Hello, Isabella."

Thato: (smiling) "Greetings, my Prince."

Zweli: "Apologies for leaving you alone right after church, but I had to claim my precious flower before someone beat me to it."

Thato: (chuckling) "It's okay, really. It is about damn time, though. Although, your grandmother made a humble request and asked that only Gloria and I cook for tonight, even though it is our day off."

Zweli: (excited) "I can't wait to see her. Let me go freshen up."

He kissed her cheek and left us standing there. Luckily Princess Nomsa had her own shit in mind, so I waited for Gloria to go back to her room and change into much more comfortable shoes and we headed to the kitchen.

Thato: (excited) "So? How did it go?"

Gloria: (smiling) "Oh, Isabella, I am beaming. I can't even explain how I feel. He is so romantic, so charming and most importantly he ticks all the right boxes."

Thato: "See? I told you that true love comes rarely. Hang onto it."

Gloria: "I am just worried about his family. How will they react to him wanting to marry a commoner like me? I mean the Queen is nice and all, but she does not want another situation like her late daughter's."

Oh, that might be a problem, but the heart wants what it wants.

Thato: "We'll cross that bridge when we get there, and besides, I think Zweli will put them in their place should they feel any different about all this."

She nodded as I started cooking. I actually miss cooking as it reminds me of all the times I spent cooking with Gringo. I am indeed my father's daughter. I made lamb shank seeped in red wine,

with Gloria making Oxtail, and we made baby tomatoes, creamy spinach with a salad on the side. I also decided to make some polenta, which is Italian pap if I should put it like that. They didn't specify what they wanted to cook, so I decided to go all out.

They are a rather big family, so I added dessert on top of it all – a blueberry cheesecake. Gloria says she has met Queen Nandi a few times and she is even lovelier than the word. She also loves her wine, so luckily I had bought another bottle of fine wine, which I went to get from my room. These people don't have much taste in good wine, because the cupboards are filled with four cousins and Saint collections. As I returned to the kitchen, I found Princess Nomsa shouting at Gloria.

Princess Nomsa: "What is going on here?! Since when do you cook, Gloria?!"

Gloria: "I am sorry, Princess, kodwa (but) the Queen

mother instructed us to cook.”

Princess Nomsa: (livid) “Kanjani (How come)?! You two want to kill us, don’t you?!”

She tried to raise her hand at Gloria, but I quickly intervened.

Thato: “You dare touch her and you will have to deal with me!”

She turned her head and looked at me in annoyance.

Princess Nomsa: “Ucabanga ukuthi ungubani wena (Who do you think you are)?! I will not have an albino looking rodent like you talking to me like that in my own house!”

Ag, I am so over people mocking my appearance. It is not like she is perfect.

Thato: "Maybe you should consider finding your own actual house instead of ruling everyone you find annoying in your mother's house. Leave Gloria and I alone. If you have a problem, then ask your grandmother."

She looked at me in such a filthy way and attempted to slap me, but I held her hand firmly as I stared her right in the eye.

Nomsa: (bewildered) "You have no idea who you're messing with!"

She roughly let go of my hand and walked away, leaving Gloria speechless.

Gloria: (shocked) "Isabella, what if you get fired?"

Thato: "I will cross that bridge when I get there. Are you okay?"

Gloria: "I am fine. I am just not a violent person. Where did you get the courage to do that?"

Thato: "You forgot my father is a notorious gangster."

We both burst out in laughter while we continued to set up the table.

Chapter Ninety Three

1 Corinthians 13:13 – "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

Thato

Finally, Glo and I finished making dinner. I can actually imagine her being the Princess of this house, really. Her beauty just captivates you before she even speaks and her level of intellect is just a super huge bonus. I now see why Prince Zweli fell for her, I mean she is one beautiful gem.

Ag, this just reminds me a lot of Kg. I just hope we can sort out this mess. The sooner the better. As we were awaiting the guests to arrive, Queen Nandi walked down the stairs first and smiled broadly when she saw us standing next to each other. There is just something about this woman; she is so real, and very funny. She reminds me a lot of my Nana.

Queen Nandi: (smiling) “How are my two beautiful daughters doing? I hope no one bothered you while you were cooking.”

Glo and I both chuckled.

Thato: “No, Ma. Everything went smoothly.”

I refrained from telling her about Nomsa’s little stunt, because I am no snitch. I think I can handle my battles on my own. My whole life those who loved me managed to be there for me and fight for me; from my mother to Palesa and even Kg. I can now see that I need to learn to fight on my own since I am all alone now. Queen Nandi smiled at me once again as she stared me right in the eye. I guess it is her habit. They have said that the eyes hold the untold truth.

Queen Nandi: (smiling) “I can see why the Ncube ancestors chose you. You are not a weakling, just soft-hearted.”

I just smiled at her as I don't really know what she means. I guess I am so used to riddles by now. She gave Gloria her usual stares with her warm smile ofcourse. Gloria looked down, blushing, but the Queen lifted her chin softly.

Queen Nandi: "You were also chosen long ago, but you sure took your time accepting my grandson's proposal. I love how you can make a man sweat. He is here to be your soul provider, and to heal you from all the hurt. All shall be well, my dear child. I am glad you managed to forgive."

Gloria stared at Queen Nandi with teary eyes.

Queen Nandi: "Let me see that gorgeous ring."

She smiled as she gently lifted her hand as she looked at her ring finger.

Queen Nandi: (smiling) "This will most definitely send Nomsa to an early grave."

The three of us burst into laughter.

The Queen: "I hope you have prepared something really nice for me to drink. This house is always filled with cheap alcohol. But don't tell Nombu I said that."

Thato: (chuckling) "We won't."

As we were talking, Princess Nomsa and Zenande walked down the stairs, and gave us the usual filthy looks. I commend Nomsa for not being pretentious at least. I knew from the get go that she didn't like me.

Princess Nomsa: "Mxm, why are you concocting

with these two witches, Gogo (Granny)? Don't you know that they have been visiting MaMasango? I even have proof."

Queen Nandi: (frowning) "Hey, wena (you). Awuna inhlonipho yini (you lack respect, don't you)? Don't you know how to greet?"

Princess Nomsa: "Ngiyaxolisa, Gogo (I'm sorry, granny)."

Queen Nandi: "I see some things don't change. No wonder your useless daughter turned out like this. Do you also wish for her to marry a useless man like your husband?"

Princess Nomsa: (annoyed) "Kodwa (But), Gogo (Granny), kufanele vele ungihlambalaze pham'kwa labantu laba (Do you have to embarrass me in front of these two)? I mean they are servants for crying

out loud.”

Queen Nandi: “If I were you, I would sit down and drink because you’re going to need it. Besides, they won’t be servants for much longer. And about them meeting MaMasango, you of all people shouldn’t be snitching and lying considering what you did back in the day. Or would you like me to remind you?”

Nomsa suddenly looked overwhelmed with fear. She kept quiet and became instantly mute.

Queen Nandi: “Oho, I see you have gone mute now. Uyaphapha (You’re so forward).”

Nomsa looked down as Zenande came to sit next to her. Derick, Nomsa’s husband came to sit right next to her. This guy still looks dodgy, but I just can’t really pin point what his deal is. The way he even stares at women is just not okay. I guess he really is

a rapist. Gloria and I were about to excuse ourselves after The King and the Queen arrived at the table. I couldn't help but notice Nomsa's state of shock when she saw the King. He looks so much better than he did this morning. I guess MaMasango's herbs really did do the trick.

Queen Nandi: "You two, come sit."

Nomsa and Zenandi looked instantly annoyed.

Zenande: "Since when do we dine with the help?"

Queen Nandi: "Since when do you have permission to talk shit while dining with elders? Uzongibhora (You will annoy me)."

She kept quiet and looked down, while Nomsa just kept staring at her father. Zweli came to the table

and he instantly smiled as he saw Gloria. His face immediately lit up. Now I am homesick and I really miss my man.

Queen Nandi: "Hello, mfana wami (my boy). Come, sit right next to your wife."

Zweli greeted Queen Nandi first by kissing her on her cheek, while Nomsa looked so flushed, I thought she was almost going to topple over her chair.

Nomsa: (nervous) "Did... did you just say wife?"

Queen Nandi: "Hawu (Oh). Didn't he tell you? I am sure Zweli told you, but you most probably forgot. Ntsika, would you like to do the honours?"

King Ntsika: (smiling) "Of course. It is official, our prince wants to wed the lovely Gloria. He has indeed

found his better half.”

Queen Nandi, Gloria, Zweli, King Ntsika and I were the only ones who were genuinely happy so it seems. Queen Nombu really tried to be happy shame, she really did try. I can't help but feel that she isn't completely happy about this. Zenande, Nomsa and Derick on the other hand were so sour, it was almost as if they ate something really tasteless.

Derick: “What?! There is no way my son will marry a commoner! Not just that – a whole maid! I won't allow it.”

Zweli immediately hardened his face and he wasted no time by standing up to his father and immediately coming to his woman's defense.

Prince Zweli: (angered) “Firstly that will be the last you address my wife as a maid, and secondly, you

have no right to allow nor deny anything. If I stand to be corrected you were chased away from your own kingdom and both your parents disowned you. You threw your whole life away before it even began. The only reason why I still treat you with the 1% respect I have for you is that you are my biological father, living under my respectable grandparents' house. If it wasn't for that, I would have told you where to get off again. The next time you try such audacity, I will not be as lenient as I am now."

He said it in such a calm, low tone of voice, but he was so stern the table almost shook. Derick was so shocked, he decided to remain quiet. None of them decided to even speak. Queen Nandi was enjoying her wine and we hadn't even started eating yet.

Queen Nombu: "I think we should start praying. I am starving."

Queen Nandi threw another hot shot at Queen

Nombu.

Queen Nandi: “Oh, yes, I think you should feed yourself before you become even more sour than you already are. One can never be happy and delighted on an empty stomach, right?”

I just saw Queen Nombu look at Nandi without saying a word. We all held hands as we started praying. I couldn't help but open my eyes while Queen Nombu started blessing the food. To my surprise, I found Nomsa staring at me with such evil and hatred in her eyes. So, what was I to do? I stared back, without a smile right until she was done praying. I am not about to give up on life and show this bitch that I am scared of her. The only person I fear is God and if anything, she should fear me. We started eating while she went back to her worried mode.

Queen Nandi: “Ntsika, my son, I am so glad to see

you up and walking again. I must say, when God says yes, nobody can say no.”

King Ntsika: (chuckling) “Indeed, mother.”

Zweli: (puzzled) “Is there something I should know? Baba (Dad), kwenzakalani (What’s happening)? Are you ill?”

Shame, Zweli looked so worried. He must really be fond of his grandfather. Queen Nandi decided to jump to answer the question. This woman’s sarcasm is off the charts, really.

Queen Nandi: “Oh, nothing is wrong with your grandfather, my boy, well – at least not anymore. Let’s just say, there’s a devil in this house who tried to kill him but he survived it.”

Nomsa immediately choked on her food.

Zenande: "Mama, are you okay?"

Queen Nandi: "Myeke loyo (Leave her). She'll be fine, wena lalela istory sami (you listen to my story)."

Zweli: (Worried) "Someone tried to kill you Baba (Dad)?"

King Ntsika nodded.

Zweli: "Kanjani (How)?"

Queen Nandi: "They poisoned him. He has been ill for the past few days, but thankfully, Isabella here managed to get him a really good antidote, so if anything, your grandfather will be alive for much longer than anticipated."

I saw the disappointment in Nomsa's face. It must be her, I mean she ticks all the boxes.

Zweli: (angered) "Why are sitting here and having a good time instead of finding the culprit?"

Queen Nandi: "You know me better than that, my boy. But, don't worry, we already have people about to search the whole house as we speak."

Nomsa started trembling and I could see the worry in her eyes.

Queen Nandi: "Wena (You), Zenande, hamba uyovula umnyango (Go and open the door)."

Zenande: (annoyed) "Why ungathumi laba (Why don't you send these two)?"

Queen Nandi: (pissed) “Askies (Excuse me)?”

She gave her a warning look as she stood up hastily and approached the door. The rest of us were eating our dinner in perfect peace, while Nomsa started fiddling her hands. As Zenande approached the table, in walked in a few people, mostly the trusted guards like Beki. There were about five men. They all bowed before us.

Beki: “Evening, my King. We are at your service.”

King Ntsika: “At ease, please. May you please start searching all of the bedrooms, including the royal quarters. The rest of you may search the rest of the workers’ chambers.”

Beki: (nodding) “Certainly, my king.”

They moved swiftly, while Nomsa's forehead even looked sweaty.

Princess Nomssa: (nervously) "Excuse me, I need the toilet."

Queen Nandi: (unbothered) "Well, I am sure that whatever is pressing you so badly can wait. Sit and eat your food."

I chuckled internally as I watched her squirm. A few minutes later; in walked one of the men who came with Beki, looking rather disappointed. Nomsa looked like she was about to die right there.

King Ntsika: "Bongani, I hope you come bearing good news."

Bongani: (sadly) "I am afraid we found something."

He wasted no time as he took it right out of his pocket. He held a small plastic bag that looked like gladwrap, and it had some black stuff in it. Everyone grew weary as Nomsa grew even more nervous. She even had to wipe off the sweat which was drenching her forehead.

Queen Nombu: "Where did you find it?"

Bongani: "In the young maiden's chamber."

He pointed at Gloria.

Chapter Ninety Four

Isaiah 3:11 – "Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for what his hands have dealt out shall be done to him."

Thato

Everyone was in pure disbelief and believe it or not, Princess Nomsa as well. It was almost as if she was relieved at the same time. Everyone was shocked, expect for Queen Nandi.

Queen Nandi: "Impossible."

Bongani: "Beki can confirm it, my King."

Beki: (saddened) "It is indeed true, my King."

I bit my lips as I looked at Gloria who looked like she was about to burst into tears. Zweli on the other hand was furious.

Zweli: (fuming) "How dare you think that of the

woman I love?!”

Bongani: (softly) “We found it in there, my Prince.”

Zweli: “It is all your doings, Ma! Did you plant this in her room because you just can’t stand seeing me happy?!”

Nomsa: (worried) “My son, please. I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Queen Nombu: “Well, the evidence speaks of itself, my King.”

That out of all statements shocked me to the core. How can Queen Nombu even think that of Gloria? The King and his mother were both unimpressed, even Prince Zweli.

King Ntsika: “Uthini (What are you saying)?”

Queen Nombu: “I am just saying, my King. We have had such instances before and they were chased away instantly. So, why should we have special favours now?”

I don't get it. The Queen seemed like a genuinely nice person when I met her, or was she pretending?

Queen Nandi: “Mxm, now you see why I never wanted you to marry her in the first place, Ntsika. Buka phela (Just look), she lacks critical thinking. This is what drove Nonkanyiso away. I see you want history to repeat itself.”

Queen Nombu didn't take it well, instead she retaliated.

Queen Nombu: (angered) “How dare you?!
Ucabanga ukuthi ungubani wena (Who do you think

you are)?! This is my house and you have the nerve to disrespect me time and time again! If you were a real spiritual guide or whatever you are, then none of this would have happened! If you were real indeed, we would have found where my daughter was buried! We would have found Nkosinathi already! Yesses (Gosh), uyadina (you're annoying), Nandi! Ntsika, are you going to let my mother speak to me like that?!"

Queen Nombu was shouting her lungs out, leaving us all stunned to the core, but Queen Nandi was so chilled. I wish I had her level of chill, honestly. She has zero tolerance for disrespect, but she can be calm as fuck.

King Ntsika: "Is it necessary for you to shout, Nombu? Why is a Queen like you behaving like a child? And why are you insulting my mother especially in front of the children?"

Queen Nombu: (stunned) "Oh, so se kunje (So, it's

like that now)? Ukhetha umakakho (You're choosing your mother) instead of me?!"

Queen Nandi: (sigh) "This is getting really tiring, Ntsika. Put a leash on your dog, or I will do it for you."

Queen Nombu got so pissed, right in front of everyone and even the male workers were too shocked to even say a word. She took a cup and was about to throw it at Queen Nandi, but Queen Nandi answered her in such a calm manner, leaving the King very much annoyed.

Queen Nandi: "Try that, I dare you. Throw that cup and uzobona unyoke (you'll see flames). Angidlali nabantwana mina, Nombulelo (I don't play with children). You seem to forget a lot of things."

Queen Nombu was breathing fire, leaving us all

stunned. Gloria had the tears threatening her eyes all along, while Zweli had her hand firmly in his.

Queen Nandi: “Since you think you’re so better than me, why don’t you explain to my dear son why he does not have any sons?”

I suddenly saw Queen Nombu’s facial expression change from rage to sorrow. At that moment she probably wished she hadn’t done what she did. I sensed a lot more drama was about to unfold. The King listened attentively as Queen Nandi was playing Skipha amafiles.

Queen Nandi: “Hawu (Gosh), have you gone mute now? Okay then, let me rather not waste any time. Ntsika, you remember that one odd night your precious wife didn’t sleep at home right after your wedding? Well, she was carrying your brother’s son. She was unfaithful to you and fell pregnant in the process.

Stupid bitch didn't even think of using a condom, and she went to get abortion medication from MaMasango. The very lady she insults today just because she is sitting on the throne which I handed over to her in hopes that she would become fit to rule. I guess I was wrong. You can take the bitch out of the ghetto, but... you know how it goes."

I saw Queen Nombu look at Queen Nandi in defeat. Queen Nandi wasn't even smiling or smirking, but she looked Queen Nombu dead in the eye without even blinking. King Ntsika was so shocked, he kept quiet for a really long while.

King Ntsika: "Gloria goes nowhere. I will get to the bottom of this."

With that said, the King stood up and retreated to his bedroom. I just felt so much pity for him, as if he

was so embarrassed in front of everyone, by his own wife, his Queen. Queen Nombu stood there one more minute and stared at Queen Nandi.

Queen Nandi: "Usameleni (What are you waiting for)? Your husband is waiting for you."

She tried not to let that tear fall, but it betrayed her as she just let it fall. She slowly walked away from us and headed towards their bedroom. Zenande and Derick stood up and also left the table, while Nomsa was still in shock. She also stood up and left without saying a word, leaving Gloria, Zweli, Nandi and I.

Nandi: "Zweli, don't you worry. I know that your woman was framed."

Zweli: (Hardened) "How do I even let go of all this hurt, Gogo? My own mother does not believe her."

Gloria does not even cook for us – ever.”

Queen Nandi: “I know, my boy, I know. Gloria, do not worry yourself about this. Zweli, take her to your room. It is not safe for her to be alone tonight. We will deal with this tomorrow.”

I have no idea what she meant by it is not safe for her to be alone tonight, but I have a feeling she already saw it long time coming. Zweli nodded as he took the worried Gloria away to his room. I love how Zwelii is so confident and he knows Gloria too well. I know it within my gut that Gloria would do no such thing to anyone for that matter. I might not have known her for very long, but I think I know her well enough to say that she is of pure heart. I was about to clean up, but Queen Nandi held me by my hand.

Queen Nandi: “Leave it, we will sort it out later. We can get others to do that. You cannot cook such a

lovely meal for us and do the dishes as well.”

I smiled at her. She is so kind.

Queen Nandi: “I know you’re confused, but the truth shall be revealed to you.”

Thato: (sigh) “It is just hard, because I just want my life to go back to normal.”

Queen Nandi: “It will go back to normal, but to a new normal. They weren’t lying to you when they said you were meant to be queen, Thato. Why do you think Nonkanyiso chose to reveal herself to you instead of her parents or even myself?”

I sat there quiet for a few moments, trying to process what she was telling me. Am I really that special?

Queen Nandi: “You really tend to underestimate yourself and the power of your prayers.”

I think she is right. Most of the time, I doubt a lot of things and question a whole lot.

Queen Nandi: “You were destined for greatness, and you will be the one who is going to change this whole kingdom, but you know, everything comes at a price. Most of the time, the good-hearted ones suffer the most. You will change everything and be the one to save this Kingdom. You know, you are actually the richest person in this Kingdom, yet you don’t even know it yet.

Hang in there, the one who disrespected you the most when you first arrived here will be at your mercy one day. You will be the one brothers will be fighting for, and one good hearted brother, is going

to sacrifice himself for you. It is not your fault as to how things turn out, but eventually you will be reunited with your husband.”

I still don't get what she means, but I hope I will be able to remember her words.

Thato: “I just have a question, Ma.”

Queen Nandi: “You are welcome to ask anything you would like.”

Thato: “What is the problem with Queen Nombulelo? I mean, I don't mean to be forward, but when I arrived here she was very warm and welcoming and she is one of the people who actually was nice to me. I mean, I thought she and Gloria had a good relationship, but I don't understand the way she reacted towards the news of the engagement.”

Queen Nandi: (chuckling) “Oh, that one. She just has some issues. She is a nice person, but she tends to forget where she comes from every now and then. You see ever since Romeo took Nonkanyiso away from them, she does not think that Royals should marry commoners, even though both her and the King changed the laws years ago, and made it possible for non-royals to marry into royalty.”

Oh, I get it, she has some issues about people who don't have blue blood. I get it. It must be painful to live each day knowing your daughter died, but you have no idea where she was buried.

Thato: “I see, Ma.”

Queen Nandi: “Go take a rest. I shall see you tomorrow.”

I smiled as she gave me one warm hug. I really miss

my Nana. Life is truly something else, you know. I just met my family, and now I was taken away from them. I can't even call my Nana just to hear what she would think of this situation. I can't even call Rami and tell her about my new life, and I can't even go to school. I'm pretty sure I am going to fail this year, really. I went into my room and tried to watch some tv, but sadly I just feel too saddened to even do anything.

I am wondering just how Gloria is feeling right now. I would also be devastated if I were accused of witchcraft. I heard her say that should you be found guilty of practicing witchcraft on the King or Queen or any members of the royal family, you get burnt alive in front of the whole village. I lit my candle and started praying. I poured my heart out to my God, and I felt relieved afterwards. I decided to get into bed and try and sleep.

Princess Nomsa

I don't understand what happened, but if it was God's will that saved me there, I thank Him. I don't pray much, but I thank Him. I went up to my bedroom right after my annoying grandmother was rude towards my husband and I the whole night. Mxm, she acts like she is better than all of us here. I mean, if she was really a true Spiritual guide as she claims, then she would have seen everything that has happened – especially with Nonkanyiso.

I have gotten too far for my plans to be ruined right this instant. I need something stronger than what I have actually tried, and Bhengu has to give it to me. They couldn't even see through me, those idiots. Now that I know my so called Gogo (Granny) isn't as spiritually gifted as she claims, I can go ahead and finish what I started. If his herbs don't work, I will just have to get a bullet right through my father's heart. As I sat on the bed, trying to shake off my nerves, in walked Derick.

Derick: “Yazi nawe uyislima (You know, you can be so stupid) at times.”

Nomsa: (annoyed) “Derick, ucabanaga ukuthi ungubani wena (Who do you think you are)? Since when do you have balls big enough to address me like I am just a stupid rock?”

Derick: “I wouldn’t be spitting that shit out of my mouth knowing my husband just saved me from being burnt alive.”

Nomsa: (shocked) “It was you?”

Derick: “Who the fuck else could it have been?”

I sat down, overwhelmed with shock. How did he know?

Derick: "You were stupid enough to leave the muthi right inbetween the mattress. Luckily I found it and I took it straight to Gloria's room before we started eating. I overheard Bongani saying that they were going to raid the house during dinner. You were just too stupid to appear nervous, instead of playing your cards right by acting calm."

I don't know what to say, except being grateful and eternally thankful to Derick. He can be a dumb fuck, but he sure saved my ass.

Nomsa: "Thank you, my love. I would have been dead had it not been for you."

Derick: "You surely can do a lot better than that."

Nomsa: (smiling) "Of course, I can. You deserve the whole thing on the menu tonight."

Derick: (smiling) "That is more like it. Now, you know just how I like it."

Nomsa: "Say no more."

I knelt down as I went for his trousers. I looked up at him and I saw his eyes stare down at me full of desire and lust. I can't wait to please my man the way I need to. I slowly unzipped his pants and as they fell right down, I removed his underwear without hesitation. I know just how he likes it, so I didn't waste any time as I shoved his already hard dick into my mouth. I love it when he moans and calls out my name. We may be married for years, but that does not mean we have to be stiff about it.

Derick: (moaning) "Aaaah, fuck! Nomsa!"

I went faster and faster, while allowing my hand to

gently rub his balls at the same time. I could feel he was close since he started holding my head and pushing me deeper towards his cock. As I continued to suck, he sprayed his load into my mouth, after letting out a loud growl.

Derick: "Aaaaaah, shit. You know just how I like it, baby."

I smiled as I swallowed his load. I am a master of profession when it comes to that department. Now I just have to find a way to deal with my father once and for all. That throne belongs to me and it is high time they know that, but first, I have to deal with that bitch Isabella. She is starting to get on my nerves.

Gloria

I can't believe just how cruel life can be. I just found love and I have finally accepted the man of my

dreams into my heart, and now, I am being accused of witchcraft. I found myself weeping in Zweli's arms once we got to his room. He would always call me to his room, just to spend the night with me and he never wanted to do anything sexual with me. But now, I feel as if it might just be our last night together, and I might wake up dead tomorrow.

Zweli: (sad) "My flower, Ngiyakucela (I beg of you). Ungakhali kangaka (Don't cry so much). I refuse to let you allow your coarse tears ruin your beauty, more especially when we have so much to celebrate."

Gloria: (crying) "Zweli, I can't do this. I really can't. I am not destined for happiness, and the sooner I accept that, the better it would be for the both of us."

Zweli: (disappointed) "Manje uthini, Sthandwa sami (So, what are you saying, my love)?"

Gloria: "I am saying, that I can see that our love is tainted by evil people. I ask one thing of you."

Zweli: "Anything."

Gloria: "Please, make love to me."

Zweli: (shocked) "Cha (No), Sthandwa sami (My love). I want our first time to be special."

Gloria: (teary) "You don't desire me?"

Zweli: (sigh) "It's not that, and you know it. How can I not desire you when you make my blood hot whenever I see you? You turn me into a hot-blooded beast and I have to contain myself whenever I just think of you."

Gloria: "Then make love to me, Zweli. Who knows what tomorrow holds?"

Zweli: "Please, I don't want to take advantage of you."

I didn't even wait for him to finish his sentence and protest any further, instead, I kissed him. I am not much of a kisser as he is the first man I have ever kissed in my life. He was shocked as his body was a bit stiff at first, but after I didn't want to remove my lips from his, he slowly relaxed and kissed me back. He paused as he pulled out of the kiss and looked at me deep in the eyes.

Zweli: "Are you sure you want to do this, my love?"

Gloria: "Yes, I am sure."

Chapter Ninety Five

Psalm 9:10 – “Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Lord, I have never forsaken those who seek you.”

Gloria

I never imagined my first time with a man like this. I mean, yes, it feels special, but I imagined all the roses and flowers and everything else we see on tv. But, if I don't do this now, I might never get the chance to do it – ever. As Zweli kissed me back, I felt a very funny, tingly feeling down there. I have heard Isabella tell me about how nice it feels when a man touches you, and how much nicer it is when he has his tongue down there.

Oh, no, I don't think I could ever let a man lick my genitals. I have seen a lot of women enjoy it on tv,

but I thought it was just acting. I always changed the channel as I don't really have any sexual experience. Zweli gently placed me on the back and let me lie on my back. He slowly came on top of me and kissed me so passionately. I felt my tongue dancing to the same rhythm as his.

I have never even French kissed anyone before, I guess it comes naturally. I felt myself being overwhelmed with incredible heat and I love it. He pulled out and kissed my neck, I couldn't help but moan as I grabbed the sheets. Am I transforming into a sex goddess or what?

It is as if I have no control over my own body. Moans, tingles and sensations are escaping my body involuntarily. Why is my body betraying me? How can it not when this man's hands and lips are capable of such magic? He kissed my neck as he removed my dress. It is a strapped dress, so he gently slid it off my shoulders.

He kissed my shoulders so gently and kept glancing at me with a broad smile on his face every now and then. I actually felt myself become shy as he looked at me. He removed my dress as he removed his shirt. It took me a second to come back to earth after seeing his beautiful, well-built body. I thought such bodies only exist on tv, but I guess I am one lucky girl. I even forgot for a second that I was staring at him.

Zweli: (smiling) "Don't stare so much, my love. This body belongs to you for eternity."

My heart sank as he said that. I know just how unforgiving Queen Nombu can be. I have seen many girls come in and out of here, trying their luck on them with black magic and it never ended well for all of them. The law still stipulates that if found guilty of witchcraft, you get burnt alive in front of the whole community, so that it could be lesson to all.

Someone has to change some of the ridiculous laws here. Zweli proceeded to remove my bra, and I felt a bit weird as I have never had any other man see me naked, apart from the man who violated me. I found myself hiding my breasts with my hands, but he gently removed them.

Zweli: "Please, don't hide your beauty from me, my love. I want to see you – all of you. I need to see you."

I nodded as I removed my hands from my breasts. He reached down to my lips again as he passionately kissed me. After a few minutes, his lips traveled to my breasts, as he gently kissed and sucked my nipples. I felt so many beautiful sensations running through my body.

Gloria: (moaning) "Aaah, Zweli..."

It seemed as if he enjoyed my moans, because he sucked with more drive, more passion as soon as I did that. He allowed his lips to travel down my navel and right to my bikini line. I felt instant Goosebumps as my toes curled. He slowly removed my underwear and got back up to kiss my vagina. He hasn't even done anything to me, yet I feel so wet down there, like I am about to urinate. He tried spreading my legs, but I held them together firmly.

Zweli: "Do you trust me?"

I nodded.

Zweli: Then Relax, Sthandwa sami (My love), I won't bite. I promise."

I let loose a little as he spread my legs apart with so much love and care. He looked at my vagina and

smiled. Then I saw his head go down there. Oh, no! What if I taste like fish or something?! I can't even begin to describe what I taste like. I found myself closing my eyes, as I don't want to imagine myself dying of embarrassment. I felt so much pleasure as he started flicking his tongue on my clitoris. I felt so much rush and heat rush through my body like oncoming traffic. I couldn't even stop it.

I found my hands traveling to his head and gently squeezing his beautifully shaven head. The more I moved and moaned, the more he kept licking. His lips alternated movements between sucking my clitoris and sucking my vaginal entrance. I felt like I was about to urinate once again, as I tried to speak up. I can't imagine peeing right in his mouth. He would never forgive me.

Gloria: (moaning) "Aaa, Zweli. Please, wait...
ngizizwa ungathi ngifuna ukuchama (I feel like I need to urinate)."

He paused for a moment.

Zweli: “You’re about to have an orgasm, my love. It is not actual urine. If you let out some fluid, then you will be squirting. I can’t wait to see the beauty on your face caused by my pleasurable tongue. Please, come for me, my love. Please.”

I don’t even know what he means, but he went back down there and ate me out like he was doing it for dear life. I felt so much heat overtake my whole body – even my head. The next thing, a huge, overwhelming rush of heat came over me and I felt myself moan out loud and shake.

Gloria: (Moaning) Aaaah!”

He kissed my clitoris and came up to me and kissed me. I didn’t even mind him having some of my fluid

on me and to be honest, I don't taste half bad. He broke the kiss and looked at me.

Zweli: (smiling) "You taste so good, Sthandwa sami (My love)."

I smiled feeling a bit embarrassed and then he gave me a serious look.

Zweli: "Are you sure you want to do this?"

I have never been more sure of anything in my life. I am not a risk taker at all, but this time, it just feels right. Isabella was right; when you find love, hang onto it and never let go.

Gloria: "Yes, I am sure."

Zweli took off his underwear as he positioned himself inbetween my legs.

Zweli: “This might hurt just a little bit, my love, but please tell me whenever you feel pain and you want me to stop, okay?”

I nodded anxiously. He started gently trying to put a small part of his penis into my vagina, and I felt a bit of pain, almost as if something was stretching my vagina. He proceeded to try and insert a little bit more and I felt a stinging pain, as I jumped up a little bit.

Zweli: “Do you want me to stop?”

I would rather bear the pain.

Gloria: (Shaking head) “No...”

He proceeded to try that and even though it hurt, it finally went in. I felt as if my whole abdomen was a bit stiff, almost the same feeling of being constipated, but in one spot in my tummy. He thrust as I felt so much pain, but a glimpse of pleasure creeping in. The pain was probably 95% more than the pleasure. Zweli was so gentle and loving, he kept caressing me and kissing me everywhere.

My God, this is the most beautiful moment I have ever experienced. My father once told me that sex is pleasurable, but even more beautiful when you do it at the right time, with the right man. I think he was talking about this very moment I am experiencing right here.

Zweli: "I love you, Gloria."

Gloria: "I love you too, Zweli."

After a long while, as I beared the pain, he let out a loud growl as his body became stiffened and he held onto me tightly. He soon collapsed on top of me and kissed me.

Zweli: "I'll be right back."

I nodded as he went into his en suite bathroom and came back with a towel and gently wiped me down there. I felt a stinging sensation. Damn, people didn't lie back in school when they said first time sex is painful as hell.

Zweli: "Stay here, I will be right back."

I nodded as I heard him open the taps in the bathroom. Perhaps he wants to take a bath, I don't

know. He came back after a few minutes and picked me up. How does he manage to pick up a girl with my sized bums? He carefully placed me in his bathtub.

I felt it sting a bit down there, but I felt a soothing relief shortly afterwards. He had put in bath salts and lavender oils in the tub. I am not used to seeing a man walk around naked in front of me. His thing kept dangling in front of me. I felt myself blush and look away.

Zweli: (chuckling) "Don't be shy, love. This belongs to you now. Move over for me."

Hawu (Gosh), Zweli is getting into the tub now? I guess two people can fit in an actual bath tub. He came in and placed me in between his legs as he started washing my back and gently kissing my shoulders.

Zweli: "Thank you so much for this beautiful gift, Gloria. I promise to never hurt you nor leave you. You are meant for me and you don't know how often I pray and give thanks to God for giving me you. Waking up to your beautiful face every morning is my ultimate wish, and making you smile permanently is my eternal goal."

It broke my heart knowing very well what I have in mind. I just hope he understands my reasons for doing this. I don't think I can see myself being in a family where I am not wanted. I love Zweli, but do I have enough strength in me for his family drama?

Queen Nombulelo

I can't believe my mother-in-law saw it fit to humiliate me yet again. After all these years, all I have ever hoped for was that she would take my

secret to the grave. Yes, I am not perfect, but I am royal. All these commoners, have shown me that they can't uphold the standards of royal life. I am not petty or anything, I am just being realistic. I will be damned if I let another commoner take away any of my loved ones the way Romeo took Nonkanyiso away from me.

I still mourn her to date. Now, I have to deal with rehashing the past to my husband. I have never seen him so hardened. He is usually warm towards me and we never go to bed without hashing out our differences. He always cuddles me in bed and waits for me to get dressed. He never sleeps before I get in, but tonight, it is a different story.

He went to take a shower and then came back to get dressed and immediately got into bed. I went to do the same, and found him already lying in bed with his eyes shut.

Queen Nombu: “Ntsika, can we talk please?”

He didn't respond.

Queen Nombu: “Ntsika....”

He still kept quiet.

Queen Nombu: “My King.”

I guess I tried too hard, because he snapped at me right that instant.

King Ntsika: “Dammit, man, Nombulelo! Awuboni ukuthi sengifuna ukulala (Can't you see I want to sleep)?! What is it that you want to talk about after all these years? Only now you feel the need to talk?! Okay, then! Asikhulume (Let's talk)! Let's talk about

your disgusting whoring ways! Angithi wena uyile wayovulela umfowethu imilenze wa vele wa mitha (You decided on your own accord to open your legs to my very own brother and get pregnant)! Angithi wena vele be uzithandela ipipi, Nombulelo (You did love dick that much, isn't that right)?!"

My husband was spitting fire. Never in all the years we have been married has he ever spoken to me like I was trash like this. I feel so broken, so alone. I hurt my husband, deeply and now he might just never forgive me.

Queen Nombu: (teary) "Ngiyaxolisa (I'm sorry), Ntsika."

Ntsika: "Ma uneSorry ngempela (If you're really sorry), leave me the fuck alone!"

He turned to the other side with his back facing me

and I felt my whole world shattered right there and then. What on earth have I done?

Thato

Nonkanyiso: "Thato! Isabella! Wake up! Vuka sisi (Wake up)! Wake up and face the devil with your own two eyes! You cannot fight her when you are sound asleep."

I found myself opening my eyes wide open as I woke up in the middle of the dream. The dream was nothing compared to the movie I was experiencing with my very own naked eye. Nonkanyiso appeared right in front of me as usual, in her white clothing, but what is even more astounding is the fact that Nomsa is standing right in front of me with a steak knife in both her hands.

I found myself staring at her with my eyes wide open

due to shock. I supposed she couldn't see Nonkanyiso, but I could. Nomsa was shocked that I stared at her right in the eye with the knife right up in the air. I am guessing she is about to stab me. I looked at Nonkanyiso with my side eye as she encouraged me.

Nonkanyiso: "Face the devil, Thato, now is not the time to run. Do what you do best. Remember your weapon."

I decided to do the only thing that made sense right there and then.

Thato: "Modimo wa ka yo a makatsang (My wonderful, amazing God). Modimo yo a rategang (My loving God). I ask that you please do what you do best. Rid my bedroom of this evil standing before me. Help me, dear lord, for I do not know what I have done to wrong this woman before me. I ask you to protect me right this instant, as you promised

me in Isaiah 54:17 – “No weapon formed against you shall prosper”!

As I said that, I saw something I thought I would never see with my very own eye; Nomsa’s eyes were widened, almost like they were about to explode. The knife turned slowly in her hands, almost as if she herself had lost control of it and it was swaying her towards a different direction. I saw the knife being lowered slowly but I carried on praying.

Thato: “For you lord, know that no bad deed goes unpunished. For you knew us before you formed us in the womb; Jeremiah 1:5. You who is the King of Kings, the maker of all and the way, the truth and life. No evil is greater than your power, oh, God. No wickedness shall ever defeat the word and power of God!”

Before I knew it, Nomsa was unable to speak, as the knife drifted her hands and she stabbed herself right

in the gut. She stood in front of me for a while, and I froze not knowing what to do. She slowly turned away from me, without saying a word, and she walked out with the knife stuck right into her gut. I have never been this scared in my whole life.

My question is; I locked my door before going back to bed, how did she get in? I struggled sleeping afterwards, especially since Nonkanyiso disappeared. I went back to lock my door, but fear crept in as I thought Nomsa would come back to finish me off. All I know is I experienced an immense power supplied by the Lord Jesus Christ and nothing beats prayer and faith.

Chapter Ninety Six

Luke: 1:37 – “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Thato

I didn't sleep so well last night. As I opened my eyes, I realized that it is way hotter than usual. I checked my phone and it is 7am. Shit! I must have overslept! I can't be flopping like this especially when I haven't even been working for a month even! I quickly went into the bedroom and wiped my face. There is no time to even take a bath.

I brushed my teeth and headed out. I wonder where Gloria is and why she didn't wake me. This is so unlike her because she usually gets up before me. As I was about to head to the kitchen, I found Queen Nandi eating opposite Zenande. She was even humming a song. I don't see Queen Nombu or the King nor do I see Gloria or Zweli.

This is going to be a messy day. I can't do anything without Gloria beside me. She did go to Zweli's room last night, so how am I going to cover for her without them thinking she is throwing herself at him

or something? I slowly walked towards the kitchen, but Queen Nandi stopped me.

Queen Nandi: “Woza lana, ntombi (Come here, my girl).”

I headed to her and I attempted to bow, but she stopped me right in my tracks.

Queen Nandi: “Don’t you dare bow to me. Those are not the ways of my kingdom. I have no idea why Nombulelo came up with such a stupid tradition.”

I smiled as I looked up at her. She didn’t even look angry at all.

Queen Nandi: “What are you waiting for? Sit. Join us for breakfast.”

I sat down next to her and I greeted Zenande even though I am expecting a scorching hot insult as a response.

Thato: "Good morning, Zenande."

Zenande: "Mxm."

I decided to ignore her. At least I greeted her.

Queen Nandi: "My girl, if only you knew who you really are, you wouldn't be so rude towards your future queen."

She just rolled her eyes at Queen Nandi. I don't even know what she meant by her first sentence, though. It seems as if Queen Nandi holds a lot of these people's secrets.

Queen Nandi: (chuckling) “You are lucky you are way across the table, otherwise bengizoku hlaba ngempama (I would have gave you one hard slap).”

She kept quiet and looked down. While we were eating, Queen Nombu appeared looking rather displeased to see me at the table. One thing that life has taught me this past year, is that people can never be trusted. A person can change on you in an instant.

Queen Nombu: (annoyed) “Nandi, isn’t it bad enough you are ruining my marriage? Now you want to make yourself known in this palace by eating with the maid?”

Okay, there is that word again. I don’t know, but I just hate it. It is very condescending. Why not use helper or house help instead?

Queen Nandi: (chuckling: “Hey, wena (you) Nombulelo. Ma ungibuka, ngi umgani wakho mina (Do I look like your friend)? You don’t even greet us, did we sleep with you last night? Now, you feel the need to disrespect us when we are trying to have ourselves a lovely breakfast.”

Queen Nombu: “This is why my husband got poisoned. You’re too friendly with poor people.”

Wow, kgante she is like this? If only she knew shame. I don’t blame her mother in law for disliking her. She is a bit of a bitch.

Queen Nandi: “You forget you were once poor. I made you wena. Don’t let the riches get to your head. If only you knew what is really happening right under your nose. Imagine, a Queen who cannot even run her own businesses. Uyislima kodwa (You’re such an idiot). All you do is sip cheap wine all day and demand.”

Queen Nombu: (fuming) “I won’t be having this conversation with you. And wena (you), where is your chancer friend Gloria? She couldn’t wait to throw herself at my grandson.”

I was about to respond, but Queen Nandi kept the insults coming.

Queen Nandi: “Nombulelo, the only reason why your husband got poisoned is because he married a lazy woman. Secondly, Gloria didn’t throw herself at Zweli. If she had done so, he would not have proposed to her – willingly that is. And lastly, you should know all about throwing yourself at another man. I mean, you fucked my other son.”

Wow, things are getting really heated in here and I don’t know which way to go, really.

Queen Nombu: “That is all in the past.”

Queen Nandi: "If it was really the past, why is my son still angry at you?"

It feels like I am watching a war between queens shame. As she was about to answer, Zweli came storming down the stairs.

Zweli: (panicky) "Where is she?! Uphi (Where is she)?!"

Queen Nombu: "Who?"

Zweli: "Gloria! She is gone, Gogo (granny). My love is gone!"

That can't be. Gloria would not just up and leave like that. She literally has nowhere to go.

Thato: "Did you check her bedroom?"

Zweli: "Her bags are gone. Her clothes are gone. Everything is just gone. She even left me this note, but I don't believe it. My Gloria would never do such to me."

He slowly handed me the note, and I read it. Every line I read broke my heart further and further into pieces.

"Dear Zweli

First of all, I would like to apologize profusely for what I am about to do. Last night was the best night of my life. I could never have imagined my first time with a decent, loving, caring and gorgeous man like you. When I look at you, I see what my father was preparing me for all those years. You are exactly

what he told me about. I will never forget you, but I have to leave.

It pains me that I am being accused of something I would never do. All I ever wanted was a job and I found love in the process. I want you to be happy and I see that our love has already been tainted with lies and blame. I will always love you, my Zweli. Please find it in your heart to forgive me for this. I hope you find the woman you are meant to be with. Love, Gloria.”

I felt a tear roughly escape my eye as it fell onto the piece of paper. How could Gloria just up and go like that? She left me alone in here with people I hardly know. Oh, my Gloria. Where will I even begin to look?

Zweli: “Gogo, you have to help me find her.”

Queen Nandi: “You will find her, my boy. Don’t

worry.”

Zweli: “I can’t lose her, Gogo. I can’t.”

Queen Nombu: “Take this as a sign, Zweli. Perhaps this is God’s way of showing you that she is guilty.”

Zweli: (angered) “You are such a witch, Granny. I don’t blame Nonka for leaving you all those years. She deserved a better mother, truly.”

Zweli swiftly walked back upstairs after taking the letter back from my hands. My heart is weeping the loss of my new friend. I know, she was not selfish, but she felt it was the right thing to do for her. As I was about to weep further, in walked Derick, fuming. Ai, I am about to have a very tough day today.

Derick: (Angered) “You! Umthakathi (You witch)!”

Yes, he was pointing at me. I don't know why I have to suffer, honestly. This is just too much.

Queen Nandi: "Hey, wena (you)!"

Derick: "You stabbed my wife! You made her stab herself!"

So I wasn't dreaming. It actually happened. Last night actually happened.

Queen Nandi: "Do you have evidence? You're saying she stabbed your wife and now she made her stab herself. Which is which?"

Derick: "She walked back into our bedroom in the middle of the night with a knife in her gut. When I asked her what happened, she couldn't speak. I

rushed her to the hospital and right after surgery she kept saying Isabella made her do it. You're a fucking witch and for that you must die!"

He was about to jump at me, but Queen Nandi got up and threw a huge bowl which was filled with all the eggs right at his face. She was fuming to say the least.

Queen Nandi: "You think this is your father's house, wena (you) Derick? Don't fuck with me – not today."

Derick was bleeding on his face as the glass bowl fell down and broke into pieces. Even Queen Nombu was dead quiet once she saw Queen Nandi's wrath. I am sure had she said another word, she was going to be on the receiving end as well. Derick just huffed and puffed while looking at me with pure hatred.

Derick: "You'll pay greatly for this."

I've had a lot of people threatening me in the past, and it has never bothered me, but this time it feels like Derick actually meant what he said. He walked away as Zenande followed him. Queen Nombu also excused herself while I was left alone with Queen Nandi.

Queen Nandi: "You don't worry about anything, Thato. I underestimated you, but you have a great power within you. Your prayers are working. Never give up. I know you have so many questions, but you will reach your destiny very soon. I can see it coming sooner rather than expected.

I couldn't help but start crying.

Thato: "But, Ma, how will I cope when I lose everyone around me? I don't even know what to do."

Queen Nandi: "You will see what you have to do, if only you believe. I keep telling you that you are the future queen, but seemingly you don't believe it. Believe it, and you will see miracles. Your destiny awaits, my dear. Hang in there."

I nodded at her, but I still just feel like I need some air.

Thato: "May I be excused?"

Queen Nandi: "Of course, my dear. Take all the time you need. Don't worry about Nombulelo, I will sort her out."

I nodded as I just headed out. It didn't even bother me that I was in my uniform. I managed to greet Beki through my sad face, and I sadly didn't even give him a chance to speak to me as usual. I walked out of the yard swiftly, and just got into a taxi. I don't

even know where I am headed, but luckily I always keep money in my uniform.

I found myself deep in thought and I couldn't even hear anyone trying to start a conversation with me. I got off at a foreign place. I didn't even ask the driver where I was, but he just told me that it was his last stop. My mind was far away, as I headed out and walked swiftly towards the grass.

I only saw the building behind me and I didn't bother to look at the name thereof. I sat on one of the benches, and drenched myself in my thoughts. Tears streamed down my face as I started recalling how good my life was just before I came here. How good it all was before Rendani fucked up my life. I miss my father, I miss Kg, I miss Rami. I had only just found Kg and now Gloria was my sanity and she is also gone. I wiped my tears off as I looked at my screen and a daily verse message from my Bible App appeared.

“Herbrews 11:1 – Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” In a way I get that God is speaking to me, but I just need someone to talk to. I know, Tman warned me about having a phone and he made it a point for me not to call people I know, but he will have to forgive me. I still know Kg’s number by heart.

I still know Rami’s number by heart. I memorize people’s numbers in case of emergency. It is an old habit of which I am truly grateful for. I stared at my phone and contemplated calling one of them. I decided fuck it, I’m calling Kg. I dialed his number and he answered his phone almost immediately.

Kg: “Wolfe.”

I kept quiet and felt immense tears streaming down my face. How I have yearned so long to hear his

voice. Whenever I saw him with Anastacia, my heart broke into a million pieces, I thought I would never recover from that ever again. How cruel can people be? They robbed us of a chance to be parents, to be newlyweds, to enjoy love and love love.

Kg: "Hello?"

I kept quiet as I wiped my tears away. He must have felt really annoyed by my silence, as he hung up. I gathered the courage to dial again, and he answered on the first ring.

Kg: "Look, whoever you are, this is not fucking funny!"

Thato: "Kg."

I could hear him ease up on the other end of the line.

He was in total disbelief.

Kg: "TT?"

Thato: "Yes."

Kg: "Oh, thank God, TT! Are you okay? Where are you? I have missed you so much, my love."

I could hear him cry inbetween his questions.

Thato: "I'm fine."

Hearing his voice and the relief in it, brought me so much peace. I think that is all I needed. I feel like I have a purpose here as I have been told, so how would going back home solve the problem? I decided not to tell him where I was.

Kg: "Where are you?"

Thato: "I can't tell you yet but know that I am fine. I am here to reach my destiny, baby."

Kg: "No, TT, please don't do this to me. I need you, I have always needed you. It has always been you, love. We have so much to talk about."

Thato: "I know, I know what happened to you and it isn't your fault. I know you have always loved me and you still do. I miss you too."

Kg: (sigh) "Can you at least tell me if you are staying in a good place? Are they taking good care of you?"

I had to lie otherwise he would never believe me.

Thato: "Yes, I am well taken care of. How are you holding up? How is Gringo? I miss him so much. I am so saddened I couldn't be at Mam'V's funeral."

Kg: "I am so much better now that I have spoken to you. He is okay, he is recovering from the shooting. Actually, he has recovered basically. He took a hard knock, but he is coming back stronger than ever."

How I wish the world was just that simple. I have had so many questions burning my mind, but none of them matter anymore because I have finally spoken to my love.

Thato: "I'm glad. I can't wait to see you once all of this is over."

Kg: "Once it is over, I am coming straight there to claim you my queen. I am going to give you the

wedding you deserve, and the family you have always wanted.”

I am not even sure if I am able to conceive again right after Sonto ruined my life. He must have sensed my reaction since I paused for a while after he said that.

Kg: “I am so sorry for what you went through while I was gone, Thato. I am so hurt that you lost our baby in such a manner and worstly I wasn’t there to comfort you. We had big plans, my love, but know that we can have bigger ones for I am back and no one will ever hurt you again. Not while I am alive.”

I felt a lot of relief, especially now that I am able to speak to him about such.

Thato: “I am worried, Kg. she hurt me badly. She ruined my life, she killed our baby and I don’t even

know if I will ever be able to give you the kids you have always dreamt of.”

Kg: “I know, would you like to know how I know that?”

Thato: “Yes.”

Kg: “Because a beautiful woman I fell in love with told me that everything is possible with God in it. She has taught me that no matter what, I should never lose my faith in God, for His promises always prevail. As she loves her favourite verse Philippians 4:13 – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” I know her as a prayer warrior, as the queen of my heart, as the kindest woman in the universe.

I know her as a woman who has prevailed all odds and despite everything that gets thrown onto her,

she still rises just like the morning sun. her mother was right to name her Thato, for she is loved by many nations and she is the lover of many. I take pride in being the keeper of your heart, Thato, for I know you are such a rare gem. I will always love and thank you for you never gave up on me. Even when the going got tough, you never gave up on me. Even when I failed to protect you, you never gave up.”

I felt myself smiling, my heart beaming with joy and pride and my face lighting up like that of a small child. Kg is still Kg, my Kg. Anastacia might have had him, but she never got to own even the smallest piece of his heart.

Thato: “I love you, Kg.”

Kg: “I love you even more, Thato Maake. One of these days, you will be mine once again.”

I was about to say my last goodbye's to him until my battery died. Oh, well, at least we got to speak about a few things. I held my phone close to my heart. Conversations are like pictures; they become so engraved into the mind. Memories are far better when you can see them, but they are great when you get to replay them in your mind. It will stay in there forever.

I finally got up the bench, and looked behind me. I now could see the building name "Enande Ncube Clinic". Wait a minute, could this be the clinic that the King and Queen own? Now I believe it when God says He is the doer of all things. How did I get here? I felt a pressing need to go in, even though I don't even know why.

Chapter Ninety Seven

Romans 8:28 – "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Kg

I can't believe that my prayers have been working so well for me. My wife has called me. I have finally poured my heart out and I am even happier that her heart still belongs to me. To be honest I have been blaming myself for so long. I promised to take care of her and I promised to be there for her. Now, after my distasteful reaction that day at my wedding, I couldn't find it in myself to even face her.

I thought she hated me, but luckily the heart wants what it wants. I don't think after this I would ever be able to let her go. I miss her so much, words can't even explain it. I have been so anxious about the next time we were going to speak. I love her so much and this time, the whole world will know. Everyone who messed things up for us, will regret the day they even had the smallest thought about ruining our lives. I found myself smiling as I stared

at my phone right after talking to my Thato. I didn't even see Gringo standing at the door.

Gringo: "The only thing that can make a man smile that much, is matters of the heart."

Kg: (chuckling) "Eish, man,, G. I'm whipped."

Gringo: (serious) "Don't tell me you have found a replacement for my daughter now Wolfe."

Kg: (chuckling) "Not at all. As a matter of fact, I just spoke to your daughter a few minutes ago."

Gringo: (anxious) "Why didn't you call me?! Is she okay?! Where is she?! What did she say?!"

Kg: "Calm down, G. She is fine. She didn't say where

she is, but she sounds really well.”

Gringo: “I’ll get Tony to trace her call and find her.”

Kg: “Don’t you think that will lead the Martinelli’s right to us by getting her?”

He stood there for a while and thought about my question.

Gringo: “Perhaps you are right. I just want to see her that’s all.”

Kg: “Me too. But I think we should listen to Nana, finish this shit, get the deal done and then our lives will get back in order.”

Gringo: “You are right. It is high time we sorted out

those bastards. I am healed and I think now is the time to go out on war. It has been so long since I have seen Luigi, and for him to mess around with me after all I have done for him. He can touch my money – but not my blood. He messed with the wrong man.”

I know we are all angry, but a man who is fighting for his daughter is capable of killing. I want Rendani alive so I can finish him off myself. I want him to relive every terrible thing he has done to us as a family. Some women really birth useless shits.

Thato

I slowly found myself walking towards the entrance of the clinic. I am so shocked, because all clinics in South Africa have terrible service; if it is not the long queues it is the incompetent and rude staff. I expected far better here, only to find the worst conditions I have ever witnessed. Gloria really

underrated her statement about this clinic, because wow. The entrance from outside is filthy; with papers and some blood spats all over the floor; rubbish bins are overflowing and no one seems to mind.

Some nurses are sitting outside having lunch, while old women and men are barely being assisted by means of even a wheelchair. Heavily pregnant women are standing in queues, when some benches and chairs seem to be broken. As I entered, the nurses at the bay were talking to one another, eating and not being worried about what was happening right there. Some women with babies who were crying non stop were being told to shut up. I felt like crying right there, but what good would that do? I approached one of the nurses at the station.

Thato: "Excuse me, Nurse. When are these people going to get assistance?"

She gave me one rude look.

Nurse: (annoyed) “Sorry sisi, awuboni sidla ilunch yethu (can’t you see we’re having lunch)?”

I looked at my watch and it is barely even 10am.
Lunch for what?

Thato: “Lunch for what when it is barely even 10am?”

Nurse: “Yoh, Nkosiyami (My goodness)! I am not going to sit around here and be interrogated by a mere maid! Yazini, if awufuni usizo lana, nqono uhambe (You know what? If you don’t want our assistance here, then you had better leave).”

She must be insane to think that I would let this go.
For her to even insult me based on my so called

occupation says a lot. I remembered that Gloria did say that most of these nurses were Nomsa's friends. Hehe, they have another thing coming. Since Derick did say that she was taken to hospital, apparently the hospital is a bit far and this clinic acts as a hospital at night. I am sure he brought her here.

Thato: "Since well you are a very good friend of Princess Nomsa, I bet you know that she was admitted here in the early hours of the morning."

She froze for a second and stopped talking to her friend.

Nurse: "Umazela'phi wena uNomsa (Where do you know Nomsa from)?"

Thato: "Go and tell her that Isabella is here to see her, and if she does not let me in, I am going straight to the papers. I swear, if you don't get your shit

together and fix this mess right here, I am bringing the newspapers before you knock off here. I will call King Ntsika right now and you will all be out of a job before the end of the day.”

She looked at me and clicked her tongue. She probably thought I was bluffing. She looked at her other friend next to her.

Nurse: “Go tell Nomsa this thing is looking for her.”

I chuckled. She is even rude about it. I have a legal obligation to help these people. I mean what kind of Queen is Nombu when she can't even look after her own people? As I stood there doing a stare off competition with the Nurse, I heard a loud scream from one of the rooms. The nurse who was sent out to go speak to Nomsa came back rushing.

Nurse: (worried) “She says she doesn't want to see

the person who made her stab herself. She became bewildered as soon as she heard me mention her name.”

Both of them looked at me puzzled.

Thato: “Where is she?”

Nurse: “Room 3.”

I didn't even say anything, instead I walked past everyone and ignored the filthy and gutwrenching stench of the place. I don't know how they even live with themselves thinking that this is even appropriate. What kind of animals think that it is okay for people to live like this? I walked past all the frail looking patients and went straight to Nomsa's ward. How odd is life? The very same clinic she is abusing is treating her like shit as well. She was in bed, with a drip connected to her. She does look a

bit crazy like she has seen a ghost.

Thato: "Nomsa."

She got frightened and sat up with bewildered eyes. She even ignored the pain she was in.

Nomsa: (frightened) "Please, yoh! Ngiyakucela (Please)! Leave me alone! I am sorry for what I did to you! Please don't finish me off, I beg of you!"

I got so surprised when I looked at her. I thought it was a dream or something, but she seemed so serious and really scared. I didn't even notice the two nurses had followed me.

Thato: "Hao, but you did that to yourself. I did nothing to you."

Nomsa: "Please, tell Nonka I am sorry for everything. Please, just don't kill me! You made me stab myself. I swear, Isabella, I will never bother you again. Please, just take whatever you want. Do whatever you want, just please leave me alone!"

Thato: "Tell your bitchy nurses to get their shit in order and start helping these patients, or else I will get them fired. Better yet, I will make them stab themselves too."

I gave them a look as they became frightened immediately.

Nomsa: (bewildered) "Nimzwile nina (You both heard her)! Hambani (Leave)!"

They both rushed out as I looked at her and she genuinely looked scared. I wanted to be funny and I took a step closer to her, but she screamed and hit

her face underneath the blanket. I wanted to laugh, but God would not like that. So, I laughed internally and walked out.

Upon walking out, I saw the two nurses shouting at everyone and instructing all the other workers on what to do. I couldn't leave, immediately – no. Instead, I took advantage of the situation and I helped out. I was now in charge of the clinic and I started telling everyone what to do.

Thato: “You two, go and check if all the rooms have the necessary supplies for everyone. Check on all the nurses who are supposed to be on duty – more especially those ones feeding themselves all day and not worrying about the patients. Get security to get up off his ass and help the frail people walking in here by putting them on wheel chairs. Get the cleaners to start mopping these floors, and split the queue into necessary departments. Pregnant women get their own queue and the elderly and the

disabled must be assisted by their own nurse. They get first preference. Emergencies are everywhere here, so get to work.”

I saw them swiftly move around as they scolded everyone around there. I literally saw the security guards, cleaners, and other staff members including nurses fly out of their hiding spots. I can't believe that they used to run their clinic as such; where patients are in serious pain and they are just roaming around and hiding themselves in rooms while others are eating.

While I stood around and saw them actually starting to work; I could see a few of them were really hungry and thirsty. I searched in my pocket, and realized I had about R500 in there. I don't even know how I am going to go home, but helping these people should be my number one priority. There is not even a wendy machine at least nor a water bottle machine for these patients to drink or quench their

thirst. I decided to head out and go across the street and buy a few bottles of water; some cold drinks for those who most likely haven't eaten and some food.

All in all the lady at the stall was so happy, she even offered to get one of her workers to bring the items to us personally. She makes some nice food such as pap and meat, but she does not seem to have a lot of customers. I am glad that at least I managed to make her day today. As I went back, I saw the litter removed, the floor squeaky clean and everyone doing what they were supposed to for a change. Oddly, everyone was very much afraid of me as soon as I walked in.

Some greeted me in fear, while some walked away or even looked away as I approached them. I heard one of the nurses tell the cleaners that I am the woman who made Nomsa stab herself. I am guessing they think I used black magic on her since

she confirmed everything. I don't care. At least people will stop talking shit about me for a change. I now have a purpose, even though it is something small, I am making a bit of a difference.

Chapter Ninety Eight

Psalm 37:23-24 – “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him his hand.”

Kg

As I sat in my chair thinking of my Thato, I found myself browsing through my Instagram. I now recall our beautiful memories together, all our pictures we took as well as the first time we made love. I can't seem to fall in love with her more and more. As I sat there deep in thought, Mulalo walked in looking dreadful.

Kg: “Mfo, dintshang (Bro, what’s up)?”

Mulalo: (deep sigh) “I can’t shake this feeling I have been having for the past two weeks.”

Kg: “You also feel it? Like something bad is coming?”

Mulalo: (nodding) “Yes, but I feel like whatever is coming is directed at me. I just want to tell you that no matter what happens, I am glad you are my brother and I am elated to have met you.”

Why does it seem like Mulalo is saying goodbye to me eternally?

Kg: “Mulalo, you are going nowhere. You won’t die, brother. I will be with you every step of the way. I

would die for you.”

Mulalo: (chuckling) “Please don’t. You still have a life to live with Thato, have children and be her King. Please, don’t ever take a bullet for me – no matter what happens. Please, promise me that.”

Why is Mulalo so deep and so serious today? I can’t help but feel like he is actually saying goodbye.

Kg: “Mulalo, I-“

Mulalo: (interrupting) “Promise me.”

Kg: (sigh) “I promise.”

Mulalo: (nodding) “Good. Gringo is calling us, let’s go.”

He gave me a long, tight hug before we walked out. That truly felt like the last time I hugged my brother. What the fuck is awaiting us? As we walked down to the lounge, we found Gringo, The Naidoos, Thendo, Rami and Nana. Rami has been a shitty mess ever since Thato has been gone, but I know Thendo has been keeping her sane, well he has been trying to do so. Gringo and the Naidoos are all dressed in black with black gloves on and all. I know we are preparing for a mass funeral.

Gringo: "Gentlemen, I have called you all here for some serious business. We have finally found a loophole in Martinelli's plans. Soks has been of great help and he has managed to get us serious intel."

That's awesome news. Now, the ball can start rolling.

Gringo: “Well, the Jet is prepared for us and we leave as in yesterday, so once we get there he will set a trap for both brothers along with Rendani the puppet. I hope we can hash out our problems before we end them for good. They have to pay for my Vivian.”

Indeed blood must be spilled.

Gringo: “You know what to do. Get right into your outfits, our guns and assets are ready as we speak.”

Say no more. We nodded and headed back to our rooms. Mulalo took his clothes and came to my bedroom to get dressed alongside me. I don't mind, I love having a brother, a twin brother that is.

Tumisho and I talk every now and then but we aren't close. We got into our expensive Italian clothing – all black pants, black shirt with black ties and black blazers. Of course we wore our bullet proofs underneath and topped it all off with our signature black gloves. I looked at Mulalo and he still looks so

dreadful.

Mulalo: My brother, please, let us pray before we leave here.”

I nodded as we held hands right in the middle of my bedroom and we started praying.

Mulalo: “Father God, we humble ourselves before you. We thank you so much for the wonderful gift of life. But most importantly we thank you for bringing us together in this life. I ask of you dear Lord, to please protect us on our mission tonight. Please help us so that no matter what happens, Kg must be saved above me.”

I opened my one eye and I saw just how serious he was.

Mulalo: "Please, dear God. Preserve him for Thato, for we are not perfect, but we ask that you have mercy on us. Please, dear lord, no matter what happens, I ask that Gringo and Kg both come back from this trip as changed men. May they leave the life of crime and the life of violence, for you have better plans in store for them. I ask this in Jesus mighty name. Amen."

I opened my eyes and he smiled at me. He smiled at me even though I could see the glistening tears in his eyes. I decided to hug him again after that powerful prayer. Mulalo is so selfless, so caring and mostly sensitive as fuck. But I love him, genuinely. He is coming back – he has to.

Kg: "Let's go kick ass, brother."

We both chuckled as we walked back down the stairs. I got the shock of my life when I saw Thendo also dressed in all black.

Mulalo: "And then wena (you)?"

Thendo: "I am coming with you."

Mulalo: "No, you're not. You're not fit for this life, Thendo. You can't do this."

Thendo: "Please, let me do this. It is the least I can do."

He is a man now and I doubt whatever we say to him will not make him stay. I just fear what would happen should he not make it back.

Kg: "Rami, what do you say about this?"

Rami: "I don't know, I have tried to talk him out of it."

But please, whatever happens, make sure you come back to me Thendo otherwise I will never forgive you for this. Even in death, I swear I will shit on your corpse before you get buried.”

We all just had to laugh at that statement. As we were laughing, Thendo was dead serious and did the unthinkable. He slowly knelt down on one knee and took out a ring from his pockets. Ai, this guy needs some serious tips on romance. Of course, he left Rami in shock. The rest of us as well.

Thendo: “Rami Letswalo, I love you so much. Words cannot explain how much you have changed my life for the better these past few months. All I ask is that you wait for me, pray for me – for us that I may come back to you so that I can make you the happiest woman on earth. I know, this isn’t ideal, but make me the happiest man on earth and say you’ll marry me.”

Rami: (shocked and teary) “Ag, man, Thendo! Couldn’t you pick a better time?! Of course I will marry you!”

Nana ululated – yes, I know. A white woman ululating. The rest of us clapped hands as he put the ring on her finger and kissed and hugged her.

Gringo: “I hate to break this party, but we have to get going.”

Nana: “Not so fast, young man.”

Gringo: “What is it, Ma? Please don’t give us any bad news, not right now.”

Nana: “Don’t be silly, David. I wanted to give you all this.”

She took out a few necklaces from her bag. One for each of us, and surprisingly she had one for Thendo as well. I guess she knew he was coming with. Smally was also coming, he is our most trusted man yet. The whole house will be under 24/7 security and surveillance while we will be gone.

Nana: "Please wear them. They will protect you. I protected them in holy water and sage. Please, don't ever take it off."

We nodded and hugged her and Rami. Mulalo became a bit more emotional when he approached Rami.

Mulalo: "Take good care of my brother for me. You have changed him for the better and you have ensured that he will never turn out like Tiger. Thank you for that. Thank you for loving him."

Rami nodded with tears in her eyes as we left. I could see Nana masking the worry in her eyes, and I know that she does not usually get worried.

Perhaps we shouldn't be going on this mission – I don't know. I guess it is too late now. We can only rely on God's grace.

Mulalo

As we got into our Kombi, I can't help but feel pained when I look at my brother. I found my other half – my own twin and now we're about to part ways forever. How do I tell him that he will never see me again after this mission? I dreamt of my late mother – yes, my biological mother. I couldn't recognize her nor understand who she was until Nana clarified everything to me.

I then saw a vision – a dream rather of exactly how I am going to leave this world. It is really not a very dignified way to die, but I would rather die like this

for my brother and Thato than live like a coward. I made peace weeks ago that I am going to die, I just decided not to tell Kg. Instead I chose to leave him with the most beautiful memories of us together that he will cherish forever. Losing me won't be so bad. It is way better than him dying because then Thato would never heal.

My own mother came to tell me that everything will be alright. How crazy is life, though? The spiritual world is something else. I experienced the most beautiful moment between my mother and I and she finally explained to me what happened years ago when I was born. I was supposed to be a sacrifice, but the ancestors defeated my enemies.

She had named me Mngqobi, because against all odds I was born. The moment I was born was a great sign of relief because throughout her pregnancy she was told that I – the bigger twin would never make it. Look at me now, look at God's

grace. I can't say I have lived, but all I can say is that I am glad I will be departing without any regrets. I mean, life is indeed too short to dwell on mistakes.

Thato

Everyone was so surprised seeing me walk in with bottles of water and cans of coldrink and plates of food. I specifically asked the guy who was sent by the stall lady to give to everyone. They were so delighted and couldn't stop thanking me. The two irritable nurses whom I first encountered when I walked in here kept glancing at me every chance they got – from a distance of course. I was perceived as the witch lady, but I didn't mind.

To my surprise everyone got assisted. As I was about to help a few of the other elderly ladies, in walked MaMasango. As soon as she walked in everyone – including the ill patients on the benches were about to stand up. I was in total shock. These

people must be shitting me. Despite them being so ill and unwell, they would rather storm out of here based on lies and heresay. I am not having that – not today. She really looked a bit unpleasant for my liking. She looked frail, and was walking slower than normal, but one could tell that she was in a bit of pain.

Thato: (smiling) “MaMasango. Kunjani ma (How are you)?”

maMasango: (faking a smile) “Ngiyaphila, mntwanami (I am well, my child). I see you are doing the lord’s work. You see what happens when you listen to God’s word?”

I chuckled a little bit.

Thato: “Let’s talk about you for a second, you don’t seem so well. What is wrong?”

MaMasango: (sigh) "Mntwanami (my child), I have tried staying away and even getting herbs to treat myself, but I just couldn't bear the pain anymore. I even had to walk here since no one wanted me in their taxi."

My heart broke into a million pieces as I heard her say that. How cruel could people be to such an old woman?

Thato: "Where do you have pain?"

MaMasango: "Right here."

She showed me her stomach.

Thato: "How long have you had the pain for?"

MaMasango: “About four weeks now. Only today it got worse.”

She looked like she was in serious pain, but she was quite strong. I gently pulled her towards the bench, and one of the pregnant ladies was about to move, but I gave her a nasty look and she looked down in shame. I walked up to one of the nurses assigned to help the elderly.

Thato: “Nurse, may you please take a look at MaMasango? She is in serious pain – abdominal pain and has had it for weeks.”

As soon as she heard me say her name, she started looking for excuses.

Nurse: (frantic) “Eish, yoh, I have a lot of patients in the queue. Perhaps give her to someone else.”

I got fed up with everyone's behaviour and rudeness towards her, so I decided to speak up. I don't care how I get perceived after this, but enough is enough.

Thato: "Drop whatever you are doing and come towards this way."

Nurse: "Kodwa (But)-"

I interrupted her by giving her one stern look. She heard the stories about me so luckily she didn't protest. I got on top of a chair and decided to speak up.

Thato: "Attention everyone. May you please drop whatever it is you are doing and listen. I will only take a few minutes."

I heard a few whispers from cowardly people but I

don't give a fuck right now.

Thato: "I would like to ask you one question and please, answer yourselves truthfully. Whom of you here are without sin?"

They all looked at each other and said nothing.

Thato: "I will ask again. Are any of you here without sin? Are any of you here perfect? Have none of you ever made terrible mistakes in your lives?"

They all started slowly shaking their heads.

Thato: "Then how come all of you – even those who have heard bad stories about me just now, took my food without even knowing me – yet you treat a frail, old woman, a woman of your very own village like an outcast? Has any of you seen her do the evil she is

accused her? Like actually seen her?”

They all shook their heads slowly.

Thato: “All of you ought to be ashamed. I admire MaMasango, simply because she has owned up to her terrible deeds. Has she not confessed long ago of the bad things she had done to people? I bet none of you here can confess that she has done any bad to you, am I right?”

They started slowly nodding heads.

Thato: “Then how come a whole community that is supposed to stand together, treat a woman like this with so much disgrace? How come you treat a fellow member of this community who has repented unlike some of you here like she is an animal? I bet MaMasango has helped a lot of you – yet you have the audacity to turn your backs on her.

Meanwhile you are going hungry and you are poor, but you cannot even find it within yourself to break bread with an old woman who has no one to take care of her. You all claim to love God by not even missing a day of church, but as soon as the church bells ring, you go back to your evil ways. John 8:7 says “Let him who is without sin amongs you, cast the first stone.” As I stand here before you, I plead with you – let any of you without sin, cast a stone at MaMasango.”

She sat there looking at everyone in pain. Not just physical pain, but emotional and spiritual pain. It can't be easy having the whole community hating you. None of them stood up.

Thato: “You nurses, you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. Some of you slept your way to the top here, some of you are unqualified and got the job just because you are friends with the princess. You

forgot the oath you took – to be a servant of the people, a healer and provider. And now, you are the first ones to reject an ill woman seeking help.

I say unto you that you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. I plead with you to rid yourselves of evil and accept this woman into your lives. Matthew 6:14 says “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive you.” God wants no condemnation from any of you for He is the only one who can condemn us.”

I was about to step down until one of the patients raised her hand. I looked at her and it was the heavily pregnant woman who wanted to run away from MaMasango.

Patient: “MaMasango actually helped my mother deliver me. As I am standing here, I am alive and so is my mother because of her. My mother had a horrible pregnancy and I was a breech baby. My

mother was close to death at eleven months pregnant. The doctors and the very same nurses who stand here before you rejected her and turned her away. MaMasango was the only one who helped her. MaMasango, I apologize for casting you out like that. You didn't deserve such treatment from me."

As I was about to continue helping her, another person raised her hand.

Patient 2: "MaMasango saved my son. Had it not been for her, he would have died. He was poisoned and the nurses also turned me away, but she was willingly and readily available to assist. My son is 10 years old as we speak."

As I listened, more and more people started confessing the good deeds MaMasango did for them. I couldn't believe it. I was in total awe.

Patient 3: “MaMasango treated my leg. I had been bewitched by my own sister and she saved my life.”

Patient 4: “MaMasango saved me from my evil mother in law.”

More and more of them started confessing and apologizing to her. One by one, they slowly went to her and held her by hand. They apologized personally and I could see MaMasango’s face change from heartbroken to happy. It is as if her heartbreak had masked the beauty on her face. Her face was probably frightened that she could still smile at least. Even the nurses confessed to having been very bad people and they too apologized.

Each of them carried her up and into the sonar room, where they assisted her. Apparently they don’t have a doctor during the day of which is not right. They need one at least during the day and not just at night. As she was being assisted in one of

the patient rooms, everyone around me started clapping hands for me. I couldn't believe it. They were treating me like I was a celebrity. One of the Nurses was brave enough to come forward.

Nurse: "Miss Isabella, I would firstly like to apologize for my ill treatment towards you. I didn't know that God would send someone like you to warn us and show us that our time is nearly up. Which is why I need to confess. I can't keep living a secret anymore. I would rather face the consequences than have people speak ill of me at my funeral."

I stood there and listened attentively.

Nurse: (sigh) "Most of us here got the job by sleeping with Derick, the Princess' husband. Some are her friends who are not even qualified. As you see the state of our clinic today, it is all because of us and her. You see, the King and Queen are not aware of this, because the King is so busy with

everything around this town. The Queen is too busy attending functions instead of taking care of her people. As we stand here before you, Princess Nomsa steals from the people.

She has been looting her family's money, money that belongs to the state, to the clinic and she has even fired really competent people. It is so bad that the Kingdom is on the verge of collapse and the King and Queen have no idea. I know God has sent you here for a reason, my dear, Isabella. Please, help us. Our people are going hungry because Nomsa is looting the money. Her husband is even raping children at the private school and no one is saying anything because they are so afraid of them both."

I couldn't believe my ears. Is the situation so bad? What the fuck man?

Nurse: "I even have all the evidence. I am ready to face whatever charge I deserve, but please, help all

those children and this community.”

I nodded as I took the file from her. I must say, she is one brave woman for coming forward with this.

Thato: “I promise, I will do my best.”

The other nurse who was busy with MaMasango called me to the room and I rushed there hastily.

Thato: “What is it? Is she okay?”

Nurse: “I’m afraid I have some bad news. MaMasango has got Stage Four Cervical cancer.”

Chapter Ninety Nine

Romans 8:30 – “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he

also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Thato

This is just not right. How cruel can life be? I mean MaMasango is just getting her redemption and now she is dying? How on earth will an old woman like her survive cervical cancer? I found myself crying – I don't know but I feel so close to her, really.

MaMasango: “Don't cry, Thato, please. I have lived.”

How can she say that when she has lived most of her life ostracized and shamed?

Thato: “How can you say that, Ma?”

MaMasango: "Because I have. You know, today, you have given me one of the best gifts anyone could ever ask for. For the first time in years, people actually saw me. They looked at me without fear and actually touched me. That is all I have yearned for all my life, now that I got that, I can die in peace."

I can't let her die like this. I asked the nurse if there is anything she could do, but apparently it had already spread to the kidneys. This is just the worst news anyone could ever hear. How will I help her when I have the rest of the money Selena gave me to Gloria? Oh, no. She can't go back to that house of hers, she needs proper care.

Thato: "How will we take care of you, Ma? That house of yours is in a really bad state."

MaMasango: "Do not fret over me, child. I am at peace."

All the other nurses heard that she was ill and came in teary. Life is indeed short. The one nurse who gave me the file full of secrets, came up with a brilliant suggestion.

Nurse: "I live alone – no husband, no kids. Ma, you are most welcome to come live with me. At least if you are going to leave this earth, rather leave it in dignity."

For the first time ever since I met MaMasango I saw her cry.

MaMasango: (crying) "I have never ever had anyone offer me help at all. Not even to carry a plastic bag or give me a lift during a rainy day. God says that the day you reap the benefits of your repentance, you shall be rewarded greatly. Indeed, Isabella, this is the best day of my life. Don't forget what I said to

you that day at the market. You are destined for greatness, you are meant to be a queen of the nation. You shall heal a lot of people and change a whole nation.”

The nurse helped me walk MaMasango to her car as we drove to her house. We didn't even bother going back to MaMasango's house as there wasn't much to take there. We got to the nurse's beautiful house and I must say she did pretty well for herself. A three bedroom house with some really nice furniture.

Nurse: “Please, take a seat. It is not much, but I try.”

Nonsense.

Thato: “Don't be silly, this is absolutely beautiful.”

Nurse: “Thank you.”

She took MaMasango to her room as I started looking at all the photos around the house. She then came back.

Nurse: "Sorry about that, I figured she must be devastated with the news and very tired. I will be sure to make her my famous soup later on. Can I get you anything to drink?"

Thato: "A glass of water would be fine, thank you."

She nodded and came back with the glass of water.

Nurse: "My name is Portia by the way."

Thato: "Isabella."

Nurse: "Isabella, what a nice name. Are you coloured?"

Thato: "Something like that."

Nurse: "Forgive me for prying."

Thato: "It's okay, I get that a lot, really. It is nothing."

Nurse: "You don't seem like you are from here. May I ask where you are from?"

Thato: "I am from Soweto actually, so I came here to get away from some drama back home."

Nurse: "I get you. It can't be easy, but hey, mental illness is real. Mental health has to come first. I left my whole toxic family just to come stay here alone."

Thato: "Where do they live?"

Nurse: "Not very far from here. I will tell you about them some other day. Let us just say they are too toxic to discuss today."

I chuckled a bit.

Thato: "So, what exactly do you want me to do with this evidence?"

Nurse: "Do something – anything. I can't let Nomsa get away with this. That woman is poison and sadly, we all knew, but we were so desperate for jobs that we just went ahead with it. I am willing to be a witness if need be. I just can't do this anymore. It has been eating me up and I can't even enjoy the money."

I get her. Sadly, everything comes at a price.

Thato: "I see."

I started browsing through the file and I wish I hadn't. The horrific discovery I made is just not right. Derick is one sick fuck. There were close to 20 cases of rape laid against him, but now how come they never made it to the King's ears? This is just too disturbing. Nomsa on the other hand has been one busy bitch.

She has been stealing money everywhere – from state funds, to donations and even sponsorships. She even went as low as stealing a portion of all the employee's salaries – even us who work at the house! How cruel could she be? The King and Queen must either be very stupid, or Nomsa is a very good liar.

Thato: "I can't believe this!"

Nurse: "Which is why I waited for the right person to tell. I don't know you, but something in me told me you are the perfect person for this. I trust you will do what you need to."

Thato: "What about MaMasango?"

Nurse: "Don't worry about her. I will make sure she is in good hands. I promise."

I nodded as I headed out. She gladly gave me taxi fare since I had used up all my money at the clinic today. I arrived at the house round about 7pm. I am sure the Queen is fuming her ass off. I slowly walked in with the file hidden under my uniform. It is a flipfile, so it won't be that noticeable. I still don't know whom to trust other than Queen Nandi, so I

have to tread carefully. As I walked in it seems as if Queen Nombu was really expecting me. She was eating alone for a change, without anyone dining with her.

Queen Nombu: "Hey wena (you)! Woza lana (Come here)!"

Yep, she really was expecting me. I slowly walked towards her. I even forgot to bow after the disturbing day I had.

Queen Nombu: "Oh, so you think you are a member of the royal family now because that old hag loves you? You don't bow anymore?"

I bowed to her. I hate this bowing shit. It makes people feel like they are worthless.

Thato: Apologies, my Queen. I didn't mean to – “

She didn't even let me finish.

Queen Nombu: “Thula (Shut up)! Sfebe ndini (You whore)!”

Wow, has it really restarted to that now?

Queen Nombu: “Where have you been all day?”

Thato: “I was at the clinic, Ma.”

Queen Nombu: “Queen! Queen Nombu!”

Okay, I see the nice Queen Nombu is no longer present as of this moment.

Queen Nombu: "What were you doing all day, Isabella?! Are you trying to ruin my reputation?!"

Thato: "No, Ma, I – "

Queen Nombu: "Ngithe (I said) Queen!"

Thato: "Queen Nombu, I – "

She was on a real mission to be rude tonight.

Queen Nombu: "Do you know how embarrassed I was hearing that my maid was busy making herself known at the clinic? People talking about how you were giving orders to my staff! How dare you undermine me like that? After all I ever did for you? You have barely been working here for a month and already you think you can be like me? You can never

be me, darling. I am born royalty. What are you?"

Yoh, I don't have time for this, really. I am sad, my heart is achy, I miss Gloria and I really need peace.

Thato: "If you must know, Queen Nombulelo, I am Isabella Groen, I am the daughter of a very powerful man, and if I were you I would tread carefully. You don't know me, nor do you know anything about all the businesses you own. Everything is done right under your nose. What kind of a Queen are you who does not care about the wellbeing of her people?"

It seems as if I added fuel to the fire. She gave me one bewildered look and in a split second, she gave me the hardest slap of my life.

Queen Nombu: "How dare you?!"

Oh, no, how dare she?

Queen Nombu: “Do you know who I am?”

Does she know who the fuck I am? As she was shouting at me and literally spitting in my face, the King and Queen Nandi walked in.

King Ntsika: “What is going on here?”

They both saw me holding my cheek and both became bewildered.

Queen Nandi: “What the fuck is this, wena (you), Nombulelo?!”

She didn't even have any remorse.

Queen Nombu: “What does it look like? I am teaching her a big lesson. She thinks she can walk around town during work hours and abuse my kindness like that?”

King Ntsika: (fuming) “Nombulelo, you have really lost the plot. It is bad enough you humiliated me by sleeping with my brother, and now you beat up an innocent young woman for doing your job at the clinic? You ought to be ashamed.”

Queen Nombu: “But, Ntsika, I – “

King Ntsika: “Pack your bags. I spoke to your mother. She is expecting you tonight.”

That was such a shocker.

Queen Nombu: (shocked) “No, Ntsika. Did your

mother put you up to this? I am not going anywhere. I am fighting for our marriage til my last breath.”

King Ntsika: “If you don’t want to pack your bags, the driver will drag you out of here. You choose.”

She looked at King Ntsika with such weakness, I sort of felt pity for her. Bitch.

Queen NOmbu: “No, I refuse.”

King Ntsika: “Very well then.”

The king walked out and came back in a split second with some guy I don’t know.

King Ntsika: “Drag her out of here.”

She was kicking and screaming, begging for mercy, while Queen Nandi, King Ntsika and I just looked at her being dragged out of the house. I was in a total state of shock with a burning cheek.

Queen Nandi: "I am so sorry about that, Isabella. Let me have a look."

I removed my hand from my cheek and I could feel it burn yet again. Shit, that woman's fingers are probably made of steel or something. She slapped me straight into pain.

Queen Nandi: "It looks a bit painful. Sit, I will be right back."

I did as told while the King sat next to me.

King Ntsika: "Firstly, I would like to apologize for my

wife's evilness towards you, Isabella. My mother explained everything to me. I sincerely apologize for her treating our future Queen like this. Had I known you were Nkosinathi's wife, I would have gotten rid of her long ago."

Thato: "It's okay, baba."

Queen Nandi came back with a warm cloth and gently placed it on my cheek.

King Ntsika: "I feel like such a worthless man. I failed to see what my own daughter was doing to me right under my nose. She has basically crippled our kingdom. We have no choice but to ask the bank for a loan. A loan of which it will take us eternity to pay off. If we take out this loan we would not own part of our land anymore."

Shit, they know. Things can't be that bad. They have

to think of another plan. We can't possibly be in such a dire state of desperation. It seems as if Nomsa basically bankrupted the entire Kingdom. I have no idea what she even did with the money, but ja, we need some help in that regard. Surely we can think of something.

Chapter One Hundred

Ephesians 1:4 – “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

Thato

I don't know what to think, really. Everything is now out in the open; Queen Nandi and King Ntsika know everything that Nomsa and Derick have been up to and now it is a little too late. Gloria is still missing and her phone has been off. Prince Zweli has not

been himself of late, and has been trying to look for her up to no avail. It is only now that I realize how private Gloria actually is.

She didn't really mention where her grandmother stays. This is such a mess, even though Zweli is doing his best to find her. He does not even want to hear his mother's name mentioned. I guess she has made a lot of enemies within her family. King Ntsika is really happy about what I did yesterday.

Apparently it is all over town.

Everyone told everyone and the news eventually landed on the King's ears. When he heard, he started digging on his own accord with the help of Queen Nandi, and that is when they actually found out about Nomsa and Derick's dealings. The problem now is Derick. He has not come home yet and they have set a trap for him – they are ready for him and the police are even on standby to arrest him with immediate effect.

Nomsa on the other hand is to also face the same charges as her husband – from conspiracy to murder to fraud. Those two are a match made in hell I guess. The one cannot live without the other so it seems. King Ntsika spread the word all over town that Derick is a wanted man, so we have been waiting for hours and yet no word from outside.

Queen Nandi: “Perhaps we should call it a night. I think we can get people to keep searching for him tomorrow. Enande is not that big for anyone to hide.”

King Ntsika: “You two can go sleep, I’d rather wait up.”

Queen Nandi and I were about to retreat to our bedrooms, when Zenande stormed in like she has just lost her marbles.

Zenande: “Who do you think you are?! You think you can just waltz in here and do as you please?! It is bad enough you made my grandpa take my father away and now? What’s this I hear of you accusing my father of being a rapist?!”

She was shouting and pointing at Queen Nandi. We all didn’t see the next move coming. Queen Nandi didn’t say a word, as she let Zenande finish talking. The louder she shouted, the more annoyed Queen Nandi became. She grabbed Zenande by the throat and pinned her against the wall.

Both King Ntsika and I were a bit appaled, but we didn’t say a word. I think I know better than to go against Queen Nandi’s wishes. Besides, Zenande deserved it. It has been long time coming. Meanwhile Zenande was shocked to the core and really scared as she struggled to breathe.

Queen Nandi: (fuming) “I have been warning you. I told you not to mess with me, kodwa wena (but) wayenzani (what did you do)? You decided to go against me and treat me like I am one of your whoring friends! I’m not your friend, Zenande. You should know better than to keep shouting like a mad person. I told you if only you knew who you really were, you wouldn’t be behaving like a lost animal. Your whoring mother slept with Mamasango’s son, you idiot. That is how you were conceived. The woman you claimed to be a witch is your grandmother. No wonder ungathati kahle so (you are so crazy).”

Wow, the secrets within this family. I can’t even keep up. Zenande was battling for dear life, as Queen Nandi had mercy on her and let go of her throat. She dropped down to the floor, coughing and gasping for air.

Zenande: (coughing) “Unamanga (You are lying)!”

Hao (Wow), she still has the guts to keep swearing at a woman who nearly ripped her throat out of her?

Queen Nandi: “I have nothing to gain from lying to you. You are nothing, but filth and you will always stay like that for as long as you follow in your mother’s footsteps. Take a good look at yourself. You don’t even look like Derick. If I were you, I would really be happy for not having Derick’s genes. Who wants to be associated with a serial rapist? A molester of note?”

Queen Nandi is very harsh, but she speaks the truth always. She does not believe in sugar coating things, and I love how she is not rude to anyone undeserving of it.

Zenande: (fuming) “You have never liked me, Gogo (granny). Why is that? Why would you do something

like this to me?"

Queen Nandi: "I have bigger problems to solve right now, than paying attention to petty, spoiled children like you. If you want to still stay here, you had better learn to be respectful and mindful of others. If not, there is the door."

She got up from the floor and rushed upstairs to her room. Ai, ja neh. The things people do for money. I can never understand how most children who are literally born into money are rude as fuck. King Ntsika went to his bedroom, while Queen Nandi and I also retreated to ours. I couldn't help but feel like something bad was going to happen.

Have you ever gotten that sudden feeling like something was just not okay with someone you know? You just don't know who it is? I tried praying the feeling away, but the more I prayed, the more anxious I felt. I couldn't even sleep a wink. I then

decided to call Rami. I know her number off by heart as well, so I called her and she answered on the first ring.

Rami: "Rami, hello?"

Thato: "Hi, Sis."

Rami: (teary) "Thato! Oh, my God. Where are you? Are you okay? Are you safe?"

Thato: "I am fine, babe. How are you?"

Rami: (crying) "Yoh, Tee. Everything has just been a mess. I don't even know who to talk to anymore. Without you I have been a real mess with everything falling apart. With Aunt Viv gone, we have had to be stuck in the house under 24 hour surveillance. I miss you so much, please come home. I have so

much to talk to you about.”

How I wish it was that simple. How on earth do I go from where I am, leaving the people who need me most and going straight back home? The Kingdom is on the verge of collapse and I need to save it. I feel like it is my duty to – I don’t know how, but God will have to help me on this one.

Thato: “I promise I will come back soon once all this dies over.”

Rami: “You don’t know?”

Thato: (puzzked) “Know what?”

Rami: “The guys all went on a mission – including Thendo. They have found Rendani and the Martinellis. They are headed there as we speak. A

war is about to break and I am scared shitless, Tee.”

Oh, no. Now I understand why I have been feeling like this. It all makes sense now.

Thato: “Rami, please pray. Ask Nana to pray with you. We’ll talk later.”

I hung up and got on my knees as I started praying again.

Thato: “Father God, I humble myself before you. I ask that you please protect all the men in my life. I do not know what is about to happen, but I pray that you grace us with your mercy and protect them throughout this. Please bring them back safe and sound in Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

I tried to sleep thereafter even though it was not

such a pleasant time to sleep.

Kg

We finally were headed to the airport and I was really anxious to end up at Italy so that we could finally kill a few motherfuckers, but suddenly Soks called the guard who was expecting us at the airport.

Guard: "Pastor Sol wants to talk to you."

I keep forgetting he is serious about this whole pastor thing. I took the phone and answered.

Kg: "Hello?"

Soks: "I told you that it is always better to get the enemy on homeground. Change of plans. Those

two idiots are coming to Cape Town. Your plan will be directed there. I will see you in an hour or two.”

Just like that, he hung up. This is so different from the Soks I know – so much more matured and straight to the point. I must say, I miss that idiot Soks back then, but I love this one more. We got into the plane and headed to Cape Town. The whole time Mulalo held his rosary, the one Nana handed to all of us. We finally arrived in Cape Town. As we got out, the drivers took us to a nearby Roman Church.

I don't even get it, but since Soks is a pastor, it makes sense why we are here now. We walked in with caution, with a few items of ammunition on us and we found him right in the middle of the pulpit. A few tables were set before the pulpit with chairs and a few drinks. I feel like we are in a mafia movie or something. As we walked in we approached Soks, dressed in his pastoral uniform.

Soks: (smiling) "Good day, you have finally arrived, family."

Kg: (chuckling) "Ja, Soks. You like the runaround. Couldn't you just tell us we were coming here?"

Soks: "Ag, you know how it is. Please, be seated gentlemen."

He pointed us at the table facing left and we took our seats.

Soks: "Gentlemen, we are in the house of the lord. As much as I hate violence and spilling of blood here, we have no other choice."

Gringo: "Noted. Can you brief us?"

Soks: "Certainly. Luigi and Luca are still against each other yet they both have the same objective - to get rid of you – all of you. This is courtesy of Rendani, who just added fuel to the fire. I shall leave you to it now. I will only come back once you are done. Please note that I put you on that table for a reason. You have your favourite and best ammunition underneath the table. I have prayed for everything and can only hope for the best. Good luck and all the best."

He left us there while we felt underneath the table and indeed there were some ammunition. It wasn't even long before Luigi arrived with his men. He didn't look armed and neither did they, but you never know. In fact, he was rather surprised to see us all.

Luigi: "Gringo. What nice surprise to see you. You here with your boys?"

I don't know Luigi for very long, but I trust him to ask

such an obvious question with his broken English.

Gringo: (chuckling) "Seems like you expected me to come alone or something else."

Luigi: "No worry. I just ask."

Gringo: "Take a seat right over there."

Luigi: "Why are we here?"

Gringo: "I should be asking you that. Aren't you the one who cooked up a plan to take over my business?"

I saw Luigi start fiddling with his hands and his eyes started wandering around.

Luigi: (nervous) “No, Gringo. I would never do that. You, me, come long way. I don’t betray family.”

Gringo: (laughing) “Then how come you failed to tell me that Rendani came to you right after kidnapping my daughter?”

Luigi’s forehead started sweating profusely.

Gringo: “You also failed to mention that he was the cause of my wife’s death.”

Luigi: (nervous) “G, listen, I knew nothing. He... he planned it all with Luca. I honestly had nothing to do with anything.”

I chuckled after the load of bullshit he was trying to feed me. No wonder why the two of them don’t get along. There is no loyalty among them at all. While

he was feeding us lies, Luca walked in and lo and behold, Rendani was right next to him.

Rendani looked so shocked to see us, and he honestly tried to run, but then the bouncers who came with Luca made sure that he couldn't leave without permission. I guess that is the price he has to pay for selling his damn soul. He has to be owned by them until they get what he had promised them.

Luca: (angered) "Luigi, I should have known. You betray me once more, stronzo (asshole)?!"

Luigi: "Don't fuck with me, Luca! You betray me – not other way round! You go behind my back and work with Rendani. Tell G the truth!"

Luca: "Rendani, what the fuck is going on here?!"

Rendani: (nervous) “I know nothing of this. I am just as shocked and surprised as you are.”

I felt myself become instantly enraged courage to kidnap my wife and put her through such hell. I really want to rip off every bit of skin from his body. I want him to relive the pain we all went through when Vivian died and Gringo was in that coma, when we all thought we would never see Thato ever again. Mulalo was starting to get agitated as well, while Gringo’s face became hardened.

Gringo: “Well, since no one is prepared to be honest, let me break it down for you. Your little friend here, Rendani, kidnapped my daughter right after having my wife killed and brought her to you, Luigi. He then fucked up and you chased him away, after he couldn’t keep his bargain of the deal regarding taking my business from me.

He ran to you, Luca, and the both of you came up

with a plan to get rid of us – all of us. You hatched a plan to get us killed and finish what you have started. Apparently you, Luca even had plans on making my daughter a sex slave somewhere in the world. Am I wrong?”

I could see Luca starting to shake a bit, as well as Luigi. They both look like they are ready to hash it out, but Rendani of course had other plans.

Luigi: “Well, I think it is safe to say that problem maker here is only one – Rendani.”

Rendani: “You two both want to turn against me and feed me to the wolves? Over my dead body.”

He drew his gun from the back of his jeans, and pointed it towards our direction. Luckily we were one step ahead of them and we drew out our guns as well. Adesh, Rajesh, Pravesh, Smally, Mulalo and

I had two guns each in both our hands, except for Gringo. He had an AK 47 in his hands, while Rendani only had one Glock Smith pistol in his hand. Things quickly escalated, with Luca, Luigi and both their men drawing their guns and pointing them at us. I see what's going on now. They both decided to stand together for us against us?

Gringo: "I see. You two decided to gang up on us for a change? Did you forget what Luca did to you, Luigi? You seem to forget he fucked your wife one time. You seem to forget that he is the reason you are also here. He made sure that he could trap you to come here and kill you once and for all. I was willing to forgive you, to let you go today had you only agreed to give me Rendani on a silver platter. But after your stupid choice, you will leave here in a body bag. Worst part you decided to disrespect the house of God instead of taking this right outside."

It seems as if Luigi was contemplating what Gringo

said to him.

Luigi: “If I give you both on a silver platter, what guarantee do I have that I will be set free?”

Gringo: “Selena saved my daughter. You have my word. I’d rather do this for her and ensure that you get to grow old together – for her sake.”

Luigi stood still for a while, thinking and within the blink of an eye, he turned his gun and shot Luca in the leg. Things escalated really fast in the blink of an eye, and Luigi’s men started shooting at Luca, while Luca’s men shot back. Rendani started shooting at us, and luckily we dodged the bullets. We also started shooting back, while Adesh and Rajesh quickly toppled the tables over so that they could act as shields for us.

They are big and round, so two of them were

enough to hold the bullets back for a while. Gringo launched his AK and started shooting in Rendani's direction. It seems as if they all were hiding behind the Church benches, while a few of Luca and Luigi's men shot at us, along with Rendani, Luca and Luigi began shooting at each other. Luca started shouting while shooting. I trust Italians to hold grudges and never let shit go.

Luca: "You will never win, Luigi! I have been planning to bring you down for ages! Padre loved you more than me, but even like that you still couldn't keep your wife!"

Luigi: "Fuck you, stronzo (asshole)! You shall die today! I curse the day you became related to me! Muori stronzo (Die, fucker)!"

As we were shooting and dodging bullets at the same time, I heard Adesh fall down as he yelled out in agony.

Adesh: (screaming) "Aaah! I'm hit!"

Rajesh: "Dad! Stay down!"

I quickly looked at him and saw him holding his shoulder.

Kg: "Tie his arm; I'll cover you."

Rajesh nodded as he went over to his dad to tie his arm and ensure that he doesn't bleed out. Smally got up and started shooting and managed to shoot two of Luc's men. Two down, two more to go. All Luigi's men were out. He was outnumbered.

Meanwhile, the table was starting to phase out as it was being devoured by the bullets. A bullet flew right through and hit Gringo on his chest. He fell down, but wasn't hurt at all. Thank goodness for the bullet proofs.

Pravesh got up and faced two of Luca's men head on and managed to take one out by shooting him right inbetween the eyes. Unfortunately he also got shot in the arm. Rajesh had to attend to him as well, leaving us short of men. I moved my head up a bit and I couldn't see Rendani. He wasn't where he was hiding. Something does not feel right. I turned to my right and Mulalo was right next to me. My worst fear came to surface as he became entangled into a scuffle with Rendani.

I pointed my gun at Rendani and pulled the trigger, but I was out of bullets. Shit. I tried looking for a gun nearby, but everyone was just too busy with their own shooting. Gringo shot Luca, along with his last man. As Luigi got up, Gringo shot him in the leg. It felt like just a split second, when I turned around and noticed Rendani had tried to grab Mulalo by his throat, but he ended up grabbing his necklace instead – the one Nana gave to all of us. I then remembered her saying we shouldn't take it off no

matter what. Fuck, this can't be happening. I looked around and saw Rajesh holding both his brother and father, supporting them and making sure they don't fall asleep.

Kg: "Rajesh, pass me the gun!"

Rajesh did as told, Mulalo fell down. Rendani pointed his gun at me and I heard his gun go off simultaneously along with mine. I looked down and checked whether I had been hit, but felt nothing. I looked at Mulalo who dropped down right before me, while Rendani fell almost instantly. I saw blood oozing from Mulalo's mouth as he struggled to catch his breath. Fuck, no! This can't be happening. I quickly knelt down as I held him. I had his head on my knees and tears streaming down my face profusely.

Kg: (crying) "Mulalo, brother, please. Don't leave me. I beg you."

Mulalo: (out of breath) "Take good care of yourself and of Thato. I... I'm really glad I met you. I love you."

Kg: "Mulalo! No!"

Chapter One Hundred and One

Ecclesiastes 6:10 – "Whatever exists has already been named, and what humanity is has been known; no one can contend with someone who is stronger."

Isaiah 46:10 – "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'"

Thato

I found myself being unable to sleep, although I eventually fell asleep after quite a struggle. I was awoken by the beaming light of Nokukhanya in my bedroom, along with someone's spirit I never expected.

Nokukhanya: "Thato, wake up. Vuka, Ndhlovukazi (Wake up, Queen)."

I woke up and faced her. I couldn't believe it. She has Mulalo right by her side, dressed in all white. He looks so different, so happy unlike the miserable Mulalo I always saw. Wait, what does this mean now?

Nokukhanya: (smiling) "You did so well, my dear child. You really are stepping up and living up to your name. I am so glad you finally managed to help the people of Enande and give MaMasango the one thing she has been longing for."

Thato: (frowning) “Ma, what is happening? I mean, why is Mulalo with you also dressed like you?”

Nokukhanya: “It is all thanks to you that I was able to find my long lost son.”

I became puzzled. I really have no idea what’s happening right now.

Nokukhanya: “You see, when I was pregnant with Kgaugelo, I was actually pregnant with Twins. One of them was Mulalo. My sister, will explain everything she did to you. She will call for you tomorrow. And when she does, I will be right there with you. She will be able to see me as I have been visiting her quite a lot. Hang in there, Thato. The worst is over. It is just unfortunate that you had to be saved by Mulalo offering his life for you – otherwise they would have come for you.”

I don't understand. Is Mulalo dead? I found myself overwhelmed with tears. No wonder I have been feeling strange and overwhelmed with nerves. Oh, Kg must be devastated. He just found his brother and now he is about to bury him. This can't be right.

Thato: (crying) "This must be a mistake, Ma. Mulalo, please. Tell me this is just a nightmare."

Mulalo: "It is not, Thato. Thank you for everything you have done for me. You accepted me when everyone else found me weird. I have found my rightful family and joined them in spirit now all thanks to you. If it wasn't for our connection, I would have never found my twin brother. For that, I will be eternally grateful."

I found myself crying profusely.

Thato: "No! No! Mulalo, No! Please come back!"

Mulalo: "You are destined for greatness, Thato. You are about to save this kingdom. Please stay strong and do what you came here for. Your time will come to support Kg through this difficult time. He won't take my loss very well, but you will have to be there to reassure him."

I feel like complete shit now. I slept with brothers – twin brothers at that. I can't believe it. Now Mulalo died without knowing his mother's biological family. This is not okay at all. They always say everything happens for a reason, but now why should our family and my loved ones always go through hell? When will it end?

Nokukhanya: "Please, do not be saddened, for everyone has their time limit here on earth. You are deeply loved, Isabella. You are going to lead this nation and before you do that, you have to get rid of all the evil and everyone who is not of a pure heart."

My sister is expecting you tomorrow morning. You will finally know the truth about how I died and where I was laid to rest. I will see you then.”

They slowly disappeared leaving me with a deeply wounded heart. I can't believe that Mulalo is gone. He didn't even have a child or any remembrance of him left behind. Life can be so unfair.

Kg

I refused to believe that my brother had died. I wept right on the cold floor with his bloody, lifeless body gone cold right in my arms. This can't be the end of our brotherhood. It just can't be. That explains everything – how Mulalo begged me to spend time with him these past few weeks, how he forced me to take pictures of every small thing. My brother knew he was going to meet his end tonight and he lay his life for me. He even asked me to make a pact with him before coming here, that no matter what – I

should be saved first. Oh, Mulalo, my brother.

Kg: (Shouting) "God, why are you so selfish? Why do you take away the people I love the most? You took my mother away from me before I had even hit puberty. You made me find my brother and now he is gone. How cruel are you? Why are you doing this to me? Is it because I am not very god-fearing? I am not a regular church-goer? Why, God?!"

I completely ignored Rendani's screams on the floor.

Gringo: (saddened) "Son, he is gone. Come, we have to go before the cops come. We have to get Adesh and Pravesh to the hospital. We still have to sort out this motherfucker. Mulalo met his death and it was time, son. Please, let go of him. Just, let him go."

How do I even let go of my brother? My other half? I got up as I carried him in my arms as we made our

way to the kombi. Gringo had Adesh in his arms, while Smally was dragging the screaming Rendani with his one arm, while Pravesh had Rajesh in his. Thendo was hiding behind the pulpit the whole time and I am actually glad for that. I can't imagine having to bury him to. He slowly walked out terrified as hell as he walked behind us. He stopped as he saw all the blood, with some of the men hit with bullets right between their eyes. He vomited profusely. It gets better with time, though. Gringo stopped right before the ailing Luigi.

Gringo: "You are lucky I love Selena and I have a soft spot for her. I am letting you go, but I can't let you go and live life the same way you used to."

He paused as he took out a gun from underneath his jacket and shot him in both knees. Luigi screamed like a little child.

Gringo: "Let that be a painful reminder never to mess

with a loyal family member.”

Soks appeared out of nowhere as we had completely forgotten about him.

Soks: “Don’t worry, G. I will make sure he gets home safe and sound. I will meet with you soon.”

Gringo nodded as we proceeded to walk out. We headed to the hospital so that Adesh and Rajesh could be dropped off and get medical assistance. They seemed to be fine, and luckily didn’t show any signs of shock. We had to drop Mulalo off at the family mortuary, courtesy of Gringo. it is hard staring a lifeless body in the eyes like that. Especially when the deceased is your very own brother or someone really close to you. After dropping Mulalo’s body off, I headed back into the Kombi.

Gringo: "Should we wait for tomorrow to sort out this mess?"

He was referring to Rendani.

Kg: "No, let's do it now. After tonight, I'd like a fresh start – a life without crime and without violence. It his high time I became the man Thato has always known. I was not born for such a life – a crime ridden life. I want a peaceful life, a happy life, I want to be a good father and a good family."

Gringo: (smiling) " I have been waiting to hear you say that. I always knew you were not Wolfe, but you were Kg. I am so glad that my daughter managed to choose so well. Now, let's get our shit in order and get rid of this piece of shit."

He didn't have to tell me twice. We drove to our warehouse along with Smally. It was only the three

of us along with our culprit – Rendani. For the first time we have no spectators. There is no need for a show and dressing up tonight. I want him to die a slow, painful death. I want him to feel how Vivian died. I want him to feel the intense fear Thato was in when he snatched her from us and wounded our Gringo. He could have died, you know. We could have had our double murder. Rendani was bleeding from his shoulder, while screaming out in pain, but we didn't care. He actually took two people whom I cared for deeply. He killed Vivian and Rendani in a space of months. I hate this fucker.

Kg: “Ja, Rendani, you are really enjoying life, neh, you sick fuck.”

Rendani: (weakly) “Please, please let me go. I promise I won't ever bother you again.”

Gringo: (laughing) “Who do you think you are, wena (you)? You honestly think you can kill my wife,

kidnap my daughter, riddle me with bullets, endanger us all and kill my son and think you can get away with all of that?!”

Rendani started laughing which actually pissed us both off even more. I found myself transforming from Kg to Wolfe.

Rendani: “Look, it is nothing personal, okay? What did you expect, G? A pat on the back for disowning my father and I and ridding us of the only life we knew? Besides, I loved Thato, I still do. I couldn’t let you have her, Kg.”

Kg: “You think you’re so smart, don’t you?”

Rendani: (chuckling) “I actually am smart. I managed to fool you, though. I managed to get past your weak security and kill your wife. I managed to kidnap YOUR wife and you couldn’t find her.”

Gringo: (angered) “What do you think we were doing all this time? What? You actually think Thato is still in Italy?”

Rendani’s little smirk changed into fear very quickly.

Gringo: “That’s right. My daughter came back to South Africa long before you could even laugh and celebrate, you stupid fuck. She came back to South Africa right after Wolfe over here killed your lousy father.”

I saw Rendani’s fear increase as he stared at the both of us with glistening tears.

Rendani: “Okay, I admit. It was stupid of me to plan this whole thing, but I swear, I didn’t plan on killing Vivian.”

We both burst out in laughter automatically.

Kg: “Too late, your little bitches told us what you instructed them to do before we killed them. You see, you messed with the wrong people, Rendani. You actually endangered our wives and you know how we feel about that. When you entered the gang you knew that wives and children were off limits and for that, you will die a slow, painful death.”

Rendani: (petrified) “Please, don’t do this to me. I am really sorry for what happened. If I could take it all back I would.”

Kg: “Luckily, you can’t. G, would you like to do the honours?”

Gringo: “I would love to, but your wound is still fresh. Do the honours.”

I chuckled.

Kg: "Smally, please bring the tools."

Smally: (nodding) "Sure thing, bozza (boss)."

He came back with our famous trolley. Rendani was on the ground, untied, wounded and weak. I intend on making this my best and last kill ever. I injected him with our famous injection.

Kg: "See this? This gives you tons of energy. It will ensure you don't pass out, but you will feel all the pain. It will paralyze you, but you will feel every bit of what I am about to do to you."

I injected him with it while he screamed. He collapsed onto the ground, still conscious and all and I lay him flat onto the ground. It is high time this

fucker gets reminded that he played the wrong man.

Rendani: (crying) "Please, please, let me go. Wolfe, I know you're not capable of such. I know you."

Kg: "Had you known me you would have known I am not one to mess with. Had you known me, you would have known that Thato is very dear to me. Had you known me you would have known Mulalo was a very special person to me."

I stopped babbling as I took a sharp machete from the trolley. I slowly cut off the edges of his face and ripped his skin off. He cried out in pain as I watched him bleed from the peels of his skin. I proceeded to cutting off both his ears.

Kg: "You seem to have a lack of listening skills, so the ears just had to go. Now that you thought with your dick and were actually planning on killing my

wife, I am about to cut the one organ off your body that drives you crazy.”

I proceeded to take off his pants while he screamed out in pain yet he couldn't even move. I cut off his dick and balls within a split second and watched as he wailed like an orphaned child. I took a blowing torch and started burning off his skin from top to toe. I started burning his one eye and left the other. I then blew off his entire neck, throughout his entire abdomen all the way down to his toes. He screamed out his lungs, but his screams were deaf to me.

I proceeded to burn through his abdomen, and rip out his entire intestines. I watched as he slowly took his last breath. I wanted him to see me, to see the ruthless pain in my eyes and recall this moment – even in death. He ended up shitting and pissing himself at the same time. What a sight for sore eyes – in the most negative way possible. He slowly took his last breath, but I wasn't satisfied. I slit his throat

even after he died, and I cut off his head.

I think seeing his head apart from his body gave me pure satisfaction. Instead of burying him, I decided to set him alight. He does not deserve even the least decent burial. He deserves to die like an animal. I watched him burn to death until his whole body turned to ashes. The pain I am in right now cannot be mended, but knowing that the cause of my entire problems was partially caused by a man who is no longer alive, brings me some sort of peace.

Chapter One Hundred and Two

Jeremiah 17:10 – “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.”

Thato

I haven't been able to sleep right after midnight; after Nokhunyana and Mulalo's visit. I can't be normal after finding out through a vision or seeing Mulalo's ghost that he is indeed no more. I tried succumbing to my incredible desire for more sleep, right until Queen Nandi started banging on my door like a mad woman.

Queen Nandi: "Isabella, wake up! Wake, up, sisi (sis)."

Yoh, I guess I just have to get up. I dreadfully walked towards the door and unlocked it.

Queen Nandi: "Yoh, why do you look so dreadful?! Be uyenzani izolo ebusuku (What were you doing last night)?"

Thato: (sigh) "I was trying to sleep, Ma. I hardly managed, until Nonkanyiso came to me with Mulalo

right by her side. I am not coping at all. I am thinking deeply about my Kg. I had no idea he was his twin and now he is dead.”

I found myself bawling into tears yet again. I didn't expect Mulalo's death to hit me so hard, but I guess I really was very fond of him. Or could it be the guilty conscience I have for sleeping with him while going through heartbreak?

Queen Nandi: “Phephisa, ntombi (Hang in there, baby girl). Ungakhali kanje (Don't cry like this). Listen, let's go to the hospital, and thereafter you can go see your family. The worst is over on your side.”

Huh? I thought I had to wait for Tman to give me instructions. I am guessing Queen Nandi knows everything, just like my Nana. Gosh, I miss them. I miss Gloria, and I don't know where she is, but I am dealing with a lot right now. I went back to my bedroom, and I took a bath. I feel so numb, I feel like

calling Kg, but then what on earth am I going to say?

I am guessing Rendani was behind this as well. Why is it all of a sudden safe for me to go back home? As I got out of the bathroom, I received a message from Tman. “The worst is over, dear Queen. You may proceed to go home if you wish.” Hao, just like that? I got into my jeans and simple Tshirt. I feel so exhausted, perhaps a strong coffee or energy drink will do. As I got out I found Queen Nandi and King Ntsika in the dining area, awaiting my presence.

Queen Nandi: (smiling) “We’ve been waiting for you. I hope you feel a lot better.”

I had to fake a smile, but knowing Queen Nandi, she saw right through me.

Thato: “I do, thank you.”

Queen Nandi: “You can’t hide from me, you know. It’s okay to feel bad, which is why I made you one strong Espresso. Believe me, you will feel a whole lot better after drinking it.”

I nodded as I gulped it all at once. My head hurts like hell as it feels like I have been run over by a truck. I feel so hungover yet I didn’t take any alcohol last night. I am guessing grief and pain mixed together is not very good for a person’s wellbeing – both physically and mentally.

After our mean breakfast, I actually felt a whole lot better and had a bit more energy. It is Saturday today, but Queen Nandi and the King accompanied me to the hospital to adhere to Princess Nomsa’s request to see me. We drove in Queen Nandi’s Lexus, apparently she loves this brand. How I miss driving my car.

This whole experience has taught me not to rely on my parents' riches and not to get used to a situation, for anything can happen at any given time. Your money can be snatched away from you within an instant, and luckily I wasn't born into money. I grew up in humble beginnings and I thank my mother for that. I am now able to live off porridge or simple bread without complaining about it. I just miss being surrounded by family; I miss Mam'V so much. Her humble nature, her crazy personality and her welcoming smile just makes me miss her so much.

I didn't get a chance to say goodbye to her, and now I can't miss being there for Kg and saying goodbye to Mulalo. We finally arrived at the clinic, and Princess Nomsa was in such a dire state I couldn't even believe it. It is almost as if she saw a ghost. One of the nurses said to us she has been acting like a crazy woman ever since last night and hasn't slept a wink – despite being given a calming injection. I guess her demons want to come out. As we walked in she became a bit relieved when she saw me.

Princess Nomsa: "Oh, thank God, you're here!
Please, call my mother! Call my mother! I want to
confess my sins! "

Okay, this is just something else.

Thato: "But she is not staying at the palace anymore
– "

Princess Nomsa: (interrupting) "I don't care! I want
my mother to be present or else I won't talk!"

I felt myself getting so annoyed especially from the
lack of sleep, but I let her be.

Queen Nandi: "Okay then. Ntsika, call her."

King Ntsika: (frowning) “Haibo (Wow), Why me?”

Queen Nandi: “Ngoba ngabe ku fona mina angeke ayibambe (Because if I call her she will never answer it). Tell her her daughter needs her and that she has a message from Noka. She will be here in a heartbeat.”

King Ntsika nodded reluctantly and proceeded to make the call, while Queen Nandi and I went to sit on the benches and waited for Queen Nombu’s arrival. We even heard that Nurse Portia took leave to take care of MaMasango. Now that is what I call a queen of note.

Queen Nandi: “How are you feeling?”

I haven’t heard anyone ask me that in a very long time.

Thato: (sigh) “To be honest, ma. I am not doing very well. I feel like I am about to lose it. Everything just doesn’t make sense. I keep losing the ones I love, and now my Kg has lost his twin brother. How do I even overcome that? How do I tell him that I slept with Mulalo willingly/”

Queen Nandi: “He already knows.”

I looked at her puzzled.

Queen Nandi: “Yes, he knew even before you called him. Mulalo told him way back, before he started getting a visit from the angel of death. Kg has been and is still okay with it. It happened and he slept with Anastacia. So, let’s call a truce a truce. Your problem Thato is that you have a tendency of dwelling in the past. Focus on the now and deal with everything. Soon after we deal with Nomsa, go be with your husband. His brother saved your husband so that you could be happy with him. Although I have

one humble request from you.”

Thato: “Yes?”

Queen Nandi: “It is about to be a bumpy ride with Olivia still in the picture as his wife. Convince Kg to have him buried right here on royal grounds along with his mother. It is high time his mother rested in peace.”

Thato: “I will have to try, Ma. Kg can be very stubborn.”

Queen Nandi: (chuckling) “There is nothing some good coochie won’t fix.”

We both burst into laughter while I blushed. This woman is crazy as fuck and I am loving every moment with her.

Thato: (embarrassed) “Hao (Gosh), Ma. I can’t talk about such with you.”

Queen Nandi: “You are funny, really funny. Don’t act like you haven’t been craving some sugar ever since.”

To be honest I have been craving some, hey. It has been rather tough being without sex.

Thato: “I guess, but then, Ma, how come you are still happy and alive and kicking without a husband?”

Queen Nandi: “To be honest, men are a luxury – not a necessity. I learnt that soon after getting married. Don’t get me wrong, I loved my husband so dearly. He was my soulmate, oh, yes, the love of my life, but soon after he died, I felt a different kind of peace. Men can be such a pain at times, and when he died, I

didn't see the need to get married again. Besides, that would mean finding another King because at the time my boys were so young so there was absolutely no way I could ever give myself to a commoner. Also, that would just have added a lot of problems on my plate."

So basically she is saying she has been without a man for years.

Thato: "So you mean to tell me you haven't slept with a man for years?"

Queen Nandi burst in such laughter, I don't even understand.

Queen Nandi: "Like I said, you're so funny. I mean, sure, I grieved my husband, hey. Royalty at the time required you to mourn for a period of two years. Luckily I married a very sane man. He had included

in his will that they were required to cleanse me immediately after his funeral and I was free to live my life thereafter – or else, they would not get a dime of his estate.”

Wow, no wonder she is so crazy. I love it when a man puts his wife first – even in death.

Thato: “That is so awesome, ma.”

Queen Nandi: “That is nothing. Wait until you see the kind of love Nkosinathi actually has for you. Your mother, Nomsa and all these people robbed you of a great life. But now, God’s favour was finally spoken unto existence and you get to experience his love and grace. Our ancestors chose you long ago, Thato. You will see now how merciful and gracerful God’s love is. Just you wait.”

Thato: (sigh) “But we have been through so much. I

feel like I will never experience true happiness without fighting for it”

Queen Nandi: “Let me put it like this for you; some of us are born straight into happiness, but we all encounter trouble along the way. Unfortunately in this life, we are fighting spiritual battles. All of us have enemies and some of us aren’t even aware of it. Don’t ever think someone does not have any problems. We all have someone who just doesn’t want us to succeed in a certain aspect of life.

The key is prayer. You see, you weren’t raised by a fool. Your mother was a true intellectual and she did tell you that your power lies in your tongue and your strength in your knees. Never ever forget to pray no matter how hard it gets. The devil rejoices whenever you don’t pray because that is when you don’t heed God’s warnings.”

Queen Nandi may be a crazy woman, but she sure is

wise. She really reminds me of my Nana. While we were chatting along, in walked Queen Nombu. Surprisingly, people didn't respond to her presence the way she was used to I guess. I am guessing they have finally seen the light. We are all human beings and this bowing shit must stop. I thought she would be a lot more remorseful since she was chased out of the palace, but ai.

Queen Nombu: (annoyed) "Oho, so now that I got chased out of my own house, you decided to play friends with the maid and got people not to take me seriously as the Queen?!"

Queen Nandi: "Ag, Nombulelo, ungazongijwaela kabi (Don't fuck with me). I have more pressing issues to deal with and right now you are really not even top 5 on the list. Let's go, uyazibambeleza (You are seriously delaying us)."

Queen Nombu followed us while clicking her tongue

in a very annoyed manner. King Ntsika didn't even acknowledge her presence. Ja, neh. It is truly amazing how men behave towards women when they cheat. It is almost as if it is the end of the world, but let them do it to you and they expect you to forgive them almost immediately. Anyway, we walked into Nomsa's room and she was talking to herself. I don't get it. Perhaps she is going angry. Suddenly, I saw Nonkanyiso appear right next to me. This woman really is punctual and she does not lie nor make empty promises. She did say that she would be here, well, I guess she has made her presence known. But it seems as if only Nomsa and I can see her.

Queen Nandi: "Isabella, you know what to do."

I am not even sure what she meant by that, but I nodded. Nomsa became really weary and petrified as soon as Nonkanyiso appeared.

Nonkanyiso: "Hello, Isabella. Nomsa, we meet again."

Nomsa: (crying) "Yoh, Nonkanyiso, I really am sorry for everything I did to you. I just wanted to be appreciated. Ngiyaxolisa (I am sorry)."

Nonkanyiso: "That is only the beginning. Tell my family first about Derick and how you two looted money from the kingdom. Tell them everything or else I won't leave."

Nomsa: (nodding) "Yes, yes, I will tell them everything."

Queen NOmbu: (confused) : "Who is she talking to?"

Queen Nandi: (rolling eyes) "Yoh, Ntsika, this is what you get for marrying an idiot. Hey, wena (you),

ukhuluma nomntwana wakho (she is talking to your daughter).”

Queen Nombu looked instantly sad, like literally. I haven't really seen her in a saddened state ever since I walked into that kingdom.

Nomsa: “Yes, everything Derrick's accused of is true. He raped all those girls and impregnated some of them. It is all true.”

I could hear King Ntsika adjusting his knuckles in anger.

Nomsa: “Everything in the file Isabella has is all true. I took a portion of all the worker's salaries at the palace. I even took a portion from all the employees you hired, baba (father). Ngiyaxolisa (I am sorry).”

King Ntsika didn't even say anything. Instead, he looked at her in pure frustration.

Nonkanyiso: "Carry on."

Nomsa: "I even took money from all the fundraising efforts as well as all the sponsorships. I didn't mean to, it is just that I was overwhelmed by greed."

While she was talking Zenande stormed in.

Zenande: (fuming) "What on earth are you doing to my mother?!"

King Ntsika: (hardened) "Thula (Quiet)!"

We all kept quiet and Zenande didn't even dare to speak a word further.

Nomsa: "I didn't mean to steal the money, but as it became easier to steal it, I did it more often and before I knew it, I had bankrupted the whole Kingdom."

Wow, this woman is really insane.

Nonkanyiso: "Tell them how much you stole and speak about Zenande's paternity. She is in heartache and dying to know.

Nomsa: "In total, I stole about R12 million."

Fuck that is really enough to cripple the state here. How on earth did her mind function? Did she even think of the future?!

Nomsa: "Zenande, I am truly sorry, but Derick is not your father."

Zenande: (distraught) "You are lying! You all tricked my mother into speaking such rubbish!"

King Ntsika: "If you don't shut it, I will shut your mouth for you, Zenande!"

I saw her keep quiet instantly.

Nonkanyiso: "Tell them about what you did to me."

Nomsa: (frightened) "I don't think I can do that. It will break me, Nonka, please."

Queen Nombu: (teary) "Oh, God. She is really speaking to Nonka!"

Nonkanyiso: "Speak to them and speak the truth

otherwise I will never leave you alone.”

Nomsa: (sigh) “I am the cause for everything that happened to Nonka and her son Mngqobi. I remember that day like a clear dream. I gave her a drink that was supposed to induce her labor. She went into labour almost immediately after taking that juice. She was so shocked, but I was there to assist her as her elder sister. I already had a plan hatched with MaMasango. We intended on sacrificing the first born and once she gave birth I had already swapped Mngqobi with a baby that was already dead. I gave the real Mngqobi to MaMasango and to my surprise she couldn't kill him. So he never died, and I never could finish him off because I never found out what happened after that. When I wanted to speak to MaMasango afterwards she refused to speak to me. I was so envious of you – I refused to be in your shadow for much longer, so I cooked up a plan with Sophie and she handed Nonka a poisonous drink. Unfortunately she was with Nkosinathi that day but she dropped dead right there

in front of him. I couldn't help it – I just wanted to be loved and appreciated by my own parents but even after you left Nonka, I was still in your shadow.”

I can't believe just how cruel people can be though. To kill your own sister. Fuck. King Ntsika was so silent, but I could see the endless tears streaming down his face. Queen Nombu didn't even know what to do, while Queen Nandi was saddened with glistening tears.

Nonkanyiso: “Tell them about what you did to uBaba (father).”

Nomsa: “I asked one of the cooks to administer poison to you, father. I basically threatened her and she had no choice. I told her if she didn't do it, I would get Derick to rape her 11 year old daughter. She did it in a heartbeat.”

King Ntsika: "Where did you get the poison?"

Nomsa: "From Bhengu."

Wow, the secrets that are being spilled here are just overwhelming. The whole time Zenande kept quiet.

Nomsa: "Gloria was not the one who put the poison into the food. She is too good for that. I regret a lot of things and one of them is causing my son so much pain."

Wow, so even in her maddened state she still does not say how sad and remorseful she is about killing her only sibling? What the fuck though?

Nonkanyiso: "I believe everything has been spilled, Thato. The ball is in your court. As the future queen of this nation, what do you suggest? She is to be

charged with conspiracy to commit murder, attempted murder, witchcraft, and fraud.”

I looked at Nomsa who seriously looked like she was secretly praying for some healing and mercy.

Thato: “I don’t believe in burning people to death, so I think she should be charged in front of a court of law and be charged accordingly.”

I heard Queen Nombu wailing and King Ntsika and Queen Nandi nodded at my request. I can’t believe they are letting a mere maid take decisions upon them. Wow.

Chapter One Hundred and Three

Proverbs 19:20 – “Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.”

Thato

Yesterday has been so tough and stressful, I honestly thought it would never end. I managed to go see MaMasango, and oddly she looks a bit worse than she did yesterday. I don't know if it is because she knows what she has now, or what, but she is really not looking so well. Nurse Portia has been so awesome, really.

She ensures that MaMasango does not have much pain by pumping her up with morphine pretty much whenever she needs it. This really reminds me of the time my mother was ill with cervical cancer. Cancer eats a person up from the inside – literally. It eats away at your body, your organs and your soul. People feel like they just want to die and I don't know why others have to suffer so much before they die.

I managed to sleep last night at least. Zenande was in a seriously bad state when we came back to the palace. She didn't even want to eat as she headed straight to her bedroom. I just ate for the sake of eating, but I was generally tired. I didn't get a visit from Nonkanyiso or Mulalo, but at least I managed to sleep throughout the night. Prince Zweli is still in a state.

He hardly manages to even get out of bed. Yoh, but Gloria really did him bad shame. I just hope they can fix their relationship. They really inspired me and now everything is a mess. I mean, at least now we know that Gloria is not the culprit and she won't be killed. Queen Nombu was sent straight back home right after the visit with Nomsa, and I must say she has been very displeased about it.

She tried to speak to King Ntsika, but he was really not bothered nor interested in hearing anything that came from her mouth. I don't even know why she

chose to ruin her marriage like that, but then I am not perfect. I also have my flaws. I woke up in very high spirits today. I feel like going to church, right before I leave and go back home. A part of me knows deep down that I am stalling my trip back home, because I just don't know how to face Kg.

I also feel a bit guilty leaving while everything here is in shambles. If it is really meant to be then I will come back and Queen Nandi has been begging me to go home. I didn't even have the courage to call Kg last night. I don't know, it seems really unthoughtful, but I just don't know.

I got up and took a nice, long bath. I guess it is my way of saying goodbye to this place. I got dressed in one of my new dresses bought for me by Selena, a beautiful black Prada dress. I wore matching heels I bought that time I went out shopping with Gloria. I really miss her. I finished packing my bags which I will take when I leave later on. I headed out and

found Queen Nandi eating alone.

Thato: "Greetings, Ma."

Queen Nandi: (smiling) "Hello, Thato. Unjani namhlanje (How are you today)?"

Thato: "I have had better days, but I feel much better than I did yesterday."

Queen Nandi: "That is good. Hlala phansi (Sit down). Eat, I have prepared a feast for you with a little something to kickstart your day."

I smiled as I sat down. She dished up for me and gave me a champagne glass with orange juice in it. As I sipped, I realized it wasn't just orange juice.

Thato: “Ma, what’s in here?”

Queen Nandi: “A mimosa with a twist. I put in a shot of Vodka just for a nice kickstart to your day.”

I couldn’t help but laugh. This woman, though. It is really nice to be so sure of yourself, so confident and not hide who you really are. We ate and then she decided to go to church with me. We got into her Lexus as we drove out. Before we got to church, I asked her if we could make a stop at Nurse Portia’s house so that we could go fetch MaMasango. I really need to do this before she departs this place. It is not much, but it is really the least I can do. She didn’t hesitate and we arrived there. I knocked and found Nurse Portia dressed up, I guess she was expecting a visitor or something.

Thato: “Good morning, Nurse. Apologies to bother you so early. I was hoping I’d take MaMasango to church today.”

Nurse Portia: (smiling) "It is like you are a mind reader. She is dressed and happy today. she has been begging me to take her to church all day yesterday."

Thato: (smiling) "Good, I am so glad. If you don't mind, we can go with Queen Nandi."

Nurse Portia: (smiling) "Driving in royalty? Oh, MaMasango will be so happy. Let me go get her."

I nodded as she swiftly rushed to the bedroom. Out came MaMasango on a wheelchair. Apparently she has not been able to stand for too long or walk long distances. She looks so beautiful, wearing the same dress and shoes I bought her the day I met her.

MaMasango: (smiling) "Isabella, you like my outfit?"

Thato: (smiling) "Of course, Ma. How could I not?"

MaMasango: "It is my all time favourite. Please, when I die, bury me in this exact outfit. Nothing else."

I hate it when people talk like that. It is almost as if they can see their death is nearing. I tried not to cry though. I don't cry as much as I used to. I'd say I have grown a bit, really. We went out to Queen Nandi's car as we helped MaMasango get into the car.

MaMasango: (smiling) "Greetings, my queen. How have you been? It has been forever."

Queen Nandi: "Good morning, MaMasango. I have been really good. It has indeed been forever. How are you?"

MaMasango: "I have had better days, but as you can see today is one of my happiest days."

Queen Nandi: "Indeed."

MaMasango: "My only wish would be to see my granddaughter before I die."

There she goes again. This is just too painful.

Queen Nandi: "That one, let's wait and see if she will come around."

MaMasango nodded. We finally made our way to church, and we helped MaMasango out of the car and placed her into her wheelchair. As we were about to walk in we saw a few people I recall from the clinic, and they were so pleased to see her. A

few others were still afraid and shocked to see her, but I couldn't care less, really. The pastor came out as people started singing and he was also shocked when he saw MaMasango. He looked like he actually didn't want her there, but because his whole congregation was watching him, he had to think of another story.

Pastor: "Ngiyabonga abantu bami (thank you, my people). Today, is one of those days where I would like to talk about forgiveness. You see, the Lord wants us to forgive in order to be forgiven. But the lord also condemns those who are wrong and states that you need to repent before He can forgive you. Without repentance, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

While the hypocrites were shouting Amen, I felt myself getting annoyed. It seems as if this pastor was hinting at MaMasango. I even saw the side eyed look he kept giving her. I mean, really? We are

still here after so many years of liberation?

Pastor: “The Bible condemns all evil; especially witchcraft and murder!”

Very few shouted Amen, while I saw the disappointment in MaMasango’s eyes. I really could see she was hoping this would be a great sermon for her. She hasn’t entered this church in years and it is high time these people let their hate go. This fat fuck in front of us is such a hypocrite, and I really don’t have the patience for this – not today.

Pastor: “As the Bible says in the Book of – “

I interrupted his shitty speech as I got up and went to the podium.

Pastor: (annoyed) “Excuse, me, ntombazana (girly).

This is my podium.”

I ignored him and took the microphone from the podium and started speaking.

Thato: “Good day, Bazalwane (congregation). A lot of you don’t know me, but let me formally introduce myself. My name is Thato Isabella Groen, daughter of David Groen. I came here all the way from Johannesburg. I met a very peculiar woman a few weeks ago, but what puzzled me is the treatment she received from others. A lot of you don’t remember me, but I remember you. I remember how you stared at her and gave her smirks and filthy looks.

A lot of you didn’t even want to walk near her, while some of you stood aside as soon as she walked past you. Now, this man that stands before you seems like he is speaking sense to you, but what about his own flaws? Yes, the Bible talks about evil,

but what happens when a woman like MaMasango has paid dearly for her sins asked for repentance and this very own church refused to be the gateway for her healing and acceptance?

She has made peace within herself and with God, yet you – these very people before me denied her the chance. Are any of you perfect? Are any of you without sin? Like I keep asking, how many of you have actually witnessed her doing the deeds she is accused of? Should a woman be made to suffer and pay dearly for the rest of her life for thing she did years ago? Deeds she repented for?”

Pastor seemed very annoyed once people started nodding their heads and looking down in shame. I guess he hates it when people disagree with him, but luckily for me I know a story or two about him.

Pastor: (annoyed) “lalela lana, Ntombazana (Listen here, girly). This is my church and I won't have you

disrespecting me right in front of my own congregation! Yazi nina amantombazana bavela egoli nicabanga ukuthi umhlaba lo owenu (You know, you little girls from Jo'burg think this world is yours)."

I was about to respond, when one of the women in the congregation spoke up.

Woman: "Hayi (No), man. Thula, Mfundisi (Quiet, pastor). Sizwile ngawe, nkosiyami (We've had enough of you, my God). You never give anyone else a chance to speak. Thula uhlale phansi (Keep quiet and sit down)."

He was so shocked to see everyone else murmur and nod their heads in agreement to the woman's statement. He sat down in disappointment while I continued.

Thato: “Matthew 7:15 – “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.” Your pastor, this very one who was preaching about forgiveness, is the same pastor who cheated on his wife with one of the altar women in here.”

While most of the people in here gasped in shock, I heard a few scream out “I knew it!”

I don’t know why I have so much courage today, but most probably the mimosa Queen Nandi made for me this morning is to be blamed. I couldn’t care less how Mfundisi felt at this point.

Thato: “Matthew 7:1-5 – “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgement you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your

brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye', when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first then you will clearly see to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

How come a lot of you still judge and ostracize MaMasango, even when you yourselves have demons you haven't dealt with? Your very own pastor hides behind his cloak and beats on his wife and children when no one is watching, and still commits adultery. Yet, he stands before you on Sundays and claims to be a man of God. Why is it that you have no shame and treat an old, dying woman with so much shame? 1 John 4:20 says – "If anyone says, "I love God", but hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen."

You cannot claim to love God when you haven't even seen him, yet you fail to love your neighbour. A lot of people sitting here have been hiding the fact that

MaMasango has helped them in so many ways. Once you see your neighbour practicing hate towards her, you join in and do the same. She has helped a lot of you – for free at that. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves.

She is dying of cancer, stage four. For all we know she could die within a few days, and yet she asked for one thing and one thing only – that the last memory she has of church remains a good one. She just wanted today's sermon to be a blessed one, one where she won't be judged or ridiculed for the first time in her life.

I applaud her for owning up to her mistakes; never has she said that she didn't do those things in the past. She didn't kill anyone yet she tried to kill an infant. She has scars – both physically and emotionally to prove it. She has lived in a broken house, lost all her family and friends all because of her deeds.

Even when they themselves turned their backs on her, you also rubbed salt into the wound by doing the same. Had God decided not to forgive you for what you did to her, would you be proud? Looking back at what you did to her, are you sure it was even worth it?"

I saw almost everyone look down; some crying in shame and some shaking their heads in disbelief. I don't know, but perhaps I am good at words, but this woman deserves to be in this church just as much as anyone else. One of the men in the congregation stood up.

Man: "MaMasango helped my mother recover. My mother was very ill for a very long time and we had no choice but to take her to a healer. MaMasango made it possible for my mother to walk again. Even after she was accused of witchcraft my mother refused to be one of the people hating her, up until

she herself passed on. My only sin against MaMasango, was being afraid of what people would say had I mixed with her and for that, Ma, I sincerely apologize.”

He stood up and walked towards her; knelt down before her and touched her hands and kissed them. I can't believe that my few, simple words made people get up out of courage, just as they did that day at the clinic. One by one, they got up and apologized to her. It was such a beautiful sight, with MaMasango smiling through the tears.

I was even crying, because I just couldn't contain my happiness. People started singing as each and everyone amongst the congregation went towards her and held her hands and kissed her. Pastor walked out in shame during the whole proceedings and we carried on amongst ourselves. The pastor's wife walked towards me with tears in her eyes.

Pastor's wife: "My girl, I don't know you, but I feel like God works in mysterious ways. I have been praying for someone to come and rescue me. Everyone including my family ridiculed me and insulted me whenever I complained about my husband. He would beat me up so badly, I so wish you could see the scars on my body. What you did today, is something I have been waiting and praying for ever since I married this monster. It is true what they say – a wolf in sheep's clothing is far dangerous than an honest thief. I can't even begin to thank you enough."

She really didn't have to thank me. I did what I felt was right. After the service, apparently it was a feast day and it ended up being a whole celebration about MaMasango's life. Truly, I couldn't have asked for a better day for her. She was exhausted, but soldiered on just so she could enjoy all the attention and food prepared. I am glad that today was such a good day for her. I can only wish that Gloria is somewhere around so that she could come

back to me.

Even the local newspaper was there. Apparently they heard all about me and they wanted to do an interview with me, but because it was such a busy day today, they decided to hear about me from a few of the congregation members. I really don't mind, all I wanted was to see MaMasango happy. As we were enjoying the feast, King Ntsika came out of nowhere. What a nice surprise. Everyone was about to bow down, but he quickly stopped them.

King Ntsika: "My fellow people, please, no need to bow down before me. I am just a human being like you. I have come here with a special request for our beloved MaMasango. Before I do that, I have a testimony to give."

I watched the King speak with so much poise and awe. He is really a great king and I haven't seen him walk around with body guards or anything.

King Ntsika: “A few weeks ago, I was poisoned by my own daughter.”

Everyone gasped in awe.

King Ntsika: “I was ready to meet my end, until Isabella, the woman you see before you, changed my life. She gave me hope. She ended up having a meeting with MaMasango, who gave her a remedy that ensured I live. As I stand here before you, I am who I am because of her. She ensured that I live, and for that I can only give her a gift she deserves so that she can live her final days the best way she can. MaMasango, I humbly request that you and Nurse Portia come to stay with us in the meantime. I would also like to build you a brand new house. With your permission of course.”

MaMasango was in tears. I don't even think she

cried this much ever since her children disowned her. I never even knew your own children could disown you. Imagine that shit. She gracefully agreed along with Nurse Portia. She would get paid for her duties of course. Now with the Kingdom hanging in the balance and almost bankrupt, I truly find this gesture a humble one indeed.

Kg

I can't believe my own brother is gone. I found myself holding the necklace which Rendani ripped off his neck while they were engulfed in a struggle. I don't know why God had to take my brother away from me at a time like this. I just found him. Life is just not fair. I found myself sipping on my glass of cognac, while holding his necklace. I haven't slept a wink. Truly speaking I am a mess, and I don't know who can comfort me. I need Thato by my side, but then even so, I don't want our reunion to be so depressing.

I checked my phone and it is exactly 12 midday. I have been locked up in my bedroom ever since we came back from the warehouse. All I want is peace, all I want is my brother back, although I know that won't happen. I have been ignoring everyone who has been knocking on my door. The last time I felt this helpless was when I lost my mother. I just can't bear the pain anymore. As I found myself sitting on my chair in my bedroom when I heard yet another faint knock on my door.

Kg: "Go away."

Thato: "Kg, it's me."

That sounds just like my TT."

Kg: "Thato?"

Thato: “Yes, open up, please.”

This had better not be a dream. Fuck, I smell like shit. I haven't even bathed yet and I still smell of blood. I can't let my woman see me like this. She deserves me looking my best.

Kg: “Can you give me 30 minutes, please?”

Thato: (softly) “okay.”

I headed to my bathroom and started washing everything off.

Chapter One Hundred and Four

Revelation 21:4 – “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

2 Kings 20:5 – “This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: ‘I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you.’”

Thato

I can't believe I finally made it back home. The house feels so different without Mam'V's presence. For the first time since her passing I actually feel the emptiness of this house. Vivian Groen was just one amazing soul, she was more than a gangster's wife. You didn't need to fear her, you would have done so automatically. But I think it was more about respect than fear. She was so loving, and it pains me to see how miserable everyone has been ever since. I actually cried when I entered the house because I just felt her emptiness.

I also think I never got the chance to mourn her, so

it makes a lot of sense why I am crying so much right now. This thing with Mulalo also hit me way too deep. I can't stop thinking about him. I can't stop thinking about how Kg feels right now. I have lost a lot of people in my life, but imagine losing your twin just after you found him.

It's one hell of a mess, really. As I walked in I found no one around. I thought I would just go to Kg's bedroom instead, but he also shut me down and asked for 30 minutes. I decided to let him be and I went to see Rami. She was so shocked to see me even.

Thato: "Hey, babe."

Rami: (shocked) "Thato?! Oh, my goodness! Is it really you?"

Thato: "Yes."

She ran up to me with tears streaming down her face. I feel so bad, that I found myself crying as well. I don't even know why, but I guess it is our moment together. We got to mourn everything that happened. We broke the hug and I gave her one serious look. She looks so different; she has gained quite a lot of weight and has gained a lot of complexion as well.

Rami is fair in complexion, but this, hai no. Perhaps she has been indoors for far too long, but how does one explain the swollen face? I think she noticed me staring at her in confusion as she started to speak up.

Rami: "I know what you're thinking."

Does she?

Rami: "I have been wanting to speak to you for so

long. I wanted you to be the one to hear it first.”

Hear what?

Rami: “I’m pregnant.”

Whoa. What? Is she serious?

Thato: (surprised) “Wow, babe. Congratulations! I mean I don’t really know what to say, but are you okay with it? Are you happy?”

Rami: “Well, I don’t know. I was very surprised and knowing me I was probably going to freak out, but I didn’t actually.”

Thato: “Is it Thendo’s?”

She nodded. Okay, I didn't expect that, but then stress makes you shag a lot.

Thato: "Well, I am happy if you're happy. We'll support you – all of us."

Rami: "That's not all."

Thtao: (frowning) "Yes?"

She showed me her ring finger and she had a stunning rock on her finger. Wow, talk about amazing. She is really happy. I didn't expect Thendo to propose, but it is about damn time. He does not know that she is pregnant so I am glad he didn't do it out of obligation, but out of love. She told me everything that happened while I was away. I can't believe we missed so much on school. It is high time I go back to campus to catch up, even if it is just for a few days.

I really worked hard to get into Varsity and I can't afford to fail right now. Apparently Thendo went out to buy some food and so, she had some time to herself. She was actually planning on telling him today, since she had no idea I was coming back, but seeing me and telling me first made it much more pleasant and easier for her. I didn't think she would ever get pregnant so early in life, but hey, when God says yes, no one says no. Thendo came back so I had to give them space.

She really didn't want me to leave, but I also have to see my man. Upon leaving, I found Nana and Gringo in the lounge. The shock on their faces says a lot. We kept quiet for a while and Nana's tears started rolling. Eish, I hate seeing someone cry. I automatically cry as well. She ran towards me and gave me one strong hug. Afterwards, I went to give Gringo a huge hug. Feeling his secure hug made me realize just how scared I was to lose him as well. Indeed, we serve a living God.

Nana: (teary) "Can I get you anything, my child?"

Thato: "No, thank you, Nana."

Gringo: "I have missed you. We all have."

Thato: (sigh) "It is really good to be home, but I have some unfinished business back in Enande."

Gringo: (puzzled) "What kind of business?"

Nana: "Ai, David. She will tell you later. For now, give her time with her husband. He needs her the most."

Gringo: (deep sigh) "I guess you are right."

Nana: "It's not easy letting your only baby girl go, is it?"

Gringo: "Don't rub salt into the wound, Ma."

Nana: (chuckling) "Go, Isabella. He is waiting for you."

I forgot she knows everything that goes on around us. Ai, it must be nice being her, really.

Thato: (smiling nervously) "Okay, I'll see you guys later."

Nana: "Oh, I wouldn't bet on it."

I left her so embarrassed, while Gringo was very unimpressed with her comment. I stood puzzled in

front of his bedroom door for a minute, since I am not even sure if he actually wants to see me. I mean perhaps he said he needs 30 minutes just so that I go away. People grieve differently, really. I decided to put my hand up and knock, but he opened the door as I was about to. His strong Givenchy cologne hit my nostrils and hypnotized me for a minute. I felt myself involuntarily closing my eyes.

Kg: "Hi."

I quickly opened them again and I saw him. Gosh, he looks even more gorgeous than the last time I saw him. I hated seeing him with Anastacia, and now that he is mine again, I don't know how to feel. I found myself feeling all sorts of vibrations down there as I looked at him. Eish, but why is lack of sex such a serious thing, though? He looks so beautiful, yet so sad. He really tried to smile beyond the tears.

Thato: (smiling) "Hi."

I don't know what came over me, but I found myself wrapping my arms around his waist as I leaned in for a hug. He is incredibly tall, so I just felt it so easy to just hug him around the waist. He didn't hesitate and hugged me right back. I really missed this hug. I missed everything about him – we didn't even get to celebrate his birthday this year. Only now it hit me that we could have had a two month old baby by now. People can be so cruel.

Had I known life would have been so tough right now, I would have prepared myself, but as Selena once told me; had life come with a manual, we really wouldn't have anything to look forward to. I suppose she has a point. I found myself inhaling Kg's beautiful scent and enjoying being in his arms. I missed his masculine and loving hugs.

I found myself pulling out of it and staring deep in his eyes as he smiled at me. I missed that dimpled

smile so much. I don't know what came over me, but I missed my man deeply. I can't wait any longer, I mean why should I?

Thato: (softly) "I missed you, Kg. I need you."

He seemed so reluctant, but most probably because he is mourning.

Kg: "TT, I don't think it is such a good idea."

I placed my lips on his as we got engulfed into a beautiful kiss. Oh, I felt myself get so wet down there, with magical signals being sent to every nerve surrounding every bit of my body. His hands traveled from my waist down to my bums, as he gently stroked my arms, weakening every bit of cautionary feeling in my bones.

Kg: "TT..."

Thato: "Please, Kg. I need you, baby."

He widened the door as he pulled me into the bedroom. I closed the door as I landed with my back right against it. I looked at Kg, who looked at me with his eyes that just became smaller. His eyes do that whenever he is horny. I am glad I still remember where to touch him. His touch hasn't changed at all. It still sends the right signals everywhere, and makes my clit instantly happy. I was wearing my black Prada dress, as he slowly removed it from my body. he was dressed in jeans and a simple T-shirt, so I removed his shirt as well.

He looked at me and his tongue dove straight into my mouth. I found myself moaning in his, with him devouring every bit of my exposed body. My hands traveled on his back and to his lower back, while he slowly removed my bra as he was kissing me. He

pulled out of the kiss and took a moment to enjoy the sight of my erect nipples and anxious breasts. They have been longing a man's touch.

I don't even want to think of Mulalo right now, because all that matters is that I am in my man's arms. He traveled his lips down to my neck as I tilted my head to give him more access to it. His hands were moulding my breasts while gently squeezing my nipples in the process. I squeezed his bums in the process, lifting one leg up and wrapping it right around his waist.

Thato: (moaning) "Oh, Kg..."

Kg: "(breathing heavily) "Baby... I missed you so much."

I like how honest Kg is and how he takes his time with me whenever we have sex. His one hand

traveled down to my panties. He has always loved lacy underwear and would always rub his thumb on the front of my pussy just to feel the lace.

Kg: (moaning) "Oh, TT. You've always managed to drive me crazy, baby. I have been praying to sleep with you right next to me."

Thato: (breathing heavily) "Then what are you waiting for? Have me."

Kg: "No, not yet. I need to devour your body first. I need to pleasure you first before consummating this beautiful moment."

As much as I want Kg inside of me right now, I will have to wait. He removed my panties as his fingers traveled to my clit. I moaned right away at the tender touch of his finger straight on my clit. He started flicking it up and down and round and round.

I spread my legs a bit further for him to gain more access to my bean.

Thato: (moaning) "Shit, Kg..."

He kissed me passionately in the process, while I felt myself getting overwhelmed with heat. Oh, no. I can't be about to orgasm when he hasn't even done anything to me yet. He dipped his one finger into my pussy as I moaned slightly. It was slightly painful, but after a few strokes with his finger flicking my Gspot on the inside, I wished it had been his dick right in there.

Thato: "Oh, Kg.... shit, baby..."

Kg: "Tell me how this makes you feel. How does my finger feel inside of you right now?"

Thato: "Aaah, I love it. It feels so good."

Kg: (whispering in my ear) "I can't hear you."

Hai, Kg and his teasing.

Thato: "I fucking love it. Now take me, please."

Kg: (chuckling) "I want to eat your pussy. Please tell me you want me to."

Thato: "I want you to."

Kg: "You want me to do what exactly?"

Thato: "I want you to eat my pussy."

Kg: "What's the magic word?"

Thato: "Please..."

Kg: "Please who?"

Fuck, I am about to kill Kg. He can clearly see how much I want him inside of me right now. I haven't had sex in so long that I kind of forgotten what it feels like.

Thato: "Please, daddy. Eat my fucking pussy already!"

I felt myself getting frustrated, while he chuckled as he slowly traveled his lips all the way down to my pussy, leaving trails of his delicious saliva on my abdomen as he licked me all the way down. He spread my legs further apart as he wasted no time,

thank goodness. he slowly licked my clit. The more I moved my legs further apart, the faster he licked it. I held his head firmly, while brushing it and pulling him closer into my pussy.

Thato: "Shit!"

He moved faster, while dipping his finger into my pussy.

Thato: "Shit, Kg, I am about to come. I can feel it."

Kg: "You know just how I like it, baby. Come for daddy."

I wasted no time, I found myself releasing right on his face. I was jerking in pleasure and soon afterwards, I looked at him in embarrassment. The confident lady who walked in here begging for dick

is gone at this point. He licked all my juices off his face. I tried covering my face, but he stopped me quickly.

Kg: "You know how I love seeing you. Don't hide yourself from me, please."

I nodded as he came back up and kissed me deeply. I love tasting myself right after he muffs me. I wasted no time and took off his jeans and briefs at the same time. I rubbed his dick, and felt his stiffened dick react, while hearing his deep and stern, pleasurable moans.

Kg: (moaning) "Baby..."

He looked at me and wasted no time. He carefully placed me on the bed and got on top of me. He stared at me so seductively.

Kg: "I love you."

Thato: "I love you too."

He kissed me once again as he slowly entered me. I felt a bit of pain as I winced, but he was so gentle and patient with me. I found myself swallowed by pleasure as he went on. I spread my legs even further and felt him dig a bit deeper into me. This feels more than just sex. It is a meeting between two souls – a to be continued meeting, rather.

I loved every moment of it. His occasional kisses, breast squeezes and eye contact. He looked at me like I came back from the dead. I know, it does not even make sense, but fuck I love this man so much. After about ten minutes or so, I felt myself climax for about the 5th time, as he collapsed on top of me.

Kg: (softly) "I love you, babe. Are you okay?"

Thato: (smiling) "Yes, I am."

Kg: "I'll be right back."

He gently kissed my forehead and went to the bathroom. He came back with a towel as he wiped himself and gently wiped me down there as well. Still the same old, Kg.

Kg: "Let me run you a bath."

Thato: "You can do that later. Please, hold me."

He nodded as he got into the covers with me and held me. I lay my head right on top of his chest and listened to his heartbeat. Our hearts were beating simultaneously. It is as if we became one again.

Thato: "Are you okay?"

Kg: (sigh) "Honestly, I feel like I am about to lose it, Tee. I really feel like I am not going to make it out of this situation very normal."

This is just so painful.

Thato: "You'll get through this, Kg. I know you. You are my strong man, you have been through the worst, so I know you will most definitely get through this. I am here now."

Kg: (teary) "He saved me, Tee. He took a bullet for me. How does one even get over that?"

Yoh, this is more hectic than I thought. Mulalo saved Kg just so that he could live? For me? I found myself leaving tears on his chest. I could feel him crying too, but I don't think I want to see him in this state. Not yet.

Thato: "I know how it feels right now, but God knows best."

Kg: "How can God be so cruel, TT? He took you away from me that day and as a result, our baby died. Now, my twin brother died and I am just hopeless. How does He claim to love us all and have our desires and best interests at heart when we always go through such bad things?"

I don't know what to say but to console him with the words that came to mind.

Thato: "Kg, do you remember what happened when you lost your mother? Do you remember how hopeless you felt and how you thought nothing would ever work out?"

I could feel him nodding as he battled to keep the

tears from falling.

Thato: “Do you remember what happened? You miraculously went through it and came out a victor. You made it out of that situation better than ever before and you even became one of the top performers at school. Now, this is the same situation. Do you remember how you were always there for me when I lost my mother? How you promised me that things would get better with time?”

Kg: “Yes, I remember.”

Thato: “Allow me to be your rock and pillar right now, Kg. Allow me to absorb those tears for you the same way you did mine with my mother. You are destined for greatness, Kg, and I truly believe that everyone dies at their own time – despite how they leave this earth. Mulalo would have never wanted you to be so heartbroken.

He would have wanted you to enjoy and embrace the moments you spent together, for I truly believe that had it not been him – it would have been the both of you. Don't get me wrong, I am deeply saddened by his passing, but you should rather remember his happy moments, just as you did with Aunt Vivian. I don't think – I know that he is okay wherever he is."

Kg: "How do you know that, Tee?"

I took the chance, knowing very well it might backfire. He might think that I am crazy or something, but I would rather risk it.

Thato: "I know because your mother has been visiting me."

Kg: (puzzled) "You mean you have been dreaming of

my mother?”

Eish, this is a lot harder than I thought.

Thato: “Actually, she has been visiting me physically, but in spirit.”

He looked at me like I was crazy or something. He paused for a moment and I knew then that he had no idea what I was talking about.

Kg: “Perhaps you should sleep a bit. Trauma can do a lot to a person.”

Thato: “Was your mother not Princess Nonkanyiso Ncube by birth?”

He got really startled as he heard me say that and he

looked at me.

Kg: "How do you... I never gave you her birth name. I only told you that her name was Evelyn."

Thato: "I know, you think I am crazy, but I see her. She used to visit me a lot when I was at your home town. I was living Enande, at the royal palace where your mother was born. She was visiting me every single night while I was there."

Kg was shook. I really didn't mean to sound weird, but I'd rather tell the truth so that in case I wake up in the middle of the night talking alone, he does not feel the need to run away."

Kg: "You mean to tell me that you were with my mother's family? The Royal family?"

Thato: (nodding) "yes."

Kg: “Care to tell me more?”

He became a little bit more relaxed as I started sharing my journey from Italy, meeting Selena, to going to Enande. I told him all about his disturbing grandmother, Queen Nombulelo, and his adorable great grandmother Queen Nandi. Of course, I told him about Sophie and Prince Zweli and of course about MaMasango. I am actually surprised he remembers MaMasango. Apparently she was the royal healer, right before she got ostracized and everything went south.

It is actually amazing to see Kg beam with so much pride as he recalls the faint memories of his childhood at Enande. He smiled a bit as he recollected playing with Zweli while he was young. The last memory he has of the Kingdom was when he was being dragged out of there by his mother and he never went back there again. It is rather bitter-

sweet talking about everything, but I love just how exceptionally happy he was when I told him about everything I did during my short stay there.

Kg: “You now, Mulalo always said you were born to be a Queen and that I had to lead right beside you. I never knew what he meant, but now it makes sense.”

Eish, ja, neh. The Mulalo thing. I don’t know how to face my man right after sleeping with his twin brother a few months ago. I think he noticed the sudden change in my mood and decided to break the ice.

Kg: “Relax, baby. I know. He actually told me right after we found out we were actually twins.”

Thato: (sigh) “I’m sorry.”

Kg: "Don't be. I actually don't hate you nor him for it. I mean, I was even with Anastacia, and I can only imagine how you felt seeing me with her. That is all in the past, so can we please just focus on our future?"

He didn't have to tell me twice.

Chapter One Hundred and Five

Psalm 73:26 – "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

1 Corinthians 15:26 – "The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

Two days later

It has been an interesting few days. All in all, I have

been by Kg's side, and helping him deal with his loss. Being here has been rather helpful for him. Apart from him literally being stuck by my side, we have had a chance to make the last few funeral arrangements. Constance insists on coming to bury Mulalo, of which we don't really care. Olivia has apparently been a bit of a bitch.

She has given birth and insists that it is Mulalo's child, but none of us believe it. Kg came clean about what he did to Rendani. I don't judge him at all, though. I just didn't want to know the final details thereof. Today, is Mulalo's funeral, so we have to get up early, plus Gringo says he has an important announcement for us all including the Naidoos.

Soks is coming and will be the pastor officiating the funeral today, and I must say, Kg is not taking it really well. He has been trying really hard to act tough, but all in all I think the day of the funeral is always the hardest.

Yesterday we had a memorial for Mulalo, and all his colleagues and old friends came. It was so touching to hear them speak so highly of him. He has always been rather calm and very private. Most people weren't even aware of his marriage woes. Of course, Olivia had to ruin it all.

She decided to ruin a perfectly beautiful memory of Mulalo, by getting up on stage and accusing us of sidelining her in the funeral arrangements. It was a bit of a bad move, because I had completely lost it on Kg's behalf. I slapped her so hard, that she went to the police station immediately afterwards and tried to get me arrested. Of course, Gringo set the record straight to those cops.

I really don't know what kind of parents Olivia has, because it seems as if they are the ones encouraging her to do this shit. Today, she had better not try any of that kak because I will be doing

more than just slapping her. Kg has been through enough already, and even Tumisho came to visit. I mean, we seem to forget him a lot of the time, but he too was Nonkanyiso's son. I hate seeing Kg so depressed.

I didn't even want to get up, since we have been making love like rabbits. I just need some beauty sleep. As I checked the time, I noticed it was 6am. I thought I would get some more shut eye and rest for an hour or so, but I got puzzled by the beaming light in Kg's bedroom. I looked closer, and my heart started beaming with joy, which actually brought tears to my eyes.

Vivian: (smiling) "Hello, Thato."

Thato: (teary) "Mam'V."

Vivian: "I am so proud of you. I am sorry I never got the chance to come visit you, I was giving others the

chance to get to know your beautiful soul.”

I smiled while at a loss for words.

She had my mother, Petunia next to her, Mulalo and Nonkanyiso.

Nonkanyiso: “Please wake Kgaugelo up. I need him to see this.”

I nodded as I gently shook Kg.

Thato: “Kg, wake up, baby. Come see this.”

Kg: “Eish, aowa (no), baby. Just one more minute.”

Thato: “Please, get up. You need to see this.”

He opened his eyes and looked at me shocked.

Kg: "What's happening? Are you okay?"

Thato: "I'm fine. Look."

I pointed towards the direction of the beautiful, deceased souls I saw in front of me. I don't even get shocked anymore. I guess I see ghosts. May I am some sort of a ghost whisperer. Kg immediately teared up. He hardly gets emotional, so when he does it is really touching.

Nonkanyiso: (smiling) "Hello, mfana wami (my boy). Unjani (How are you)?"

Kg: (teary) "Mama, I'm okay. Is this really you?"

Nonkanyiso: (chuckling) “Yes, it is me.”

Kg acknowledged everyone else who was there, but I think his biggest achievement was seeing his mother’s spirit. I now see where Kg and Mulalo get their beautiful genes from. Even Tumisho took from her and most definitely not from Romeo.

Nonkanyiso: (smiling) “My boy, I am very proud of you. I need you to know that whatever it is you’re doing, you’re on the right path. Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.”

Kg nodded in affirmation as he slowly let the tears fall down. I became instantly emotional as I held his hand. I even forgot we were both naked for a second.

Nonkanyiso: “Continue with your dreams and your big plan regarding this woman. I have heard your cry.

All is well, my boy. I am always with you. Never fear anything or anyone for you only need to fear God. Besides, who needs fear when you have an Iron woman right by your side?"

I couldn't help but laugh along with Kg and the rest of them laughed as well. It is a bit weird conversing with spirits, but it is one of the most beautiful things I have ever experienced.

Petunia: "Thato, you were destined for greatness. Both you and Kg were born with a leading spirit. You were both born to be leaders of a great nation. I know, it sounds so crazy right now, but in due time you will understand."

Mulalo: "Bafo (Brother), it is now time to claim your throne and do right by your woman. Don't worry, you don't need to mourn me. For I am always with you and yes, I approve. I heard your cry and I most definitely approve."

I don't even know what they are talking about. First Nonkanyiso said she approves and now Mulalo. What is Kg planning?

Vivian: "Wolfe, after this, you will no longer be Wolfe but you will be the man you have always desired to be. Hang in there and make each other happy no matter what. Never go to bed angry at one another and always remember that you two are best friends. And remember the key to a successful marriage is great sex."

We all laughed out loud. This feels like one of those family dinners we would always have with Mam'V. How I wish Gringo was here to witness this.

Vivian: "Take good care of my husband, and please tell him to do what he and I were planning to at this time of the year."

I don't know what she means, but I am guessing Gringo will know.

Nonkanyiso: "We all love you two so, very much."

Vivian: "Thato, take good care of Rami. That boy is a bit wet behind the ears, but he will be okay in due time."

Thato: "Am I going to see you guys anytime soon?"

Nonkanyiso: (chuckling) "Only when the need arises. You will still see a lot more dead people. You were born with that gift."

I nodded.

Nonkanyiso: "However, I have one more request."

Thato: "Anything."

Nonkanyiso: "Take my father to the place you saw in your dreams last night."

I got puzzled for a moment, but then I quickly recalled I dreamt of a graveyard with her name on a tombstone. I am guessing that is where she was buried.

Thato: "Ofcourse, Ma."

They all said goodbye to us and I could see Kg was internalizing everything.

Thato: "Are you okay?"

Kg: (smiling) “Yes, I am. I finally know what to do.”

I still don't know what he meant, but I smiled back as he gently kissed me.

Thato: “Let's go bury your brother.”

He nodded as we took a bath together and had one steamy session for the road. Eish, had I known we were going to be bonking so much, I would have delayed my visit. We got done and got dressed. Kg put on his Prada suit, while I put on my brand new white, lacy Prada dress.

It is a bit long, just below the knee, and has a very long slit at the back and is also backless. Kg bought it for me the other day. Apparently Mulalo asked him that we all dress in style on his funeral. His favourite colour was also white, just like Mam'V, and he wanted us to dress as if we were going to a

wedding. Indeed we are going to a wedding; his wedding.

I did my make-up and for some reason I can't help but think of Gloria. I do hope I see her soon. It can't be easy being Zweli today, especially since Mulalo is going to be buried in Enande. It is family tradition that all the royal members be buried on royal ground – well, those that have not been disowned by the Ncubes.

We were actually supposed to sleep over, but it would not have been okay with MaMasango being ill. Apparently bringing a corpse into the house when you have an ill patient is bad luck. So, they bury them much later than we do in Jozi and Pretoria. It is customary that they bury a royal member after midday.

So, everyone around the neighbourhood will be present and it will be a huge feast. Plus, it is some

sort of a party as one of their own has returned home. Mulalo will be buried as Mngobi Ncube, even though we all know him as Mulalo. It is rather bitter sweet, but better late than never. Of course annoying Queen Nombu will be there, although I don't want her anywhere near me. We headed downstairs and I remembered what to do, as I saw King Ntsika in the house, along with Queen Nandi.

I always smile whenever I see them, they just bring so much joy to my face. They did come see Kg a few days ago, right after I returned here, and let me just say Queen Nandi was in tears when she saw Kg. It was also the very first time I saw the King crying. I must say, he really looks much better without Queen Nombu by his side.

King Ntsika: (smiling) "Nkosinathi, Ndhlovukazi (Queen)."

He calls me that now. It is a bit weird, considering I

was his servant.

Thato: (smiling) "Hello, Baba (Dad)."

Kg: "Sawubona, Baba (Hello, Dad)."

In all these months I have been with Kg, I have never actually heard him speak Zulu before and honestly, it is one hell of a turn on.

Queen Nandi: "Thato, I believe you have a message for us from Nonka."

I always forget how she just knows everything.

Thato: "Yes, I am supposed to take you to a place that I saw in my dreams."

Queen Nandi: (nodding) “Hence we came with MaMasango. She has been so ill nowadays, but because we are burying the Prince today, she is up and running. Dying people have a terrible sense of humor.”

I couldn't help but burst into laughter.

Queen Nandi: “And wena (you), Nosinathi, uyeleke ukudla umfazi ungamulobolanga (stop sleeping with a woman you haven't paid dowry for).”

I still have to get used to him being called Nkosinathi. He smiled in mischief. My gut is telling me Kg is planning something. He has always been the king of mischief. I guess we will have to see.

Chapter One Hundred and Six

Psalm 30:5 – “Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”

Thato

The whole family walked out and proceeded to the parking lot. By the whole family I mean Thendo, Rami, Nana, Tumisho, Gringo, Kg and I along with Queen Nandi and King Ntsika. I was so happy to see Nurse Portia with MaMasango in Queen Nandi's Lexus. I was so happy to see her smiling and looking much better.

She waved at me as I waved back. We got into Gringo's Viano. My father is a true whitey, he loves family trips and prefers that all of us travel in one vehicle. Rami has told Thendo about her pregnancy, and I must say he took it exceptionally well. He seems excited, now all that's left is coming clean to her family.

Her parents and brother will join us a bit later. We

headed to Rockville, and I really can't say I miss this place. It just has way too many sad memories for me. Surprisingly I recall the tombstone I saw in my dream very well. As we drove into the cemetery, we had to park along the paving in order for us to walk a bit further to reach the grave. We all got out of our cars, including the Naidoos.

MaMasango asked that I walk alongside her, which I gladly did. Of course, Kg was right by my side. This man thinks I might run away or something if he lets me out of his sight. We walked a bit further on, until I spotted the grave. "Nonkanyiso Evelyn Moloji. Beloved mother and friend. R.I.P." Wow, just like that? SO much for effort, Romeo. Kg couldn't remember it much because apparently Romeo never brought him back here after his mom died.

Imagine that. I could see him tense up a bit as we approached the grave and I affirmatively squeezed his hand. He probably had a bit of a recollection of

that painful day he buried his mom at the tender age of 9. MaMasango had given Nurse Portia her bag of herbs as she took out some incense and burnt it. She took out some herbs as she dipped her feather in some of it and started chanting.

MaMasango: “Nonkanyiso Evelyn Ncube, kudala unghlupa emaphupheni ami (you’ve been appearing in my dreams a lot). Sibonga amadlozi ka Ncube ukuthi se sikutholile (We thank the Ncube ancestors that we have finally found you). Se sifikile, Ntombi, Nkosazana w aka Ncube (We have arrived, my girl, The Ncube Princess). Ungaphumula ke manje (You can rest easily now). Sizokuncwaba no mfana wakho (We will bury you alongside your son), at your final resting place, where you should have been buried a long time ago.

You will finally receive the proper sendoff you actually deserve. Give us peace and wisdom, bless your son and his new wife with all you can, and rest

easily with your other son, Mnqobi. For they are royalty and need to be treated like it. Be our guardian angel and never desert us. We thank you for finally reaching out to Isabella, we trust in you and our God. Sihamba nawe, Nkosazana (We are leaving with you, Princess). Siyakucela (We beg of you), unganyameki (Don't be weary). Siyakuthanda, ntombi (We love you, my girl)."

For the first time since I have met Queen Nandi, I saw her break down.

Queen Nandi: (crying) "Nonkanyiso! Ngibonka unkulunkulu ngoba sikutholile, mntwanami (I thank God for we have found you)!"

King Ntsika: "Nonka, ngiyaxolisa, mntwanami (I am so sorry, my baby). I am sorry for everything. Had your mother not pushed you away, you would still be here today."

We proceeded to wait as the guys that were hired by King Ntsika came to exhume the body. Of course, the casket was rusty and old, since it had been years since she was buried.

King Ntsika: (shaking head) "I don't think we should bury them today. I would like to pick out a beautiful casket for my Nonka. Mama, we need to do this right."

Queen Nandi: "I agree."

And just like that, the funeral was postponed, a few hours before we had to bury Mulalo. Ai, what a turn of events. We could not go back to Jozi, as we here really halfway to Enande. That would really delay us. Gringo said he would get people to bring us clothes for tomorrow since we were all headed to Enande. We had to take a drive, since King Ntsika wanted to

make sure nothing and no one disturbs our drive to Enande, with us driving the corpse back home.

At least they were in one car, even though they were both emotional. I could say the same for Kg, and Tumisho was also a bit saddened. I guess seeing his brother in such a state must be really upsetting. I like the man he is becoming, though. He has been in boarding school and he is almost done with school. Kg promised him a nice car, once he is done with his schooling – that is if he produces enough distinctions ofcourse.

We drove to Enande, and it took quite long, but with Gringo by your side, you can never be bored. He had us in stiches, telling us nice stories about his trips with Mam"V. I am really glad that he can finally speak about her without crying or being upset. Speaking of which, I have to give him her message in case I forget. I hope I don't forget because this has to be a private moment between the two of us.

Rami has been rather sleepy, along the way. I am guessing this baby is already taking strain on her.

We finally arrived at Enande, four hours later. We arrived just after 1pm, with a whole crowd of people waiting outside the Royal Towers. What also surprised us all is that we found a lot of “important looking” people there – with big, black SUV’s, shouting at Bheki and Bongani, the royal guards. I can’t say they all came together, since they had different cars each, as if it was two different families. The man who was shouting at Bheki, I don’t recognize, along with the other one who was shouting at Bongani.

They look fairly old, most probably in their 60s or 70s or so. I do however recognize the one Mercedes, which was a red one, similar to the one I once saw at Tiger’s house. The disrespect, though. King Ntsika and Queen Nandi walked out of their car annoyed as hell. We obviously couldn’t wait in the car, so we had

to get out too.

King Ntsika: (angered) “Nifunani la (What are you doing here)?! Futhi, why ni bangela abasebenzi bami umsindo (Also, why are you shouting at my guards)?!”

The whole crowd outside kept quiet as soon as the King appeared. The man who was shouting at Bheki, decided to speak first.

Man1: “Ntsika, uzokhuluma nathi kanje (Are you honestly going to speak to us like that)?! Size lana ukuncwaba umfana wethu – inkosi yethu (We came here to bury our son – our Prince)!”

Wait, could this be the Nembilwi’s?

Man2: “Futhi thina size lana ngoba uxoshe umfazi

wakho, indhlovukazi ya lapha Enande, futhi awusitshelanga (We also came here because you chased away your wife, the Queen of Enande, without even telling us). Awungitshele (Tell me), Ntsika, is this how you disregard us? Is it because you have more money than me?”

King Ntsika looked really annoyed, but tried to be calm. So I see what is going on here; the Nembilwi's, Tiger's family, came to claim Mulalo as their own of which I kind of understand, but the way they did it is not okay. Queen Nombu had the audacity to invite her people over as well to come and chaos havoc, all because she was chased away from here. I thought they were done, but the second man kept going.

Man2: “Futhi ubambise intombi yethu uNomsa ungasitshelanga (You also failed to tell us you got Nomsa arrested without telling us). What is this I hear of you letting some maid make decisions around here? Are you fucking maids now, Ntsika?”

Okay, even I myself felt quite offended by that question. My Kg was not even the least impressed either. Gringo on the other hand looked like he was ready for war as he turned pink.

King Ntsika: “Okay, if any of you would like to talk like grown men instead of ranting and raving in front of my gate, then my house is open. But if you are going to keep insulting me and our future Queen, uzonya (you’ll shit yourself)! Kukwami la (this is my house) and if you have a problem, you address me properly like a fellow king – not insult my family the way you just did, Msunu ka nyoko (Your mother’s cunt)!”

I have never seen King Ntsika swear at anyone before. Now I get to see all the drama unfold in front of me. He is usually a man of a very few words, but I guess he is a ticking time bomb. The second man got so angry, he wanted to launch at King Ntsika, of

which I totally feel this is unnecessary. I guess now I see where Nombulelo gets her disrespect and audacity from.

As he was about to launch his knob kierrie at King Ntsika, Bheki and Bongani were ready to stop them, but Kg and Gringo took out their guns in a flash, along with the Naidoos and pointed at them. I guess this is what you get when you bring Gangsters to the village. The crowd was in shock, as they gasped without saying a word. The two men were also a bit scared now as they kept quiet, while Queen Nombulelo decided to get out of her car.

Queen Nombuklelo: “Uyabona, Ntsika (You see now). Se uzilethele igebengu lana (You have brought us gangsters). I should have never left.”

King Ntsika: (fuming) “None of you are welcome into my house. Dare try me – any of us actually and I will have them shoot you.”

They didn't dare utter a word as we got back into our cars, while Bongani and Bheki opened the gate for us and we entered. We have been driving for so long only for these fuckers to mess up our day. Thank goodness King Ntsika postponed the funeral, otherwise there would have been drama. These people really came with an aim to ruin everything for us. As we drove in and parked, King Ntsika looked so embarrassed.

King Ntsika: (saddened) "Gringo, Ndhlovukazi (Queen), Nkosinathi, my fellow guests. Please, I beg of you to accept my humble apologies. I did not mean for any of this to happen. I would never allow anyone to insult any of my guests nor family like that."

Shame, he really felt so bad.

Thato: “Baba (Dad), it is really okay. Let’s go inside and figure out how to deal with this mess.”

He slowly nodded as Nurse Portia helped MaMasango in, and she went straight to bed to take a nap. She is not used to walking around anymore, more especially since she refused to take chemotherapy. She said that she wanted to die in peace and that chemo is just another method of western medicine to kill the body slowly and eat away at your soul.

It is very painful to know that she will die very soon, but we respect her decision, nonetheless. The rest of us walked in and headed to the lounge. I could see a whole new cooking staff. I didn’t see Zweli around, which reminds me that I really have to go look for Gloria.

Queen Nandi: (fuming) “Those fuckers really don’t know ukuthi ngingubani mina (who I really am)! How

dare they?! How dare Nombulelo?! I told you long ago, Ntsika, that girl has no brains!”

Nana: “Calm down, Nandi. The solution here is simple and you know it.”

King Ntsika: “Ndhlovukazi (Queen), what do you suggest we do?”

I am guessing he is referring to me. But now everyone is looking at me sternly awaiting a response. Is this guy serious? Does he actually value my opinion that much?”

Thato: “Baba (Dad), with all due respect, you are the king here – I am not even married yet.”

King Ntsika: (chuckling) “All that will change very soon – hence I am asking for your input.”

I am actually humbled, but what if I mess things up or I give a stupid response or a weak opinion?

Thato: “Well, to be honest, Baba (Father), may I speak freely?”

King Ntsika: (smiling) “Of course.”

Thato: “Well, your biggest and only mistake in this situation, was not informing the Nembilwi’s formally and personally regarding Mulalo’s passing. Remember they raised him – although we don’t know the details of how good or how bad they did that job, but he was born and died a Nembilwi.”

As I spoke, I felt my hand tremble with fear as I really don’t want to mess this up. I looked up and I saw them smiling – all of them. Even my Kg next to me as he squeezed my hand affirmatively and nodded

for me to continue. I guess I needed assurance that I was saying the right things.

Thato: “However, they do not have the right to speak in that manner to you – for they should know their place. We were supposed to invite them and have a talk with them regarding Mulalo’s burial as a Ncube, since he was indeed Princess Nonkanyiso’s son.”

I looked around as my eyes were searching their faces for approval, but they just kept smiling and nodding.

Thato: “In the case of Queen Nombulelo, your only mistake there was not notifying their family of why you sent her back home. You were supposed to be clear to her and her family, my King, regarding your feelings for her and your way forward. Forgive me for speaking so bluntly, my King, but matters of the heart can make you do drastic things. Yes, she was really wrong for the way she behaved, but are you

honestly telling me, my King, that all of that is enough for you to say that you do not love her? Can you honestly convince your heart and say that you really cannot see a future with her?”

I saw the King fiddle with his fingers as he looked down, and I thought Queen Nandi was going to tell me serious shit due to her dislike of Queen Nombu, but she just kept smiling at me and so did Nana.

Thato: “Regarding all these issues, my King, including that of Princess Nomsa, I think that it is safe to say that they should be let in if they are willing to behave, but provided they pay heavily for their blatant disrespect, as we were supposed to bury the late Prince and we have the late Princess mother’s corpse standing outside in this heat all because of their disrespect.”

He nodded gracefully with a smile.

King Ntsika: “What kind of punishment did you have in mind, Ndhlovukazi (Queen)?”

Thato: (shaky) “A hefty mine, my King. One they would never forget and would teach them to humble themselves. R50 000 each.”

Okay, it actually felt a bit good acting like a Queen. I don't know, but it felt a bit nice to have some power over a few decisions made and being able to make people pay for being annoying and rude.

Queen Nandi, Nana and King Ntsika laughed out loud.

Queen Nandi: (smiling) “Ngikutshelile, Ntsika (I told you). She was born a leader, a true Queen of note.”

King Ntsika: (nodding) “I just have one more request

from you.”

I nodded.

King Ntsika: “Please, handle this from now on because the rest of us will not handle it really well. It is just too personal for us and I think we need one person who is neutral.”

Thato: (nodding) “Very well, my king.”

King Ntsika nodded as he asked Bheki to give them our message. We waited for a while, and we could hear them shouting at the gate even though they were quite far. That man can really shout for a king, shame.

Queen Nandi: “While we wait for them to scramble the money, may I humbly offer you gentlemen a

drink? Don't you worry, I know all the good stuff from Cognac, to whiskey to Bourbon."

They all chuckled and accepted the offer. Besides, it is rather rude to decline an offer in someone's home. While Queen Nandi went to the kitchen, Nana followed her and they came back laughing about who knows what? They came back with a bottle of Cognac, a bottle of whiskey and two bottles of red Champagne.

This woman really knows her stuff. Nana brought the glasses as we poured ourselves a drink. I am guessing that they were really pissed by the 50k idea, and I honestly don't think I was being spiteful at all, okay maybe just a little bit. We sat and even laughed for about a whole hour, until Bheki came back with some news.

Bheki: "My King, Both the Nembilwi's and the Ngubane's are ready to proceed."

King Ntsika: (looking at me) “Well? Should we let them in, Ndhlovukazi (Queen)?”

I had a bit of liquid courage, so I was ready for anything. But Bheki didn't come in with anything in his hands.

Thato: “Kodwa (But), Mhlonishwa (Honourable man), you don't have any parcel in your hands?”

Bheki: “They said they would like to pay once they have entered the house, my Queen.”

That's not good enough, I know a scammer when I see one.

Thato: “Please, Mhlonishwa (Honourable man), may you kindly let them know that they need to give you

the money before we allow them in?”

Bheki looked like he was chuckling a little bit.

Bheki: “Most certainly, my queen.”

He went back out, while Queen Nandi laughed.

Queen Nandi: “Hehe, Nkosinathi, you have your hands full with this one. Nothing will come easy and I love it!”

We all laughed as Bheki came back swiftly with the money.

Bheki: “Here is the parcel, my Queen.”

I am not about to accept money that has not been counted. I don't trust anyone. I learnt that from my

father.

Thato: “Thank you, Mhlonishwa (Honourable man). May you please tell them that we are still counting the money and we will let them know, once we are ready to let them in?”

Bheki really seemed to like being called Mhlonishwa. I don't feel comfortable calling anyone older than me by name.

Bheki: “Most certainly, my queen.”

He nodded and went right out. As the money was on the table, Nana and Queen Nandi offered to count the money in delight. They counted it while Kg was laughing as he stared at me. King Ntsika looked at me so impressed, and I must say I really like it. Gringo, looked so proud.

Nana: “Hah ah! This one is R100 short.”

We all laughed still. I guess being petty is not nice when it is on the receiving end. I bet Nombulelo is probably having a fit. We called for Bheki again as we told him the money was R100 short. He was about to laugh, honestly as he went back. He came back swiftly with the R100 note.

Thato: “You may proceed to call them in, Mhlonishwa (honourable man), on one condition – no noise is to be made and they ought not to speak until the King addresses them.”

Bheki: (smiling) “Most certainly, my queen.”

After a few minutes, I could hear a few footsteps. You know whenever a person is angry, you can tell by the way they walk. They walk so fast and literally bang their feet onto the ground – well, that is exactly

what happened. I saw a whole crowd of people. Some of them wearing a certain traditional attire, while the other wearing their own. I now remember seeing the Nembilwi attire in the family portrait over at Tiger's house. Tiger's family was quite a big bunch and they even came with a familiar face.

Thato: "Khanyi?"

She was about to speak, until Queen Nandi stopped her.

Queen Nandi: "You heard our instructions from our queen. Do not speak until the King addresses you."

I could see they were all pissed as fuck, with Nombulelo looking at me especially like she was trying so hard to swallow the pile of shit she was ready to spit out. The two men who were ready to fight at the gate, looked really angry. They need to

relax – more especially at that age. Don't they know that high blood pressure is a real killer?

King Ntsika: “Well, I am finally glad you have managed to behave like real kings. Before I allow you to sit – one wrong move and I mean even the slightest sound of an insult and you are out.”

They all kept quiet.

King Ntsika: “You may be seated.”

I love how big this lounge is – you can fit so many people here with all these couches. I guess it is a royal thing. Usually royal families meet in the dining area – but here, they like the lounge.

King Ntsika: “Now, I have not a clue as to why you are here – so, I will upon our Queen Isabella to

address you. One wrong move, you are out.”

Nombulelo just couldn't hold it in anymore and clicked her tongue out loudly.

King Ntsika: “Nombulelo, barely five minutes you have been here and you already can't keep quiet. This is why I let you go in the first place. I was prepared to take you back, but with all this attitude and no desire to be respectful, I think the chances of that happening are slim.”

I could see Nombulelo looking down with a shattered face.

King Ntsika: “You may proceed to speak, Ndhlovukazi (Queen).”

They all looked at me like I was crazy, but I didn't

care.

Thato: “Thank you, my king. My dear elders, as you see you were fined for not behaving. We do not act like that in front of other people’s houses. Now, you all clearly came here with a list of grievances. We shall allow the Nembilwi family to go first.”

They all looked at me like I am probably a crazy white chick from Jozi.

King Nembilwi: “Thank you. Firstly, I would like to apologize for our behaviour outside. It really was not our intention to bring shame upon your family, Ntsika. As I was saying, we came here with a grievance. Firstly, we were not happy that we were not informed personally of Mulalo’s passing.

I came here a million times during the week to find no one willing to assist me. I needed to know why

you would do such a thing to us, Ntsika. We loved our boy and only from strangers – commoners! We hear of our Mulalo’s burial. We expected him to be buried from our royal grounds.”

As I expected, they are not happy with how the situation was handled, but I hate the way he speaks of Non-Royals.

Thato: “I hear you, Baba. The Ngubane’s, you may proceed with your grievance.”

Queen Nombulelo: “I am not happy mina –“

King Ngubane: “Thula, man (Quiet)! Your big mouth is what got us into this mess to begin with.”

Nombulelo looked down in shame. She does not learn.

King Ngubane: “My child – “

King Ntsika: (interrupting) “Does she look like your child? Address her as Queen.”

Wow, I could see how King Ngubane was trying to tread really carefully.

King Ngubane: “My apologies, Queen. We have come here to formally speak to your King. We were so disappointed to hear that he had chased away his queen – the mother of his children –“

Queen Nombu: (interrupting) “For a mere maid!”

I see she can't even recognize Kg next to me.

Kg: (angry) "You shall not address my wife like that, Gogo (Granny)."

Queen Nombu only realized who he really was after hearing him call her Gogo.

Queen Nombu: (crying) "Nkosinathi?!"

King Ntsika: "This is not about you. Khawuthule (Just keep quiet)."

I saw the despair in Queen Nombu's eyes and the hurt and pain she had hid all these years as she looked at Kg without saying a word further. Instead, the tears were dropping down like a flowing river.

King Ngubane: "We also demand clarity as to why Nomsa was arrested. She is a royal therefore she needn't be treated like a common thief."

I chuckled as I stared at this rude fat fuck. I see rudeness is their nature. He “demands”? In whose house? I see that these people have some sort of undermining attitude towards King Ntsika. I get it – he is richer than them and now that they heard the true rumours about them going broke – they decided to spit out all the venom they have kept hidden all these years. I don’t know what the future holds, but I am ready to give these people a lesson about life.

Chapter One Hundred and Seven

James 4:6 – “But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble.”

Thato

I may not be a queen yet or even at all, but I have to speak my mind.

Thato: "Permission to speak, my King?"

King Ntsika: "You may, Ndhlovukazi (Queen)."

Kg affirmatively kept squeezing my hand as I continued.

Thato: "Let me start with you, King Nembilwi. Baba (Father), I apologize on the King's behalf for not notifying you of Mulalo's passing, but you yourself knew that he was not of your blood. Our mistake was that we didn't come to you in person to notify and involve you on a way forward. For that, I humbly apologize."

King Nembilwi: "I accept your apology."

Thato: "However, you cannot as King decide to rant

and throw tantrums at another man's house in front of his own people and still expect fair treatment or even expect to be allowed to enter. King Nembilwi, if I may ask, had King Ntsika come to your kingdom and raised his voice in front of YOUR people and DEMANDED to speak to you and cause chaos, how would you feel? How would you have handled it?"

He looked down in shame.

King Nembilwi: "Not very well, my queen. I see my mistake and for that I humbly apologize."

Thato: "Your apology must be directed to the King, sir."

King Nembilwi: "Ntsika, we go way back. I didn't mean to be so rude. Please, my brother, accept my apology."

King Ntsika: (nodding) “Apology accepted.”

Thato: “I’d like to leave you with this verse, King Nembilwi, that is if you are familiar with the word of God. Proverbs 29:4 – “By justice a king builds up the land, but he who exacts gifts tears it down.” What the Lord is basically instructing us in this verse, King Nembilwi, is that you need to be a just king and not demand anything from your people or anyone else. From my point of view – you think that the world is at your feet.

Do not get too comfortable, for it all can be taken away from you in a heartbeat. The only king we all need to fear is the Lord himself. Now, I see that your son, Todani also had the same charisma as you, but should you ever wish to run your kingdom in a Godly manner and should you wish for your grandsons and grand daughters to live a good life – change your ways.”

He looked down in shame, while I could tell Kg was so proud.

Thato: “King Ngubane, my King has heard your grievances, however, had you perhaps called my King and asked him why he did what he did instead of coming to his house to demand answers and to be let in from HIS workers, we wouldn’t be in this mess. Had you actually taken a look at how your daughter behaves in front people – we wouldn’t be in this mess. I may not have been here for very long, sir, but what I can tell you is this: your daughter is very rude and looks down a lot on others. Your daughter is the reason a lot of the things here do not make sense, for example this culture of bowing before royalty.

Why should workers feel the burden of being treated as servants when they themselves are not animals? Your granddaughter Nomsa, is the reason why things don’t match because for one; she stole

money from the kingdom, from the state and from the workers. Her husband is a serial rapist on the run and lastly, she tried to poison King Ntsika and when her poison didn't kill him, she pinned the attempted murder on a very good woman who worked in this kingdom.

As a result, your very own daughter blamed her and demanded she be set alight right away. Now, tell me, King Ngubane, since when do people get set alight without even going to stand fit trial and without proper evidence being followed up upon? Upon that note – lest we forget that she is indeed the cause for all this mess. Had she not tried to kill Mulalo, we would not be in this mess.”

I saw the embarrassment in his eyes as he slowly looked down. I am guessing Nombulelo didn't tell him everything.

Thato: “King Ngubane, kings are supposed to work

together. Now, if you as a King disrespect a fellow king in front of everyone, how will your children even his own wife, respect him the way need be? The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 10:20 – “Even in your thoughts, do not curse the king, nor in your bedroom curse the rich, for a bird of the air will carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter.” When you gave Queen Nombu to King Ntsika, you trusted that he would care for your daughter, so why is it now that your own granddaughter decided to steal from the people and humiliate her own parents, you also decided to take the last ounce of respect his people and everyone around him has for him?”

He looked down and decided to speak up.

King Ngubane: “Ntsika, I really am sorry for the way I handled everything. I was just upset when Nombulelo came to the house with all these stories. I should have spoken to you as my son-in-law.”

King Ntsika: "Your apology is accepted."

Thato: "Would anyone else like to add on their grievances?"

I couldn't believe it. I was actually a natural. King Nembilwi raised his hand.

King Nembilwi: "May I speak?"

I guess they learn their manners pretty fast.

That: "Yes, you may."

King Nembilwi: "Well, since we have laid our grievances on the table, may we discuss a way forward regarding Mulalo's burial?"

I knew this was coming, deep down. I expected it.

Kg: (angered) "What do you mean?"

Oh, Lord, this could be a potential disaster. I could see King Nembilwi was really trying not to step on anyone's toes.

King Nembilwi: "I mean, can we at least come to some sort of agreement? We raised him, but you only found him now. So surely we can come to some sort of agreement."

I think I have the perfect agreement to this, but Connie decided to be a bitch about everything.

Connie: (fuming) "Father, why do you have to bow before these people and beg them?! Where were they when I was the one nursing Mulalo?! Where

were they when I was the one he ran to whenever he was in trouble?! Let's not forget that they are the reason why Tiger and Rendani is no more!"

Constance is still the same old bitch.

Gringo: (angered) "Constance, choose your words well."

Constance: "I will not be silenced! Your precious Vivian is no more, so you can't do anything without her! You all including your precious little fake queen here killed my husband and my son!"

Wow, she just had to go there. Gringo didn't even wait a split second.

Gringo: "Do you have proof?"

Constance: (shouting) “No, but – “

Gringo didn't even wait for her to finish.

Gringo: “For the record, Constance. We are not children. We are also not deaf or hearing impaired, so I don't see the reason for shouting. Secondly, you like throwing accusations around without proof. One day it will get you into trouble. Remember, I let you go when you idiot husband and his friend stole from me.”

Connie: (shouting) “How dare you?! You think you own everyone in this world!”

Gringo: (sigh) “For the record, I did kill your husband and your son. And I will tell you why; your husband is the reason Mulalo and Kg were separated and he was a serial rapist on top of it all. Now, since you probably have Olivia on her way here already, tell her

not to even bother since I know that Tiger was the father of her baby.”

Everyone gasped in shock as Gringo’s confession left Constance beyond numb.

Gringo: “You think you know everything, don’t you? Well, your son, Rendani, killed my wife for no apparent reason and kidnapped my daughter in the process. He also got me shot multiple times and you know what? I don’t regret killing him. Now, be a good girl and shut the fuck up so that we can end all this. This is the reason why Tiger always preferred fucking other women to you because you are dumb as fuck. You can’t even behave like the Princess you are.”

Constance slowly sunk into the couch with tears falling down. Wow, Gringo can really hurt a person. They say words hurt and they sure as hell weren’t lying.

Thato: (clearing throat) "May I propose a suggestion, my king?"

King Ntsika: "You may."

Thato: "I think that Mulalo should be buried right here on his home ground right next to his mother. I also think that since he was raised by the Nembilwi's we can honour them by burying him with both names and surnames given to him. That is indeed the least we can all do."

The king was so pleased, which is what I really couldn't say for Queen Nombu.

Queen Nombu: (annoyed) "You don't know everything. Nonkanyiso was buried without our knowledge."

Queen Nandi: (irritated) “Had you kept your foul mouth shut you would have known that we went to exhume Nonkanyiso’s body. She is outside as we speak because you idiots ruined everything.”

Queen Nombu looked like she was about to die of shock right there and then.

Queen Nombu: (shocked) “What?”

Queen Nandi: “You heard me. Angithi uyaphapha (you’re so forward).”

Within a minute we heard her wail out loud as she dropped on the floor. I saw her father quickly get up and attend to her. I saw the look in King Ntsika’s eyes, a look filled with sorrow. He seemed like he wanted to grab her and hold her, but pride was getting in the way. Nombulelo might be a real bitch, but she is the love of his life I guess.

King Ntsika: "Please, go put her into one of the guest bedrooms."

I knew right then that he was nowhere near ready to forgive her. King Ngubane nodded as he carried her up the stairs.

King Ntsika: "I think it is safe to say that we are ready to conclude this matter."

We all agreed. It has been one shitty day. My Prada outfit has gone to waste and I just want to rest.

King Ntsika: "Okay, Isabella, I agree with your suggestion. We will have the funeral here tomorrow afternoon then. It will be a grand occasion as my daughter has returned home and will also finally be laid to rest where she needs to be. Do we all agree to this?"

We all agreed.

King Ntsika: “Since we have come to an agreement, I would like to offer all of you my home for the night. It is the least I can do.”

They were more than happy to accept the offer, really. As they were shown to their respective bedrooms, Nana and Queen Nandi offered to cook for all of us, while Khanyi went up with Constance. She looks really odd, a bit bigger like she has gained some weight. She looked like she didn't have any interest in talking to me so I let her be. I still don't know what she is doing here because she was not married to Rendani.

Kg and I decided to take a walk around the Kingdom and I could tell he was slowly piecing all of the pieces together again. We walked hand in hand, and

I really can imagine myself living here. A few weeks ago when I arrived here, I didn't think I would find a family here. It is so hot here, but it is quite serene. Nonkanyiso's body was taken to the nearby mortuary. There is not much there, even though she is a skeleton now, at least she will be given the dignified burial she deserves.

Kg: "I am very proud of you, my queen."

Ai, Kg though.

Thato: (smiling) "All of you keep calling me that, I might just make it happen."

Kg: (chuckling) "You don't have to do that. It is my job to turn you from a princess into a queen."

Thato: (laughing) "Okay."

I was deep in thought, when I felt Kg letting go of my hand. I looked at him and I saw him kneeling down on one knee, taking out a beautiful sapphire, diamond ring. This can't be real.

Chapter One Hundred and Eight

Hebrews 11:1 – “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

John 7:38 – “Whoever believes in me, as Scripture said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

Thato

I am still in such disbelief. I mean, Kg and I were already engaged months ago, well, over a year ago. We didn't even get to enjoy his birthday. I don't even

know what to say, I mean of course I know I want to say yes all over again, but I mean this ring is just amazing. I love the look; it is so much more different than what I have seen before.

Kg: (smiling) “My love, my TT, my beautiful flower, Ndhlovukazi yami (My Queen), Qhawekazi yami (My heroine). This is not the most perfect or most ideal way to propose to you, but if I don’t do it now, I will never manage to sleep. I had it all planned in my head; but rather now than never. Words can never explain how much you mean to me. You know very well I am a man of my actions and a man of few words.

I have loved you from the moment I saw you. I have loved everything about you and your presence in my life has taught me to believe that there is indeed a God. I know He carved you so perfectly and took his time when he created you, just so that you could be the perfect figure for me. Thato Isabella Groen, you

are the owner of my heart, the rescuer of my soul. You are my soul provider, you bring peace and calmness to my life.

You make me so happy, that I literally wake up just to stare at you and pinch myself to see if it is indeed real. I can't believe that God had favoured me so much to give me you. I almost lost myself when I lost you. I felt so much rage inside of me and I was ready to go on rampage when you were gone. I was and will always be ready to kill for you. You and I were blessed immensely and we had that taken away from us, but I promise you that from now on, only blessings and greatness shall overflow in our lives.

I can't imagine my life with anyone else but you. I need the whole world to know that I have indeed captured you – the rarest gem in the whole entire universe. I want to show you the world, and not just that – but I want you to live this world. You are my

caramel, and I am your chocolate and together, I'd like us to make toffee and coffee babies. I love you so much, MaNcube, will you please make me the happiest man alive and say yes?"

That speech was enough to bring tears to my eyes. Toffee and Coffee babies? Really Kg?

Thato: "You didn't have to ask me twice. Of course, I will marry you!"

He got up anxiously as he slowly slipped the ring onto my finger and gave me a passionate kiss. I lost my ring before due to those fuckers who stole it from me after kidnapping me, but Kg made everything so much more worthwhile. I have no doubt in my mind that he is indeed one person I would like to spend the rest of my life with.

Kg: "I love you, Thato."

Thato: "I love you, Kg."

Queen Nombulelo

I can't believe I messed up so badly. I was so enraged and irritated when my own husband chose a common girl over me. He chose her over Nomsa and everything we had built together. Yes, Nomsa is trash and what she did is just not okay. It is not unforgivable. I just want to fix everything, but how do I do that? It is because of me that my daughter Nonkanyiso ran away and rejected us.

I pushed her away because I expected her to be the epitome of perfection. I couldn't stand her being with a man like Romeo and to make matters worse, Nomsa married the first idiot who called her beautiful. I don't fucking get it, she fucked up big time. You don't just marry dumb. Now, he is on the

run and has serial rape cases against him. How does one even deal with such?

I feel as if I will never win and I truly feel that all I have been doing is so damaging to one's soul and heart. I was really mean to Isabella, I really was mean to Gloria and now Zweli won't even come near me. He won't even look my way. I don't know how to fix this as I feel I owe Nkosinathi and Isabella a huge apology for my recent behaviour.

I just don't want to lose them and seeing her in action like that today, I must say I am quite hurt. No one has ever been such a sensible Queen – not even Queen Nandi. This is just one of the worst things I have ever done. I just hope that there is still hope for me to fix things. I have been so selfish, and I think I know just how to ensure that everyone has a happy ending.

Thato

Kg and I took a long walk around the Kingdom as we just enjoyed each other. This place is really beautiful at night, but it could do with a lot of lights. These workers work too hard and I feel it is just too much, really. We headed back to the house I think right after 11pm, while everyone was fast asleep. We had even forgotten that we were walking around in the scorching sun in our Prada outfits. The nice thing about dating your best friend is that not everything will be about sex.

You will have meaningful conversations and moments of intimacy without even sexual gratification. All I can say is that I can't stop staring at my ring. The King specifically asked that we sleep in one of the royal headquarters, but I prefer my bedroom – the one I used when I first came here. I just like it, maybe because this is the first place where Nonkanyiso appeared before me.

We went to my bedroom and immediately took our clothes off. We got into the bathtub, since Kg and I used to love taking showers and bathing together. We still do that – a lot. He filled the tub with water, and some bath salts and foam bath as we entered. He placed me in between his legs as usual and I just can't stop staring at my ring as he kissed my shoulders.

Kg: (smiling) "You like that ring?"

Thato: "Are you kidding me? I love it!"

Kg: "I am so glad you do, because I made it."

I looked at him puzzled.

Thato: "What do you mean?"

Kg: "I designed it and made it especially for you."

What? Kg has always loved jewelry design, but I thought that part of his brain left him a while ago.

Thato: "You put all that effort just for me?"

Kg: "You deserve it, baby. You deserve the whole world."

I smiled as I kissed him. We finished taking a bath as we dried ourselves as we headed back to the bedroom. He wasted no time as he got on top of me. I guess it is time for some celebratory sex. We made such passionate, good love. It felt like I would never wake up again. We finally managed to sleep after about three rounds of sex. I woke up in the middle of the night feeling quite thirsty. I did have a bar fridge in my bedroom, but I was all out of water.

I got into my dress, since there is literally nothing else to wear, and I walked out. As I was proceeding towards the kitchen, I got puzzled as I saw the reluctant Khanyi dressed in lingerie. I am talking exposing lingerie. She stood outside of one particular door. That is exactly the same room Kg was supposed to sleep in. I headed up the stairs slowly, so that I could get a better view of what she was trying to do. She knocked sternly while revealing some of her underwear.

Thato: "Khanyi?"

Khanyi became so startled when she saw me.

Thato: "I didn't mean to scare you."

Khanyi: "It's okay."

Thato: “I am sorry for eavesdropping, but what are you doing in front of Kg’s door right in the middle of the night?”

She fiddled with her hands and started looking down.

Khanyi: “Oh, I got lost for a moment.”

She turned towards me as she quickly closed her robe, but I had already seen that. She had one of those dark brown lines that grow from the middle to the end of her tummy. If I remember correctly, it is called the Linea Nigra. This is about to get interesting. What is a pregnant Khanyi doing outside Kg’s bedroom door dressed in nothing but lingerie, in the middle of the night?

Chapter One Hundred and Nine

2 Peter 3:9 – “The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient

toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

Thato

I stood there staring at me with total shock on her face. I honestly don't even know what to make thereof. Something just seems offish with Khanyi. I mean, she was always jealous of Rendani's obsession with me. I just think she really needs a crash course on life itself.

Thato: “I asked you a question, Khanyi. What are you doing outside Kg's bedroom half naked at this time of the night?”

Khanyi became instantly annoyed instead of being remorseful or something. Talk about an entitled bitch.

Khanyi: (annoyed) "I don't have to answer to you, Thato. Just because they treat you like a queen, does not make you one."

I find it so funny that she has a problem with everything I do.

Thato: (chuckling) "Okay then. But if you must know, Kg is not available and even if he was, I doubt he would have been interested in you."

I was about to walk back down the stairs and head to the kitchen, but she just kept the insults coming.

Khanyi: (fuming) "You think you're all that, don't you, Thato? No wonder Kg left you for a beautiful girl like Anastacia. Constance was right, you are a little she-devil."

Oh, I get it now. Connie put her up to this? For some reason I wasn't even offended.

Thato: "Oh? Me? A she-devil? I don't think you're speaking to the right person. As for Kg leaving me, I think you must have the wrong information. If he left me then how come I have his ring on my finger?"

I flashed my finger to her and I could see the smirk on her face disappear in a flash. I headed downstairs only to find Kg waiting for me. I could see the disappointment in Khanyi's face when Kg approached me with nothing but his pants on.

Kg: (smiling) "There you are. I have been looking for you. Are you trying to run away from me?"

Thato: (smiling) "I could never run away from you."

He gently kissed me and looked towards Khanyi's direction, puzzled.

Kg: (frowning) "And then?"

Thato: "Ah, she must probably be sleep walking."

Kg: "Okay. Let's go back to bed."

Thato: "Ja, but I want some water first."

Kg: "Then let's go get some water. Better yet, let's get some alcohol and pick up where we left off."

I had to chuckle as he held me seductively. Kg has such a high appetite for sex. We went to the kitchen and left Khanyi standing there like a lost puppy. We headed back to my room and continued where we

left off. The morning came and we just had to get up early. We don't want to be labelled lazy while everyone else gets ready for the occasion.

It is more than just a normal burial, it is a celebration. Even though we will be burying both Nonkanyiso and Mulalo after midday, we still had to get up early. Well, we tried to, but ended up getting up at 10am. I am a bit embarrassed at that fact, and I have no idea how I am going to walk out of here.

Luckily, Nana was sent to my bedroom by Gringo. He got Smally to get us some clothes from the house back in Northcliffe. I managed to take a bath and for the first time in ages, I got up before Kg. He must be really tired. I got into a maxi dress and wore a doek. Of course, they never expected me to be dressed in a dress or anything like that, but I really don't want them to think that I am doing my own thing.

I walked out and found all the women busy; walking around and helping with the cooking. I'm shocked to even see Queen Nombu walking around and helping. She never does this at all. This is really shocking. Everyone was helping – except Constance and Khanyi. Constance was looking around with Khanyi beside her the entire time. I don't know, but something does tell me that these two are plotting something.

Constance is a real disgrace to be honest, all the women even from her family and the Ngubane family are helping, while she is sitting doing nothing. I didn't see any man in sight – they must be busy outside with the burial preparations. Even Nana is helping and she and Queen Nandi seem so high in spirits. I bet they are sipping on some good beverages.

Nana: (smiling) "Good morning, Issa. How did you sleep?"

Thato: (smiling) "Very well, thank you. You?"

Nana: "Like a baby."

Thato: "Is there anything I can help you with?"

Queen Nandi: "Take these plates up for Zweli and the other one is for you and Nkosinathi. You had better eat up, because we have to be ready by 11am."

Thato: (frowning) "Hao, Ma. Why must I eat while others work?"

Queen Nandi: "We have it all covered. Go."

I nodded and did as told. I just don't want people to

think I am being favoured. I greeted Constance and Khanyi, but they just looked at me funny. I decided not to even say anything further. I am not about to beg anyone to greet me back. I took the first tray to my bedroom, and found Kg up.

Kg: (smiling) “Hao, baby. Wa ntshabela nowadays ne (You’re running away from me these days, hey)?”

Thato: (chuckling) “Hai (No), man. Here is your food. Ka boa (I’ll be right back).”

Kg: “O ya kae (Where are you going)?”

Thato: “I have to give Zweli his food. Instruction from Queen Nandi.”

Kg: “Okay, don’t take too long.”

Ai, this man of mine. I nodded as I headed back to the kitchen and took the tray upstairs. I knocked on Zweli's door a few times, but he didn't respond. I took the chance and entered it without waiting another minute. I found him looking so miserable; he most probably hadn't even taken a bath for days. I felt like crying; matters of the heart are just something else.

Thato: "Hi, Zweli."

Zweli: (miserable) "Hi, Isabella. How are you?"

Shame, he tried to fake a smile. He hadn't even shaved in a while and the smell of this room is a bit unpleasant.

Thato: "I am well, thanks, how are you?"

Zweli: "I have had better days."

Thato: "Has she not yet made contact?"

Zweli: (shaking head) "No, I mean, do I mean that little to her, Isabella? Why couldn't she at least tell me how she is doing?"

The pain in his eyes is just something else.

Thato: (sigh) "To be honest, Zweli, I really don't think she disregarded your feelings. I personally think that she really was taken aback by the whole situation. I mean, she has been working here for years only to be accused of witchcraft and she thought she would get burnt to death. I really want to help you, but I don't know where her grandmother lives."

Zweli: "What's the use of living without my Gloria?"

You know, I had just finally received my own taste of true love only to have it snatched away from me. I really hate Nombulelo. I wish she was dead. She should actually be the one to be buried today instead of my brother Mulalo.”

Thato: “You don’t mean that, surely.”

Zweli: ;”I do, I mean it and if I had it in me I would have killed her myself.”

I think it is best that I just leave the plate of food here and leave. I really don’t think that anything I tell him now will change how he feels or have an effect on this whole situation. As I opened the door, I found Nombulelo standing right outside. Was she eavesdropping? I think she noticed the frown on my face, but she returned a smile. Almost similar to the warm smile I saw on her face when I first got here.

Nombulelo: “Forgive me, Isabella, I didn’t mean to

pry. I wasn't eavesdropping either, but I am actually looking for you."

Thato: (frowning) "For me?"

Nombulelo: "Yes. I... firstly, I would like to apologize to you."

This is a first. She looked really serious and actually sounded genuine.

Nombulelo: (nervously) "I have to apologize. I really felt a bit jealous of you when you started getting all the favour from the king. I really failed to look at the bigger picture and I failed to realize just how toxic I was – as a mother, a wife and an employee. As a result, everything is in shambles. For the first time in my life, I am actually ashamed to be called a queen. I owe all this to you, without you we would not have been able to bury my daughter and grandson. You

are indeed the chosen one and will make a very good queen. I am truly sorry for my revolting behaviour towards you and I do hope that one day you can forgive me.”

Wow, I don't believe what I am hearing. Is this really Queen Nombulelo Ncube speaking? I must have forgotten myself for a moment as I looked at her in silence.

Nombulelo: “I didn't mean to offend you if I have in any way.”

Thato: “Oh, no, it is just that I am just a bit shocked, that's all. I humbly accept your apology, my queen.”

Nombulelo: (smiling) “Please, call me Ma.”

This feels really nice. It always brings me joy to

forgive.

Nombulelo: "I have one more request from you."

Thato: "Yes?"

Nombulelo: "Please, accompany me somewhere. I would like to do something I should have done a while ago. I need your assistance for that. After that, I will be out of your hair as I will return back to my maiden home."

She must be joking.

Thato: (frowning) "You're leaving?"

Nombulelo: (saddened) "Yes, it's no use staying here when I am the reason for all this chaos. Please, may

we go now? I promise you I won't take too long."

I didn't really doubt anything or think that she was plotting something against me. So, I went with her.

Thato: "Okay."

She smiled as we walked down the stairs. Everyone was too busy to even notice that we had walked out. Queen Nombu took one of the cars from the garage of which I assume belongs to her. I can't say anything in past tense yet, because I firmly believe she deserves a second chance. She is really not that evil to begin with. Some people have done far worse. So, we got into the Mercedes Benz and drove out. For the first time ever since I have known Nombulelo, we actually engaged in a meaningful conversation. She told me what actually happened between her husband's brother back in the day.

I get it, she was young and had a poor sense of judgment. I feel a bit bad for her after hearing the story from the horse's mouth. It turns out King Ntsika also cheated on her a few times back in the day and she had forgiven him. I wonder if Queen Nandi knows about that part, or if she is one of those toxic mothers who just protect their children. So, King Ntsika behaved like any other man – a real hypocrite. I am in no space to judge, but she deserves to be forgiven just as she had forgiven him.

Just because she fell pregnant doesn't mean she is a bad person. We drove for about 15 minutes, and arrived at an unfamiliar house. This house is a bit small, and a bit on the further end of the street. The yard is quite big, with very nice grass and flowers all round. As Queen Nombu parked the car, I was shocked to the core. I saw Gloria right outside carrying a bucket filled with water.

She looks so different; as if she is glowing and her

boobs are a bit fuller and it's like she has also gained some weight. She looks even more beautiful than I have ever seen her, although her face is tainted with sadness. As we walked into the yard, she nearly dropped her bucket as she saw the Queen and I approaching.

Thato: "Hi, Glo. How are you?"

Gloria looked a bit stunned. She looked at me once, and then at the Queen. She was about to bow, but the Queen quickly stopped her.

Queen Nombu: "Please, Gloria. Do not bow before me – I beg of you."

Gloria was very shocked, but also nervous.

Gloria: "Isabella, My Queen. To what do I owe this

visit? Am I in trouble? I promised to stay away from the Kingdom. I swear, I did not administer any poison to anyone.”

Shame, poor Gloria. She started crying immediately which brought tears to my eyes. The Queen held both her hands and looked at her.

Queen Nombu: “Gloria, please, allow me to do what I came here for.”

Gloria stared at her.

Queen Nombu: “Gloria, I am really sorry for what I did to you. You of all people did not deserve such treatment. You have always been so loyal and kind towards me. Not even once did you disrespect me even when I was taking out my moods on you. I should have been kinder towards you. I have always known that Zweli had an interest in you and to be

honest, I never had a problem with you. The fear I had from Nonka and Romeo's relationship kept creeping up on me. I felt like I was also going to lose Zweli to a similar situation. I really have nothing against you."

Gloria: (crying) "I don't know what to say. How will I know that you are not trying to trick me into coming back so you can burn me?"

Thato: "Because I am here, Glo. Do you honestly think I would endanger your life like that? Please come back with us, Zweli is such a mess. He hasn't eaten nor slept properly in days. He does not even take a proper bath, that is if he bathes at all."

I saw Gloria look up in sadness.

Gloria: "Really?"

Queen Nombu and I both nodded.

Gloria: "How will I ever face him now? He will never forgive me."

That: "He will forgive you, do you know why?"

Gloria: "Why?"

Thato: "Because love does not keep count of the wrongs. Because he loves you just the way you are; because when you are not by his side, he literally feels like he has lost his other lung so breathing becomes almost impossible. Sleeping and eating; all the basic things he has to do feel like an impossible mission, for his reason to smile is not by his side anymore. His heart does not even beat properly nor fast enough anymore. Give him a chance to at least tell you all this."

I saw Gloria contemplating it.

Gloria: (sigh) “How will he believe what I am about to tell him? He will chase me away.”

I looked at her puzzled by her statement, but Queen Nombu on the other hand, smiled at her gracefully.

Queen Nombu: (smiling) “He will believe you without a doubt. He knows this child is his – he is a true Ncube.”

Wait a minute, Gloria is pregnant? No wonder the glow. Seems like everyone is pregnant around me. But how did Queen Nombu know?

Gloria: (shocked) “How do you know?”

Queen Nombu: "I know a pregnant woman when I see one. Come, we have a lot to do."

Chapter One Hundred and Ten

Isaiah 60:22 – "When the time is right I, the Lord will make it happen."

Thato

I am honestly really surprised and actually happy that Queen Nombu has decided to turn a new leaf on her own. I mean, this goes to show that she isn't really half bad, at times the world and greed changes you. Worldly things have a way of destroying the very good part that is left inside of you, but it is never too late to turn the devil away and invite Jesus back again into your heart.

When we got home; Gloria felt really ashamed and it really breaks my heart. She is such a good person,

and all I ever wanted was for her to find her true love. To top it all off she is pregnant, I can't wait to see the joy on Zweli's face. We wasted no time as Queen Nombu took her upstairs to be with her man. Everyone seemed to have been dressed; so I had to go back to my bedroom. I got there and found Kg worried frantically.

Kg: (worried) "Thato, I have been looking everywhere for you! Where have you been?"

Thato: "I am so sorry, your grandmother asked me to go with her to Gloria's house. We just brought her back."

Kg: "Oh, thank God. I was worried sick. You didn't even eat your food and we have to get dressed already."

I didn't even feel much hunger, so I guess I will eat a

bit later.

Kg: “Go take a bath; I will get your clothes ready.”

I kissed him briefly as I went to the bathroom. I couldn't help but stare at my brand new ring. I love this unique design and of course my Kg is so full of surprises. He designed the whole ring from scratch specifically for me. He also got one of the best jewellery designers to make it for me. I am truly honoured to wear it. He says it is just as unique as our love.

How special is that, though? The way Kg is so romantic and full of surprises, I don't even think I can ever match up to his standards. I am really dull when it comes to surprising someone. I had to finish up before he came and called me out. I headed out and found him standing before me in a new suit – an even better one than yesterday. This one is white, though.

Thato: (puzzled) “And this?”

Kg: “Hao, baby. Did you forget Mulalo wanted to be buried in white just like Mam’V?”

Thato: “That completely slipped my mind, honestly. Yoh, he might have never forgiven us had we worn black to his funeral.”

I got dressed as we both chuckled. My hair has grown back a bit. That is what I kind of hate about my hair. My hair cuts don’t last at all. I literally have to get a new haircut within a week. That is how fast it grows. Now, I have bob-like curly hair since it has grown til that length. I put on some lipstick and did my brows only. I had to wear my brand new white, tight fitting Prada dress. Oh, I love this dress so much. There is no slit in slight, but it is a one shoulder dress, and hugs me everywhere – including

my boobs. I don't even think I have time for any make up today. I was under the impression that Kg was in a rush, but I became puzzled when I saw him staring at me.

Thato: "Hao, Kg. A re tsamaye, kgante (Aren't we leaving)?"

Kg: (smiling) "You look so beautiful."

Thato: (chuckling) "I hope you're not thinking of ripping my dress off."

Kg: (smiling) "I would love to, but I'd rather do something even more special right now."

I looked at him puzzled.

Thato: (Raised eyebrow) "Which is?"

Kg slowly took out a long, thin box from his jacket. Where does this guy find the time to surprise me like this always?

Thato: (surprised) "Baby, keng se (What's this)?"

Kg smiled and opened it slowly. I honestly didn't want to cry, but he made me. My tears slowly gushed out of my eyes as he took out a beautiful, 18carat blue sapphire diamond necklace, surrounded by white gold and so many sapphire diamonds. How on earth will I be able to wear this one now when my first diamond pendant got stolen?

Thato: (crying) "Kg..."

Kg: "I wanted to give you this on a very special night,

but I just couldn't wait any longer. When I heard you tell me that the diamond pendant I bought you got taken by those two thugs, my heart broke because I know just how sentimental you are."

He is very much right. I am very sentimental, and I still used to wear the non-diamond necklace around my neck until Rendani took it from me. Ai, some men and their disgusting tendencies.

Kg: "I want you to wear this and look like the Queen you are. I never want you to be without it for it will always remind you of us. I have an even better gift than the pendant for you so that you can keep all your memories. I want to give you the world, my wife, you just wait and see."

He helped me put on my new diamond necklace. This one will need a bodyguard. There is no way I am walking around in Jozi with this thing around my neck. I kissed him and we walked out as we

proceeded to join the rest of the family. As we walked out, we found Gringo, Nana and Queen Nandi staring at us anxiously.

Queen Nandi: “Yuuh (Wow)! Kunini sinimele nina (We’ve been waiting on you two)!”

Nana: “Kg, I’d expect this from Thato since she is always late, but not you.”

Kg: (chuckling) “Forgive us, but we’re not late, are we?”

Queen Nandi: “Royalty should always be early – no matter what.”

Gringo: (frowning) “Wolfe, you have been keeping my daughter hostage for way too long now. I need those cows. A thousand at that.”

I couldn't help but look at him embarrassed. Really, dad? Kg was not even offended.

Kg: (laughing) "That little? I was expecting a thousand."

We all laughed.

Nana: "You're talking as if you paid that many for Vivian. Ag, man, David."

Gringo: "Well, this is my one and only daughter. She deserves to be taken with a very high price."

Ai, while we were candidly talking, Queen Nombu walked down the stairs with a luggage bag. She was dressed in her usual royal, traditional Zulu attire. Wow, this woman is really beautiful. I am guessing

beautiful genes run in the family. I looked at Queen Nandi and she didn't look sour or annoyed at all. Instead, she looked at her with a bit of despair and pity. I guess she also didn't hate her, just her attitude.

Thato: (puzzled) "Ma, where are you off to?"

Queen Nombu: "Oh, my darling Thato. I am off to my home. I think I managed to do what I needed to do. Your King still banished me from this kingdom, so I have to return home. Besides, this house does not feel the same anymore without him by my side."

She said that trying so hard to keep the tears in tact. This pains me so much because I can clearly see that those two love one another. Pride is a very dangerous emotion – it can easily break a good thing and it is very hard to get rid of it because once you decide to fully disapprove of it, you become overwhelm with guilt, regret and sorrow. I was about

to speak, but Queen Nandi surprised us all.

Queen Nandi: “Nombulelo, stop talking nonsense. Go put your bag back into your room and come back downstairs. We cannot bury your daughter and grandson without you.”

Wow, she actually said that with so much genuineness that even Queen Nombu was shocked. I think she had always been nice to Queen Nombu, but because it was the whole two queens in one castle thing, it became difficult for Queen Nombu to see it.

Queen Nombu: “Ma, I am truly humbled by your gesture, but I really do not want your king to have a bad day because of my presence.”

Queen Nandi was about to speak, until King Ntsika appeared himself and spoke.

King Ntsika: “I’d like to speak for myself, thank you.”

He looked so handsome and well put together – even Queen Nombu looked so charmed. I kept gazing at the two of them and I literally saw the spark light back into their eyes. Love is such a beautiful thing – no matter how old you are.

Queen Nombu: “Ntsika...”

King Ntsika held both her hands and got down on both knees. Now this is something. A grown man with a bit of a pot belly kneeling on the tiled floor in a white suit. Well, he was also dressed in his traditional royal white attire. Queen Nandi was also wearing a unique piece of white traditional attire. I have never seen such before, but I am guessing it is their royal attire. Funny enough my Nana was also dressed in the same outfit as Nandi. Ja, neh, these

two will end up being like DJ Zinhle and Pearl Thusi. They are literally two besties.

King Ntsika: “Mfazi wami (My wife), Thambo lami (My bone), Sthandwa se nhliziyo yami (The love of my life). Before ngikhuluma eziningi (I say a lot), I would first like to say that I am sorry. Ngiyaxolisa Nombulelo (I am sorry Nombulelo), I never meant to hurt you or make you feel like you were an outsider. I never meant to make you feel like you were not worthy enough to be forgiven. You are my wife and will always be my other half.

I have always chosen you and my pride got in the way of my heart. I nearly lost you because of my stupidity. The past should remain in the past, and to be honest, my mother would have never kept your secret from me had she not felt you were good enough for me. We all make mistakes, my wife. I will never hold that against you. I have made so many mistakes and yet you forgave me without

even making me sweat. Please, sthandwa sami (my love), ngicela ungixolele (please forgive me). Allow me to spend the rest of our lives making it up to you.”

That really touched my heart. I couldn't help but smile as Queen Nombu was in tears, staring down at her man. Queen Nandi and Nana were smiling broadly, while Gringo's smile was tainted with a bit of sadness, but of course, he didn't let it show. It can't be easy being alone after losing his Vivian like that. I know, he would do anything just to have one more day with her.

Queen Nandi: “I forgive you, my husband. You don't have to tell me twice.”

King Ntsika jumped up from the floor so fast, one would swear he was a teenager. He kissed her so passionately of which was so odd for Kg and I. I mean, we are really not used to old people kissing

before us ai no. I know my cheeks had already betrayed me because I felt them become hot while I looked down.

Nandi: "Look at Thato's cheeks. Ag, man. Being white sucks, hey. You will literally show all your emotions. When you get angry you become pink. When you become happy, you still become pink."

We just had to burst out in laughter. Nana, though.

Gringo: (smiling) "I am glad my pep talk worked on you, Ntsika."

Ntsika: "It is never too late to learn, chief."

Queen Nandi: "It is time, asihambeni (let's go)."

We walked out with the Naidoos, Tumisho, Rami and Thendo following behind us. MaMasango was already in another car with Nurse Portia. I love how she strives and never misses such a day. We got into our Viano as usual and drove off. We arrived at the Royal burial grounds, which were not very far from the palace. It was about 15 minutes away. We arrived and found it so packed. The people here have so much respect. Chairs and one huge tent was laid out for all the people, and a special tent was laid for the royal guests. I feel so humbled to be here, honestly.

To be a part of such a ceremony brings tears to my eyes. As we drove in, we parked at the royal parking lot and Zweli and Gloria were already seated, holding hands and smiling at each other. Zweli got his rib back and he can't seem to let her go. Glo looks so beautiful, I get now what people mean when they say pregnancy makes one glow. Rami and Thendo walked ahead of us as Rami wanted to greet her already seated parents and brother. Her mother

looked at her with a curious frown but said nothing. She must have noticed the weight gain. Of course, Constance and her family along with Khanyi were already seated. Khanyi looks really puzzled, I just can't seem to put my finger on it yet.

The Ngubane's – Queen Nombu's family had already been seated, even though the first two rows were left open for the rest of us including MaMasango. I love how the people of Enande value culture and tradition. Back in Rockville people would be spinning their cars around here and playing music and even drinking alcohol right in the graveyard. I love Enande. I can't believe I am actually saying it.

As we walked out of the car and proceeded to walk towards the tent, I could see Connie's evil look, but I returned a smile. Kg clammed up a bit as he tightened his grip around my hand. People started ululating as soon as they saw us approaching our tent. I saw Soks dressed in a beautiful suit in front

of us, and two beautiful white caskets before us. Our tent was decorated in white and royal Blue. Apparently Royal Blue is the Kingdom colours. I felt the beautiful atmosphere, I actually forgot for a moment that it was a funeral because of the beauty of it all.

Soks: "Sanibonani (Good day), Bazalwane (God's people). Today is a very special day."

I still can't get over how eloquently spoken Soks actually is.

Soks: "Before I continue, may the Royal Spokesperson approach."

Queen Nandi stood up and walked up to Soks.

Queen Nandi: (facing the caskets) "Nonkanyiso,

Mnqobi, we have come here to bid you farewell. It pains me to bury a mother and son together, but Joy always comes in the morning as the Lord promised. You two have now joined our ancestral clan. Nonka, you have finally joined them in peace. We will always love you and never look back or regret what happened.”

The people ululated. It was such a beautiful sound. MaMasango stood up with the help of Nurse Portia.

MaMasango: (ululating and shouting clan praises)
“Siyanobongela nina “Onkatha kayingen’ endlini, yangena kubol’izinkaba zabantwana. Benazi nje ukuthi kulenkundla sibuye sibe nezincazelo zamaphupho, njenga nje incazelo ngezizathu zokuthi umuntu aphuphe ngamanzi? Lala Ngoxolo Mnqobi (Rest in peace). Lala kahle Nonkanyiso (Rest easily).”

She kept chanting clan praises and burning incense

around the coffins. The spectators were very quiet and intrigued by it all this. They were ululating, while the rest of us in the Royal tent were watching anxiously. All of us were here, except for Zenande, Nomsa and Derick of course. Zenande has been AWOL ever since that tragic day Queen Nandi told her the whole truth about her paternity.

Meanwhile Derick is still missing in action, and Nomsa is awaiting trial, while the Kingdom is left with the whole financial mess she has created, but I think we will deal with all of that once we are done with the funeral. Nonetheless, I truly love what King Ntsika did today. All of us in the Royal tent are receiving good treatment – royal treatment if I should say, while the rest of the “commoners” are also receiving the same treatment – with Bottled water and juice galore. I love how special he made them feel.

Soks: May the Nembilwi spokesperson come

forward to bid their son farewell?”

I saw King Nembilwi stand up with pride, dressed in his royal white suit with Gold touches, and a leopard skin draping his right shoulder. He also had a half round hairy hat on also made of leopard skin. I am guessing leopard is their ancestral animal.

Apparently the Ncube's ancestral animal is the Cheetah – but they hardly wear any clothing made thereof unless it is a wedding. So I was told.

King Nembilwi: “Ndi masiari avhudi (A very special greeting to you all). I am humbled by your presence, for Mulalo was `and will always be my son. A lot of you don't know the story behind his existence, hence you are a bit shocked by his Venda name. Mulalo was supposed to be sacrificed by someone and luckily they didn't manage to kill him.

Instead, he defeated all odds and was raised by us. We are so thankful for him finding his rightful family,

for he shall be able to rest in eternal peace. (turning to look at Mulalo's casket) Mulalo, Mutukana wanga (My boy), Ndo livhuwa nga maanda (I thank you very much) for always being who you were – most importantly, I thank you for teaching me how to love. You were one amazing boy and I will never ever forget you. I will always love you, my boy.”

I felt so touched by that as he chanted a few clan praises from the Nembilwi side. This is truly a beautiful sight. I felt my own tears building up as I watched the whole ceremony. I felt a different aura around me – a beautiful and peaceful aura that is. The weather looked like it was about to change; I felt like it was no longer that hot and it was about to become cloudy, perhaps it is all in my head.

Soks: “I know that today is a very sombre day since it is a funeral and many of you were wondering why we are all dressed in white. Today, is a celebration – for the long lost Prince has returned home along

with his mother. It is indeed saddening since we are burying them both today, but let today be a lesson to us all – for our lives are all lend to us and none of us are permanent residents here on this earth.

That does not mean that we should cry when we lose a loved one, but we should rather rejoice for they have gone back to their maker and have now joined their ancestors in peace. As God says in Isaiah 41:10 – Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid – for I am with you. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Before we proceed, may the royal family please approach as we are going to view the Prince this once. The Princess will not be viewed for obvious reasons.”

The King and Queen stood first, as the ushers opened Mulalo’s casket. I guess this is how they do things here. We get to view the body right in this heat. I hate viewing the dead. It never really ends

well for me for I get nightmares and keep seeing the images of the body in my head and dreams for weeks. Kg relies on me for support, so I have to do it.

It was finally our turn to view. Kg held my hand firmly as we approached Mulalo's coffin. I felt a bit uneasy and anxious, but I pulled through. We got to his coffin, and there he was – dressed in a beautiful custom made white and royal blue suit with a gold tie. He looked so peaceful – so happy. He really looked like he was smiling. Maybe I am going crazy – who knows?

Kg: (emotional) “Farewell, my brother.”

We walked away and Soks gave the rest of the guests a chance to view the body. They all did so in so much peace – it was truly beautiful. It took a bit long because there was about 500 guests in total. Imagine a whole crowd of 500 people walking slowly

in a queue to stare and look at a deceased person's body. Yesses, I felt a bit hot, but I managed. Afterwards, it was time for the coffins to be lowered. One of the members started singing "Yawah le Mbewu (The seed has fallen) and believe me, that song just makes almost everyone cry.

Even a few of the royal members were crying. Of course, Rami and Gloria were crying hysterically. Blame it on the hormones. Things were all fine until it started raining out of the blue. It was quite weird since there was sun and open skies everywhere across the burial grounds – except where we were. It started becoming cloudy and rainy right where we were, but it was not violent rain. It was a bit heavy for two minutes or so, and then the sky cleared immediately after that.

MaMasango: (shouting) "Ba ya vuma abaphansi (The ancestors have accepted). Siyavuma nathi ba ka Ncube (We fully agree as well, the Ncube's)."

As she ululated, so did the royal guests along with the rest of them.

Soks: "From dust we were created and to dust we all shall return. 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18 says – "After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words."

I see things are done a little bit differently here. We do not throw any sand into the grave and we sit and sing until they are done closing up the grave. This day will take exceptionally long since both of their tombstones are going to be erected. I should have eaten, honestly. After about what felt like the longest two hours of my life, the tombstones were erected and my goodness, all I can say is that they look purely gorgeous. Both of them were made of granite stone, with Gold engravings of their names

and dates of birth and death, and an exceptionally beautiful carving of each of them on the tombstones.

This must have cost a fortune and I don't know where the money comes from since they are in serious shit all thanks to Nomsa. That girl needs Jesus, seriously. We proceeded to the royal headquarters and I could tell a lot of the people were really excited to be invited to the royal palace. The gates were opened immediately after all the royal guests entered the yard. The yard was decorated so beautifully, with marquees almost everywhere and food and drinks galore. The King addressed everyone first and asked them to behave and enjoy responsibly. I'd also come even if I knew no one, because wow.

The food and drinks could make a person full just by looking at it. We, the royal guests proceeded to walk into the house and found our food already prepared for us. The lounge table and chairs were extended

to accommodate everyone. MaMasango was in high spirits today and even managed to eat with us. We had a good meal and I couldn't even care less how it tasted because I was just so hungry.

King Ntsika: "I'd like to make a toast. To all of you who made this day possible, thank you very much, but this one is a very special toast. To Isabella."

I became puzzled. Gosh, I hate attention.

King Ntsika: "Ever since you came here you have been a light in all our lives. You are truly the chosen one and I am saddened that we met you this late in life, but it is honestly never too late. May you bring more peace and happiness to this kingdom, for you have an even greater purpose in this life."

I smiled as Kg kissed my cheek. This man and public display of affection. Ai.

All of us: “Cheers.”

I felt really touched and humbled to be honoured by royalty. Khanyi was so distance and looked like she was really uncomfortable. Constance just looks like she has something on Khanyi. Constance kept staring at her and side-eyeing her the entire time. Khanyi really looks scared if I should say that. As bitchy as she is, I actually feel sorry for her. She legit has very few to actually zero experience on pretty much anything and I just wonder why her own parents aren't even here. Did Rendani marry her before he died or what? I wonder what these two are up to.

Chapter One Hundred and Eleven

Phillipians 1:6 – “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Thato

We had such a pleasant lunch, and even with all these different people and very different and dominant personalities in the room, we did not have one fight. I am just happy we managed to be at peace for a change. Without Zenande, Nomsa and Derrick, I can safely say that this feels like a real family without them.

King Ntsika decided that we should all have some fun and he ordered the best alcohol for us. I am truly pleased to be around them and be treated like family. As the day progressed, each of us did our own thing while Khanyi and Constance disappeared without any of us actually noticing, the King and his Queen were delighted to be happy and in each other's arms again.

Kg: (whispering) "I bet he's going to get it all tonight."

He said that as he referred to King Ntsika and Queen Nombu. Really, Kg?

Thato: "Hayi (No), Kg. O sele (You're naughty)."

He chuckled while I tried to remain composed. I just can't even imagine them doing the nasty. Yoh, no. I felt a bit pressed after the beverages, and I couldn't help but laugh at the wonderful stories King Nembilwi was telling us about Mulalo. He was actually a very shy and funny guy. King Ntsika, Queen Nombu and Queen Nandi told us about Nonkanyiso, and also about Zweli growing up. The memories made us laugh really hard. It is such a bitter-sweet moment.

Thato: "I'll be right back. Ke sa ya toilet ("I'm going

to the toilet).”

Kg: (smiling) “Don’t run away from me, okay?”

I nodded as I stood up and went to one of the toilets. I became puzzled when I heard some voices in the corridor.

Connie: “You’d better do this, girly. If you don’t, uzozizola (You’ll regret it).”

Khanyi: “Kodwa ngizamile nje (But I have tried).”

Connie: (annoyed) “Try harder or else your little bastard child will grow up without any father or any money from me!”

I just had to eavesdrop, though. They stopped

talking and I heard hasty footsteps, only to be met by Constance, who looked really frightened and annoyed at the same time.

Connie: (frowning) "What are you doing here?"

Thato: "I was on my way to the toilet. Not that I need to explain myself to you."

Connie: "Mxm, you think you rock wena ne (you, hey)? I wouldn't be too sure if I were you. You see that little ring and necklace you're wearing will be the last expensive things you will ever wear. Don't be too sure of yourself."

She clicked her tongue as she walked away. My mom always told me to pray for such people. It's quite saddening how people have a problem with you but you don't have any with them. Talk about holding your spirit captive. Khanyi looked a bit

scared, but also gave me some attitude. I don't get why she won't let me help her. She is a bit of a bitch, but it is the least I can do. We're both young and she seems like she has no one in her corner.

Thato: "Are you okay?"

Khanyi: (irritated) "What do you care? Anithi wena uperfect (You're so perfect, aren't you?"

I left her as is as she clicked her tongue in annoyance while she walked past me. I decided to go to my own bedroom for the loo. What if they set a trap for me or something? I can't be too careful. I must have taken a bit long because as soon as I walked out, I found Kg already looking for me.

Thato: "Kg..."

Kg: "I thought something had happened to you."

Ja, neh. It is so true what Nana told me; she said that when a man loves you this much, he loves you like you are literally going to die any moment now. Kg feels as if I am his one lung and without me he can't breathe properly.

Thato: "Ah, sorry, babe. I decided to use the bathroom in my bedroom."

Kg: "I see. Come, Gringo has organized a special meeting for us."

What kind of meeting is this now? I wonder. I walked alongside him as we went to the study at the far end of the corridor downstairs. As Kg opened the door for me, I was met with Gringo, Nana, Rami, Thendo, Rami's parents and Kgabo, her brother, and a man I have never seen before.

Gringo: (smiling) "Isabella, we have been waiting."

Thato: "Sorry, I was in the toilet. Did I miss something?"

Gringo: "No, not really. This is Bokang, my lawyer. He was also Vivian's lawyer and has come to read her will."

I totally forgot about that, really. Everything and everyone has been so busy, I had completely forgotten about that.

Thato: "Okay."

I took a seat right next to Kg.

Bokang: "The will is straightforward and pretty simple, so I will get right to it."

I don't know why I am a bit anxious, though. I have never been to a will reading before. I have always seen it on tv and always assumed that only rich people get it done.

Bokang: "This is the last will and testament of Vivian Letswalo-Groen and it shall be read as follows:

To everyone who has always been there for me, I will always love you. I know that you shall not fight for anything that I leave for you and should you ever do so, I promise to haunt you even in death."

I couldn't help but chuckle. Can a person still have such a sense of humour even in death?

Bokang: "I will first start off with my darling husband. David, my love, my sweetheart, you have always been and shall remain the most important person to me. I know, you specifically asked me not to leave you anything, but my love, so for that, I shall respect your wishes. Thank you for being the wonderful man you have always been and most importantly, thank you for always loving me just the way I was. I do however request one thing from you; please fulfil my dream – the one I have been wanting to pursue for years. That is all I ask of you."

I saw Gringo nod with tears in his eyes. I am guessing that it is between the two of them.

Bokang: "To my darling sister. You have always been so supportive and amazing. Not once did you judge me despite my painful past. I would like you to have a comfortable life and never worry about working ever again. I leave both you and your husband with R4 million each. May this money be

the start of your empire and a comfortable life. You deserve all the best.”

I saw Rami’s mother shed a few tears along with her husband.

Bokang: “To Kgabo and Rami, you two have shown me that love comes in all forms. I did not have to physically have my own children, but I was a mother to you both. You both loved me unconditionally and I thank you for that. I leave you two with R2 million each. Rami, I leave you with the club as well and I do trust that you will run it better than I have.”

I saw Rami’s tears stream down her face with Thendo holding her hand.

Bokang: “To my darling mother-in-law, you have always been such a breeze. Continue being the person you have always been. I know you don’t need

a cent, but a woman can never have enough money.”

Nana chuckled.

Bokang: “I leave you with R2 million.”

Nana smiled proudly. I still don’t know why I am here, though.

Bokang: “Lastly, to my darling daughter Thato. Your presence in our lives has changed us for the better. My husband has never been this happy before and I thank you for that. I leave you with R5 million.”

I nearly choked thinking I didn’t hear that correctly.

Thato: “I’m sorry, what was that?”

Bokang: "Mrs. Groen has left you with R5 million."

Why do I get to have more than them? This is weird as fuck. What if they start resenting me for that? I looked around and no one else looked at me funny. Maybe they are hiding it amongst themselves.

Thato: "I don't understand."

Nana: "You question too much, Isabella."

Bokang: "She has left you a personal note addressed to you. You can read it in your own time."

I nodded.

Bokang: "That is all from my side, guys. Now, if you could all excuse us. I'd like to remain in the room

with David, Thato and Kg.”

They stood up and I still assessed them anxiously, but still I didn't get any negative vibes. Everyone else left the room except Gringo, Kg, Bokang and I.

Gringo: “Isabella, you're probably asking yourself why you're here.”

He read my mind correctly. I am asking myself that. What more surprises does he have in store for me? Kg seemed just as clueless as I was, which is a first.

Gringo: “I asked you and Kg to stay, because I am going to do what my wife and I had been planning – right before she died. I am going to travel for a while and since she specifically asked me to do it – with or without her, it is exactly what I am going to do.”

I saw so much pain in my father's eyes. Nothing can and will ever comprehend losing your life partner, no matter for how long you've been together. God was indeed no fool when he created man for woman; for He knew it would be honestly impossible for anyone to be alone until eternity. I feel like those that managed to be alone for years until death, did so willingly or most probably forced by circumstances due to being hurt dearly by someone they truly loved. Let's face it – most of the people who end up being alone have been abused.

Gringo: "I'm telling you this because I will be leaving soon, after your wedding."

He seems so serious. I can't even be selfish enough to tell him not to go when I am literally always with Kg. Could I have been so selfish that I didn't realize he was hurting this badly?

Gringo: "I don't want you to feel like I am neglecting

you, more especially after we have just found you, but you're a mature, grown woman now. You're about to be someone's wife, and lead a whole nation while at it. I couldn't be more proud and happier."

I actually felt tears stream down my face. The crying never stops.

Thato: "Dad, you're making me cry."

Gringo: (Chuckling) "It's okay to cry. Besides, you're marrying a good man. It pains me that I was not there to teach you about boys and love, but I love how you turned out. Always be a firm believer in God. I can see He is already performing miracles through you."

The tears just won't stop.

Kg: "Ah-ah, man, G. You're making my wife emotional. Stop it."

Gringo: (chuckling) "Be careful, Wolfe, I might just decide not to marry her off."

Kg: "You can never refuse a handsome man like me. You said it yourself – I am a good man."

They both chuckled.

Bokang: "May I proceed, Mr. G? You do pay me by the hour."

Gringo: "Ai, Bokang, I always forget just how dry your sense of humor is which reminds me – when are you getting married?"

Bokang: (laughing) “The day you create the perfect woman for me.”

Kg, Bokang and Gringo all laughed. I can tell this Bokang guy has attachment and commitment issues all at once.

Gringo: “Sure, continue.”

Bokang: “Mr. G has asked me to follow suit with the ammendments he has made to his will. With that being said, he asked me to give you this.”

He handed me a white envelope while Gringo was smiling proudly from ear to ear. I looked at him puzzled.

Gringo: “Open it.”

Gringo and Kg are very much alike, hence they just get on like a house on fire. They both like surprises and enjoy it when you're delectably tortured by the suspense thereof. I slowly opened the letter which was in the envelope and became stunned as I read on. "Dear Isabella, I have spent a great deal of time thinking about how to arrange my estate for when I die.

I had to change everything upon the news of your conception. Firstly, I want you to know that the way you were conceived does not determine your way of life. I have loved you from the moment your mother told me she was pregnant. I do not wish for the money I leave behind to harm your pursuit of a meaningful life, rather, I would like to be helpful.

My decision lies as follows:

This Trust account was created for you with the intention to give you a fruitful life. And I wanted to

give it to you when you turned 21, but with you getting married, I would like you to enter into marriage as an independent woman. I leave you with the following:

My beach house in Cape Town which was built just for you, so now that you are old enough, you can get to keep it in your name.

I also leave you with a sum of R20 million to use however you wish.

I also propose a gift to you and my son-in-law Wolfe; my house in Northcliffe is now in both your names, along with one of my buildings there. The building is yours Wolfe, so that you can finally start that business you have always wanted to have. The world is your Oyster, my children, may this be the beginning of a fruitful life for the two of you. Love, David.”

My heart must have skipped a thousand beats as I read that letter. I do not know what I did to deserve R25 million. It's not even about the money at all, but what am I going to do with so much money?

Gringo: "Well? Do you accept?"

I doubt anyone could ever refuse so much money, though. Kg read the letter with me. I think Romeo not being the best of fathers really affected him that badly.

Kg: "G, this is too much."

Gringo: "I know you don't need the money, Wolfe and I am not doing this with the intention to insult you at all, but it is the least I can do to show you my appreciation. I will forever be indebted to you because you treated my daughter like a God. Not

once did you feel the need to take advantage of her and for that I thank you.”

It was a very emotional moment between the two men I adore dearly. I don't have much experience, actually I have none of men, but I do know that Kg is a good man. Things got so emotional, I mean I actually can't believe I am a millionaire. I woke up a few hours ago someone's fiancée all over again, and now, I am a few millions richer. God does work in mysterious ways indeed.

Chapter One Hundred and Twelve

Hebrews 5:8 – “Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.”

Thato

The rest of the day was rather busy. I don't think any of us slept enough hours or at all to be exact. Kg

and I only got in bed at 2am, and even that didn't stop him from giving me a hectic night of exercise. I can't even feel my legs anymore, as we probably tried all positions of the Kama Sutra. My pussy is burning, shame. Drunken sex is nice, but the after effects are drastically painful. My head hurts – it feels like I have been run over. It's most probably because I drank too much.

Kg was not in bed when I got up, so I decided to go to the bathroom and run myself a soothing bath. As I got into the tub, I heard my bedroom door open. I assumed it's Kg, so I didn't become startled at all. As I sunk deeper into the water, so that I could get some proper relief down there, I became a bit puzzled when I didn't hear him make a sound – except footsteps. Kg is not one to be quiet and non-responsive whenever I talk, but I didn't become too puzzled, since my eyes were still closed.

Thato: (eyes closed) "Kg?"

No response.

Thato: “Baby?”

Still, there was no response. As I was about to open my eyes, I felt someone roughly push my head under water. I tried moving and fighting them off as I was squirming, but I couldn't even more myself out of the tub – that's how strong the person was. “Oh, shit. I'm going to die” – I thought to myself. I felt my lungs barely holding on, as I started swallowing some of the water due to the fact that I was gasping for air right underwater. Am I being drowned because of the money? Why now? The next thing I heard a voice, as I truly felt I was about to meet my end.

Kg: “What the fuck?!”

I felt the person's grip become loose while I quickly scraped the little energy I had left as I got up and coughed while gasping for air. I could still taste the soapy effect of the foam in my mouth, while I could barely see a thing as I was blinded by the foam water. As I tried to clear my face, I could see Kg ruthlessly beating someone up. A female.

Kg: (Angered) "Ucabanga ukuthi ungubani wena (Who do you think you are)?! You think you can try and kill my wife and walk out of here alive?!"

My heart sank as I saw who it was.

Thato: "Kg, leave her. You'll kill her."

Kg: "She's better off dead! She tried to kill you!"

Thato: (softly) "Please..."

I could see the anger that had consumed his face slowly disappear.

Kg: “Are you okay? Can you breathe? Do you need a doctor?”

Thato: (softly) “I’m okay.”

He helped me up as I looked at the blood oozing from her nose. He gave her a serious beating, though. Even after what she just attempted to do, I can’t help but feel sorry for her. “What did you do, Khanyi?” – I thought to myself.

Kg gently placed my naked, wet, shaken body onto the bed. He looks seriously angry and ready to commit murder. I totally get it, but there is just something about this Khanyi situation. I don’t think she decided on her own to do these things. I doubt

she has it in her to just decide to kill me.

Kg: "Get dressed, while I sort that bitch out."

He was about to walk back to the bathroom, but I stopped him.

Thato: "Kg, no."

Kg: "Get dressed. Ka bowa (I'll be back)."

It was seemingly no use to beg him, as he went back to the bathroom and dragged the bleeding Khanyi out of our bedroom. I decided to get dressed without even lotioning my body as I followed the trails of blood left behind. Who knows what they might do to Khanyi? As I walked out, I heard a lot of commotion. Ai, to my surprise, Olivia decided to finally pitch up with her royal family.

I don't even know how they got in. Everyone must still be drunk from yesterday. She had her new-born son in her arms, but that surely didn't stop her from behaving like a hoodlum. Kg had Khanyi right by her hair as she was left on the floor, while Connie stood right across us ready for war. Queen Nandi, Nana, Queen Nombu, King Ntsika and Gringo were all standing right in the lounge.

Olivia: "Ja! You all thought you could keep me away forever, neh?! Well, you thought wrong! It's bad enough you dragged my husband's body all the way to this farm without my consent, you had to ban me from his funeral too! But, thankfully, the law is on my side!"

Yoh (Wow), when will the drama end?

Kg: (Angered) "Olivia, don't mess with me – not right

now and surely not ever!”

Connie: (shouting) “Wena (You), Kg! why do you have Khanyi’s hair entangled into your hands like that?! Did you beat her up, you woman beater?! You and your stupid wife think you own everything and everyone around here?! Meanwhile you are just pitiful orphans whom everyone is doing a favour for!”

I don’t get how miserable people always have to make it a habit to drag everyone else down with them.

Kg: “If I were you, I would shut the fuck up! Khanyi here, tried to drown my wife a few minutes ago in the bath tub! Imagine that! This bitch walked into our bedroom and tried to drown my wife!”

King Ntsika: (Angered) “I welcome you into my house and you do this to us?! Our own Queen?!”

What kind of people raised a disrespectful rodent like you?! And wena (you), how dare you speak to the future king like that?!”

Constance didn't realize what a stupid mistake she made.

Connie: “I, I didn't mean to – “

King Ntsika: “Thula (Quiet)!”

Kg: (fuming) “I won't ask you twice, Khanyi! Why did you try to kill my wife?!”

Khanyi looked so bruised and scared, I actually felt so much pity for her. Connie on the other hand, looked like she was about to piss herself. I hope Khanyi spills the beans.

Khanyi: "I... it wasn't my pl-"

Connie: (interrupting) "Are we actually going to listen to a common poor girl when we have bigger issues to discuss?!"

Nana: (Livid) "You shut the fuck up before I do it for you!"

Wow, I never see Nana angry, so this is going to be one interesting day. For someone who went through hell, I never thought Connie would actually go back to her evil ways. I guess it wasn't a painful lesson enough. Connie kept quiet instantly after seeing how angered Nana was.

Kg: "You know, I'm no woman beater, but today I'm going to murder a woman, for the first time in my life. God forgive me because I am going to do it!"

I think those words and Kg's enraged tone scared Khanyi even more than anything else.

Khanyi: "It wasn't my idea! It was Connie's! Please, don't kill me! I didn't mean to do it!"

Khanyi sold Connie out just like that, on a shiny silver platter of course. She didn't take it too well.

Connie: "What?! That's ridiculously insane! I would never want Thato dead, I mean what could I possibly gain from that?!"

Khanyi: "It's true, Kg."

Kg: "Mr, Ncube to you!"

Khanyi: "Mr, Ngcube. I swear on my life."

Kg: “If you want that little bastard growing inside of you to live, you’d better start talking.”

Khanyi: “Connie made me do it! My family kicked me out and disowned me the moment I told them I was pregnant. I went to her, telling her that Rendani is the father, but she told me that he was dead. She told me that she would ensure my son would be well taken care of, if only I agreed to her plan.”

I knew these two were up to no good. Kg didn’t ask any further, as we were all staring at her awaiting this plan. Connie looked displeased to put it mildly.

Khanyi: “She said that I had to find a way to seduce the future king, then I’d have to say he’s the father of my unborn child. She would ensure that she ruined Thato’s life and ultimately kill her.”

I think it took us all a moment to absorb the shit she was spewing out of her mouth.

Khanyi: “She realized her plan failed when Thato overheard us and when Kg seemed disinterested in me, hence she told me to kill Thato.”

Wow, so much all out of desperation and pure hate for another individual who did absolutely nothing to you. I still feel bad for Khanyi even though my skin is cringing at the thought of her actually killing me.

Connie: “She’s lying!”

I don’t think Connie, or any of us saw the next move coming for that matter. Nana grabbed Connie by the throat, pinned her against the wall, leaving everyone of us in a state of shock. Now I see why she and Queen Nandi would make really great friends.

Nana: "You messed with the wrong woman, Constance. It is bad enough you had your husbands' soul mate killed. Now you tried to kill my grandchild?! My innocent grandchild? Why do you hate her so much, Constance?! Why?! Is it because she reminds you of the love of Todani's life? Had you not used witchcraft on him, your life and his would have turned out differently. You killed a girl when you were 17, Connie! Is that not enough blood on your hands?!"

The secrets that people hide beneath the surface are just ridiculous. I mean, why on earth would one do such? How cruel can Connie really be all for a man? I saw Connie squirming for air, while Nana held her by the throat using both hands. I have never seen Nana unleash so much rage before.

Nana: "You live by the sword, you die by it!"

Do I really want Connie's evil blood on my pure

grandmother's hands?

Thato: "Nana, let her go."

Nana: (Infuriated) "She tried to have you killed, Isabella! I'll be damned if I let her get away with this! Not this time!"

Thato: "Nana, you're too pure for such deeds. Allow us to deal with her another way, please."

Nana: (breathing heavily) "You're lucky Isabella has a good heart, otherwise you'd be breathing your last breath as we speak. You piece of trash!"

She let go of her while Connie dropped to the ground, gasping for air and coughing profusely.

Olivia: “Is everyone going to focus on those two bitches and completely ignore me?!”

Olivia also didn't see it coming. Queen Nandi gave her one fat slap across the face. It was so rough, she stumbled and fell right onto the ground with the baby. While the baby screamed, she was left speechless. Miserable people will make you feel worthless. If you don't learn to be obedient from a young age, you will end up as a disastrous adult. Was all this necessary, though?

King Ntsika: “I think it is only fair that Connie and Khanyi be held accountable for their actions. It is safe to say that they should get arrested, seeing as they did try to attempt murder right on my land – worst of all my own house!”

Thato: “My King, if I may speak.”

King Ntsika: “As you wish.”

Thato: “I think we should think about it for a while. Perhaps punish the instigator and not Khanyi. For she is pregnant and Connie took advantage of a child without even thinking of the repercussions.”

Everyone was rather shocked – and Kg was even more livid to say the least.

Kg: “Are you insane?”

Thato: “No, but I think everyone deserves a second chance. I think Khanyi can change from this. She has no one.”

They all looked at me as if I was crazy – including Khanyi, but I know what I see.

Chapter One Hundred and Thirteen

Proverbs 6:16-19 – “These are the six things that the Lord hates: yes, seven of them are an abomination to him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies and he that sows discord among brethren.”

Thato

Thanks to Khanyi, Constance and Olivia, we have had to cancel all our plans for the day and attend to their shit. I am not happy at all, but ke (then) who am I to argue? The King ordered Connie and Khanyi to be taken away. He did however say that he would consider my gesture regarding Khanyi, as we will have a court meeting soon.

Nomsa’s date is also approaching – since they have

to decide what to do with her. By court, I mean Tribal, since they don't really have courts of law here. That is where their mistakes lie because normal, unqualified people cannot decide to set people on fire without taking the proper measures. There needs to be effective police and police stations here.

I made a note to ask the King about how they deal with such things in regards to rape and all. I mean, did those kids who were violated by Derrick even get proper counselling? We cannot have nurses and a few policemen who just arrest people and then they get sentenced to death without even proper investigation. Who are these people leading the Tribal council? Are they unbiased? Will they judge a perpetrator accordingly?

Anyway, Olivia has been quiet ever since she got a beating from Nana. Kg was so pissed, he called Mulalo's lawyer, who was surprisingly on his way here as we speak. I don't even know what is

happening, but all I know is that Olivia is a gold digger and her family have absolutely no order. I now see why the Nembilwi's didn't even have a care in the world for her. She is just uncultured and rude. The lawyer, Anathi, finally came and he delivered a rather short yet surprising message.

Anathi: "I'll be very quick and brief, as I have elsewhere to be and the will is short and sweet. This is the last will and testament of Mulalo Gabriel Nembilwi. In the event of my death, I leave all my assets, including life insurance policies, funeral policies, pension, and any money left in my account to my only brother, Kgaugeto Moloji. I also leave the sum of R1 million to my sister-in-law, Thato Isabella Groen."

Wait a minute, this guy left me money too? Wow, I mean, wow. Olivia's smirk quickly faded as she was left with absolutely nothing.

Olivia: (shocked) "There must be a bloody mistake! I have the real will in my hands and it states that he leaves everything to me! I am his legal wife!"

I have never seen people fight for money like this.

Anathi: "Ma'am, this will was last dated a month ago, so yours is invalid. And no, you are not legally married to Mulalo."

Olivia: (livid) "This is outrageous! He didn't even know these people!"

Anathi: "I have a letter personally addressed to you, but he asked me to read it in person."

Olivia: "No! I won't allow that-"

Anathi didn't even wait for her to finish ranting.

Anathi: "To my darling Olivia. You have been such a pain in the ass throughout our marriage. I honestly tried to love you, I really tried, but I could never be with someone who just didn't respect me and love me the way I needed to be loved. I deserve so much more even in death, and even now, Olivia, you still don't deserve a single cent from me. You are not worthy of anything of mine.

I found out that you are indeed carrying my father's child. Yes, I had my ways. The most saddening part is that I was willing to learn to love you, Olivia, but you took my love for granted. You hurt me in a way that can never be repaired ever again. But you actually made me the person I was until the day I die. If you could ever be half the person Thato is, life would be good for you. Thank you and so long. Mulalo."

Wow, talk about being blunt straight from the grave.

Of course, Olivia didn't take it well and had forced her family to be present during the will reading. This is nothing but disastrous. I mean, how could she actually stoop so low, though?

Kg: (irritated) "Well? Cat caught your tongue now, Olivia?"

Olivia didn't even respond, nor apologize for her ridiculous outburst earlier on. Instead, she decided to get up slowly and accept defeat in silence. She took her baby in her arms and simply walked out. Her family didn't even have the decency to apologize either, they just walked out without saying a word and that was it. I don't really care, as long as we just don't have any more drama – I am good.

Few days later....

Things have been so good around here. I don't even

know why we all decided to stay so long, I guess it is because of the generous hospitality and being fed almost every hour. Nana has been enjoying herself so much, she actually forgot that she has her own house. She and Queen Nandi have been getting along like a house on fire, and at least Rami and I have been given the opportunity to write our Supplementary tests and assignments to catch up with our work.

Gringo and I have been closer than ever these past few days. He has just been a amazing and I guess spending time together made it a lot easier and simpler. We have bonded even more than ever before. Today, King Ntsika said he has summoned us for an important announcement. He apparently was supposed to announce it the day Olivia did her shit and Khanyi almost killed me, but today is the day I guess.

We were all in the lounge, awaiting his presence,

when he finally came with Queen Nombulelo. He looks rather saddened to say the least. The Nembilwi's finally left and they have seemingly formed a great relationship with King Ntsika and the Queen. Queen Nombu, Nana, Gringo, Kg and I were the only ones left, as Rami, Thendo and Kg had to go back to Jo'burg.

King Ntsika: "Greetings everyone. I am sorry for summoning you at this time, but it is indeed urgent."

I looked at him and couldn't tell why he was so nervous. Could it perhaps be that today is Nomsa's hearing and Khanyi and Connie will be hearing their fate today? I haven't had a chance to propose my changes, but I guess I had better do it today.

King Ntsika: "I have called you all here to let you know that due to our financial circumstances, the Queen and I have been forced to either do the following: sell a part of our land and allow the

Chinese to start mining or form an alliance with the Nembilwi kingdom in order to regain and sustain our financial freedom.”

Wait a minute, that does not even make sense. How will them signing off their land rights to another country make them financially free? I mean these people own the whole land and it belongs to them. So how will selling a portion to another country make them free?

Thato: “What do you mean, my King?”

King Ntsika: (sigh) “You know what my daughter Nomsa did to us, my child. She crippled us so badly, that in order for us to keep our economy going, we have to sell or form an alliance.”

Everyone else seemed to be too shocked to speak.

Thato: "Permission to speak, my King?"

King Ntsika: "As you wish, Ndhlovukazi (Queen)."

Thato: "I think that it would be very reckless of you to sell a piece of our land to another country, my king. Reason being that they might abuse our resources and you won't have a say. They might not even want to employ our people and you still won't have a say. Had King Nembilwi really had your best interests at heart, he would have loaned you a portion of the money at least so that you could get back on your feet. Forming an alliance would mean that you would no longer be the King without his input here."

Everyone looked a bit impressed, well, I think. I hope they don't think I am overstepping my mark here.

King Ntsika: "I have thought about that, but with the

way things are here, even the bank does not have enough money to loan me out of this mess. I have no other option, otherwise everyone will be out of a job.”

Wow, King Ntsika is willing to sacrifice his whole wealth and kingdom for everyone else. Now, that’s a true king.

Thato: “I have something in mind, but I don’t know if you will agree to it.”

King Ntsika: “Speak your mind, my Queen.”

I don’t even feel weird anymore whenever he calls me that.

Thato: “I propose a plan. I can get us to keep everything of ours; get our own police officers, have

our own mine, and ensure how we use our own resources. Provided that we have our own trustworthy people. I mean, my King, we should have qualified, educated people to trial offenders and sentence them accordingly.

I mean, say for instance your tribal council has something personal against Nomsa or Derrick and they decide to sentence them to death or burnt to death. How will you ensure that evidence was gathered accordingly? Yes, in this case we all know that Derrick is indeed the perpetrator and he did violate those children, but what happens in a case where we literally have no evidence and the victims are paid to speak lies?”

I could tell he was contemplating it .

King Ntsika: “I love your suggestions, Ndhlovukazi (Queen), I really do, but we have no money.”

Thato: "I do. I have enough money to sustain all injuries the Kingdom suffered and we can slowly build on the other goals I have mentioned."

I saw how he really seemed interested.

King Ntsika: "I love your idea, but Isabella, I cannot take your money. I refuse it."

Thato: "You are not doing anything wrong, my King. It is my duty to help. I have the finances, so why not assist?"

King Ntsika: "Isabella, I simply cannot accept your offer. I know, it comes from a good place, but I just can't do it. I cannot take your money."

Thato: "My King, all I ask is that you consider it. I am

not asking for much, but I ask that you think about it. It won't just be me pitching in to save the Kingdom – my Kg will be doing it too.”

For the first time ever since I arrived here, I saw the King in tears.

King Ntsika: (teary) “I don't know what to say, Ndhlovukazi (Queen). You have been one true blessing indeed. I really don't have any words to express other than my greatest gratitude.”

Kg: (smiling) “I am truly blessed to have a woman like Thato beside me. I really can't imagine life without her.”

I also can't imagine my life without Kg, really. I feel like we are really blessed to be together. I do believe in soulmates. The following day arrived and of course I was as tired as always with Kg giving me

one hell of a workout. He just made such nice and slow love to me all night, I honestly can't imagine life without him. The king and queen wouldn't stop praising me, and I kept thinking about Zenande for some reason.

I really hope she is indeed okay. I did however, keep thinking of Khanyi. She really isn't stupid and has her whole life ahead of her. She was meant to be her family's golden child and make them proud. This path she is going on is really not who she is meant to be. As the King promised, today was supposed to be Nomsa's trial. I was not looking forward to it, but I am glad because the King gave me the go ahead to move forward with the plan I have in mind. I don't know, but I am pretty excited. Kg and I got up at the same time today and took a bath together.

I enjoy these moments of intimacy and I really feel weird whenever we bathe separately. We made our way out of the bedroom and found King Ntsika,

Queen Nombu, Queen Nandi and Nana already set and waiting for us. They were all dressed in royal attire – including Nana. Kg and I feel so out of place now since we are dressed in Gucci. Eish, but I hope that won't be a problem.

King Ntsika: "Our queen, our king, how are you?"

Thato: (smiling) "Very well, my King, how are you?"

Kg was smiling ear to ear.

King Ntsika: "I am well, thank you. We have been waiting for you. Shall we go?"

Thato: "Apologies for holding you up. We were not sure what time to be ready at."

King Ntsika: (smiling) “No need to apologize. After today, your whole life will change.”

I frowned in confusion.

Queen Nombu: “You are about to change history.”

I am not sure what they meant, but I just went ahead with it. I looked at Kg who also had a mischievous smile on his face. What does he know that I don't?

Thato: “Okay, we shall go.”

Queen Nombu: “On second thoughts, my king, why don't you go with Nkosinathi and we will bring Isabella later?”

Kg: “Please, make sure she comes back to me in one

piece, ladies.”

Nana: “Ai, Kg. Go.”

Kg: (smiling) “I will see you later, Mrs. Ncube.”

With that said, he gave me a passionate kiss. I felt a bit embarrassed, but what can I say? Gringo was surprisingly not around, so I know for sure something is brewing. King Ntsika left along with my Kg, while I gave Queen Nandi, queen Nombu and Nana a good look. These three ladies are actually dressed a lot similarly, almost like they are going to a wedding.

Thato: “What is happening here?”

Nana: (laughing) “You are so slow, Isabella. Come. There is no time to waste.”

The three of them dragged me to Nana's bedroom and made me sit on the chair in front of the bedroom mirror.

Thato: "Is someone going to tell me what is going on?"

Queen Nandi: "Oh, Nkosi yami (My goodness), Thato, are you honestly going to tell me that you didn't even get any hints that today is going to be your special day?"

Thato: (puzzled) "Special day?"

Queen Nandi: "Yoh, hai (no). I give up."

Queen Nombu: "Don't listen to these two, Isabella. Tell me something; how would you like your wedding

day to be?”

I guess I never gave that question much thought because I sat in my chair staring in the mirror, deep in thought.

Thato: “I haven’t thought much about it, but I think I would like the idea of a small, intimate wedding.”

They all paused and looked at me like I was crazy.

Thato: “Did I say something wrong?”

Queen Nombu: “Not at all, my dear. Now, tell me, had you been deemed royal, what would you like your wedding to be like then?”

Thato: “Well, I would like a very pleasant wedding

without any drama and I wouldn't mind sharing it with the people of Enande. But, in order for me to have a great wedding, I would be at peace knowing that all my plans would have fallen into place. That would really make me a happy wife."

They suddenly smiled as if what I had told them before about a small wedding was a nightmare.

Queen Nandi: "That's more like it. Spoken like a true queen. Ladies, let's get ready."

Nana: (nodding) "Since your hair has grown, how would you like to wear it?"

Thato: (frowning) "None of you have told me where I am going, you know."

Nana: "Let's just say today is the day you are going

to address the nation, sweetie. You cannot possibly go out and approach the council looking like one expensive queen. You need to dress like them, you know.”

I don't buy her story, but well, I am a bit tired, so I will just go with it. They started fiddling with my hair, fixing my nails, doing my make up. I am not used to people titivating me so much, but what can I say? In the good old end, Nana did my make-up just the way I like it – soft and subtle and I applied red lipstick. My air was straightened and since it is now long enough to be in a bob, we left it like that. I just asked her to give me a fringe for a change. My nails were nice and short and it was now time to change my outfit.

I don't even know why, but well, I guess I have to look the part. I became shocked when Queen Nandi brought a very beautiful, custom made Zulu dress. What puzzled me is the design thereof. The dress

was a mermaid style dress, with a beautiful one hand design with some lace frills on the arm; it had a mixture of Zulu and leopard prints; with some royal elements of this kingdom. The bottom part had a beautiful lace frill, and I already knew what that meant when I saw it.

Thato: (teary) "Is this what I think it is?"

The three of them were smiling at me.

Queen Nombu: "Yes, my love. And believe me, it was so hard to surprise you when you kept asking questions like that."

Nana: "She can be just as annoying as David was when he was younger. He would never wait to be surprised – he always wanted to know what you were planning. How odd is life? He ended up being really big on surprises."

They all laughed while my tears rolled down. I don't know why I always cry whenever I get surprised.

Queen Nandi: "Hayi (No)! hold it right there! You cannot mess up all the good work we did on your precious face."

Thato: (chuckling) "Askies (Sorry)."

Queen Nandi: "Woza phela (Come already), your husband is waiting anxiously."

Nana: "He's been texting me every five minutes. I can't take it anymore. How do you even handle him, Isabella?"

Thato: "(chuckling) "I have my ways."

Nana: "Of course. You know, if you want to keep your man happy, just feed him well in all departments if you catch my drift."

I had to blush and I felt my cheeks turn pink as she said that.

Queen Nandi: "Don't blush so much, Thato, I mean I gave your mother-in-law the same talk when she married my son."

Queen Nombu: "Oh, believe me, she was very explicit about it."

I don't want to be told about sex, otherwise I am going to imagine the wrong people doing it.

Nana: "I remember my first time. Yes, I was one of

the few who had sex on their wedding day.”

Thato: “Eish, Nana, I’d rather not hear about that, please.”

Nana: (laughing) “Alright then. I’ll tell you some other time when you come crying about your marriage. It happens.”

I wonder what it would be like when Kg and I fight because we have never fought – ever. Will I actually have marital problems and will I be one of those who talk about them to my friends or family? How will I even handle friction or arguments with him? I guess I didn’t think about that. I found myself increasingly worried as I got dressed in my beautiful traditional, royal wedding dress. I tried to hide the worry on my face, but being so light is such a disadvantage. You turn pink almost everytime whenever you experience a strong emotion.

Nana: "What is wrong, my baby?"

Thato: "I guess I never thought about the logistics of marriage. I mean, how will I handle being married, like really being married? Kg and I have never fought and I really don't know how I will handle that."

Nana: "My advice, don't shout at him. Address him with respect because any sign of disrespect makes a man feel like he is a weakling, but also at the same time – never subject yourself to any form of abuse."

Queen Nandi: "Never go to bed angry, and always communicate. Don't be afraid to let him know how you feel."

Queen Nombu: "And remember Isabella; you and Kg will be a team now. Which means you do everything together. There will be times when you don't agree

with something he does or says, but communication is key.”

Queen Nandi: “Always remember that everything happens in God’s timing. Never be forced to have children or anything because you and your husband have your whole lives ahead of you. Love each other, respect one another and never forget to have fun. I becomes we from now on. As the Lord said in Genesis 2:24 – For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

Nana: “1 Corinthians 16:14 – “Do everything in love.”

Queen Nombu: “1 John 4:18-19 – “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.”

These three ladies remind me of my mother. I feel so humbled and blessed to be in their presence because they do not make me feel my mother's absence. I truly am blessed indeed.

Chapter Hundred and Fifteen

Mark 10:9 – “Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Thato

I became overjoyed, elated, scared all at the same. I really am excited, although I have no idea what to say. I mean, I most probably have to recite my own vows because I know Kg most definitely will. Even though Queen Nombu and Queen Nandi kepe telling me not to worry, I can't help but worry. They said things are done a bit differently here, so I won't have to worry much about the logistics like having a

matron of honour and bridesmaids.

I would really love to see Glo and Rami there, though. Queen Nandi said a short yet powerful prayer for us and we headed out. Upon leaving the house, I found myself in tears as everyone outside was ululating and smiling at me. From the royal guards to other royal employees.

They were all dressed so nicely in traditional attire. They had even rolled out a long, red carpet for me from the door all the way to the gate. I won't even be reaching the gate, which I found the carpet ridiculous, but I am happy. I love their gesture. There was a golden carpet alongside the garden, and with Nana by my side, we followed the carpet.

It had beautiful white rose petals all the way. We made it to the back garden, as the royal house is really big. I heard the whole crowd of the royal employees walking behind us. I was stunned as I

saw a beautifully decorated garden. There was a big marquee, with hundreds of guests. The chairs were gold and beautifully decorated with white bows.

I saw my Kg standing right at the altar, alongside Zweli. He looks so beautiful in his royal attire. Dressed in his Zulu skirt, shirtless with his Tiger-feathered rounded hat with his royal stick in his hand. The King was also on his other side and I just let the tears fall down slowly. I saw my father approach me dressed in beautiful white and royal blue attire. He approached me with a smile as Nana let go of my hand and went to sit down along with the two queens. I see a lot of people I don't know, but none of them matter now.

Gringo: (smiling) "Are you ready, Isabella?"

Thato: (nervously) "I think so."

Gringo: "I got you."

I smiled as I heard Kwesta's Khetile Khetile play. This song reminds me of the very first night I spent at Kg's house. That very night he professed his love for me and the very first day we started dating – on my birthday. Only then it hit me that we never got to rejoice in our anniversary, our baby's birth, our birthdays for this year, but everything happens for a reason. So much was taken from us but we gained a lot more back.

I cannot wait for this new chapter. I slowly walked alongside my father, with Kg's eyes fixed on me. I didn't even notice everyone else, as he was right there waiting for me. My man has never looked this handsome. I think I am addicted to his zulu look and I think I must have fallen in love with him all over again. He indeed does look like a true king. After what felt like a very long walk, we finally made it to the altar. Kg approached us with a smile.

Gringo: (smiling) "Take good care of her."

Kg: (nodding) "You have my word."

Gringo kissed my cheek and sat back down. At this point I had my eyes fixed on Kg with my bouquet in my hands. It just felt like it was just the two of us in that atmosphere. My Kg and I finally together and we have beaten the enemy. Indeed, God's promise has been fulfilled. Unfortunately, a lot of us find God through suffering, but that does not mean that we have to keep suffering to know His love and devotion towards us.

Lo and behold Soks was our priest. He stood up from the crowd, dressed in his Italian suit. Such a stylish priest, I do hope that he is done with his illegal dealings for good. I looked at my Kg and thought just how sly he is. I can't wait to see what

this new venture will bring, since I am always on my feet. I can never know what he has in store for me.

Soks: “We are gathered here today, at the Ncube Kingdom, to witness a beautiful union between Nkosinathi and Thato. My people, with the King’s permission, today’s wedding will be extra special. Yes, with his permission, we will not only be crowning our newest King and Queen, but we will also be changing the future of Enande. My King, may you please approach.”

King Ntsika smiled as he rose from his chair facing us. He let go of his Queen’s hand and came forward to speak on the mic.

King Ntsika: (smiling) “My good people, nothing gives me more pleasure to witness this moment before me today. For had it not been for this intelligent woman, we would not have found our long lost Nkosinathi. Had it not been for her, we would

not have been able to bury our Nonkanyiso's remains. For the Lord chose this day, as he knew his reasons why. I have a very special surprise for all of you, but I'd like our pastor Solomon, to continue with our service as we will deal with the logistics later. Halala!"

Crowd: "Halala!"

He sat back down as Soks nodded. I don't know how we are going to change history today, but all I know my future has started today and I am about to write a new chapter today.

Soks: "Before we continue, ngicela sithandazeni (may we please pray)."

We bowed our heads as we embraced the silence amongst the crowd.

Soks: “Father God, wena unkulukulu wethu (You who is our God), iNkosi yethu (Our King), Our Provider, Our Promise keeper, Our faith keeper, Our Healer, Our Beginning and Our End. We come before you as your children, we ask that you please protect our King and Queen before you. For I know, Father, that you have great plans in store for these two. You who is our waymaker, you have brought these two together. As you say in Matthew 19:6 – ‘Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate.’ For we trust in you Lord, for you choose our paths in this life. Let us allow our couple to say their vows straight from the heart.”

Shit, this is the moment I have been dreading. I don't have any vows I have written. I hate Kg for doing this to me.

Kg: (smiling) “Thato, My TT, you have always been my love. From the moment I first saw you, I knew you were going to be the one I'd marry. I knew from

the get go that you would be my wife. At that time, I didn't even know you, but you brought so much radiance in my life; so much peace whenever I saw your smile. Whenever I look at you, I thank God because I know that Angels can exist in human form. Whenever I think of you, I know that Memories are priceless, for there can only be one you in this world.

You have changed my life so much, that I myself have changed for the better. Whenever I breathe, I can't sleep or function knowing you are not by my side. As I always say, Thato, words can never explain how much I love you, but my actions will always express that. You have shown me unconditional love and I know for sure that even if we were the poorest of the poor, life would still be blissful with you by my side. I love you, Thato Isabella Groen."

I felt the tears warming my cheeks as people were cheering and ululating. I even forgot about

MaMasango, but I heard her chant praises.

MaMasango: (chanting) “Ha! Haaaa! Siyabonga ba ka Ncube (We thank you the Ncube family), Siyabonga Mthimkhulu, Qhawe, Ndhlovu!”

Soks: “May you say your vows, Thato?”

Eish, I dreaded this moment a few moments ago, but as soon as my Kg poured his heart out, I didn’t hesitate to speak directly from the heart.

Thato: “Kgaugelo, I have loved you from the moment you showed me love. I never knew what pure love from the opposite sex meant until the day you showed me. I loved everything about you – your level of respect for women, your charisma, your personality, your smile and most importantly your flaws. I love how you never cease to amaze me, I love how you always manage to surprise me.

I love how you always prove me wrong whenever I think of something negative towards you, and how you prove me right whenever I think of you positively. I love how you love me and how you made me love love. For that, I will eternally be grateful, for you loved me just the way I am. Thank you so much, Kg, you will always be my first and only love.”

I saw him smile and shed a tear. The whole time I was so nervous with shaky hands while he held them in his. People were ululating, with MaMasango chanting clan praises yet again.

Soks: “I love love, bakithi (my goodness). With the power vested in me, I present the rings.”

Zweli got up and brought the rings. Ai, I don’t see why Kg bought me another ring. He placed my ring on my finger and I placed his in his finger. I see we

don't have to do the whole vow thing again.

Soks: "I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride."

Thank goodness he didn't ask that ridiculous question of who feels they should not be married, speak now or forever hold your peace. Otherwise, I would have killed a bitch for ruining my perfect day. Kg gave me the most passionate kiss I have ever received. A kiss full of love and promise for the future, promise for a better day. I think I am seriously smitten all over again.

Soks: (clearing throat) "Eh, Mfo (bro), you might end up sucking the poor woman for all eternity."

We all laughed while I also blushed in the process.

Soks: "Now, for the big reveal."

I saw King Ntsika approach us with a document in his hand. He got in front of the podium, and started speaking.

King Ntsika: "My fellow people, as promised, I have a change for the future in my hands. Had it not been for your new queen, none of this would have happened. For this new bill shall be read as follows:

As of today, the new bill will be passed as follows:

We shall have a newer, bigger, police station built, along with a bigger court of law where all criminals shall be held accountable for all their wrong doings. In the case of witchcraft or theft, a criminal will have to undergo a formal court case held by formally qualified employees of the law. They shall all be in a good state to be able to judge the accused fairly

and equitably. As the law states – innocent until proven guilty.

In the case of rape or attempted rape, the accused will be held in our local prison until his case has been fully heard to the satisfaction of the people of the law as well as the defendants. If found guilty, provided with all the necessary evidence, the accused shall be put to death.

In the case of murder and attempted murder, the accused will be held in our local prison and will only be given bail only if; the accused murdered a perpetrator whilst he or she was trying to rape or kill him/her or another person. If the accused was acting in self-defence and only if the murder or attempted was a mistake. The accused will also be able to receive counselling just as those who will be held accountable will also be treated.

In the case of adultery, there will be no one will be

held in prison for that, for a man or woman is supposed to honour his or her wedding vows. We will not enter such cases, only if or when the man or woman becomes violent and or aggressive towards his or her partner or spouse.

In the case of abuse towards women and children; no man or anyone else will be given the right to perform any form of abuse towards women and children. They will be held accountable for their actions and as such will receive their punishment accordingly.

As of today, no one shall be put to death for being accused of practising witchcraft. No one shall be arrested without any proof. As a result of everything, it is my wife and I's pleasure, to announce that our school will no longer be a private school, but it will be a school funded by the government for everyone."

I heard everyone chanting and ululating. I couldn't believe my ears.

King Ntsika: "Isabella, would you do the honours of signing the pledge of the new bill?"

I looked at Kg who didn't look surprised at all. I approached him with my Kg by my side and I signed where necessary. Kg signed as well and just then and there, we were the two people who made it possible for so much change to occur in Enande.

King Ntsika: "Now, for the big reveal. As you all know, Nkosinathi has always been the rightful heir to the throne. He is to rule right after me, but today is a very special day. I am not leaving or going anywhere, but it is with pride that I formally announce that Nkosinathi Kgaugelo Ncube and his wife Isabella Thato Ncube are now crowned King and Queen of Enande."

The crowds were ululating, along with MaMasango. Kg and I had to kneel down before them all, as King Ntsika and Queen Nombu approached us with our Traditional crowns. I mean, yes I expected that this day would come one day, just not this soon. I am only 18 and am yet to finish school. How am I going to juggle that and being a Queen?

MaMasango: (ululating) “Sizwile ba ka Ncube (We have heard you, the Ncube family). Sicela nivikele iNdhlovukazi yenu ne Nkosi enu esha (Please protect your new King and Queen), for they have a long way to go!”

I felt a strange, yet beautiful aura around us as we were being crowned. While MaMasango was chanting, we immediately saw the clouds disperse and rain started pouring down upon us. I was surprised because it was really hot. This is almost the same thing that happened when Mulalo was

being buried along with Nonkanyiso, but today's rain is pouring a lot harder. No one was moving out of the way, as they seemed not to mind getting wet.

I swear, I heard the roar of a Cheetah. I became startled a bit, but Kg was not even, he just held my hand tighter. I looked around and saw no Cheetah's in sight, but I could hear the roaring sounds along with the gushing sound of the rain. After about fifteen minutes later, the rain stopped immediately. I was surprised as to why everyone else was smiling and basking in the ambience of the pouring rain.

I looked at King Ntsika and Queen Nombu and they were both so elated. Queen Nandi as well as Nana were just smiling with their eyes closed. It looked as if they were inhaling the beautiful scent of the soaked sand. King Ntsika must have noticed my puzzled expression.

King Ntsika: (smiling) "Isabella, my child, all is well.

Our ancestors indeed approve of your wedding. You are indeed the chosen one. Do not fear.”

I smiled in relief. Now I know that black people are one unique bunch. We just have such an amazing blood line and history to tell our children. I cannot wait to tell our children stories about their heritage.

Soks: “We may proceed to enjoying the festivities and a whole new beginning. May this be the beginning of a fruitful era.”

Everyone rejoiced and started singing wedding songs. I just love how embracing these people are. Mamasango has become such a celebrity now. Nurse Portia hardly gets to do her job as everyone wants to be around her. I still see the tint of sadness in MaMasango’s eyes, because all she would like to do is reunite with her children and grandchildren before she leaves this earth.

I now firmly believe that we do have our own special place reserved for us on the other side when we die. It indeed cannot be explained, since we do not have books that explain to us in detail about how black people and ancestry works. Maybe one day someone will write one for us. My Kg and I enjoyed our day.

I don't even know how we had a wedding without lobola, which of course is one of those things that we have to talk about tomorrow or some other day. Today is all about my Kg. Looking back at everything that happened, I surely don't really have any more hate within me. I am really saddened at how I lost my baby, but I know that God has bigger and better days in store for me.

Even Rami was present along with her parents and father, and believe me, I was so happy to see her. I cannot imagine my wedding without her or Gloria.

We had to sit on our big chairs while being congratulated by people. Gosh, being royal requires a lot of people's skills, patience, humility and kindness. Otherwise, people will easily hate you. We had to sit there for about an hour, while some people even asked to pray for us.

Finally, the Letswalo's came forward. Rami's parents shared amazing words of encouragement but I like one specific piece of advice they shared with us: "you are both responsible for carrying each other. At times, Kg will fall and you will be the only one carrying him along with the children and at times it will be the other way around, but one thing has to be certain – never lose faith and hope in God.

Once you start doubting everything, your marriage will start collapsing." I think those are a few of the most profound words I have ever heard from a married couple. Whenever I look at them, they seem so happy but I can somehow sense that she has

indeed been through a lot. Kgabo finally made his way to us.

Kgabo: (smiling) "Mrs. Ncube, at last."

He decided to talk to me and slowly started whispering while Kg was still talking to Rami's dad.

Thato: (chuckling) "As you predicted."

Kgabo: (laughing) "How are you feeling? I am most certain you are the happiest woman around here."

Thato: "Indeed I am."

Kgabo: "I am glad you followed your instincts, Thato, but remember one thing; happiness does not last forever. In between happy days you will experience

turmoil, but never forget God's word."

I hate such. I became puzzled and looked at him with a fast paced heart beat.

Thato: "What do you mean?"

Kgabo: "All I am saying is never let your guard down. At times your closest people become consumed by envy and end up hurting you badly. Don't tell everyone everything about your marriage. Be careful who you confide in – your most trusted confidante will be your downfall one day."

I became a bit rattled by his statement. All I know is that Kgabo's prediction is never wrong. He sure is not one to drop a bombshell like that unless it is really important. What is going to happen to me now? I faked a smile and tried to act happy and all, but deep down, I was being consumed with worry.

Kgabo: (smiling) "Enjoy your day further. We'll talk soon."

I smiled as he left. Kg looked at me once and he knew that I was a bit upset.

Kg: "Bothata keng (what's the problem)?"

Thato: "Nothing, love."

He decided not to pester me as we enjoyed the rest of the day. Finally the congratulations came to an end and it was time for the food. I am starving and I won't lie. We had our beautiful and delicious meals, with lots of beverages of course. I still had Kgabo's words at the back of my mind, but today is my day and I am going to enjoy it to the best of my ability. God has given me Kg all over again. And if I had to choose again, I would most definitely choose him all over again.

Chapter One Hundred and Sixteen

James 4:8 – “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

Thato

Of course, Enande people know just how to party up a storm. They just couldn't even wait to celebrate our wedding. We didn't sleep much, since we got to bed at about 4am. As usual, Kg is the one who got up before me even though he decided to work me up all night. I have a headache from hell and a painful body. I checked the time and it was 11am. Shit, I must be really bad at this queening thing because everyone must probably be awake – except me. As I was about to get up and take a bath, in walked my darling husband with his famous breakfast tray. Of course, he used King Ntsika's tray since we were not in our own home. I think I miss Jo'burg now. Just

the feel of it and the vibe. I think I also miss the vibe of Vivian's house.

Kg: (smiling) "Good morning, MaNcube."

I have to get used to getting called that, just as much as I have to get used to calling Kg Nkosinathi. I don't think I ever will, though.

Thato: "Morning, Kg. eish, I am so tired, you're not so fair. You worked me all night only to get up before me."

Kg: (chuckling) "I told you that you need to start exercising a bit. Besides, everyone is still fast asleep except the king."

I guess he must have gotten his early bird syndrome from his grandfather. That man cannot ever sleep

not even if they paid him.

Thato: "I see."

Kg: "I have good news and bad news. Which one do you want to hear first?"

Thatao: (sigh) "Bad news."

My mother always said if someone asks you that question, you start with the bad news first so that you at least cry once and end it on a good note.

Kg: "Alright then. The Bad news is that we have to get ready right after you are done eating. You have a lot to do."

Thato: (sigh) "And the good news?"

Kg: "The good news is that you'll have this gorgeous meat right by your side all day."

Thato: (laughing) "Really Kg?"

Kg: "Yes, really. Am I not attractive kgante (though)?"

Thato: "You are way over attractive."

We both laughed as we ate our food. I had to get up and go to the bathroom immediately after eating. Kg ran the bath for us as we got in together and did our business. I love these moments, and I truly think it takes a lot to get over the loss of your loved one. We finished up and got dressed. As per tradition, I have to get dressed in the Ncube Royal attire for a week or so, just to honour them and show people I am indeed part of their family now.

At least I don't have to stress about doing koti-duties (daughter-in-law) duties. I don't want to be cooking and scrubbing pots all day. I'd have rather stayed single if that was the case. We headed out of our bedroom and found everyone else – King Ntsika, Queen Nombu, Nana and Queen Nandi. Nana and Queen Nandi are such a tag team now. I am guessing since they also share the same gift of seeing the future and all that, it makes things a lot easier and more exciting for them.

Nana: (smiling) “Wow, Nandi, look at what you did to my grand daughter. She msut walk around wearing these clothes?”

Queen Nandi: (chuckling) “Yes, it is not a form of abuse or anything, but it is just to show people that she has accepted our way of life. After a week, she can wear whatever she wants. You can see even Nkosinathi has to wear them too.”

Nana: "I see. As long as you are of abusing my baby otherwise there'd be hell to pay."

Queen Nandi: (chuckling) "Yazi uyahlupa wena (You are so tiring, you know)!"

Nana: "Ngifana nawe (I'm just like you)."

They burst out in laughter like small children.

King Ntsika: "My children. Are you ready?"

Kg: "Of course, my King."

Thato: (frowning) "Ready for what, my king?"

King Ntsika: "Nomsa has requested to see you. We need to decide her fate before we start with court proceedings. I hope that is indeed okay with you."

I didn't really know what to say because had I actually refused, I'd look like a bad queen or something. But why does she want to see me specifically?

Thato: (smiling) "It's okay, we can go. I am ready."

We proceeded to walk out and headed into our cars. Along the way I just couldn't help but think of Kgabo's words. I just hope he's wrong even though I know he is not. I wish Nonkanyiso or Mama or someone would just pitch up and tell me what to do. Whenever you need answers from the deceased they are never there. You unfortunately have to seek them in order to find out what you have to do. Ai, ancestors can be so selfish, though. But then I guess I will have to pray about it. I must have been

in my own world because I heard Kg call me.

Kg: "Love, you've been quiet. Are you okay?"

Thato: "Ag. Ke shap (I'm okay). Just deep in thought."

Kg: "Are you ready to tell me what is going on?"

Thato: "It's really nothing."

Kg: "Thato, you have been quiet ever since Kgabo left us after congratulating us. I know I am not imagining things, and I know that you are trying, but can we please not have any secrets in our marriage? You're still young, but you're very much matured and I really want us to be able to work things out whenever we have uncertainty."

Eish, I know Kg is right, but then I don't think I have

to tell him everything, do I?

Thato: (sigh) “Can we talk about it after this whole Nomsa thing?”

Kg: (nodding) “Okay.”

I could see he didn't like my response but what I like about Kg is that he does not push me to do or say anything. He held my hand and kept brushing it gently, until we got out of our car. We even have a driver now, but I don't think I like being driven around. This whole thing makes me feel like I am spoiled for choice and I don't want to appear as if I am abusing the royal benefits.

Just because I'm a queen now, does not mean that everyone has to do things for me. I have never really enjoyed anyone doing things for me – except my Kg and even so, on alternative days. I have never lived

in the comfort of having a cook or a cleaner and all those things up until I found my father. We got out of our car and met up with Nana, queen Nandi, the King and queen. We found ourselves right outside the police station.

The conditions are so dreadful; with very few staff and so many people standing in queues. We walked in and found the staff available enjoying their cups of coffee – that is if there is even coffee in those cups. Some were even talking on the phone with their legs up on the table, while people were in despair waiting for service in those long queues. I could see Queen Nombu and King Ntsika look down in pure embarrassment as this is not what they had expected. My thoughts are now; if this is how they treat people who seek assistance and basic justice from them, how do they even treat criminals behind those bars?

The place was filthy with no cleaner in sight. A lot of

those people looked so hungry and tired, yet these policemen and –women were enjoying themselves while on the state’s payroll. This is ridiculous. No wonder they haven’t found Derrick. As soon as they saw us, they quickly jumped up looking shocked to the core. The people in the queues looked at us and bowed. I really hate that. That has to change.

Thato: “Permission to speak and address the people, my King and Queen?”

For some odd reason, the King prefers it when I speak. Kg is a man of very few words but he demands respect just by looking at you.

King Ntsika: (embarrassed) “As you wish, Ndhlovukazi (Queen). You do not need to ask any further. You and Nkosinathi are now the rulers of this land. Feel free to speak.”

I decided to start with the people in the queue.

Thato: (smiling and nodding) “My people, please, do not ever bow for us ever again. Bowing may have been a sign of respect in the past, but for me it just feels like it is a sign of imposing authority onto you. Please, there is no need to bow.”

They slowly lifted their heads while smiling at me along with Kg and the rest of the family. I completely ignored the officers, but one of them was so forward and started talking.

Officer: “May I assist you with anything, Queen Isabella?”

I completely ignored him and focused on the people concerned.

Thato: “My people, may you tell us why you look so dreadful with a police station full of officers?”

I saw them look at the one officer who offered his useless assistance to me a few seconds ago, while others looked down in fear. Things must be really bad here.

Thato: "Please, speak freely. Do not mind the eyes nor the ears around you. I can promise you, you will be protected."

As soon as I said that to them, they spoke with so much ease. They started opening up and venting their frustration and anger one by one, leaving King Ntsika angered on their behalf. I can imagine how he feels right this moment.

Man: "Ndhlovukazi (Queen), apologies if I come across as offensive, but we never receive any assistance here. I have been standing in this long queue for over two hours, along with my wife and

child. I came here seeking assistance from these very police, regarding my brother. He has decided to evict us from our family home, and I have lived there for years.”

I looked at his wife and child, and I could sense the disappointment from her, with the baby seeming so hungry and agitated, poverty was right around the corner. How cruel could these police be?

Furthermore, people started stating their grievances, much to the policemen’s dismay.

Woman: “I have been waiting here for over 3 hours. I came to report a rape incident. My own husband raped me and when I told him (pointing at the forward policeman), he laughed at me and called all his friends to laugh as well – including the female. I even took off my clothes and showed them the bruises that my husband left me with all because I refused to let him have me. You know what that lady said? She said! “Well, you could have at least let him

have you since he paid money for such a fucked up body.”

I felt so much turmoil inside of me and I also felt Kg's agitation as he held my hand a lot firmer. How cruel could fellow women be? Worst part women of the law. I admire this woman, she refused to leave until someone came to assure her justice would prevail. Another elder woman, about MaMasango's age, came forward.

Elder woman: “Ndhlovukazi (queen), when I saw you being crowned as the new queen yesterday, I had no idea I would end up here today. My own son, 26 years of age, lives with me along with his wife and six children. I have been supporting him even when I went on pension. Ever since then, he has been abusing me along with his wife and first born. I have to feed all of them while they beat me if I refuse to give them money. Ask that woman (pointing at the female officer), why I am here today. I am here

because she has turned me back many times. I don't even know what kind of law they serve when they refuse to help our people.”

My heart broke, and I couldn't help it but let the tears flow. I quickly wiped them back, even though my heart bled with every story told by each and everyone of those people. From defeating the ends of justice, to refusing to help rape victims, even taking bribes as the few people standing before me stated they were willing to testify as long as they were deemed safe and protected. My heart broke even more when I looked at King Ntsika who had red eyes filled with sadness, Queen Nombu was crying hysterically while Queen Nandi and Nana were bewildered, showing no emotion other than rage. I looked at the officers who were even sweating in fear.

Thato: “So, tell me, when you took the oath to love, serve and protect the people of Enande when you graduated from your courses, is this what you

meant?”

They were all shaken, terrified to speak, while some of them were shaking their heads relentlessly.

Thato: “How dare you look at a victim, someone who came to report a case, someone who requires assistance from an officer of the law and turn them away, laugh at them, make them feel like absolutely nothing?”

They were trembling and mumbling, all failing to speak clearly.

Thato: “Had I not been a queen standing before you, would you be standing before me with the respect and fear you possess right this instant?”

None of them were speaking, instead they were

looking down. I feel like firing their asses right this instant, and I bet they weren't all qualified to be in their current positions.

Thato: "Weren't any of you raised by the word of God?"

They all nodded in shame.

Thato: "You had better go and read up on what the Bible says about pompous people who forget where they come from. I bet a lot of you grew up in similar positions and poverty, yet you look down on these people. As for you (looking at the female officer), while the country is under heavy Gender-Based Violence, you decide to become one of the perpetrators. I bet you and the rest of you know where Derrick is hiding himself. And I bet some of you if not all were instigators and enablers in his abuse towards all those girls."

They all looked down and were even afraid to wipe off the sweat from their faces.

Thato: “Tell you what, my family and I are going to see Nomsa right now. She might be a criminal, but I do hope that she was not abused. When we come back here, all of these people had better have been assisted, otherwise all of you will be fired. On that note, by the time we are done, I need all information regarding Derrick, where he is and what he is up to; all his case files and he had better be arrested by the time we go to bed tonight. Do I make myself clear?!”

Officers: “Crystal, my queen.”

I walked away from them hand in hand with Kg, while the people were thanking me for my assistance with tears in their eyes. I tried to contain myself, as I was five to crying my eyeballs out. We finally reached

Nomsa's cell, without the assistance of the officers and station commander. I really couldn't even face them after the shit they put people through. It is really saddening how people only respond highly to people in power and not those who are poor. When we got to Nomsa's cell, she looked like she was reciting a prayer, with bloodshot teary eyes. She looked like she hardly slept, and got a bit of a fright when she saw us.

Nomsa: (alarmed) "Thato... Baba (dad), Mama, Gogo (Mother), Nana..."

I got surprised when she mentioned Nana. How does she even know her. She became even more distraught when she saw kg.

Nomsa: (emotional) "Nkosinathi..."

Kg clenched his jaw, tightened his hand around mine

and didn't say a word. This husband of mine is not very forgiving I tell you. Unlike me, he really takes a while to forgive.

Thato: "King Ntsika says you requested to see me. What is this about?"

Nomsa: "I really want to apologize firstly. I was a really bad person and the way I treated you was really inhumane."

I tried reading her emotions and I really could tell she was being genuine. My question is, why the sudden change?

Nomsa: "I know, you are looking at me like I am crazy, or you must probably be thinking that I just want this meeting to get my freedom. That this sudden change is really a façade."

She's right. Most of us really think so.

Nomsa: "I've had a rude awakening, Thato, and to be honest, I am glad it came right at this moment."

I became puzzled when I heard her say that.

Nomsa: "You see, I was driven by greed, lust and a world full of no shame nor remorse. I fell in love with Derrick years ago, and when he actually chose my friend over me, I completely lost it - even when my own mother warned me to stay away from him, I refused. He was the handsome soon to be King, everyone wanted to be his, so who was I to reject him? So, I offered him my virginity, at the cost of my friendship. When that was not enough, I stalked him and begged him for his love and when he blatantly showed me just how disinterested he was - I poisoned her.

I made sure she was dead. Of course, it hurt me to see just how devastated Derrick was, so I became his shoulder to cry on and ofcourse, he ended up marrying me out of guilt of course. I refused to let go of him, even when I noticed that I was slowly losing myself, so I decided to visit MaMasango. Of course, at that time she was the most feared yet the most trusted witchdoctor, so I got some muthi from him.

She did warn me that because Derrick didn't love me at all, it would turn him into something no less of a hooligan. I decided to take the risk, and as a result, he became even worse than the pervert he was. When I met Derrick, he seemed like the perfect man, but as soon as he raped his first victim, I was in denial. I refused to believe that I was the cause of it all, even though Derrick had deep rooted issues of being perverted.

I know all his darkest secrets, and I still kept quiet

when he raped and violated all those children. I kept quiet when he manipulated me into stealing the family money and stealing from the employees. I became someone I could never be. Nkosinathi, I did what I did to you because I believed I could get richer, and the whole world would belong to me. I had the world at the tip of my finger, and I just needed your blood and innocent soul. I know, words are cheap, but please forgive me. I didn't call you here so that you could have mercy on me, but I called YOU here – Thato, so that YOU could have mercy on me.”

I was still puzzled and confused. Why would I be the one to have mercy on her? What power do I possess?

Nomsa: “I haven't been able to sleep ever since Nonka came to visit. You see, I never told anyone, but soon after her death – she would visit me often. She would firstly appear in dreams and I would make none of it. Then she would appear in real life, in spirit form in my bedroom while Derrick was fast

asleep. She would say nothing and stare at me and then one night, she told me that I would have to surrender to God one day and that the woman who would make me confess everything was a girl named Isabella. I was very fearless and I had no guilt. I didn't even fear God, so who was she?

The moment when things fell apart, I started turning to God. Only then I realized that I still had some good in me and that I had some sort of a conscience. Which is why, I can give you all evidence against Derrick. Yes, I am still to be blamed – I murdered a woman and obstructed justice, I enabled a rapist and extorted funds from the government of Enande.

I employed non-qualified people at the clinic putting everyone's lives at risk. I was friends with the police and in turn they never took crime seriously. So, I am guilty of so many charges and for that I take full responsibility. My only plea to you, Isabella, is this: Please, take care of my Zenande. I ruined her so

much, and she cannot stand on her own two feet. Yes, she will be a handful and will most probably turn out to be a rotten apple, but please try and teach her how to stand on her own two feet.”

Fuck, right then and there, I remembered Nonkanyiso’s words – “The one who mistreated you when you first walked in here will be at your mercy one day.” Wow, life is truly a spinning wheel. Life is actually a thorn bush if you ask me, only those fit enough to handle the pain of the thorns, rip them out of their feet and soldier on will indeed make it. All I know is that Nomsa is not perfect much like all of us, but she sure has the balls to change and try to be a good person.

It is never too late to turn to God, for God just wants us all to turn to him and be His children all over again. He accepts us with all our flaws, with all our previous sin and is always ready to guide us right into a new life. I know, a lot of people would think I

am too naïve or stupid for feeling pity for Nomsa, but how many women have actually done bad things, some even illegal things all because of the men they love?

Unfortunately, men know our weaknesses and work on that. They prey on us because of that and make sure that we worship them somehow, and disrupt our lives in the process. Life is tough, but it is even tougher for an abused woman. Yes, Nomsa has her own fair share of troubles, but she is just as much as a victim as any other abused woman out there.

How many men actually rape these young girls they have affairs with and make sure that their wives have no say due to fear of being kicked out? Once a man realizes that you are fully dependant on him, he will chew you up and spit you out like used bubblegum. He will even throw the bubblegum wrapper right at you.

No matter where you come from, how rich your family is, a man can still entice you and wrap you into his abusive little world and hold you mentally, spiritually, emotionally and financially captive. It takes a very brave, beaten down, worn out yet strong woman to come out of such a situation.

A lot of people won't see it now, but I applaud Nomsa for finally taking a stand. She is even willing to take the stand and testify against Derrick. She gave us her password to her own laptop, that has Derrick's information and damning evidence against him – enough to win this case. All I know is that God truly works in mysterious ways – at times you might think you know everything, but even a mere homeless person can be the breakthrough you need.

We walked out and as we were approaching the exit, I asked King Ntsika if I could see Constance and Khanyi. Oddly, they were both held in one cell of which I really did expect. As soon as they saw me,

Constance really couldn't even hide the annoyed look on her face, while Khanyi just looked at me with threatening tears.

Thato: "Hello, Khanyi, hello Constance."

Constance: "Mxm."

Khanyi: (shaky) "Hello, Thato."

Thato: "I came to see you and ask you a few question if you don't mind."

Khanyi nodded swiftly, while Constance just folded her arms in annoyance.

Thato: " Khanyi, I just wanted to know why. Why did you hate me so badly that you wanted to kill me and

agree to this plan?"

Khanyi: (teary) "Honestly, I have always been envious more than hateful towards you, Thato. You seem so perfect, you have the perfect body, perfect complexion, every guy wants you and every piece of you, while the rest of us end up with the crumbs. When I finally slept with Rendani, believe me I felt like I had actually won against you. I felt like I finally got him and he would never stop talking about you. Things were falling into place and I refused to see the bigger picture.

When he went missing and I found out I was pregnant, my mother didn't hesitate to tell my father, who disowned me in the process. I had nowhere else to go but to Constance and to tell her about my situation. I had hoped she would feel pitiful and actually grant me a place to stay and at least offer to take care of the baby so I can go finish school. But once she heard that I knew you, she hatched this

plan. I said I didn't want any part of it, so I refused and she said if I didn't do it, she would make sure that I starve to death with my unborn child. I had no choice and for that I really am sorry."

I feel like Khanyi deserves a second chance, although a part of me told me not to do what I was thinking of. Even Kg begged me not to consider.

Kg: "Baby, don't do it. I honestly don't think this one has learnt her lesson. It will come to bite us in future."

I knew I had to listen to Kg, but I felt so much pity for her being an expectant mother with no one by her side.

Thato: "I will give you another chance, provided you go back to school and take good care of your child. You will have to prove your enemies wrong and your

family wrong. You only get one more chance, Khanyi.”

Khanyi was so happy of course as she nodded with streaming tears in her eyes. Of course Kg was not happy at all.

Khanyi: “Thank you, thank you!”

Constance looked so annoyed, she couldn't even hide her hatred for me. Kg and I walked out towards the exit and he gave me one long look.

Kg: “You are going to regret this one day, I am telling you.”

Had I only listened.

Chapter Hundred and Seventeen

Psalm 138:2 – “I will bow down Your holy temple and give thanks to Your Name for Your loving kindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word according to all Your name.”

Thato

After our visit to the Police station; as we left the cells, I was amazed when I found all the people who had come to seek help gone. There was effectively no queue in sight and some of the officers were even answering calls and responding to calls from the community patrollers. As soon as they saw us walk out, they bowed. I hate that.

Thato: “Please, for the last time, do not bow. I am not your God.”

They shook their heads anxiously.

Thato: "Who is the station commander here?"

They all looked at each other, probably seeking an answer in each other's eyes, but none of them answered.

Thato: "I asked you a question."

Officer: "He is not here, my Queen."

Thato: "Where is he?"

Officer: "He is on leave"

Something told me that he was not telling the truth.

Thato: “I did not like what was happening here today, and I bet none of my family members loved it, however, I think it is safe to say that all of you had better prepare to get tested to see if you are actually qualified or fit to be here.”

I saw a few of them look at me with widened eyes and I knew right there and then that they were not qualified to even be officers of the law. How could someone be appointed and be able to shoot and hold a gun without being properly trained? Nomsa really created one big mess.

Officer: “My queen, does that mean our jobs are at stake?”

Thato: “Yes, I mean, we cannot have people who are unqualified to be in positions that enquire them to take care of our people. That is highly dangerous. Take heed, we will be watching you. We’ll be in touch.”

They all looked at us anxiously and I could tell they were nervous. We all walked out while Kg looked really grumpy to say the least. He still had my hand in his, but I could tell just how displeased he looked. I can't shake the feeling that this all has to do with Khanyi. Kg is really one of those men who cannot hide his emotions really well, no matter how hard he tries. What you see is simply what you get with him. We got into our car and he was still silent.

Thato: "Do you mind telling me what is on my mind?"

Kg: (softly) "I don't feel like stating the obvious."

Okay, that response kind of hurt my feelings. I didn't actually think that Kg had it in him to act so childish towards me.

Thato: "Bathong (Wow), Kg. You don't have to be so

childish.”

Okay, perhaps I should not have said that. It came out wrong, I know.

Kg: (irritated) “Childish? Thato, you obviously have a lot to learn about communication and relationships. If one of us is childish, then it sure as hell is not me,”

Ouch, I actually felt that. We’ve barely been married for a week and already he’s spitting fire at me. I felt so sad, as he just kept quiet and kept looking outside his window. He slowly let go of my hand and I couldn’t help but feel that burning sensation in my chest whenever I feel sad, hurt or angry. We had a quiet yet tense ride back home. As soon as we arrived, he did what he always does – he opened my door for me and we walked alongside each other. Kg is still affectionate even though we just had our first “mini fight”. We headed straight to our room as I felt we needed to sort this issue out first. Kg

headed straight to the bathroom, and left me on the bed alone. He never does that. He always asks me to come bathe with him. It actually hurt – a lot. I am not used to rejection from him. I was about to go into the bathroom and join him, until I heard a stern knock on the door.

Thato: “Who is it?”

Queen Nombu: “It’s me. I hope I am not disturbing you.”

Thato: “No, not at all, Mme (ma). Please do come in.”

Queen Nombu: “Oh, I’d rather not, out of respect for you and Nkosinathi. However, do you perhaps mind joining the King and I in the lounge for a few minutes? I promise you we won’t take long.”

I contemplated my situation – going after Kg or heeding the Queen and King’s call.

Thato: “Okay, Mme, I’ll be right there.”

I heard her footsteps become fainter as she walked away.

Thato: “Kg, ka bowa (I’ll be back).”

He ignored me – I think. I don’t know if it is because of the loudness caused by the running water or if he did it deliberately. What if he was right. What if he really meant what he said about me having a lot to learn about marriage and relationships – never mind communication? I mean sure, I am not perfect, but I sure do love Kg. He loved me when I felt like nothing and took me and groomed me into the perfect rose I have become.

Could this be his way of telling me that he is already tired of me? I don't even know who to ask advice from as Queen Nandi and Nana sternly advised me to communicate with my husband and never go to bed angry. Eish, anyway, I headed out to meet the King and Queen. Upon arrival in the lounge, I found Queen Nombu only waiting for me. I was under the impression that I'd be meeting her and the King.

Thato: (puzzled) "Is everything okay, my Queen?"

Queen Nombu: (smiling) "Yes, everything is okay. I just wanted to speak to you – woman to woman if that is okay with you. I apologize for calling you here under false pretense, but the King couldn't face you after what happened today."

Thato: "Not a problem at all, Ma. May I ask if I did anything wrong or anything to upset the King?"

Queen Nombu: (chuckling) “Not at all, my baby, no. He is just depressed. You see, the King and I were so busy with so many projects and only now he realizes just how careless he has been with his trust. He trusted Nomsa so much, and failed to see how she ruined everything. We both trusted her too much. He just cannot face you because he feels to ashamed.”

Wow, a whole King ashamed to face me? Come on.

Thato: “Pardon me, Ma, but I feel quite bad about that. Please, reassure him that he has nothing to worry about. Truth be told, yes, you trusted your daughter a lot, but I feel that is what all parents do. All parents decide to love their children to the best of their ability. All parents choose to see the good in their children, even though they know deep down what a messed up child they have raised. At times, we do such out of guilt; I think we decide to boost

our children's confidence in order for us to feel better about ourselves. I am just a nobody, Ma. Please, alert the king that I actually admire him – both of you. You took Enande and turned it into what it is today. A lapse of judgment may have caused its' state to collapse, but you did well. You are role models if you ask me.”

Queen Nombu: (smiling) “Now I see why Evelyn chose you.”

I frowned a bit in confusion.

Queen Nombu: “You see, Evelyn came to visit me on the night of your wedding. Can you imagine? Ever since she passed on she had never come to visit me in dreams at all, but that evening, she came to me live in spirit form – the same way she used to visit you. We had such a lengthily conversation about life and everything and she told me how she chose you for a reason.”

I looked at her anxiously.

Queen Nombu: “She said she chose you because you are one of a kind – literally. She chose you because you were born just for Nkosinathi. You are the one person who calms him down and you don’t even know that. You should pay more attention, whenever Nkosinathi is angry, he never gets overexcited or does anything bad in your presence. He does not even swear in your presence. That is how much he loves you. I don’t know him that well, but I know love when I see it.”

I faked a smile with tears wallowing in my eyes.

Queen Nombu: (puzzled) “Did I say something wrong?”

Thato: “Oh, not at all, my queen. It’s just that – well,

Kg is mad at me.”

She raised her eyebrow.

Thato: “He is mad at me about the whole Khanyi issue – well I think. I called him childish of which I so regret now and he is not even talking to me.”

Queen Nombu gave me one stern look and burst into laughter. I felt so offended – I really shouldn’t have discussed my shit with her. Now, she thinks I am a real joke.

Queen Nombu: “I am sorry for laughing, my child, really. Your issue is not funny at all – it’s just that it reminds me of the very first fight I had with King Ntsika. Can you imagine we fought over a whole cooking set? I had bought myself one and he decided to buy me a better one and threw the one I bought myself away. I was so angry, I didn’t speak

to him. I ran to his mother who burst into laughter as soon as I told her about that.”

I kept quiet because I wasn't sure if she was saying such because she was trying to be funny or what.

Queen Nombu: “You know what she said to me?”

I kept quiet and shook my head.

Queen Nombu: “Well, at first I looked at her just as you are looking at me and she said to me;
“Nombulelo, a man is literally like a dog – you give him a bone and he will gladly take it. Treat yours like a dog- pet him, feed him, nurse him, love him, take him to the doctor whenever he is feeling ill, nurse him whenever his ego is bruised or whenever he is feeling down and he will run to you like a good owner.

A woman is exactly like a dog's owner – she has to literally treat her husband like a good old pet. Men have feelings and decide not to show them always like dogs. Whenever they are happy, you'll see it and whenever they are saddened – you'll less likely see it. A dog likes making his owner happy by wagging his tail or playing games – a man likes to make his woman happy by making kind gestures based on what the woman tells him she likes – that's love language. All men and women have a different love language. You see, Ntsika, bought you better pots because he was hoping you'd like them even more because they came from him.

He didn't mean to disregard your feelings – he just wanted you to brag about something to your friends by telling them that you good hearted husband bought you these pots. When you are young, you make stupid mistakes especially when married, but the key is to be open and honest with your husband. Learn what his love language is and learn to speak with respect. Yes, we women like shouting and that

really turns them away. Learn to be at ease even though it bruises your ego, but a happy husband is better than a grumpy husband.”

I think Queen Nombu said a mouthful in that conversation. Wow, I didn't know she carried so much wisdom from her.

Queen Nombu: “You see, I have made a lot of mistakes ever since being married to Ntsika, but nowhere did he tell me he hates me and vice versa because we always made sure we didn't go to bed angry at one another. At times you won't even feel like having sex with him because you'd be angry, but after speaking to him before bed, he will be touching your good spots and you'd be putty in his hands all over again. Marriage is not about being spiteful, it is about being a team and competing to love each other more than the other does. Go speak to your husband, Isabella, learn to communicate.”

She is the second person to tell me that today. I guess I have so much to learn. I nodded and thanked her for the fruitful conversation. I got up and immediately went to my room to face my demons. I found Kg already in bed, with a towel wrapped around his waist, and his wet chest staring me in the face. I got wet instantly, but managed to control myself. He was busy on his laptop, and I actually felt like he got a little bit annoyed as he saw me enter the bedroom. He didn't look at me once, but at least he was responding to me.

Thato: "Hey, I'm back."

Kg: "Okay."

Ouch, he is never this brief. Eish, being used to something really hurts.

Thato: "May I sit next to you?"

Kg: "Do as you wish, your majesty."

He said that in such a condescending tone, I felt like he was trying to prove a point. I get it, calling him childish was a bad move. I decided to put my pride aside and sat next to him. I saw him busy with a beautiful design of a necklace.

Thato: "This is so beautiful, Kg. May I ask what it is?"

Kg: "It is a very beautiful masterpiece. A 40 carat diamond necklace, and I plan to get it in ruby."

Thato: "May I ask what inspired it?"

Kg: "A beautiful woman I married inspired it – all of my collection – hence I decided to name my company Isabella."

I felt my heart sink. Wow, I was so mean to him a few minutes ago and he decides to tell me this good news?

Thato: "Kg..."

Kg: "I name everything I design right after you, Thato, but I am thinking that I should scrap this very one."

Thato: "No, why?"

Kg: "Well, because this was supposed to be the very surprise for you on our white wedding. But, I think that I am rather too childish to create such a thing."

Okay, the childish thing really did not fit well into the picture.

Thato: “Kg-“

Kg: (interrupting) “You see, Thato, I love it when you act all Queen outside of our bedroom. Whenever I see you do that, I say to myself ‘That is the woman I married’. I love seeing you in action, it is clear you were born for this, but I just don’t want this to go to your head.”

I looked at him puzzled.

Kg: “Don’t get me wrong, yes, you are here to serve the people, but don’t forget that family comes first. When I married you, you promised me that we would be a team. We would figure everything out together. I honestly don’t like what you did with Khanyi and instead of talking to me about it – you went ahead and did your own thing. I became we the day you said I do, Thato, and I need to hear you say that. I

need to hear you say that we are a team now.”

He was dead serious.

Thato: “Kg, we are a team now.”

Kg: “And promise me that you will stop calling me childish.”

Thato: (chuckling) “I promise, I will never ever call you that ever again.”

Kg: “Good, I love you Thato.”

Thato: “I love you, Nkosinathi.”

Kg: (chuckling) “Oho, so now I am Nkosinathi?”

Thato: “Yes, angithi you hid that name from me.”

Kg: “That is because I don’t like it.”

Thato: “Well, I do – my Nathi.”

Kg: (smiling) “You’d better call me that when I have my face buried in between your beautiful legs, feasting on your delicious pussy.”

Eish, mara (But) why does Kg make me so weak. I smiled at him and bit my lower lip as he looked at me with those feasting eyes of his. I know what he wants and how he wants it whenever he looks at me like that. I know for a fact he wants to punish me.

Chapter One Hundred and Eighteen

Matthew 6:12 – “From the Lord’s Prayer – “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

A few weeks later

It’s been a rough few weeks with Kg and I learning the ways of the kingdom and having to get all the customs done before we can go back to Jo’burg. King Ntsika and Queen Nombu fully agreed with us that I should finish my studies first and Kg will also start his company before we can come back here and fully run this kingdom. They are both still able to run, so we will do it as a bit of a side hustle until we are both ready to step up to the plate. I honestly love being in Enande, everything here is way slower than Jozi.

I sometimes wish I didn’t have to go back. Kg has been begging me for a holiday, and I know he has some kind of trick up his sleeve. Gringo has

officially left Enande. It was so nice having him here and everyone loves seeing “the big white man” play with the village kids and teach them how to read and write. That is what he has been up to and surprisingly Smally was in on it too.

Soks has also been staying here a while helping around with the local church. Since my last sermon, the pastor was chased away by the community. Ever since then, the wife has been set free and she couldn't thank me enough, really. Gloria and Zweli finally got married a few weeks ago and have moved out of the palace out of respect for the queen.

Glo wanted to give me back the money I deposited into her account a while ago, but I gave it to her as a gift. She is now able to study part time, while awaiting on her baby's arrival. She couldn't be happier. Rami on the other hand, has been one hell of a rollercoaster. She has Thendo by the balls, demanding this and that from him, and now without

Constance in the picture, it is quite hard for Thendo to grow a pair of balls.

He does what she says – always. He never really disagrees with anything; I blame the hormones, but Nana and Queen Nandi said that those two won't last even if they were paid to stay together. I don't even know what that meant, but I do pray for them. They went back to Jozi a while ago, and I was hoping we'd go back sooner than I thought, but seems like we still have a few loose ends to tie up. MaMasango is still with us, although she looks so frail nowadays. I hate cancer, really.

Especially when it eats up at an old woman like her like this. It just is not right for someone to suffer so much for so long even. We haven't seen Zenande ever since that day Queen Nandi grabbed her by the throat. I don't know why, but I have been dreaming about her lately. I keep dreaming she is trapped and trying to get free from a cage. I don't even know

what the dream means. I have been so busy and pre-occupied that I haven't had the chance to ask anyone what the dream means. I can't even remember the last time I had a break, and Kg has been trying to get me to exercise with him. I do get up with him every now and then, but it just feels so tiring, though. I don't know how he does it every single day. I was deep in thought when I heard Nurse Portia call out for me hysterically.

Nurse Portia: (Screaming) "Queen Isabella! Ngicela uzobona (Please come and see)! uMaMasango uyakubiza (MaMasango is calling you)."

My mind had drifted so far off, especially now with Kg out. I jumped up without even wearing my gown, as I was in my short Pajamas. I ran out of my bedroom and found Nurse Portia looking so bleak with weary.

Thato: (worried) "Is everything okay?"

Nurse Portia: "Come."

I didn't ask any further. I hurried alongside her until we reached her bedroom. I walked in and was met by a very unpleasant yet familiar sight. MaMasango lay in bed, in a corpse-like position facing up. Her face so bleak, almost like she had no blood flowing in her body – just as I saw my mother that day when she had no breath left in her. I stood there frozen, and I saw her slowly lift her arm for me to hold. I rushed towards her and held her hand, trying so hard to force the tears back, but they immediately left my eyes.

MaMasango: "Thato, my child, it is now time for me to leave."

I know what that means. Very few people like her are so fortunate to decide when to leave and how to

leave at that, while most of us don't even get to say goodbye to our loved ones. She has had a remarkably amazing few weeks, while ill with cancer, she managed to do most things she had been dying to do before she passed. Her one wish, though, of making peace with her children and grandchildren was not fulfilled and that pains me more than anything.

Thato: (crying) "Mme (Ma), it has been an honour knowing you."

MaMasango: (smiling) Nonsense. How can you say that when you are royalty itself? I am so proud of you, my girl. Never stop shining, no matter what may be thrown your way, Isabella. You have a good life ahead of you, but challenges may still arise. I have a message for you to give to King Ntsika and Queen Nombu. I don't have much time."

I listened attentively as I saw her starting to breathe

a lot slower and pause a lot in between her words.

MaMasango: “Please tell them, that their next family healer is indeed from this family. Your dreams were right, Thato, they were guiding you. For as long as Zenande does not want to be saved – no other healer can be a part of this family apart from her. She is the chosen one, one that will lead this family in times of trouble and sorrow, one that will deliver your children.”

I was so confused. I do know that by custom the royal family is supposed to have a healer, and it is supposed to be chosen by the ancestors, but ever since Nonkanyiso’s death, none of them had been having the dreams that would lead them to the correct person to lead the family. I guess Zenande is the right one now. Wow, now it makes sense why I kept dreaming of her trapped in a cage.

MaMasango: “Please, Thato, you have to help my

grandchild. I am saddened that I could never make peace with my own children, but they will be told of my death and will try to cause havoc here. Beware of what is coming, my love, for Zenande is still troubled and she will cause you great pain – but granting her forgiveness will set you free and enable you and Kg to be blessed with what you desire the most.”

I felt sudden panic as my heart started beating way too fast, almost leaving my body. What does she mean by Zenande causing me great pain? What on earth is she going to do to me?

MaMasango: “Remember, she is troubled right now. She is the chosen one and has great powers that can only be unleashed through you. Only you can help her release those powers in order to help people. She will be the next greatest healer of all time. You see, I was a very good healer one time, I am sure they have told you about me. She will be

even greater than me, but it all depends on you.”

Thato: “What do you mean, Ma?”

MaMasango: “Even the one you confide in the most will turn their back on you, but Zenande will be there to help you. I love you and tell my children that I forgive them.”

I saw her slowly close her eyes and take a few short breaths. From there I saw her chest stop moving. I felt myself crying uncontrollably as her soul left her body. What the fuck is she talking about? I have never been so confused in my life. How do I follow suit with what she said? The dead can be so spiteful at times.

They deliberately leave you with unanswered questions and make you ponder your mind, while they can give you all the answers. I cried, wallowed

there like a baby. I felt so much pain inside of me, which was rather odd. It really felt like I had sudden pain in my abdomen.

Thato: (holding stomach) "Aaah!"

Nurse Portia came running towards me in tears.

Nurse Portia: "What is it, my queen? Are you hurt?"

Thato: "I... I feel so much pain in my stomach."

I felt yet another pain yet again in my stomach. A very sharp one as if I was being stabbed with a knife. For a moment I forgot about MaMasango and focused on this unbearable pain. The pain became worse and I felt my forehead become sweaty all of a sudden. Nurse Portia ran out to call Bongani, as he came in and carried me with both arms and led me

out.

The King and Queen are gone, Nana and Queen Nandi are traveling the world, my father is also busy with his missionary school, while Soks and Kg have been gone since this morning on some business trip. He said he would be back later. Nurse Portia went back inside the house and came back rushing as she came back with my phone. We got into one of the cars, as the driver started it immediately and drove towards the hospital. Yes, Ncube Clinic has officially been transformed into a fully functional hospital named after Kg's mother.

Princess Nonka Hospital is available to everyone, with fully functional equipment and fully qualified staff. It is not so far from us, but it felt like the longest 10 minutes of my life. I have never felt so much pain in my life. As I was screaming, while trying so hard to pray, I heard my phone ring while Nurse Portia answered it briefly and handed it to me.

Nurse Portia: "It's Queen Nandi."

Thato: "Put it on speaker, I am in so much pain."

She nodded fearfully and did as told.

Nurse Portia: "Ma, you're on speaker."

Queen Nandi started chanting clan praises and praying.

Queen Nandi: "Yebo (Yes), Ngizoyenza baphansi (I hear you, my ancestors). Ngicela isikhathi sokulungisa lento le (I am asking for some time to fix this). Vikelani indhlovukazi yenu na bantwana bakhe (Protect your Queen and her children). Yebo, ngiyabonga, ngizoyenza kanjalo (Yes, thank you, I will do as you wish). John 3:16 – "For God so loved

the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Take heed in that verse, Thato, for you will know what it actually means to you very soon. Your children are at peace now. You will be okay,”

I became so puzzled as I felt a bit better right after she prayed and said those words. The pain was gone immediately. Wait, did she just say my children?

Thato: “Ma, what do you mean?”

Queen Nandi: (chuckling) “Thato, did you honestly think you could have unprotected sex with your husband and not fall pregnant?”

I felt myself blush.

Thato: “Wait, I’m pregnant?”

Queen Nandi: “You can be so slow a times. Yes, you are pregnant – with twins.”

Thato: (shocked) “Wow.”

Queen Nandi: “Yes, Wow. You just haven’t been eating very well and you haven’t been sleeping much hence the cramps, but you will be fine. We’ll talk later, I have a few hunks to meet on the boat ride. Your husband will call you in two minutes. Bye.”

She hung up just like that while I took a few seconds to actually let it sink in that I am pregnant indeed. I mean wow, I thought it could not happen, right after my miscarriage. I am truly amazed, and yes, indeed Kg called and that time we were still outside the hospital in the car. I answered it.

Thato: “Hello.”

Kg: (hysterical) "Thato, are you okay? I felt as if you were in some kind of danger. I had stomach cramps and Soks said I should call you."

Thato: "It's okay, I am fine. I'm at the hospital."

Kg: "I'm on my way."

He hung up while Nurse Portia helped me out, but I felt fine. She still didn't want to take any chances. Shame, poor Bongani and the driver waited for us in the car, while the staff approached us hastily with a wheelchair. I was placed on it while they all made such a fuss about me as we walked into the hospital. Ai, I don't expect first class treatment just because I am the queen, you know. Anyway, Nurse Portia wheeled me into one of the wards and I sat on the bed. The doctor came in and Nurse Portia explained everything to him. He drew some blood from my

arm, and gosh, I hate needles, really. He asked me to pee on the magical stick and I sat there in the bed awaiting results. I saw Kg run in frantically.

Kg: "My wife, are you okay? Are you hurt?"

Nurse Portia: (smiling) "I'll be right back."

I love how humble she is and how she knows what to do and when. She left while Kg held my hands literally shaking.

Thato: "I am fine, baby. Relax."

Kg: "Then why are you here? What happened?"

Doctor: "Well, Mr and Mrs. Ncube, I have good news. Indeed, you are pregnant."

Kg: (shocked) "Heh?! Pregnant?! You're not pranking me, are you doc?"

Doctor: (laughing) "Not at all, my king. I never joke while in my coat."

Kg was so ecstatic, he couldn't hide his excitement.

Kg: (excited) "Baby waka (My baby)! You don't know how happy this makes me!"

I smiled as the doctor asked me to change into the hospital gown while he had to perform a transvaginal ultrasound. I could see just how uncomfortable Kg became while he saw the doctor spread my legs.

Kg: (Worried) "Aowa (No), Doc. Don't get a boner

while doing that now. Phela that is my wife's privates. Only I am supposed to see them."

Doctor: (laughing) "Relax, my King. It is my job and I can tell you, we don't even get sexual thoughts whenever doing this."

Kg: "Good."

Bathong (Gosh), Kg, Really? The Doctor did the scan and to my amazement, I couldn't be even more shocked after today.

Doctor: "Well, I see two heartbeats. Congratulations, you two are going to be proud parents of twins."

Kg was still reeling in excitement was I was so worried. Will my babies even make it?

Doctor: "You are about 10 weeks pregnant, Queen

Isabella, however I do advise you to take it easy, please. As told by your royal Nurse, your history is a bit tricky considering your traumatic miscarriage, not to mention the damage your cervix has endured. It is amazing that you managed to fall pregnant and not know this long.”

It is indeed a miracle, but I just had to ask.

Thato: “Will my babies make it, Doc?”

Doctor: “Ofcourse, I don’t see why not. You are in tip top shape, but please, get some rest. And eat healthily and remember to take your daily supplements. Given your history, I would advise you to come see me twice a month instead of once.”

Thato: “Okay, thank you, doc.”

Doctor: "I'll go write out your prescription."

He left while Kg looked at me with the proudest look on his face that I have ever seen.

Kg: "My wife, you have just made me the happiest man in the whole world! I can't believe you chose me, a whole me, to be the father of your children. I promise to honour you as I did on our wedding day. I will never deliberately hurt you and our children. I will strive to become a better man and better father than my father ever was. I will love you and our children til eternity, babes. Thank you so much for the best gift any man could ever ask for. I love you so much, Thato."

I had to smile as he said that and mask the fear behind my face. I really am terrified of what MaMasango told me. It matches what Kgabo told me as well. I can only hope and pray that God will spare my children's lives and keep them out of

harm's way.

Chapter One Hundred and Nineteen

Luke 23:34 – “Father forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.”

Thato

Ever since we got back from the hospital, Kg has been so excited. He couldn't even stop touching and kissing my belly. I am trying to smile, really, but deep down I am overcome with so much worry – I won't lie. Perhaps it feels odd for me to be so happy while we just lost MaMasango, but then I can't help but think that her words really got to me. So, I am guessing Zenande has to deliver my children as she said? Over my dead body. I have never trusted her so how can she be the one to touch innocent souls? Kg and I arrived home to find King Ntsika and Queen Nombu in the lounge. We saw a horse outside, so I

am guessing they had called the mortuary to take MaMasango's body.

Kg: (smiling) "Greetings, Mkhulu (Grandpa), Gogo (granny). Pun intended by the way."

Queen Nombu: (Excited) "Are you saying you are pregnant?!"

I nodded.

Kg: "Oh, yes. You are going to be great-grandparents."

King Ntsika was so happy, as he stood up to hug us, while Queen Nombu was chanting and ululating first.

King Ntsika: "Congratulations, my children. This

couldn't have come at a better time. Things are indeed looking up for you. What a great year it has been indeed."

Thato: "Thank you, my King. I am just saddened that I have to rejoice at a time like this. We just lost MaMasango."

King Ntsika: "Oh, no, please don't think like that. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh. Such is life, my dear. We should never force ourselves to be sad while we have so much to celebrate."

Kg: "Exactly, Mkhulu (grandpa)."

Queen Nombu: "Besides, we cleansed the house. No one is allowed to enter her room until Queen Nandi comes back."

Thato: "What about Nurse Portia?"

Queen Nombu: “She can use one of the guest bedrooms. Her belongings have already been moved. We wouldn’t want her to attract bad luck by sleeping in a deceased room before she has been buried.”

I guess that is the belief right here. I am not complaining as I married into this family so I know what I have gotten myself into. I am no longer Thato Isabella Groen, I am now a Ncube, and as such I will have to behave. We proceeded to our bedroom, while I just couldn’t help but feel too gloomy.

Kg: “Okay, what is it that is pondering your mind so much?”

Thato: “Nothing, love.”

Kg: “You don’t want me to remind you of our

conversation the other day, do you?"

Thato: (sigh) "I am just a bit rattled. I mean, I never really told you much, but MaMasango said that the one I confide in the most will betray me. That is the very same thing that Kgabo said to me. I just can't help but wonder. She also said that I am the one to help Zenande from her current misery and that she is the one that will be the family's healer. She also said that Zenande is the one who will cause me great pain, but only if I forgive her, will you and I be able to be blessed with everything that we desire."

Kg paused for a moment as he took it all in.

Kg: "I am sure they just mean something else, but if we pray about it together, then nothing bad will come our way. I truly believe and have hope that our babies will make it, baby. You always tell me to have faith, love. Remember my favourite verse? The one I had engraved inside our rings?"

Thato: "Isaiah 60:22."

Kg: "When the time is right I, the Lord will make it happen. I chose that verse for a reason – for I know that no matter what happens we need to pray together. Our timing isn't God's timing, but I do know that no matter what, we shall get what we desire. You have taught me how to love again, TT. You have taught me so much about myself and about God and for that, I will always be grateful. This is a new beginning in our lives, so please enjoy this moment with me. Let us bask in the moment, please."

I guess he is right. I mean, we have to embrace everything that happens in our lives with grace and hope. I don't see any reason to be unhappy about this.

Thato: "You're right, baby. You're absolutely right."

Kg: "I promise, I will be with you every step of the way. Just trust me."

I nodded as he gave me a passionate kiss. Oh, I can't believe Kg still makes me so wet. It is still early, yes, but I guess that is what happens when you're in love.

Kg: "How about a real quick round before we go have some lunch?"

Thato: "You don't even have to ask twice."

Kg gave me a long, subtle kiss, as he occasionally ran his soft, masculine fingers along my arms. I couldn't help but moan in his mouth as his tongue met mine.

Thato: (moaning) "Oh, Kg..."

Kg just loves it whenever I moan and surrender myself to him. He kissed my neck as I tilted my head backwards to aid him more space. He caressed my breasts with such care, and gently squeezed my nipples, making my clit jerk instantly. My hand travelled down to his crotch, as I started fondling his rock-hard dick. I felt his hand get into my pajama pants, and he gently started rubbing my clit lightly.

Thato: (moaning) "Aaah, Kg. You know I hate it when you tease me."

Kg: (chuckling) "I love you too, baby."

He got back to kissing me, while he started rubbing my clit in circular motions. I could feel myself get

warmer, as he proceeded in faster motions. Kg is so good with his hands, that whenever he rubs my clit, I don't take long to orgasm. I could feel my orgasm build up as he started breathing faster while I was rubbing his crotch. I felt myself nearing my goal, when we both heard a stern knock on the door. Fuck.

Queen Nombu: (knocking) "Isabella, Nkosinathi, apologies, but you are needed at the table. We have an urgent matter to discuss."

I could see the annoyance on Kg's face with his eyes slightly squinted.

Kg: "Can't it wait, Gogo (Granny)?"

Queen Nombu: "I'm afraid not. Would you be able to make it to the dining table in five minutes?"

Kg looked at me and smirked. I know that look. There is no way he can finish in such record timing.

Kg: "Yebo, Gogo (Yes, granny), we'll be there."

Queen Nombu left and Kg smiled at me as soon as she was gone.

Kg: "You know what that means, right?"

Thato: "What?"

Kg: "I have to be quick."

Thato: "Kg, you have never been that quick."

Kg: "Try me, baby, come on. Bona ke tsogetswe bjang (Look how hard I am)."

He had taken off his jeans and briefs and I saw his hard dick pointing up. I salivated immediately.

Thato: "Okay, but be quick."

He smiled as he turned me around, and of course, he got on his knees and dug right into my pussy. He hates it when we have sex without him muffing me first. I didn't even have time to moan, as he literally just sucked me for about 10 seconds. He got up and rammed into me. I had to make sure that I was not loud, as he kept pounding me.

Thato: (moaning) "Shit... Nkosinathi..."

I just felt like calling him that for a change and it seemed as if he enjoyed it. He took his one hand and rubbed my pussy while pounding me.

Kg: (moaning) "Fuck, baby!"

I felt him going faster and faster and within about just over ten minutes he was done. We reached our climax together.

Kg: "Wait here."

He rushed to the bathroom and got a towel for us. He had already wiped himself and proceeded to wipe me too. He kissed me on the lips and touched my belly. After our intimate moment, I changed into a pair of jeans and a tshirt. I luckily don't have to be dressed in royal attire all the time. My "Kotiza" period is over, so I can be dressed however I want around the house, but whenever in public, I have to be spot on – unless I feel like wearing something else. It just does not have to be skimpy or too tight. Ai, what can I say? Kg and I walked out hand in hand

and found King Ntsika and Queen Nombu already waiting for us at the table.

Queen Nombu: (smiling mischievously) “That was a bit quick.”

I couldn't help, but blush. Eish, the women of this family are just too naughty. If it isn't Queen Nandi, it is my Nana and most definitely Queen Nombu. I really don't want to imagine her and the king doing it. It would just be too weird.

King Ntsika: “Haibo Nkosikazi (No, my wife). Let them enjoy their bedroom affairs in peace. Remember what we used to be like when we got married?”

Queen Nombu: (chuckling) “Nothing has changed, though, my husband.”

King Ntsika: “Enough, now. You don’t want to embarrass the children.”

I felt my cheeks become so hot, while Kg was smiling ear to ear. Ai, I don’t get how he is never embarrassed really. We said a short prayer before eating and dug in. I actually realized just how hungry I was. Usually, a woman dishes up for her husband, but in Kg’s instance, he likes dishing up for me. They say that he spoils me, but he gets so defensive about it so they let him be. He always dishes up for me before we eat. I have tried to make him stop, but up to no avail. Queen Nandi even said that her husband was like that with her. He literally worshipped the ground she walked on and would even bathe her children while she would take naps and rest. Now that is pure love. Her mother in law apparently would try and scold her saying she was turning her son into a boy, but she got so mad and poured boiling water on her. I don’t know the full story, but I just laughed at the story.

Kg: (dishing up) “Do you want the Greek salad?”

I nodded, as he kept asking me if I wanted each item of food displayed.

Queen Nombu: (chuckling) “Uyabona ke, Ntsika (You see now, Ntsika). Ngabe une tender loving care kanje ngaleso sikhathi sis a cala ngabe manje ngivuma yonke into ungcicela yona (If only you had as much tender loving care as Nkosinathi back then when we started dating, I’d be saying yes to everything you ask for).”

I couldn’t help but chuckle while King Ntsika burst out in laughter and kissed her hand gently.

King Ntsika: “Ao, Nkosikazi (my wife), it is never too late to be obedient.”

As they chuckled, Kg handed me my plate, as I had asked for some boiled eggs which were served with some mayonnaise and sauce, some salad, creamed cheesy spinach, Baby potatoes, steak and quarter chicken. I have never had allergies in my entire life nor hated any kind of food except broccoli, but for some odd reason I couldn't stand the smell of the eggs and the chicken.

Thato: "Eish, Baby wami (My baby), o kare kgogo e ya nsillisa (I think this chicken is making me nauseous). These eggs also."

Kg: (smiling) "Alright, don't worry. I'll eat them."

Queen Nombu: "When I was pregnant with your mother, Nkosinathi, I couldn't handle anything, but red meat. Imagine having to wake Ntsika up in the middle of the night saying I am hungry. Nothing else would go down, except red meat."

Kg looked a bit worried, while I laughed. This is hilarious.

Thato: “Hao, so what happened?”

Queen Nombu: “Poor man had to get up and make me some steak. I was craving it so badly that evening.”

I just laughed while Kg looked really worried.

King Ntsika: “I really didn’t enjoy that pregnancy at all, considering it was my very first child at that.”

Thato: “Yoh (wow), but did it get better or was it like that throughout the whole pregnancy?”

Queen Nombu: “Oh, yes. It was like that for the first five months. Afterwards, I ate anything and everything. Poor Ntsika hardly slept throughout. I would wake him up in the middle of the night craving KFC.”

King Ntsika: “I swear, I was worn out when Nonka was born, but after I saw her for the very first time, I just fell in love instantly. She was my world, even though her pregnancy was the worst.”

I saw Kg kept quiet for a while. Shame, he is probably worried about what is going to happen to me.

King Ntsika: “Hawu, Nkosinathi, don’t look so worried, I am sure it won’t be so bad. With twins, it will be double trouble, but not so bad.”

I just had to laugh because I have never seen Kg

scared or worried much before. This is a worrisome sight, but very amusing. We had our lunch, or brunch as Kg calls it and then dessert which was a raspberry cheesecake. They decided to hire a chef who cooks for us now, instead of helpers as it is just too risky after the whole incident with the poisoning. Even though Nomsa planned it, one of the cooks administered it and she was lucky to walk away unharmed and not jailed for it.

King Ntsika: “So, we called you here because we have an urgent matter to attend to. It has come to our attention that we need to pay lobola to your family, Thato.”

I looked at him puzzled. I thought my father refused the lobola.

Thato: “My King, I was under the impression that my father refused the money?”

Queen Nombu: “It is custom for us to pay Lobola to the family that raised you – biological or not.”

What the fuck? I took a moment to just absorb what I was being told.

Thato: “You can’t be serious.”

King Ntsika: “I am afraid we are. We believe that if we don’t, nothing good will come out of your marriage, Isabella. You see, the family that raised you might hold grudges and curse you. The power of the tongue is very much deadly – way more than the sword or gun.”

Eish, I just hate this. Just when I really thought that everything was falling into place, I have to see Sophie and Koko Maria all over again. Not to mention Sonto and all the people of Rockville. I

don't know if I am ready to do this. I felt my palms become instantly sweaty, as Kg squeezed my hand. He must have sensed my agitation.

Queen Nombu: "We don't mean to stress you, Isabella, but we had to do this long before you got married. We just appeased the ancestors, but now the time has come."

I can't argue with tradition.

Thato: "When do you want to do it?"

Queen Nombu: "Well, we were thinking a month from now, the 2nd of December."

Shit, that's my birthday. The very same day Kg got shot while I got kidnapped. I don't know if I am ready to relive that trauma.

Thato: (shaky) "Can't you make it another day?"

Queen Nombu: "Unfortunately not. That is the day the ancestors chose right before MaMasango passed. I am sorry, I know this day brings a lot of heartache for you, but we have to do what is asked."

Thato: "It's okay. Thank you for informing us. May I please be excused?"

I didn't even realize that I got up before they replied. I had let go of Kg's hand and walked to my bedroom like I was in some sort of trans. I can't even think of reliving a day like that. What if something bad happens to me on my birthday yet again? What if what MaMasango's words have some sort of connection with this day? I am so anxious, I just can't even hide it. I just went to the bathroom and started running the water in the tub. I didn't even

hear Kg walk in, all I felt was his soft hands touching my shoulders and kissing my neck gently.

Kg: "Let me run the bath for you."

I just nodded in silence as he put his famous salts and oils into the tub. I got out of my clothes and right into the tub. He didn't say anything either, and chose to wash my back and help me bathe myself. He helped me get out and instead of lotioning my body, he gave me a really nice, soothing massage. I basked in the amazing feel of his magical soft hands. I tried to get that day out of my mind, but the more I tried to block it out, the more I saw the visions of that tragic day replay themselves in my head all over again. After that, I must have dozed off without even realizing it. I woke up at about 6pm, feeling an incredible need to pee. I found Kg sleeping next to me which is of course a bit odd. He never sleeps during the day, but I guess he must have been tired. As I was about to go to the bathroom, I was met with

Nonkanyiso's beautiful vision. She smiled at me as usual, while I smiled back.

Thato: "Hello, Ma. Nice to see you again."

Nokukhanya: "Hello, Thato, how are you?"

Thato: (smiling) "I am well, how are you?"

Nokukhanya: (chuckling) "Spirit is always at peace. Congratulations on your bundle of joy, my daughter."

Thato: "Thank you, ma. I haven't seen you in a while. I thought you wouldn't come visit again."

Nokukhanya: "I was going to come back, but I am here to warn you of a few unfamiliar guests that are right outside. They are going to try and cause havoc for you, but no matter what, my child, be vigilant and always rely on your husband."

Thato: “What do you mean, Ma?”

Nokukhanya: “Remember my words and everything else you were told. Greet my son for me. See you soon.”

With that said, she left me. I went to the toilet and did my business. I decided to get into a long dress as I had been craving some water. I got out of the bedroom and headed to the kitchen. While I took a sip, I heard people storming in and arguing with the Queen and King.

Man: “Ningazonginyela nina (Don’t fuck with me you two)! You didn’t call me when my own niece got arrested, now look what happened to her child! Se ulahla abantwana bakho, Ntsika (So, you are throwing kids away now, Ntsika)? Uyabona ke Nombu (You see now, Nombu)? You should have

married me instead.”

I heard a scuffle emerge and a loud blow to someone’s head as someone fell down. I quickly ran out the kitchen to see the commotion and I saw Zenande, looking really weird, almost like life has really given her a real beat down. She was next to some man who looks a lot like King Ntsika, but King Ntsika had his hands on him and kept beating him up. Alongside them were a woman and a man. The woman looked so much like MaMasango. Could this be the chaos I had to expect?

Chapter One Hundred and Twenty

Jeremiah 17:7 – “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord.”

Romans 16:17-18 – “I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have

been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naïve.”

Thato

I couldn't even believe what was happening in front of me. No one was even heeding to Queen Nombu's voice. Everyone was shouting, that even Kg came running from our bedroom. As soon as he saw king Ntsika fighting with that man who looks very much like him, he managed to break them apart, while the rest were just standing there. Zenande just stood there almost like she was in a Zombie state. I just couldn't really tell what exactly was happening to her.

Kg: (fuming) “How dare you waltz in here and fight the man of this house, Malume (Uncle) Mzi?!”

Oh, so this is the uncle that slept with Queen Nombu and got her pregnant back in the day. No wonder King Ntsika was so angry. He was breathing fire, and Queen Nombu was very much unimpressed with his presence.

Mzi: (angry) “Wena (you)! How dare you stop me from killing this fool?!”

I chuckled internally. From what I saw, King Ntsika was the one who was killing him, not the other way around.

Kg: “You do not have the right to walk in here and make demands, let alone try and put your hands on the King.”

Mzi: “Amanyala wani ayenzakalayo lana (What is this nonsense that is happening here)?! How dare you

appoint YOUR grandson as the King without even consulting me, Ntsika?!”

Yoh (wow), this man has entitlement issues shame. I just can't.

Kg: “I am giving you ten seconds to state what the fuck you are doing here before I blow your brains out – all of you.”

There is something about Kg and I guess that is why they call him Wolfe. He literally acts like a Wolf – unscathed, unbothered, fearless and demands respect. He instills fear in you just by him looking at you with his squinted eyes. I saw the other two people looking a bit scared as they started speaking up.

Woman: “My name is Rose Masango. This is my brother Bruce. We are here for our mother's burial.”

She seemed a bit calmer than Bruce, but it looked as if Bruce came with so much drama.

Bruce: (shouting) “Sifuna ukwazi why ni ngazi tshelanga ukuthi uMa uyagula (We want to know why you never informed us that Mom was ill)?!”

Really? This boy is full of shit.

Rose: “Bruce, ima kancane toe (wait a minute, please).”

Bruce: “We demand answers!”

Kg must have had enough because I saw a punch flying so quickly and landed on Bruce’s face. He landed on the floor, while still for some reason, Zenande looked like a statue. She had no emotion on her face. She just looked at Bruce in a dull

manner and continued to look at me. Her look just gave me chills down my spine. Something just does not look right. The Zenande I know is one hell of a slay queen – not this dirty, barefooted Zenande who was standing before us.

Kg: “I dare you to raise your filthy voice at us again and you won’t live to see another day.”

Rose: “I’ve been telling you on the way here, Bruce. I told you to behave. Uzolimala (You’ll get hurt). Please, forgive us, my King. We mean no disrespect.”

Kg: “I forgive you since you have manners, but that fucker, I don’t. So, I will grant you one last chance to explain yourselves in a decent manner. You will be allowed to sit down and speak, but if one of you decides to shout or display your rudeness, you’ll be thrown out without a doubt. Do I make myself clear?”

Rose was more than willing to comply.

Rose: "Absolutely, my King."

Bruce just nodded in disgust, without saying a word, while Mzi nodded slightly while giving King Ntsika a nasty look. Ai, when will this feud even end? Kg walked towards me and held my hands.

Kg: "Are you okay?"

Thato: (nodding) "Yes."

He kissed my forehead and sat next to me. All this while Zenande still stared at me. I really hate being stared at, but this is on another level. It's actually creepy. Kg didn't notice it and neither did King Ntsika and Queen Nombu.

Kg: "Okay, let's start with you Rose, then we can deal with this one later."

Clearly Uncle Mzi saw what Kg is capable of doing, so he didn't even dare to try and raise his voice.

Rose: "I live in the Eastern Cape. I relocated there once I got married, although my mother and I were never on good terms ever since she was accused of withcraft. Things were never the same after that. I had heard that my mother was ill from my brother Bruce, but my pride got the better of me as I refused to go. He himself told me that should I go see her, then he would disown me. My own husband along with his family said the same thing to me. They told me that if I had gone to see her then I should never return and leave my children behind."

Oddly, she thought so back then and now she is here.

Kg: "Then what are you doing here now?"

Rose: "I heard that she passed on and I felt I could never forgive myself if i didn't at least bury her."

Kg looked at Bruce who just looked a bit anxious, but Rose seemed to be telling the truth.

Kg: "And your husband? In-laws? Children?"

Rose: (teary) "I left them behind. I cannot get them back as they have disowned me."

Kg: "I applaud you for being honest, Rose. I can assure you that I am willing to help you if you are completely honest with me. You can rest assured."

Rose seemed hopeful all of a sudden.

Rose: "Thank you."

Kg: "Now, your turn, Bruce. Why are YOU here?"

Bruce: "But Rose just told you why we are here. To bury our mother."

Kg: "I don't like your tone. For the mere fact that you came here with unrealistic and ill intentions, I will not let you speak any further. To answer your ridiculous outburst earlier on; you were notified of MaMasango's illness. Everyone was busy hailing her while she longed for the two of you. Neither of you were here to at least respect her last wishes. She was hailed, respected and forgiven all thanks to my wife. You should be ashamed of yourselves if nothing more. You had ample time to come and forgive her."

Rose burst into tears right away as Kg said that to them, while Bruce looked down in shame. I just don't trust this Bruce guy at all.

Kg: "Now, Malume (Uncle), ubekwa yini la (What brings you here)?"

Mzi: "I came to see what mess your parents have dragged you in! How dare they appoint a king without my absence?!"

Just then Kg was already up and was about to teach Mzi a lesson, but I quickly got up.

Thato: "Kg, No!"

Mzi: (chuckling) "You'd better listen to your wife, little boy."

Thato: "You will not dare speak to my husband like that. If anyone here is acting like a boy, it is most definitely you."

Mzi: "Utheni, sfebe ndini (What did you just say, you bitch)?!"

Kg grabbed him by the throat. I was about to beg him to stop it, when I heard Queen Nandi walk in with Nana.

Queen Nandi: "Nkosinathi, let that dog go."

She spoke so softly, but it was firm enough for Kg to listen to her. He let him go while she walked up to Mzi looking furious as hell. She gave him one look nje, and he looked down. I guess your mom will always be your mom.

Queen Nandi: “Mziwoxolo, is this how you treat your brother after every pain you have caused him?”

Mzi: (softly) “No, Ma.”

Queen Nandi: “Yini amasimba lawa uwayenzako (What is this shit you are busy doing)?!”

I feel her now. She was getting agitated to say the least. I hope I get to be such a disciplinarian.

Mzi: “Kodwa Mama (But Mama), you are always on Ntsika’s side.”

Queen Nandi gave him one fat slap across the face.

Queen Nandi: “Did I tell you to sleep with his wife

and make her pregnant?”

Mzi: (shaking head) “Cha (no), Ma.”

Queen Nandi: “What gave you the right to walk in here and disrespect your brother and his children? Worst of all our new King and Queen?! Did I raise you to behave like a dog, Mziwoxolo?”

Mzi: “No, ma, kodwa (but)-“

He didn’t finish and another fat slap landed on his face as he didn’t even say anything in revolt against his mom.

Queen Nandi: “Transport is waiting for you outside. You have no decency and therefore you don’t deserve to stay in your brother’s house. The day you feel remorse will be the day you will be allowed to

walk back in here. Sukuma uhambe (Get up and walk out)!”

He slowly walked out and looked at Zenande.

Mzi: “Zee, Masihambe (Let’s go).”

Zenande got up in a robot-like manner, but Queen Nandi quickly stopped her.

Queen Nandi: “Wena (You)! Hlala phantsi (Sit down)! Wena (You)! Hamba (Leave)! Take Bruce with you since you both came here with the same mission.”

Mzi: “Kodwa Ma (But Ma) – “

Queen Nandi: (infuriated) “Fokof!”

They both got up and rushed out, leaving Zenande sitting on the chair like a robot. What happened to this girl?

King Ntsika: (softly) “Ma, you didn’t need to fight my battles for me.”

Queen Nandi: “Yes, you are old enough for that. You could have broken your bloody hip fighting with your useless brother. I have more pressing matters to attend to. (looking at Zenande) Oh, Nkosiyami (My God), look what he has done to her!”

I was confused, but I knew that something was not right with Zenande. How can a person who was normal just look like this all of a sudden. Queen Nandi looked at Rose.

Queen Nandi: “Are you ready to spill the beans or do you want me to beat it out of you?”

Rose: (crying) "I don't know what you are talking about."

Queen Nandi: "Okay, since well, wena you are boss, I am going to tell my grandson not to help you get yoru kids back. Of course, they don't deserve a hypocrite of a mother and someone who kept them away from their grandmother. Angithi uyistarring wena (You're the starring, aren't you)?"

Rose bawled her eyes out and began crying hysterically. I guess that's a sign of being incredibly guilty.

Queen Nandi: "I won't ask again."

Rose: (crying) "It was not my plan. Bruce is just a bully. He forced me to ostracize my mother, and now he forced me to come back here and demand money from the royals. He heard that she was being

taken care of by you so he thought this would be the perfect opportunity to get some money out of you.”

Queen Nandi: “I’m not bothered by that and you know it. Tell us the actual reason why Zenande is the way she is right now!”

Rose: “I can’t. He... he told me he would kill me.”

Queen Nandi: “If you don’t speak now, then I’ll be the one to kill you.”

Queen Nandi was dead serious and after what she did to Zenande a few weeks ago, I know that she means every word.

Rose: “Mzi got into cahoots with Bruce... She came crying to him and that is when he hatched a plan. He got angered at the fact that you chose to appoint a

new king without even recognizing him or his children. He is buying for blood and will do everything for the throne.”

Queen Nandi didn't look as surprised as the rest of us were.

Queen Nandi: “Then tell us what exactly he did to Zenande.”

Rose: “He... he found out that she has great powers after he took her to some sangoma. He was told of how Zenande is the key to all the blessings in this family and that it would only take one thing for her to do wrong, and everyone would be against her, and that would be the end of blessings for the Ncube Kingdom. If everyone is against her, she can't be able to protect the kingdom and everything and everyone in it.”

I got chills down my spine as she said that. My heart really bled for Zenande. This is what MaMasango meant. Oh, my goodness. Now I am dreading to hear what he did to her.

Queen Nandi: "Carry on."

Rose: "The sangoma cut her hand very deeply, and mixed it with Bruce's, since he has my mother's bloodline. I refused to be present, I swear, but with that, he is transforming her into his zombie. She is halfway there, and by the full moon tomorrow evening, she will have finally turned into his evil servant. He did say that should Zenande be able to get to Queen Isabella, they will have won over the Kingdom and evil shall prevail."

Queen Nandi: "Rose, I hope for your sake you are being honest with me, because I will literally rip out your throat from your neck. You had better not lie to me."

Rose: "I swear, Ma, I will never."

Queen Nandi kept quiet and started thinking.

Queen Nandi: (sigh) "Nana, as expected, my worst fears have prevailed. Your premonition seems to be true."

Nana: "I also refused to believe it, but well, it is what it is."

Thato: (anxious) "What does all t his mean, Ma?"

Queen Nandi: "It means that they have put a spell on you, Isabella – a spell on both you and your babies. They did this with the intention that you would become barren, but then they found out you were pregnant, and t hey rose up to the occasion. This is

part of the reason why you had cramps earlier on today. They want to sacrifice your children, using Zenande to do so.”

This can't be right. Why can't I ever have any peace?
All I want is just healthy babies and a happy life.
Does happiness really come at such a costly price?

Chapter One Hundred and Twenty One

Psalm 21:11 – “Though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed.”

Thato

I felt like I was instantly getting a bit dizzy and overwhelmed by this situation. I have heard of many women who have lost their babies – some more than one even, but this – is something else. I even heard Nurse Portia telling me a few stories about a few patients. Speaking of Nurse Portia, I haven't

seen her since I came back from the hospital this morning. Queen Nandi and Nana started devising a plan, but as usual, I had to be involved.

Queen Nombu: "So, what now, Ma?"

Queen Nandi: "Well, Isabella, do you remember your recurrent dreams? The ones where you kept dreaming of Zenande battling to come out of a locked cage?"

Thato: "Yes, I do."

Queen Nandi: "You have to save her. You obviously can't do it alone because we are dealing with a lot of evil spirits here. We need you to be fully protected before we can release her spirit from being held captive by Bruce and Mzi. My son has always been evil, I just never thought he would actually get this far."

Thato: (anxious) “What do I have to do?”

Nana: “You have to first bathe in holy ash and oils. Don’t worry, Wolfe can help you with that. Don’t you worry, my baby. I know, you just found out that you are pregnant and now this is happening. I promise you, nothing will happen to your babies – not now.”

See that right there? That very last statement “not now”. Does it mean that something will happen to them at a later stage? This is causing me so much grief and depression already. As we were about to retreat to our bedroom, in walked Soks holding Nurse Portia’s hand and they looked like they had come from dinner or something. I am guessing Soks has found his missing rib.

Soks: “Sanibonani (Good evening).”

Queen Nandi: "Solomon, no time for that right now. Look at Zenande."

He gave her one look and his smile became a serious face.

Queen Nandi: "You know what you have to do, right?"

Soks nodded without saying a word.

Nana: "Wolfe, on second thoughts, how about you, your grandfather and Solomon go set up the room, while we women go and get ready for the ritual?"

Kg looked really reluctant to let go of my hand.

Queen Nandi: "I promise you, she will be well taken care of."

Kg kissed my forehead and let go of my hand in weary. Queen Nombu got Zenande to get up as she went with her to her old room, while Nana, Queen Nandi and I went to my bedroom. I can't help but feel so anxious and saddened. As we walked into the bedroom they really tried their best to console me, and I just couldn't help, but let the tears fall down.

Nana: "Oh, honey. Don't cry so much now. Do not be so soft, Isabella, not now. You cannot let the enemy win."

Queen Nandi: "Rest assured, your babies will be fine. You know your faith and how strong it is, so please do not disappoint us now."

Nana: "We need you strong enough to continue with the ritual, please, Isabella. You cannot go through

with it in this state. Remember, whatever you feel, your babies can feel too.”

Thato: “I don’t mean to be such a weakling, Nana, but I am just tired. I am so emotionally drained because I have to constantly fight for what is rightfully mine. Why can’t I just live in peace?”

Nana: “Because the people who are highly blessed tend to suffer the most. We unfortunately live in a ruthless world, Isa. We fight with spiritual beings constantly on a daily basis. Sometimes we are not even aware that we are in a spiritual warfare. Rest assured that you will not suffer forever. There is always light at the end of the tunnel, without a doubt. Life is a thornbush, my baby and the ones who soldier on no matter how many times they get stung by the thorns are the ones who win the battle. Not all of us make it out of the bush alive and happy, but what matters is that you do try.”

I guess she has a really good point, but I will have to try. I have to fight for my children.

Thato: "What do I have to do?"

Queen Nandi: "Well, we have to bathe you and apply oils and holy ash on your body, especially on your stomach. Then you will have to start praying with us until midnight."

I widened my eyes in shock.

Thato: "So, we are going to have to pray for 5 hours straight?"

They both nodded.

Nana: "That is a small price to pay than losing your

children. Come, we don't have much time. Bruce and Mzi are already busy with evil as we speak.”`

Thato: “Okay.”

They proceeded to help me undress as they put me in the tub once again, filled with holy oils and ash. We had to pray as they poured the water on me while both of their hands were placed on my stomach. I couldn't help but also pray, and felt an overwhelming spirit overcome me.

Mzi

I can't believe that my plan failed before I even got it to start working. What the fuck will I do once it fails completely?

Bruce: “You are such an idiot, Mzi! You couldn't even

get past your own mother!”

Mzi: “Look who is talking. You are the one who went in there with a fight. Now look where we are. This is such a mess.”

Bruce: “When Cobra asks what happened I am totally blaming you.”

Mzi: “You think that I’d take the fall without implicating you as well? Don’t forget, mighty Bruce. You have just as much to lose as I do. We made a pact; if this plan fails, we lose our first born sons. I bet you don’t want to lose your precious Lwandle – the one who supports you all. You wouldn’t want to lose the family bread winner because you were greedy, do you?”

Bruce kept quiet and I could see that I had him right where I wanted him.

Mzi: “Exactly. Now, stop being a bitch about everything and start thinking. We are going to summon Cobra, and let him know the truth. I am sure he will be able to tell us what is the way forward.”

I guess we were already too late because he appeared right away.

Cobra: “Too late, Mziwoxolo. You have always been an idiot, unlike your brother. Pity he is too holy for his own good.”

Mzi: (scared) “Hello, Cobra. How are you?”

Cobra: “Cut the bullshit, Mzi. Why is the Queen still pregnant?”

Mzi: “Well, you see, the thing is – “

Cobra: (interrupting) “Ungimoshela isikhati wena slima (You are wasting my time, you idiot). I told you, if you don’t get this done by midnight tonight, I am going to take your son. You were warned.”

Mzi: “Wait! Give us a few more hours. Zenande is still under your spell, surely you can use her to get to the queen and her unborn children.”

Cobra: “You have five hours, Mzi. If she is still alive by midnight, your sons will take the fall as promised. I am not threatened by your stupid mother and her silly white friend.”

Bruce: “If I may ask, Cobra, if you were so fearless towards them, why don’t you appear to them instead? I mean why do you have to hide yourself and appear in spirit?”

Cobra: (angered) “I told you, Mzi. You always bring

your foolish friends to me. This won't end well for him. Don't ask me stupid questions. Five hours and counting."

I suddenly regretted my deal with him. What if this plan does not work? I mean I can't lose my son all because I tried to be king.

Thato

Once I was done with everything, Nana and Queen Nandi proceeded to the lounge with me, while I saw Queen Nombu walking down the stairs with a cleaned up Zenande. Oddly, she has not said a word ever since she came here. Apparently they trained her not to talk. I can't imagine how she feels as of this moment – trapped inside her own mind and body. Only God knows what she is thinking right now. Kg ran towards me in haste.

Kg: “Baby, o shap (are you alright)?”

Thato: (nodding) “Yes, don’t worry about me.”

He nodded and kissed my forehead. I was draped in white cloth and so was Zenande. The lounge looked completely transformed with so many white and red candles surrounding the area where the table was in circle form and mphepho (incense) was burning.

Nana: “Let’s go in.”

We carefully walked in and I had to sit on a pillow, while the rest of them didn’t mind sitting on the carpented floor. Zenande sat right across me, while Kg sat next to me. King Ntsika sat next to his wife, while Soks sat next to Nurse Portia and Nana sat next to Queen Nandi. Rose was the odd one out, standing outside the circle.

Queen Nandi: “And then wena (you)? Umeleni lapho (What are you waiting for there)?”

Rose: (scared) “I don’t think I am needed here, Ma. Besides, I am not family.”

Queen Nandi: “Ma ufuna ukubona unyoke, qubheka ngamasimba lawo (If you want to see your mother, carry on with your bullshit).”

Rose didn’t even think twice, she entered the circle and sat right next to Zenande as that was the only spot left open. Nana took out her rosary and so did Queen Nandi. They had the Bible before us.

Queen Nandi: “Thato, take a few moments, close your eyes and open the Bible and read the first verse your eyes land on.”

I nodded and did as I was told.

Thato: “Matthew 5:38 – “You have heard that it was said, “Eye for an eye, and tooth for tooth.”

I don't really know what the significance of the verse is, but their facial expressions were unreadable.

Nana: “Wolfe, take the Bible, and do the same. Read the verse you come across.”

Kg did the same thing and to my shocking surprise, he landed on the same verse. Nana and Queen Nandi looked at each other, almost like they were signalling something to each other and nodded without saying anything.

Thato: “What now?”

Nana: “Well, now we eat.”

I looked at Kg who also looked puzzled. There was some food prepared for us by the chef before he left, so we had some food and drinks. Gosh, I can't believe how much I ate. I actually realized how much I was starving. Zenande gobbled the food with her bare hands – without even using cutlery as she would normally do. What the fuck, though? Could they really have been so evil to turn such a young child into a zombie? I mean, she isn't my most favourite person, but no one deserves such. After eating, Nana and Queen Nandi strictly instructed us to keep quiet and meditate.

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Chapter One Hundred and Twenty Two

Romans 5:3-5 – “More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us

to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

Thato

It had been about three, probably four hours since we had been sitting in the circle. I am so exhausted, I can actually feel myself falling asleep. Apparently, none of us are allowed to fall asleep. We just have to keep meditating until they tell us when to start praying. I really feel odd, as if my soul is not one with my body – yet I feel somehow connected to God, my ancestors if that even makes sense.

Thato: (softly) "Ma Nandi, I feel weird."

Queen Nandi: "It's just your spirit, my dear. You have connected with your ancestors. They are here. I need you to focus right now, Thato, please. This is

for all of us – more especially for Zenande. All of us are going to see the ancestors right now, but do not be alarmed – for any feeling of fear or agitation might scare them off. We have come this far, and remember, evil energies are about to make their presence, so our ancestors are here to protect us. Can you do that, Thato?”

I nodded and tried my best not to be fearful. My Kg has been so supportive, he has just been praying all the way through and never let go of my hand.

Nana: “Isa, please open the Bible again and read the verse that you see again.”

I did as told and my eyes landed on the very same verse yet again – Matthew 5:38. Nana and Queen Nandi both looked at each other once again but said nothing else to me.

Queen Nandi: “Nkosinathi, open the Bible and read your verse please.”

Kg did as instructed, and this time, he landed on a different one.

Kg: “Job 1:21 – “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”

That verse didn’t sit very well with me, but I tried my utmost best to remain calm. Queen Nandi and Nana both looked at one another yet again and said nothing, but I decided not to ask. Suddenly, the air around us felt rather windy, but in a peaceful way. We felt a weird aura, and an overwhelming presence. Light appeared before us, but we couldn’t see anyone.

Nana: “Remember what we said, Isabella, the ball is in your court. Let us close our eyes.”

Queen Nandi: (praying) “Baphansi (our ancestors), Ba ka Ncube (The Ncubes), Ba ka Mokoena (The Mokoena’s), Ba ka Groen (The Groen’s), Ba ka Masango (The Masango’s), Ba ka Dlomo (The Dlomo’s), we all welcome you here. We know it was not an easy task to summon you all at once, but we ask you to please do what you need to do in due diligence. We ask you to protect us, more especially our young mother with her unborn cubs.

She needs you now more than ever. Yebo (Yes), we have received the message, however, we ask that we may be given a chance to appease you. We need everyone to get out of here alive – and by everyone, I mean EVERYONE. Zweli, my husband, kudala uhamba name (you have been with me throughout), kodwa lena iyangihlula (but this one is too heavy for me). Ngicela ubenathi (Please be with us).

Umfana wakho uyaganga (Your son is mischievous), playing God with your grandson's life, for that I ask for a way out. Reveal to me if there is anything else we can try. I hate bargaining, and I am not doing it as a sign of disrespect, but I am doing it so that we can reach a common understanding. Please, save us. Amen."

Immediately when I opened my eyes, I was met with the most beautiful sight I have ever come across. I saw my late mother, Petunia, Mulalo, Nonkanyiso and a few other people I don't recognize, but all have a resemblance to the Ncube family. They were all dressed in Cheetah skin clothes, while Aunt Vivian was also next to them, but dressed in different attire.

She was dressed in a Leopard attire, while I saw a white man along with a few white people next to him dressed in all white. I am assuming that is Nana's late husband, by the way he was smiling at her and

then at me. I saw MaMasango dressed in Zebra clothing, alongside other people who were dressed the same as her, while some of the others were dressed in Elephant clothing. Wow, I am guessing this is our ancestral lineage. What surprised me the most is that the lounge literally looked like we were in a field full of trees and bushes – we were no longer in our lounge so it seems.

There were also animals alongside these people. Each tribe had their own animal. The Ncubes had Cheetahs; the Letswalo's who are Mam'V's maiden family had a Leopard; MaMasango had a Zebra with her family, while the others had an Elephant. The Groens had white doves present with them. This is such a beautiful sight, I don't think I ever want to forget this.

Nonkanyiso: "Isabella, my baby. Remember what I told you. Tonight, you will have to fight for dear life. I am so sorry it has come to this, but it has to be

done. Your life along with the babies' lives are all in grave danger, but Zenande needs you most right now. She will be the one to save you all and will guide you til her last days on this earth. I know, you have been through so much, but please remember what I told you – the best is yet to come if only your heart can remain pure. You are a forgiving person, that is who you are. Do not ever let evil consume your heart.”

She then looked at Nana and Queen Nandi along with Soks.

Nonkanyiso: “You know what to do. The time is now.”

The three of them nodded.

Queen Nandi: “Thato, I need you to pray right now. Pray like you have never prayed before. Call upon

your ancestors, upon everyone surrounding us right now and pray for those babies, pray for Zenande, pray that we all make it out alive tonight.”

I nodded as I took a deep breath, closed my eyes and started praying with Kg’s firm hand in mine. As I was praying, I could hear the rest of them praying as well.

Thato: “Badimo ba ga Mokoena, ba ga Groen, ba ga Ncube, ba ga Masango, le bohle ba ke sa ba tsebeng ka leleme (The great ancestors of the Mokoena family, the Groen family, the Ncube family, the Masango family, and everyone else that I do not know off by heart). Rea le leboga ge le re fihletse (We thank you for your presence). Ke kopa le tshwarane matsogo le Modimo wa rena le re bontshe tsela (Please, work alongside our God and lead the way).

I do not know what the future holds, but all I know is

that I love my children and I am prepared to die for them. I ask that you protect each and every one of us here, protect Zenande. Give me the strength and courage to forgive her and face whatever is about to come. I know not why these things are all happening to us, but for God has always had his way and so it shall be.

When Jesus says yes, nobody can say no. Just as Jesus raised the widow's son in the book of Kings, I ask you to touch Zenande's life in the same way. The same way Jesus fed the 5000 people in the Book of Mark, I ask that you feed us with the holy spirit as well. Just as Jesus healed the paralyzed man in the book of Luke, I ask you to heal Zenande for us.

Just as Jesus stilled the storm in the book of Mark, I ask you to help us pass this storm as well. As Jesus said in John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth and the life." For we know that you can help us. Please,

guide us, for we cannot do this without you. You know us, and you know there is a reason for everything. We are all here for a reason. I do not know why I was tasked with such a huge responsibility, but I am not questioning, all I ask is that you reveal the answers to me in due course. Amen.”

As I opened my eyes, I saw Zenande’s eyes become pure white and I became scared.

Queen Nandi: “Do not fear, Thato, he will feed off your fear and use it against you! Pray, my dear child, pray!”

I heard all those animals making sounds, those that roar were roaring, I could hear them so loud as if I was at a game farm. Zenande remained unresponsive with pure white eyes, I couldn’t even see the pupils. I don’t even know who it was that Queen Nandi was referring to about him feeding off

my fear, but seeing Zenande like that, I just had to try.

As the animals were roaring, the ancestors were making chanting and ululating sounds. All this while Rose was praying with tears streaming down her face. I felt my eyes become soggy as I saw Zenande, and I dug deep into my soul and found the little energy I had left and used it to help my cousin.

Thato: "I appeal to you once more, my ancestors, my God! Be with Zenande right now, for no evil can prosper against a child who has so much power. She has a responsibility towards her people and how dare anyone try and take that away from her?! For you God, know everything. Jeremiah 1:5 – "Before you were formed in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Ecclesiastes 6:10 – "Whatever exists has already been named, and what humanity is has been known;

no one can contend with someone who is stronger.”
Isaiah 46:10 – “I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say; “My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.” For no one has the right to contest what God has already set apart and has already written in the heavens! Whatever evil spirit that has Zenande hostage, I rebuke you! I condemn you! We shall not fear any evil for God is walking right amongst us!”

I heard the roaring become louder, the ululating become stronger and the chanting become almost deafening. I felt as if the ground was shaking a bit, but the candles were still strong and not even burning out. Zenande was starting to shake a little bit with foam coming out of her mouth. I became scared, but the more scared I became – the harder and louder I prayed.

At that point it felt like I was no longer in my own body, but I kept going. I felt a very strong, sharp pain

in my stomach. I screamed out, but all I could hear at this point was the animals, the prayers, the chanting and ululating. Kg held my hands and asked me if I was okay, but I couldn't even hear him. I just saw his lips moving. The pain became stronger, and as I got up I saw Zenande's eyes clear up and she started speaking.

Zenande: "Thato! Thank you for releasing me! Thank you, my queen for bearing with me! Oh, how I wish to do things right! This cannot be happening."

She came closer to me and held my tummy and started praying. I have never even seen Zenande pray so much, for I never even thought that she could pray. It seemed as if she was high in spirit or something, but she kept praying and chanting and even praying in tongues. As she kept on praying, the pain slowly subsided.

Zenande: "All is well, my God. No one has to touch

these children, for God has already written their destiny. No one shall spill their blood on anyone's accord."

I felt a sudden negative energy enter the room, but the ancestors didn't move. All we heard was a voice, but we couldn't see the person. Zenande's hand never left my stomach.

Zenande: "Stay calm, do not fear. God is always with you."

Queen Nandi: "Ja, Cobra, you never learn, njandini (you dog)."

Who on earth is Cobra?

Cobra: (laughing) "You think you have won, don't you, Nandi? I have come to collect those two souls and there is nothing you can do about it."

Queen Nandi: (chuckling) “Still a coward, I see. You are still hiding in your little store room back home? Life must be tough right after your fifth wife left you and you are now left with one son.”

Cobra: (panicky) “How on earth did you know where I live?! No one knows that.”

Queen Nandi: “Like I said, you think you know me, Cobra. I am tired of you messing with my family. It is high time you suffer the consequences.”

Cobra: “Wait! I am going to kill your son if you take mine away from me.”

Queen Nandi: “I am not God, Cobra, besides, you can kill Mzi for all I care. Good bye now. You are ruining a perfect moment with your evilness.”

I heard this man start screaming and at the same time, we could smell something like Flesh burning. Soon he disappeared from the room and the room was now only left with positive energy. I felt so exhausted, almost like I was about to pass out.

Thato: "Is the worst over now?"

Zenande looked at me with such sorrow and pity.

Zenande: (teary) "I am afraid it has only just begun."

As soon as she removed her hands from my belly, I felt another sharp pain.

Thato: (screaming) "Aaaah!"

Kg: (frustrated) "Thato! Baby!"

His worried face was the last thing I saw that evening.

Chapter One Hundred and Twenty Three

Matthew 19:14 – "But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

Three weeks later

Thato

Petunia: "Thato, ngwanake (my child), you have to be strong now. You have to wake up."

Thato: "Where am I?"

Petunia: "You can't be here. It is not the time for you to join me. Not yet."

Thato: "Mama...."

Petunia: "Go now."

I slowly opened my eyes and realized that it was just a dream. I was blinded by the light in the room. As I looked around, I realized that I was in the hospital, hooked on drips and machines. My throat felt so dry, as if I hadn't had any fluids for weeks. I saw Kg sleeping on the couch right opposite me. I doubt he will even hear me, but I will have to try.

Thato: (softly) "Kg... Kgaugelo..."

I saw him get up anxiously as he rushed to my side.

He looks like hell. His face was unshaven and he looked like he hadn't cut his hair in ages.

Kg: (teary) "My love, how are you feeling?"

Thato: (coarse voice) "Water..."

He didn't hesitate, he quickly ran out and came back with a fresh bottle of water. He quickly opened it and dipped a straw in it, and helped me drink. I must have been way too thirsty because I gulped down half the bottle, and even nearly choked on it.

Kg: "Take it easy, Sthandwa sami (my love)."

I finally managed to quench my thirst and was able to speak again.

Thato: “Why am I here? What happened?”

I saw sudden sadness in Kg’s eyes. It actually felt like he was consumed with a whole lot of sadness and pity. Kg is never speechless, but now I can see how he really has nothing to say to me.

Thato: “Kg?”

I could see he was thinking of what to tell me, as he held my hands gently and let his tears stream down. Right then I remembered, that we had a hectic prayer session with Zenande and my family. I cannot recall what happened afterwards. Everything seems so blank after that.

Thato: (worried) “Kg? Keng (What is it)? Bolela (Talk)!”

His silence was deafening, which actually left me defeated. I found myself crying even when he hadn't told me anything yet.

Kg: "I'm sorry..."

Thato: "Sorry for eng (what)?"

Kg: "We... We lost our babies."

Right then, I felt like I had lost my mind. Those four words felt like a very sharp dagger that was forced into my chest instantly and very much unexpectedly. It felt like everything he said afterwards just didn't make sense. I could hear him, but I actually couldn't comprehend what he was saying at the same time.

Kg: "Baby? My love? Please, say something."

I saw so much hurt in his eyes. How could I have been such a failure at life? I have lost three children all before the age of 20 even. Life can be so unfair; whenever we were given such a topic for essays and debates back in high school, I always thought they were insane, but now I know the meaning thereof. We always see women on tv losing their children, and I guess you won't understand it until it actually hits home.

Thato: "How long have I been here?"

Kg: "Three weeks."

Thato: "How did it happen? Was it my fault?"

Kg: (puzzled) "Thato, none of this is your fault."

Then I remembered everything that happened a few

days prior. All the dreams I had been having about Zenande; the whole ceremony we had to do for her. Everything that has happened is all because of her. I lost my child because of her. I couldn't even get to bury MaMasango because of her!

Kg: "Thato, please, say something. Don't shut me out."

Thato: "Am I really that undeserving of happiness, Kgaugelo?"

Kg: (Puzzled) "No..."

Thato: "How can God be so cruel to me? To us? Is it not enough that I have already lost so much in a very short space of time?"

KG: (crying) "My love, you are the one who has

always kept the faith alive in our relationship. When you were kidnapped, I had to pray and have faith again, I never believed that you would not come back. Please, don't lose faith now. I know, it is so much to ask from you, but God has His reasons. We should never question, but be thankful for another day of life. You were in a coma, for some reason and apparently evil wanted to take your spirit since you helped Zenande, but you made it through. Malome (uncle) Mzi lost his son and Bruce also lost his son. We lost our twin boys, but we will be parents again one day, that much I can assure you."

That stabbed my heart even more. I felt so much worse after he told me that.

Thato: "Boys?"

Kg: (nodding) "Queen Nandi told me that you were carrying boys. Please, my love, don't shut me out."

That was probably the fourth time he repeated those words “don’t shut me out”. I honestly don’t know what to say, but I am so shocked, so heartwrenched, that words cannot even explain what I feel right now. I have heard of men cheating on their wives because they couldn’t bear them children. What is going to happen between Kg and I now that I am not pregnant anymore, not only that – I have now lost three of his children. Maybe my womb is incompetent. I was robbed of mourning for my children properly. Honestly, I feel so angry at Zenande, had she not come back then we wouldn’t be in this mess. As I sat there, wiping my tears away, with Kg kissing my hands, Gloria and Zweli walked in – along with Rami and Thendo. I felt my heart suddenly drop to the pit of my stomach as I saw them both glowing so beautifully with their big bellies. Their husbands had so much pity written on their faces; while I felt an immense feeling of envy and jealousy consume me. Why can’t that be me? Am I turning into a jealous old friend now? Will I become like those childless

women who hate women who are fertile?

Gloria: (crying) “Oh, my darling. Are you okay?”

She hugged me with so much pain and relief. I am guessing relief because I am finally awake, but one thing about Gloria is that she is indeed an empathetic person. She literally feels your pain and carries you through it. I actually could feel that her spirit was pained just like mine. She was most probably crying throughout the whole 3 weeks that I have been here. Her face was swollen and puffy.

Thato: (faking a smile) “Glo, come on. You really need to stop crying. This is not good for your glow.”

Zweli chuckled a little bit after he and Thendo hugged Kg. Glo smiled at me as she wiped her tears away. Rami just looked so different – I really can't tell if it is the pregnancy or what, but she

seemed a bit distant from me. She seemed a bit unhappy, rather sad.

Thato: "Hi Rami."

Rami: (teary) "Hey, Tee. O shap (Are you okay)?"

She didn't even come to hug or hold me, which actually puzzled me. Rami is very affectionate towards me especially and now she is just behaving a little oddly. Thendo didn't even mind her, which was also rather odd. I mean, he was usually so all over her, but now they just seem a bit over each other if I can put it like that.

Thato: "Yes, I'm fine."

I don't know how to even answer that to begin with, but hey, I guess no one really knows how to answer

such a question, right? Kg noticed Rami's offish mood, but I honestly blamed it on the pregnancy. For someone who just had her fairy tale wedding a few weeks ago, she sure looks depressed. But I guess pregnancy can have a huge toll on you. We had a bit of an uncomfortable silence so I decided to break the ice.

Thato: "So, Glo, how is the new house coming along?"

Gloria: (smiling) "Well, we are doing the last touch ups for the renovation. You should come visit soon before you go back to Jo'burg."

I guess I should do it soon because I want to go back to Jo'burg.

Thato: "Most definitely. Wena (You), Rami? Dintshang ko Jozi (What's cooking in Jo'burg)? I am

pretty sure everyone on campus misses you at their famous parties.”

While I cracked a smile, along with Kg, Glo, Zweli and Thendo who were laughing, Rami didn't take it quite well. She actually took my comment rather offensive.

Rami: (annoyed) “O nyaka gore eng (What are you trying to say), Thato? Are you saying I'm only known for parties? That I have no other talents in life?”

Wow, she actually said that folding her arms, while looking at me in the most disgusted manner. I was actually hurt by her reaction. Gloria was so shocked; while Kg was annoyed and unimpressed by her little outburst. Thendo on the other hand was rather embarrassed.

Thato: “I didn't mean it like that, Rami. It was just a

joke. Since when do you take everything said to you so seriously?"

Rami decided to hurt me to the point of no return instead of saying something else.

Rami: "Since I became an expectant mom, not that you would know anything about that."

Her words cut me so deep, I couldn't help but feel my tears threatening to leave my eyes. Gloria and Kg were so irritated.

Gloria: "Haibo (wow), Rami! My goodness! Asiyenzi kanjalo ke sisi (We don't do that here, sis). You are in the presence of a Queen and you decide to speak such vile words against her? No, girl, no."

Rami: "Well, she is your queen, mos (right)?"

I felt scorching hot tears burn my cheeks as I looked at her, unremorseful of her actions. Kg was breathing fire, as he gently held my hand. Couldn't Rami actually wait another time to rub her pregnancy in my face?

Kg: (Firmly) "Mfo (Bro), please take your wife with you and leave. She has no place here."

Thendo: (embarrassed) "I apologize for her behaviour. It must be the hormones."

Rami: (unimpressed) "Wa reng, wena Thendo (What did you just say, Thendo)?!"

Something just isn't right between these two, but for her to say such to me hurt me to the core.

Thendo: (angered) "Let's go!"

Rami followed Thendo as she left rudely without even apologizing.

Gloria: "I am so sorry, sisi (sis). Please don't take it personally. I am pretty sure she was just going through her moody phases, but it just was not very nice of her."

Thato: "Kg, do you and Zweli mind giving us two a moment alone together?"

Kg: "Okay, baby. Do you need something?"

I am actually quite starved. I wonder what I have been eating in the last three weeks.

Thato: "Just some food, please."

He kissed my forehead as Zweli kissed Gloria on the lips and they left us. I don't know what it was, but as soon as they left, I managed to cry my eyes out. I actually cried so much, I even felt a slight headache coming about.

Gloria: "It's okay, my love. Let it all out. You know, my father would always tell me that it is better to cough everything out and cry until you can't anymore, than to keep it all bottled up. It is better to gradually deal with pain than to explode it all out in the end. I can't even begin to tell you what it feels like to lose a baby, but what I can tell you is that you will heal. I remember how I felt when I was raped by my stepmother's brother.

I was a mess, I questioned God and everything about him. I would even question His existence; I asked myself if He was really alive and loved us, then why did so many bad things happen to good

people? I actually felt a lot of hatred towards Him. Funny enough, the more I felt He didn't exist nor love me, the more He actually proved His love for me. I felt like killing, but someone saved me. I didn't feel like completing my schooling, but my teachers saved me.

I remember using my last R20 and I had no idea what I was going to eat the following morning, but someone out of the blue appeared and told me about the job at the Royal Palace. I felt like my life was at a standstill and you appeared. I can't even begin to describe what you feel, my love, but I can assure you that God loves us all. His timing is not our timing, but rest assured, He loves us all. You shall not suffer, Thato, you will get your heart's desires when the time is right."

Oh, Glo and her words of comfort. They always bring such calmness to my soul. I can't even believe how much better I actually felt after she told me that.

Thato: "You, know, Glo, you are someone I haven't known for long, but I trust you. Can I confide in you about something?"

Gloria: "Sure."

Thato: "On my wedding day, Kgabo, Rami's brother said something very puzzling to me. He said that the one I confide in the most will turn against me. What on earth does that mean?"

Gloria: "What I can tell you, Thato, is that you just need to keep your eyes open. You have to know which battles to fight. Don't run to just anybody whenever you and Kg have a problem and don't tell anyone everything about him. Learn to keep your secrets and learn to keep him as your best friend. You might actually be surprised as to how the people you trust the most actually don't love you."

Her last statement made me think that there was more to it, but she was trying to be subtle about it. I don't know, really, but Rami genuinely broke my heart. She is not herself, but it must have taken a lot of hatred for her to say such to me.

Thato: "I hear you, my love. I hear you."

We spoke about a lot of things and I am actually glad that Glo was there to keep me sane. I managed to ask her about her growing baby and I looked at her sonar scan without breaking apart. I love Glo, really. She is the sister I never had. After about an hour, Zweli and Kg came back with some food. Gloria and Zweli decided to eat with us and we managed to forget for a while that I was in hospital.

While we had our meal, Queen Nandi, Nana and Zenande walked in. I felt my mood change instantly

when I saw her, but I didn't show it. I am not a hateful person, but I just feel something oddly unpleasant growing for her. I know she has never liked me, but now I lost my babies because of her. I saw the pity in Queen Nandi's eyes, and the utmost sadness in Nana's eyes. She was turning pink already, trying to force the tears back. Zenande looked very uncertain, and didn't seem like she wanted to come in.

Queen Nandi: "Hello, my children. Thato, my child. How are you?"

Thato: "I am fine, Ma, how are you?"

Queen Nandi: "I am alright."

I refrained from asking Nana anything, because I knew that just one word from me and she would totally lose it. I have had enough crying for the day.

Queen Nandi: "Thato, Nkosinathi, is this a good time to talk?"

Kg: "Sure, Gogo (Granny)."

Queen Nandi: "I know we have a lot to deal with, but we have an urgent matter to discuss."

What could be urgent at this time?

Queen Nandi: "As you both know, we had a lobola ceremony scheduled for you, Thato. We had to postpone it because you were in a coma and unresponsive, but now that you are awake, we have to do it as soon as possible, or else, the ancestors won't be happy about this. Nothing will go well for you two if you don't follow through with this ceremony."

Kg: (sigh) "I see."

Honestly, I just need to get my life in order.

Thato: "When can we do it?"

Queen Nandi: "Well, we were hoping on Saturday."

Well, it is Thursday today, and Saturday will be the 2nd of December, my birthday. Just my bloody luck. Another lobola ceremony scheduled for my birthday, a year after I lost my baby. I don't think this is a coincidence, but I guess I will have to do it. Kg probably sensed my fear.

Kg: "Can't we choose another date, Gogo (granny)? I mean, that is Thato's birthday. I want her to have the fondest memories of her birthday for a change."

Queen Nandi: "I am afraid not. The ancestors have spoken, and it is actually your mother who chose this date, Nkosinathi. She spoke to me through a dream."

Thato: "It's okay, I'll do it."

Kg: "Are you sure?"

We don't really have much of a choice, and besides, we have lots of security detail and I doubt Sophie or Sonto have anything in them to even hire a hitman or someone to do us dirty this time.

Thato: "Yes, I am sure."

Queen Nandi: "Well, there is something else. Zenande has to cleanse you, my darling. I don't know if you will be comfortable with that."

I don't even know what to say because it seems as if things have just taken a turn for the worst. I guess marrying into a family like this one, you just have to adhere to their customs. I knew what I was getting myself into when I married Kg, so I cannot start revolting right now.

Thato: "Yes, it's okay."

Zenande looked really sad, uncomfortable and genuinely out of place. She does however look a lot better than what she did that night she arrived.

Zenande: "Thato, I firstly would like to say I am sorry. I know, you blame me for what happened, but I really did not mean to cause you any harm or disrupt your life. I am truly sorry for your loss."

For the first time I have known Zenande, she actually

seemed genuine. It felt as if I was seeing the real Zenande before me for the first time in my life. I felt a little bad for even feeling an ounce of hatred towards her, but forgiveness does not come overnight.

Chapter One Hundred and Twenty Four

Romans 12: 18-21 – “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Thato

After what felt like eternity in the hospital, everyone

around the hospital apparently kept sending their lovely messages, flowers and cards. Before I got discharged, I received all those gifts and Kg had apparently been taking very good care of those flowers. The people of Enande have indeed shown me too much love. The day I got home, all the workers were there to welcome me, and they had even cooked a feast for me, with given permission of course.

Queen Nombu and King Ntsika felt it was too soon for me to see people, but how could I just let those people leave without me spending time with them? I didn't mind at all and apparently Nurse Portia has been spending a lot of time with Soks. I see some love blossoming there and it is honestly a good thing. I'm keeping quiet, I guess she will tell me when the time is right.

Tomorrow, we have to have the cleansing ceremony and Kg and I have to officially name our deceased

children. It is customary to do so, since we are Africans. Apparently the children will grow spiritually and should never be forgotten. Queen Nandi told me that it does not mean that when you abort a child or have a miscarriage or stillborn, that the child's life ends there. The spiritual life is much more complicated than we know, and I guess we all need to know what happens on that side. Kg and I actually had so much fun with the people and we enjoyed their food. A lot of women were so comforting and said some really nice words to us. I guess that when the time is right indeed, we will have our own children.

It of course is not nice when you see people around you having children while you keep losing them, but we cannot be dwelling on the bad stuff all the time. After all the festivities; I decided to retreat to my room. Shame, poor Kg wanted to tag along, but I could clearly see that he was having so much fun with Bongani, so I forced him to stay a little longer.

Once I got in I managed to find some peace and quiet as I took out the sonogram I got the day I found out I was pregnant. The bedroom looks oddly different, or maybe it is because I haven't been here in weeks. Little did I know that the day I found out I was expecting, was going to be my last day expecting. I couldn't help but shed a few tears while staring at my unborn boys. How cruel is life, though?

Thato: (teary) "Rest in peace, my boys. I love you so incredibly much."

After that, I heard a stern knock on the door. I didn't even bother to ask who it was.

Thato: "Come in."

Nana slowly walked through the door. Shame, she looks like she had been crying. A few glasses of your favourite beverage will do that to you. She just

walked in and looked at me. She didn't say anything as I opened my arms and she hugged me. She gave me one, long hug and cried for a while. This must bring some painfully vivid memories for her. How she had 4 miscarriages before having my father. I guess this truly hits home.

Thato: "Are you okay?"

Nana: "My baby, I am not okay. I am not okay because you are going through pain. This pains me so much, more especially since I saw it before it happened."

Most of the time I don't even blame Nana and Queen Nandi for being borderline alcoholics. They deal with so much and seeing the future can't be easy, really.

Thato: "I am sorry you had to carry that burden,

Nana.”

Nana: “Isabella, when I heard that you were found, my first prayer to God was that he would spare you the pain of losing a child. Now that you have lost three already, I can’t help but relive my pain.”

Thato: “I will be okay, Nana. As the Good Lord promised that we will all find solace in His name. All in good time He shall give me my heart’s desires.”

Nana: (smiling) “That’s the spirit, my baby. You know, my David came when no one expected it. This life will make you want to kill yourself because we are all constantly competing against one another. It is not about what you have achieved at a certain age, it is all about the mere fact that you did finally get there. No matter if you get a child at 50, at the end of the day you did reach that milestone. You might find so many girls who are pregnant or have had children at your age, but are not happy about their

decisions and as a result, their children are suffering the most.”

She has a good point, I guess we fail to see it when we are in times of trouble and weary.

Nana: “Greater days are coming and you just don’t know it yet. I just need you to open your eyes and have faith in God. Never leave your husband’s side, and forgive Zenande. I know it is a lot to ask of you, but really, it is not her fault. You might not see it now but in due time, you will.”

This is so hard for me. I know she means well and she never lies, but it is just painful to think that I have to smile at a woman who has caused me such great pain. She left after a few minutes, and I managed to doze off. I dreamt of Nonkanyiso and my mother, walking alongside each other, while Nokanyiso had two babies in both arms. They didn’t say anything to me, instead they just smiled. I knew right there

and then, that my babies had arrived safely in the spiritual world. I woke up in the middle of the night, smiling, with my body enwrapped in Kg's grip. He woke up as soon as he heard me trying to wiggle out of his grip. I didn't even hear him walk in.

Kg: "O ya kae (Where are you going)?"

Thato: "I didn't mean to wake you. I want to kneel down and pray."

Kg: "Do you mind if we do it together?"

I looked at him and he seemed so serious. Kg would literally do anything for me, but I feel that this is partially for him – for us. This is part of the healing process and in order to heal, we have to do it together. Speak to God together.

Thato: "Of course not."

We both knelt down and Kg began praying for us.

Kg: "Modimo wa rona yo a rategang (Our Loving God), The God of love, the God of peace, the God of prosperity, the God of healing and forgiveness. My beautiful, selfless wife and I bow before you as we speak, for we firstly would like to thank you. Thank you, oh, God, for being so wonderful to us. No one is perfect, no life is perfect, but mine is because you decided to give me this beautiful woman besides me.

Thank you for granting us another day of life, thank you for granting us good health and a chance to start over. Thank you for bringing my wife back to me, and thank you for allowing her to love the broken man that I am. We come before you lord, to ask for your divine protection, intervention and blessings. We have lost a great part of ourselves, but we know that you have so much better in store for us. You

never lied to us when you promised us a good life, for as long as we believed, had faith and prayed to you.

I may seem like I am demanding right now, but my utmost request to you, Lord, is that you may please grant my wife strength through this ordeal. Grant her the ability to see her enemies; yet grant her the strength and courage to keep going and being herself again. For this world would be at a terrible loss should she decide to give up now. Once again, forgive us for our trespasses, God, but help us become better people, a better couple. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.”

I felt a great sense of serenity inside of me after he prayed for us, while we both had tears running down our cheeks. We hugged each other for a while and I just knew that things were going to be okay, for as long as I had Kg by my side.

Chapter One Hundred and Twenty Five

Psalm 34:18 – “The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Thato

Friday eventually came and passed. The ceremony was so emotionally draining yet it has brought some sort of peace to my heart and I know Kg feels the same. Our babies were named Mthunzi which means shadow and Thulani which means be comforted. I honestly have no idea why they were named such names, but apparently Nonkanyiso wanted it that way. It was a bit hard for me to allow Zenande to cleanse me, but I actually realized that she was a victim just as much as I was. Queen Nandi begged me to try and forgive her, otherwise her cleansing would not work. I cannot say that I have made peace with what has happened, but I am getting there. She was so uncomfortable and Queen Nandi did say that if the cleanser is not at peace,

then I won't have peace in my life.

We didn't need any negative vibes, so I tried to give her the benefit of the doubt. I feel for her, really. Her rapist dad was finally arrested, and is pending trial, while Nomsa is also awaiting trial for her fraud case. She has apparently found God and sends me letters every now and then. I am glad she is finally trying to make an effort if she truly is being genuine.

I do hope that some day she comes back as a changed person, because I do see how this has affected King Ntsika badly. He really thinks he has failed his children and does not even have much confidence in himself anymore. He longs to fill that void, hence he keeps asking us when we would like to take over the reigns fully. I am not really ready and I know that Kg also wants to get his business up and running before we can actually run this kingdom full time. Today is my lobola ceremony and no one told Gringo about my miscarriage.

I am glad they didn't, even though he will keep talking about the baby and I will have to break the news to him some time. He seems so much at peace with his new missionary school and I do not want to make him feel like I really cannot do anything on my own. I am truly grateful for the support I have. Queen Nandi and Nana are such awesome beings, they took it upon themselves to go and look for the gifts and everything for the ceremony for today. Gloria helped Nurse Portia arrange all the food and décor for today and even made sure that it got shipped beforehand. Being heavily pregnant, she didn't even mind walking around. She walks around so well, as if she is not even pregnant.

She is always so full of energy, and Queen Nandi says she is carrying a very sweet yet stubborn being in there. They do say that they can't even see the gender, as if the baby is deliberately hiding from them along with the ancestors. Apparently this

baby will change Zweli forever. Soks has been so supportive and has been by Nurse Portia's side ever since that day I found out I was pregnant. I can see love blossoming there, but I still haven't asked her. Perhaps she might tell me what is what today.

We had to leave Enande at 3am, and my goodness I am tired. All these ceremonies do tend to take their toll on a person's body. I had to "bury" my babies yesterday and today I am getting married. Nana has been trying to encourage me to be happy today; she says that a sad bride brings so much bad aura and affects the marriage in the long run as well. She did say that marriage is a beautiful union and the mood of the bride and groom also affects everything else.

I guess I am too hung up on the past and on what happened last year. It is my birthday indeed, and I have to at least try to enjoy it. Kg and Soks along with King Ntsika; Bongani and the rest of the family members are driving in their own kombi; while

Gringo took it upon himself to drive us to the airport.

He is letting us use his private Jet of course. It is really nice being a millionaire, though. Of course, Nana and Queen Nandi didn't mind drinking almost everything on the menu, while I just had nerves all over my body. My Kg couldn't even wait to be next to me. Apparently he is not even supposed to see me, but because we are already married. The ancestors made an exception. He could sense my nerves as always as he gently squeezed my hand, I immediately zoned out of my deep thoughts.

Kg: "Baby, o shap (are you okay)?"

Thato: (smiling) "I am fine."

Kg: (chuckling) "You can never lie to me, you know, but I'll let it slide this time."

I smiled as he stared deep into my eyes.

Kg: "You really mean the world to me, Thato. I know, this is not the ideal wedding you want, but give me a chance and you will see. I just want to make you the happiest woman alive."

Thato: "I am happy, Kg. Having you is just enough for me."

He smiled and kissed me gently on the lips. He is right, this is not ideal for me, but it is necessary. After a few hours, we landed in Soweto. Of course, there was no time to sleep, as I had to get dressed in my attire immediately. Luckily, I found Glo and Nurse Portia already watching the caterers, telling them where to put what; while Mrs. Letswalo, Rami's mother was in the bedroom that was prepared just for me. I felt a bit odd and weird as I had to enter the yard, especially without Kg by my side.

I saw a few family members, including Aunt Rachel, our elder from my mom's family. The house was in such a mess, but you could see that they did some last minute touch ups to fix it for today. The pavement looks freshly painted, while the shelter seems to be holding on to dear life. As soon as Koko walked out of the house to greet me, I just could not help but feel pained and ashamed to be some sort of related to her. She allowed her evil daughter to abuse me and she let her back into my house by the way, right after everything she did to me.

Koko Maria: (smiling) "Ngwanake (My child)."

She opened her arms while trying to hug me, and I couldn't help but return a hostile reaction towards her.

Koko Maria: “Hao (wow), Thato. Setse o nyalwa ka jeno ga o sa re itse (Because you’re getting married today, you don’t know us anymore)?”

I really tried by all means to be happy today. Nana was holding my hand the whole time, begging me to be polite. Apparently since I am the reigning queen, if the traditional beer (umnqombothi) does not boil, it means that my marriage won’t last or that I’ll have bad luck, so I have to try my best to have a good day. Nana was very unimpressed with Koko.

Nana: (annoyed) “Koko (granny), please, give our bride some space. She has had a long flight and I am sure she will attend to your needs soon.”

Koko Maria: (smiling broadly) “Of course, of course. Please, let me lead you to the bedroom.”

Nana: (hostile) “It’s okay. We know where to go.”

Nana didn't even show her any of her teeth as she refused to return a smile. We went to my mom's old bedroom and already I saw a lot had changed. I wanted to cry, but they all quickly got to me.

Mrs. Letswalo: "You shall not dare shed a tear and make your enemies happy, Thato."

Queen Nandi: "Don't you see? They are all faking smiles and waiting for you to fail. They refuse to believe that you have finally found happiness."

Nana: "Even when they are living in such rags. They still do not wish you well, but you are here to face your demons, child. Show them that you are not a toy – but you are the chosen one. You are God's favourite and your blessings are indeed running over you as they will keep doing so."

I guess they are right. I quickly pulled myself together. I couldn't help but feel a tinge of heartache when I noticed Rami was not around. I mean, she isn't even 8 months pregnant yet, so she can't say that she was too tired to be here. She is literally having the time of her life and going clubbing every now and then, but ever since that day she told me those hurtful words, she couldn't even bring it upon herself to at least support me on my day. I can't hide it – I am hurt. I think Mrs. Letswalo noticed that and she tried her best to cover for her child.

Mrs. Letswalo: (uncomfortable) "Uhm, Rami couldn't be here today. She said she wasn't feeling well. You know, morning sickness can be such a nightmare."

Thato: "It's okay, Mme (ma), you don't have to cover for her."

Mrs. Letswalo: (sigh) "She will come around. Don't let her get to you."

Her statement seemed more than just someone comforting a hurt friend. Rami is more like a sister to me and something really tells me that she is hiding something serious from me, but I will have to let it slide. I had to freshen up, while the women helped me get dressed in my Tswana attire, as we would later change in our Zulu Royal traditional attire.

Queen Nombu: “Oh, you look so beautiful, my baby. No wonder everyone is so envious of you. You know, I come from a family of 5 sisters and 1 brother. I can tell you, honestly, that I am the prettiest, even Queen Nandi will confirm that.”

They all laughed.

Queen Nandi: “Hayi, Nombulelo, uyazithemba ne sisi (you really are confident, aren't you, sis)?”

We just had to laugh at that.

Queen Nombu: “Nawe uyazi (you know it too).”

We finished our touch ups, and Queen Nandi said a powerful prayer for us before we headed out. As Queen Nombu opened the door, she caught Sophie eavesdropping.

Queen Nombu: “It’s bad enough you treated my daughter like shit, now you are eavesdropping on us. Why couldn’t you knock like a normal person?”

Sophie looked nothing like the mini slay queen she was turning into the last time I saw her. She looked like a real mess. Some of her teeth were missing; her figure was gone; her face had gone back to the phuza face she had back in the day.

Sophie: “Ah, no man, I was about to knock. Kgante lena le bjang di king and queen (What kind of people are you Kings and queens)? La tena man (you are boring)?”

Queen Nombu: “Wa itse wa kgona go nyela sediba, Sophie Mokoena (You can really shit on a good person). Now that you got a huge chunk of lobola money, you think you can have the audacity to speak to me like that?”

We could all smell the alcohol from every corner in the bedroom.

Sophie: “Mxm, ah, ka gore o patetse 200 stena nyana o nagana gore o dese (Just because you paid a mere R200 0000 you think you are better than us)?”

I was a bit shocked that Queen Nombu could speak Tswana, so well even, but I was actually even more

shocked that Kg actually paid that much for me. So much money for these people? They truly don't deserve me. Queen Nombu was about to tell her kak, but I decided to intervene.

Thato: "Leave her, Queen Nombu. She is not worth it."

We proceeded to walk out while Sophie decided to start insulting me yet again on my lobola day. Ja, neh.

Sophie: (shouting) "Ja, tswela pele selo ke wena (Carry on, you little thing)! You will never amount to anything in life! O ka se tswile o bile le bana, o phadile le ke Kagiso, jou moerskont (You will never have children, even Kagiso did a better job than you at that, you cunt)!"

Those words hurt me; they really cut me deep but I

walked on without looking back. And just then, I heard Queen Nandi whisper something to Sophie, but loud enough for us all to hear.

Queen Nandi: “You know, I have read the Quran and I can tell you that it is really pleasant and very straightforward about Karma. “And for every person we have imposed his fat upon his neck, and we will produce for him on the Day of Ressurrection a record which he will encounter spread open – Quran 17:13.” What that basically means is that what you did to your my beloved granddaughter Nonkanyiso, will most certainly come to you tenfolds. Your precious Kagiso – the township whore will burn and poison every single one of your grandchildren.”

I stopped to look at Sophie’s reaction and she actually looked scared, because Queen Nandi held her firmly by her hand and stared her deep in the eye. I don’t know, but it seemed like Sophie was in some kind of trans.

Queen Nandi: “Yes, I want you to see it, to live it, for that dirty tongue of yours has no right to curse my precious daughter in law like that. You will die a slow, painful death, Sophie. Even repentance will not be enough for you in your last days.”

She let go of Sophie and I saw incredible fear in her eyes from that day on. I didn't mind because I had a good day from there onwards. We carried on walking and we finally made it outside. I actually cried when I saw how beautiful the tent was. Glo and Nurse Portia actually did a very good job. The décor was so royal, so traditional. Sesotho meets Zulu and wow, my goodness, my dress is just something else. I don't know, but for some reason I still crave an intimate ceremony between Kg and I just for the two of us. Two cows were slaughtered and of course everyone in the township was around and made it to my wedding.

They heard that the white girl is getting married to Kg who is now a royal King, and they just couldn't wait to see it. Of course, they came because they saw the big brewery truck standing outside my yard. If you want to see fake people from the township saying good things about you, give them free alcohol. The food is not even a want nor a need, but give them free alcohol and they will be putty in your hands.

Even Ruth was present, greeting me with the broadest smile ever. I am tired of pretending and I can't really pretend much. I won't smile at them just because they chose to come to my wedding. My Kg looked as handsome as ever. My goodness, I swear I fall in love with him even more each and every day. Ultimately, we had a very good day. Queen Nandi brought the Traditional beer and she was smiling, which means it managed to brew. I breathed a sigh of relief knowing that at least my marriage would be fruitful.

It was so nice, so refreshing to actually see Zenande in her zone, dressed in her healer attire and actually blessing our day. I really have hope for her and I can see MaMasango's genes run through her veins. Everyone had fun; they drank up a storm and the music was galore. Ultimately, we had the perfect kasi wedding. Thankfully we didn't have to stay long, because we just had to do some of the things as part of cultural formalities.

Deep down I was a bit worried that I would see Sonto, but thank goodness she didn't make it to my wedding, because I am nowhere near ready to see her. I am glad that I managed to have fun and put the past behind me. Gringo was so proud of me and he chose to sit next to me while we got on the plan. Shame, my Kg was a bit jealous, but he understood that my father does not see me every day, so he gave him this moment.

Gringo: "So, how is it going with the bun in the

oven?”

My face automatically changed and I couldn't even hide it.

Thato: “I lost the babies, dad.”

For some reason, he didn't even look shocked. Sad he was, yes, but it didn't seem like it was news to him.

Gringo: “I know, my baby, I know. I was waiting for you to tell me.”

Thato: (puzzled) “They assured me that they would not tell you.”

Gringo: “Who said they told me?”

Thato: (puzzled) "Who told you?"

Gringo: "Vivian told me. She visits me often, you know. Can you believe she wants me to move on already? She even chose the perfect wife for me. That woman is insane – even in death."

I couldn't help but laugh a little.

Gringo: "Seriously, how are you holding up?"

Thato: "I am taking each day as it comes, dad."

Gringo: "That is good news, baby. But take it from me, you might have lost babies, but perhaps this is God's will. Don't take this the wrong way, but enjoy your life with Wolfe before you have children. He has enjoyed his youth, and I know that he wants the

same for you. Have a good life, create memories and have a blast. Party together, get drunk together, travel together, make mistakes and just have fun. You two will have the children when the time is right.”

I guess he is really right. I didn't really think of it that way. I guess I was trying to fill the void of the first baby I lost, forgetting that I still want to complete my degree. I will get there – I mean Kg has been telling me about how good his early twenties were and how he wishes the same for me. Deep down I knew that he is the one who asked Gringo to speak some sense into me.

Thato: “I hear you, Dad. I will try.”

Gringo: “Remember, I am always just a phone call away. If you need me nearby, I can come in a heartbeat.”

That I know he is capable of. I guess I am truly blessed to have him in my life.

One year later....

Time has passed and honestly, it has been quite a rollercoaster. I finally finished my first year and I aced it despite my troubles. I am about to finish my second year now, and it is almost my birthday yet again. Life has truly been good and we did manage to come back to Jozi. We do go back to Enande every now and then, and I can say that Kg and I are stronger than ever. He did manage to get his company up and running and we are actually launching it on my birthday. Yes, I trust Kg to make everything about me. Well, Soks is full of surprises, he wed Nurse Portia literally three months after knowing her and they are in the ministry together.

Of course she is still the royal nurse, while he remains a pastor. Life has truly been good to them. Zenande and I have finally managed to have peace, and Gloria and Zweli finally met their bundle of joy – a beautiful baby girl named Zendaya. Don't ask me why they named her that, but such is life and it is a beautiful name. Rami on the other hand has been on and off with me. I don't know what is happening in her life, especially since she and Thendo got divorced right after she gave birth to their son, Todani.

Yes, he was named right after his father. Things have been quite tough for her, but she still hasn't told me about her troubles. I hear all this from Thendo. I have accepted that Rami has shut me out of her life, and as painful as it is, I have finally moved on from it. I have learnt to make Kg my best friend, and I don't know what the future holds, but all I can say is that I am ready for it.

I was deep in thought when my phone rang. I checked the caller ID and it was Zenande.

Thato: "Hello, Zee. How are you?"

Zenande: (anxious) "I am well, Thato, how are you?"

Thato: "I'm okay. You sound very anxious, what's wrong?"

Zenande: "Thato, I had a very strange vision right now. Something bad is coming your way, I have tried praying about it and I just can't shake the feeling."

I became worried all of a sudden.

Thato: "What do you mean, Zee?"

Zenande: “Something good you did back in the day has finally come back to haunt you. Whatever happens, open your eyes and never stop praying. This is going to be a serious test between you and your husband, but no matter what – don’t stop praying.”

Here we go again. Another riddle.

Thato: “Okay, I’ll try.”

Zenande: “Oh, and Thato, be careful of Rami.”

With that said, she hung up.

Chapter One Hundred and Twenty Six

Galatians 6:9 – “And let us not grow weary of doing

good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

Thato

Oscar Wilde once said, no good deed goes unpunished. A few of us actually realize the meaning thereof, but Palesa would always tell me that good people always get fucked over. I have been told countless times that I am too good for my own will – even by Kg himself. I don't know what Zenande is on about, but ever since she called me, I have been very uneasy. I can't seem to get her words out of my head. I was under the impression that I had no enemies – well except for my mother's family and my own mother.

Speaking of Sonto, I haven't really seen nor heard from her since the time her womb was ripped out of her body. Sophie also forgets just what Gringo and Kg did to her, but as expected, they finished the

lobola money within a month. They blew it all on expensive shoes and clothes, and champagne. She even bought Kagiso's kids designer clothes – all three of them. After all that she fell pregnant once again and must have probably given birth by now. They called me soon after the money was finished and asked me to send them grocery money.

Kg told me straight up not to even dare. I won't lie, I really thought about doing it, I mean it is not nice seeing people suffer from hunger while I have millions in my bank account, but I chose to listen to my husband instead and not give into their silly demands. Of course, Sophie swore at me like never before and I just let her be. I mean, that is just how life goes. I decided to freshen up and go visit my husband. He took his time with this new company, and he even named it right after me – Thato Jewelers.

I am too excited about the launch, and he keeps

asking me for my input almost every time. I don't know why he does that when he has a PA. I haven't even met the girl, but he has assured me that she is a nice girl and of course, far too young to ever try to seduce him. Rami being on and off with me, has tried to tell me continuously that I need to mark my territory, while Gloria has told me that I need to relax and trust my man.

I know deep down that Glo is more sensible than Rami, but then what harm would it do to see this girl? So, I got into my black, tight-fit lace dress, the one Kg bought me a few weeks ago – also one of many outfits bought by him. Luckily his company is not very far from our house – about 10 minutes away and right into Newtown. I don't really have to sign in when I am there, but I still comply like anyone else. I saw a few people doing touch ups to the building, such as putting in new lights and painting the last bits of the building, but overall, I am impressed by what he did to Gringo's old building.

It is not everyday that your father in law gives you a whole building as a wedding gift. Tumisho will also be joining him, since he apparently is very good and assembling just about anything. He refused to go to varsity, so his big brother told him to join him instead. He loves being around Kg, and I think that really will help him a lot since he is basically an orphan – even though Sonto is very much alive. As I walked in, I found a very beautiful girl sitting in the reception area. She had chocolate skin and not one pimple in sight.

Her dimples were to die for, and of course, she looked like the typical receptionist – boobs out, long nails, ridiculously long weave and very high heels. I saw her feet underneath her desk, but I wasn't too sure what she was wearing, until I approached her and saw from over the counter. There is no way Kg will be working with a girl like this.

I mean, I am not jealous or anything, but what will

his clients say when they see someone dressed in such a skimpy dress? She smiled at me, but I could tell that smile was not very genuine. She gave me that low-key nasty look; you know, that top to toe look and I am pretty sure she was analysing me and telling me shit in her mind.

PA: (smiling) “Hi, you must be Thato. Oh, Kg has told me so much about you.”

She reached for my hand, but I was more hung up on her approach. Is she going to refer to everyone that walks through those doors on first name basis? And since when does she call my man by his nick name? I felt a tinge of jealousy – I won’t lie. I shook her hand reluctantly.

Thato: (fake smile) “Hi, you must be ReINETTE, right?”

ReINETTE: “Yes, but you are so welcome to call me

Ree.”

Thato: “I’d rather call you by your full name if that is okay with you.”

I could tell she was not impressed with my reaction.

Reinette: (fake smile) “Of course. Kg was not lying when he said you were quite headstrong. I don’t even know how you do it. I mean, he is such a cool, calm and collected man, surely you don’t need to stress him out with your overpowering personality, don’t you think?”

She blinked her fake ass lashes at me, with her fake smile and ridiculous heap of make up. I swear, I wanted to take out a packet of wipes from my bag and wipe it off her face. Who does this bitch think she is? I mean, we might probably be the same age – about 20 or so, but she lacks respect.

Thato: “Reinette, I really don’t think it is appropriate for you to speak to me or anyone else for that matter about MY husband like that.”

I made sure she got reminded that Kg was mine. Shame, the nerve.

Reinette: “Oh, I didn’t mean it like that, Thato – “

Thato: (interrupting) “Mrs. Ncube to you. And please, if you feel that I overpower my husband, feel free to keep it to yourself next time.”

I kept a straight face and I could tell she really was not impressed with my reaction at all. She did look like suddenly was full of regret. I don’t know, man. She just looks so familiar, like someone I know.

Reineitte: (regretful) “Please, Tha – Mrs. Ncube, I honestly didn’t mean it like that. Please, may I make it up to you by showing you to Kg’s office?”

There she goes again. She seems too comfortable around MY man. Why is that? Could Kg really be too nice to this girl or could they have something going on?”

Thato: “Reinette, I am sure you know that calling your boss by his nick name is rather inappropriate. Refrain from doing that next time, because that is really not what Thato Jewellers represent. And I know the way, so no need to follow me.”

I gave her one look – the same one she low-key gave me when I walked through that door and I walked away and proceeded to Kg’s office. I don’t know, but something seems rather offish about this girl. Why didn’t Kg tell me about her? I mean like give me details about her and why does she feel the need to

look at me in such a dodgy way? She just seems way too comfortable for someone who started working here a few weeks ago. Have you ever had that weird feeling?

That stingy feeling inside of your gut, like it just won't go away? That is your instinct. Nana and Queen Nandi always tell me that if you get that feeling and it sticks – then you do have something to worry about unless you are an overthinker, really. I knocked a few times and opened the door, and I found my gorgeous man dressed in a suit, on the phone and he smiled at me as soon as he saw me. My heart melts every time I see him. I mean he might be 27 now, but he still looks 25.

Kg: (on the phone) “Yes, Mr. Hassim. Absolutely, I will most definitely make sure that you get it as soon as possible. Alright, goodbye.”

He hung up and got out of his chair immediately. He

gave me one long, passionate kiss and spun me around.

Kg: "My Queen."

Thato: (blushing) "My King."

Kg: "Unjani, Sthandwa sami (How are you, my love)?"

Yes, ever since Kg was declared King of Enande, he has been speaking Zulu more often than Setswana. I don't know, but I guess he is so used to it. Besides, he just gets me so horny every time he speaks Zulu.

Thato: "I am alright, how are you, Mr. Ncube?"

Kg: "I feel so much better now that you are here."

Thato: (puzzled) “Is there something wrong?”

Kg: “No, not really. I just have one big order that came through from Mr. Hassim. He is one of the Commissioner’s business friends from Dubai. He has ordered a very unique custom designed ring. I worked on it all day the other day, and he wants at least 50 carats on that ring, along with a custom made necklace – also made of 50 carats white diamonds.”

Wow, Kg must be balling already. We haven’t even launched the company and already he has such a big order.

Thato: “That’s amazing, love. Bjanong keng o kare (So why does it seem as if) you are not very happy about this?”

Kg: “I am, it is just that I don’t know if I will be able to

pull this off. I mean, it is a big deal and he has already paid me.”

I love seeing Kg so in his element and proud about his job. He really loves designing jewelry, though.

Thato: “Kg, babe. You are going to do great. You know that everything you touch turns into gold.”

Kg: (chuckling) “Just like whenever I touch that pussy of mine and I turn it right into platinum, right?”

Thato: (blushing) “Hayi, hayi (no, no), Mr. Ncube. You cannot be having such dirty thoughts at this time of the day.”

Kg: (smiling mischievously) “Come, let me show you what my dirty thoughts are telling me.”

As much as he makes me horny, I need to address the ReINETTE issue first.

Thato: "On that note, I need to discuss something with you first, or rather someone."

Kg: (sigh) "You can really be a mood killer, baby. Alright, bakwenzeni (What did they do to you)?"

Thato: "Why didn't you tell me about ReINETTE?"

Kg: (frowning) "What do you mean? I already told you about her."

Thato: "I mean, why didn't you tell me about her? What she is like, what she wears, her bitchy personality...."

Kg: (laughing) “Oh, that. Hawu (wow), baby. Are you telling me that you are jealous already after being married for over a year?”

Mxm, I am busy talking to this man about a serious issue and he is laughing at me.

Thato: “Kg, ke serious hle (I am serious).”

Kg: “Okay, what is it that you don’t like about her so that I can tell her where to get off?”

Thato: “Well, I don’t like her attitude. I mean, she is too comfortable, man. She addressed me as Thato, instead of Mrs. Ncube and she does not even know me well enough to address me by name. Secondly, she addresses you as Kg, instead of Mr. Ncube, you are her boss, Kg. That can’t be acceptable, lastly she dresses like a skank instead of a professional girl that represents your company.”

Kg: "Okay, I'll fire her."

Okay, that's a bit drastic.

Thato: "What?"

Kg: "Angithi upha umfazi wami inking (She is giving my wife problems), so I will have to fire her."

Thato: "No, Kg man. I don't want to be known as the petty wife who gets everyone fired for flirting with her husband."

Kg: (chuckling) "Who said she is flirting with me? Hayi, baby. Had they told me that the first year of marriage was going to result in a jealous wife, I wouldn't have done it."

Thato: "Heh (Huh)?!"

Kg: (chuckling) "I'm joking. I'll speak to her. Now, can you please let me taste my gorgeous pussy, please?"

Thato: "Ha-ah, Kg. Not here. Your building is literally made of glass, what if we get seen?"

He smiled as he took a remote from his desk and pressed it. Immediately, the room became dimmed as blinds started going down from all angles in the office, covering all the sides. We were literally covered up now.

Thato: "I'm impressed."

Kg: (smiling) "Thank you. It was actually Reinettes"

idea. She said it was most definitely necessary for some office king, and my goodness she was right.”

And there it was again – that sting in my gut. This Reinette girl is just a bit much for my liking. I smell a rat, but I decided not to let Kg see it. I don't want him to stress out a week before his launch. I decided to ignore that feeling once again, even though it stayed at the back of my mind. I allowed Kg to devour me as he carefully placed me on his office desk. He made me sit on it, as he slowly trailed his hands down my thighs.

He moved his hand up my dress casing me to feel those electrifying tingly feelings all over my body. Kg seems to get better by the day. His hands always do magic, as he works my body like I am a guitar. He slowly pulled down my panties, as my dress was pulled up. He spread my legs apart, got down on his knees and stared at my pussy with a huge smile on his face. He does that a lot and I really got used to it.

It does not bother me anymore.

Kg: "Damn, TT, your pussy looks better each time I see it. Permission to devour you, my Queen?"

I always melt at Kg's dirty talk and the way he likes asking for permission beforehand.

Thato: "You need not even ask, my King."

He smiled at me and slowly graced my pussy with his tongue's tantalizing presence as he slowly licked my clit and flicked his tongue over it. I felt myself being overwhelmed with heat from all angles, as I voluntarily opened my legs wider. Kg loves it when I do that, and I felt him dip his tongue into my entrance. I felt my hand grabbing his head firmly, while aiding his head to go deeper.

Thato: (moaning) "Aaah, my King."

Yes, we have evolved now. Dirty talk has resorted to us calling each other by our royal titles. It spices things up, though. Kg got up just when I was about to cum. He knows how much I hate it when he does that.

Thato: (frustrated) "Kg! You know I hate it when you do that."

Kg: (chuckling) "I want my dick to make you cum today, my love."

He wasted no time as he got his pants down. I decided to torture him as well. I got down on both my knees without warning, and got hold of his big dick in my hands. My other hand was on his balls. I looked up and saw him smiling at me.

Thato: "Permission to devour, my King?"

Kg: (smiling) "Fuck, TT, you know just what to do to me."

I smiled as I slowly licked the tip of his penis. I felt his hands behind my head and I saw him tilt his head back in pleasure. I circled my tongue right around the head of his penis, then I put all of him inside of my mouth as I started sucking up and down in fast motion. My one hand was rubbing his dick while my mouth was moving up, while the other hand was rubbing his balls vigorously.

Kg: (moaning) "Aaah, fuck, my Queen!"

I was about to let go and give him a taste of his own medicine, when the door just flung open without warning.

Reinette: “Kg, I was wondering if you would like some – “

Both of us were rather shocked and caught of guard. I quickly got up and looked at her pissed. Instead of her closing the door immediately, she stood there and stared at us. That fucking bitch.

Reinette: “Oh, I am so sorry, I – “

Thato: “Close that fucking door!”

I was rather mad to say the least. She closed it in haste, leaving us both annoyed.

Kg: (irritated) “I’m sorry, baby.”

I don’t know what annoyed me more – the fact that

she just stormed in here without warning or the mere fact that he seemed unbothered by this. I clicked my tongue, fixed my dress and grabbed my handbag.

Kg: “Hawu, Sthandwa sami, asiqhubeki yini (My love, aren't we going to finish off)?”

Thato: “The day you call your PA to order will be the day we finish off!”

I stormed out without even saying goodbye. I found Reinette looking worried at her desk.

Reinette: “Mrs. Ncube, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to – “

I didn't even bother to listen to her nor respond, but instead I left her there talking to herself as I stormed

out and headed to my car. I got into my car and huffed in frustration. I just don't trust this girl, really. I needed to vent, so I took out my phone and checked out my list of contacts. I can't really go visit Nana or Queen Nandi because they are off on holiday, as usual. I can't really talk to my father about it, because he might dislike Kg based on what I tell him. He won't forgive him, even if I do. Gloria is in the Seychelles with Zweli, celebrating their baby's birthday. I can't really bother Mrs. Letswalo, so I have only one person left on my list – Rami. I decided to call her and she picked up on the first ring, which is rather unusual.

Rami: (happy) "Hey, sis."

Thato: "Hey, o kae (how are you)?"

Rami: "Ke shap, man, wena (I'm okay, man and you)?"

Thato: "I am fine, I guess."

Rami: "You never really call. Talk to me."

Thato: (sigh) "It's Kg, I – "

She didn't let me finish even.

Rami: (chuckling) "Trouble in paradise, already?
Could the King be tired of his Queen already?"

I don't know, but ever since Thendo left her she has been a bit of an unfiltered bitch. It is a bit annoying and has resulted in us not really inviting her to some of our functions.

Thato: "Not exactly. I can't do this over the phone.

Can we hook up?"

Rami: "Sure, I'll come by your house. I'll bring Todani with."

I agreed even though my heart felt a bit uneasy with this whole situation. God knows I really need to be okay, and Rami used to be one of the very few people who understood me. Now, I just don't know what is happening. Am I making the right decision by confiding in her?

Chapter One Hundred and Twenty Seven

Proverbs 14:30 – "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones."

Thato

I found myself driving to my house with that gut

feeling not going away. As I was about to enter my yard, I found Rami right outside the gate waiting for me in her car. She had sold the Mercedes Benz that Aunt Viv and Gringo bought for her just before she died, and got herself a Porsche. I don't know what is happening in her life, but this all screams a midlife crisis. I hardly see her on campus any more, but I figured it is because of the baby and all. She has a nanny, though, but I just don't know. I hadn't even reached my gate yet and she started hooting at me.

Rami: "Bula gate, man, sesi (Open the gate, man, sis)."

I chuckled thinking that this is the Rami I remember, the nonchalant, forever smiling Rami. I opened the gate with my remote and she entered first, while I entered after her. She didn't even waste time, as she walked out of her car and I got shocked immediately. She had a bottle of Savanna in her hand.

Thato: (shocked) "Rami, please don't tell me you drove all the way from Sandton while driving under the influence of alcohol."

Rami: "Ag, Thato, relax, man. You just love being so stressful all the time. Relax, will you? I just opened it while I waited for you right outside the gate."

I knew she was lying. She was reaking of alcohol, really.

Thato: "Still, don't ever do that again."

I was pretty stern and she could see that I meant business.

Rami: "Okay, Mom. I promise I won't do it again. Help me get this child out of the car."

Rami though. I was quite annoyed that she had actually driven in such a state with poor Todani in the car. I really hate that name, but well, he is not my son. His other name is Lethabo, but she insisted on calling him Todani. So, it stuck I guess. I carried him out of the car, and he was sleeping so peacefully. He seems rather uncared for for a one year old.

I don't know, but maybe I am just imagining things. I decided to keep quiet before she told me all kinds of shit. Mothers really take it personally when you attack their mothering – I would too. We walked into the house with Rami taking out her six pack of alcohol, leaving me to carry her son and her baby bag. I decided to keep quiet and do it anyway. We walked into the house and she just couldn't wait to start criticizing.

Rami: "Hmm, you didn't do a bad job, hey. Ka nnete, o zamile waitse (Seriously, you really tried, you

know).”

I felt that was a bit condescending from her side, but I let it slide.

Thato: “Let me go put him in the guest room nearby.”

I left without her saying a word and I placed her son carefully on the bed. He looked a bit dirty, for a baby boy. I mean, sure, kids play, but he just seemed like he hadn't been bathed and it was only 11am. I don't know why God always blesses those we seem to see are really undeserving of these souls. I honestly feel that life can be unfair at times, but such is life. Who are we to decide who gets to have what?

I walked out and found Rami, seriously analysing the house. I became rather annoyed, really. No one should actually do that when they enter your house. She hadn't been here since we moved in and now

she wants to start talking rubbish about my décor. I did a way better job than she did with her house.

Thato: "So, can I make you something to eat?"

Rami: "Ah, rather buy us some food. Order from Kreme or something."

Thato: (frowning) "Kreme?"

Rami: "Yes, or keng (what is it)? Zaka ga e sale teng (Don't you have money anymore)? Ai, ska wara, (Don't worry), I'll pay."

I really became annoyed. It takes a lot for me to actually keep quiet, but this has gone far enough.

Thato: "Rami, I don't know what your fucking

problem is, but ever since my miscarriage you have been nothing but a bitch. I was there for you despite everything. Not even once, did you apologize for being so rude towards me that day and every other day after that, but I let you slide. I gave you the benefit of the doubt because you are actually like a sister to me. I was there for you despite you pushing me away after your divorce, I was there for you when you went through post natal depression with Todani, my word, I was there for you. Now, you come into my house, drunk as a skunk before midday, throwing insults about my house, my marriage and everything about me, but I am done. I think it is best you leave.”

I was breathing fire, but I tried to be as polite as possible. Rami was starting to seriously take advantage of me and I just couldn't take it anymore. Just when I thought she would get up and leave, I saw her burst into tears. I became puzzled and felt bad right after my little outburst.

Rami: (crying) “Oh, Thato, I am so sorry. I have been such a bad friend towards you and you honestly don’t deserve my trashy behaviour towards you. The truth is, my life is a mess. I ruined things with Thendo and now he wants absolutely nothing to do with me. I have been so bossy towards him, I actually drove him away from me and as a result, he cheated on me with that rural skank!

I know, you have most probably never forgiven me for that day when I said those hurtful words to you when you had your miscarriage, but the truth is – I envy you. I really wish that I had a partner like Kg. He literally worships the ground you walk on, Thato. All I ever wanted was to be loved like that, but not even Thendo could ever love me. I know, he is not as strong as Kg nor as courageous, but I did love him. I still do.”

She was crying her eyeballs out. Shit, I feel so bad even though she didn’t really apologize for that day.

It still hurts me to even think about it, but I mean she is only human, right? Zenande did tell me not to trust her, but could she have been blind this one time? I mean, Rami was the first person to pick me up right after my kidnap and forced abortion ordeal. She took me in along with her family, so why should I turn my back on her now? She needs me now more than ever before.

Thato: "Rami, it's okay. Please, relax. You will get through this, just promise me that you will talk to me whenever you need help and you will never ever drink while driving ever again."

Rami: (teary) "I promise. I will never hurt you like that ever again."

She had better not, because there is only so much a woman can take, right?

Thato: “Okay, let’s relax. I’ll make us some food.”

Rami: (smiling) “You are truly Godsent, Tee. I could never ever have such a forgiving heart like yours. God has truly sent you into my life for a reason.”

I don’t know how genuine her statement actually is, but I don’t want to dwell on that right now. Rami has been through so much, and upon her finally opening up about her marriage woes, I actually understand why she is the way she is right now. She has lost so much weight – even her face shows something is just not okay. Her eyes have these dark circles underneath them and she just looks a bit frail.

I decided to go check up on her son, while she was on her 6th Savanna, but I hadn’t even finished making us food yet. This is worrisome, but a story for another day. Luckily I found Thendo awake, I changed his nappy and realized he had a bit of a nappy rash. I took him with me and headed back to

the kitchen. It literally took me only 5 minutes to change the poor boy, but she had finished her last bottle of Savanna already.

Thato: (puzzled) “Rami, setse o feditse go nwa (you are already done drinking)?”

Rami: “Yes, ah, waitse bier ga e nketse selo nna (you know beer does not really have any effect on me). Don’t you have a bottle of wine or something?”

Thato: “Take anyone except the 2002 Shiraz. Kg and I are saving that one for a special occasion. We got it from Gringo on our wedding day.”

I hope she heard me because otherwise Kg would have a serious fit if I had to tell him that someone drank our wine. He is not much of a fan of Rami lately, but something tells me he knows more than I do. I took Thendo to the spare bedroom he was

sleeping in and I gave him a nice, soothing bath. He seemed so in tune with it and really seemed like he needed it.

He kept scratching his head a few times, and that is most definitely a sign of lice. I wonder if Rami even bothers to check him into the doctor. I dressed him, after playing with him in the bath tub and headed out. Upon entering the kitchen, Rami was nowhere to be found. She left a small piece of paper and it read "Gone out. Watch Todani. Be back soon. Xoxo Rami."

I was irritated by the fact that she just left me with her kid like that, but now I became even more livid when I saw an empty bottle of Shiraz 2002 on the kitchen counter. I told her not to fucking touch the bottle, but she did! I am so screwed. I am not happy, but Kg will be even angrier. I made some food for Todani, and he really seemed to enjoy the food.

He really is not a fussy baby, I guess as long as he has eaten, then he is okay. I put him in front of the tv with some cartoons, while thinking of a plan to devise regarding this bottle of wine. How dare she though? I called her and the phone took me straight to voicemail. I decided to check online if maybe I could order or something, but no one had that bottle.

I am screwed for days – I can feel it. I managed to get rid of the bottle, but now, it is pretty obvious that there is a bottle of wine missing. I tried to re-shuffle the bottles of wine I had in the kitchen, as I got busy thinking of a way out – I heard Kg's car drive in. I panicked a little bit, but I hid that from him. Stress or an upset husband is the last thing I need right now. Kg walked in with a huge smile on his face, a bunch of white lilies in his one hand, and a small gift bag in his other. Just great.

That is enough to make me feel like shit. How do I lie to my husband about his favourite bottle of wine

being downed by my so called best friend, knowing very well that she was not supposed to drink it? I don't know if I will manage lying to him while keeping a straight face. Luckily I had just made one of his favourite meals – lamb shank with mash and roasted veggies. I hope that will be enough to make him melt.

Kg: (smiling) "Evening, my Queen."

Thato: (smiling) "Hello, my King. How are you?"

Kg: "I'm well, thanks. I am glad to see you smiling. I thought I was still in the dog box."

Thato: (chuckling) "Why would you be in the dog box? Did you do something wrong?"

Kg: (frowning) "I don't know how to answer that."

You might be tricking me.”

Thato: (laughing) “Bathong (Goodness), Kg.”

Kg: “On a serious note now, I have brought you something special. As a peace offering.”

He handed me the flowers and the gift bag. It is always nice to receive gifts from your man. I looked at the gift bag.

Kg: “Open it.”

I slowly put down the flowers on the table and opened the gift bag. I found a big jewellery box. I anxiously stared at it and opened it. My eyes were met with the best sparkling necklace I have ever seen. This is way shinier than the one he gave me back in Enande.

Thato: (teary) "Kg..."

Kg: (smiling) "Do you like it?"

Like it? He must be joking. I absolutely love it.

Thato: "I absolutely love it. Please help me put it on."

I hardly wear the one he gave me back in Enande due to me being afraid they will steal it. When will I wear this one? As Kg helped me put it on, he told me all about it.

Kg: "See this piece? It is a 40 carat Emerald and Diamond Necklace. You know I love being unique, so whenever I see unique diamonds, I think of you. Every piece I have designed in my current collection

reminds me of you. You are the inspiration behind it all, Thato Isabella Ncube. Of course, Emerald being green, was inspired by your maiden surname – Groen.

You are such a beauty, Thato – both inside and out. So, this one, I named it the Emerald Queen. I want to give you all the diamonds in the world, because ultimately you are the rarest of them all and the shiniest one of course. I am sorry for what ReINETTE did today, and as a result I have given her two week's notice. She will be serving her last day on your birthday.”

Okay, now I feel like shit. ReINETTE just needed to be called to order, not to get fired.

Thato: “Baby, you really didn't have to fire her, though.”

Kg: “No one has the right to disrespect my woman – let alone the Queen. So, she has to go. Besides, I actually think she has the hots for me so she has to go.”

I am saddened. Perhaps I shouldn't have said anything. Now, as a result of my big mouth, I got her fired. I can't even persuade Kg to think otherwise, but that is what it is. We were about to sit down and dish up when Todani crawled all the way to the kitchen. Oh, I forgot to tell Kg about him. He gave me a look and I was left anxious, I thought he would get angry, but instead his face lit up so much that he picked him up and started playing with him.

I breathed out a sigh of relief and actually took a moment to appreciate the beautiful sight in front of me. Kg was literally cooing and making baby sounds and actually laughing with this boy. My heart aches knowing that we were both so close to having our own, but now we don't have any kids to warm the

house with their giggles and laughter.

He even forgot to ask me where Rami was, and probably assumed that I was babysitting. I didn't even feel jealous at all when he was giving Todani all the attention, so I sat there and ate while thinking of a way of finding a replacement of that bottle of wine. After our dinner, Todani fell asleep in Kg's arms. Oh, it just made me envious. I know, I am still young, but having children seems like a bleak possibility right now. I know he said he does not want to rush me, but all in all I just want to see him this happy everyday. Kg fed Todani and even changed his nappy. He took him to our bedroom and lay him on the bed in between us.

Mxm, so now Todani is just one year old and already he is stealing my husband from me. I cleaned up and went to our bedroom to take a shower. A few minutes later, I heard him walk into the bathroom and right behind me in the shower. He slowly

washed my back and made his way to my breasts. He started fiddling with them and his hand made its way to my clit. I tilted my head backwards and found myself moaning. Kg is so sly, he kept rubbing my clit, kissing my neck, he decided to ask me questions. Mxm.

Kg: (whispering) "Where is Rami and why did she leave Todani here with you?"

Thato: (moaning) "Aaaah, what?"

Kg: "You heard me, Ndhlovukazi (Queen). Don't make me repeat myself."

Eish, this is tough.

Thato: "I... She... I invited her over for lunch and she said she'd be back soon."

Then Kg decided to ask me the one question I had been dreading.

Kg: "So, where is the Shiraz bottle Gringo gave us on our wedding?"

I wanted to freeze, but this tsotsi kept feeding my pussy his finger.

Thato: "I..."

Kg: "Think very carefully about your answer."

Thato: "I... Rami drank all of it after I told her not to do it. I swear, it was not my fault."

Kg: "Next time, you will learn to listen to me when I

tell you I don't like that girl."

With that said he stopped rubbing my clit and I was close, so close. He took his towel and walked out of the shower leaving me annoyed.

Thato: "Hawu (Goodness), Kg. Just like that? Aren't you going to finish what you have started?"

Kg: "Some other time. When my wife learns to listen, will be the day I satisfy her very well."

I stood there helplessly shocked.

Thato: "But Kg – "

Kg: (interrupting) "You knew how I felt about Rami but you still left her in our house unattended. You knew just how much that bottle meant to me and you knew we were saving it for a very special

occasion. I told you I had planned something really amazing for your birthday this year. Take this as a lesson learnt.”

I was hurt shame, really hurt. He really left me standing there. I finished up annoyed as fuck and went to the bedroom. I was hoping I would seduce him in a way, but he wasn't even in the bedroom. He had left Todani on the bed and was nowhere to be seen. I got dressed and tried to read my Bible. Everything frustrates you when you are sexually deprived, really. It is bad enough we were nearly there today, and now this. I know, what Rami did was shitty and Kg really tried to warn me about her as well. What is it that they see through her that I can't?

I remember Zenande correctly telling me that I need to be careful of Rami, but what is it that is so bad about her? Zenande did tell me that she was going to some initiation thing that would last a month or

so, and it would be pretty much impossible to get hold of her as they are always in the mountains, but I tried my luck to call her anyway. As expected, her phone led me straight to voicemail. I decided to try Gloria and she answered immediately despite being on holiday with Zweli.

Gloria: "Hey, Stranger."

Thato: "Hey, you. How are you?"

Gloria: "I should be asking you that. I'm fine, but how are you? And don't you dare lie to me."

I took a deep sigh and explained everything that happened today to her. I also told her what Rami did to me and as usual, Glo was quick to listen and didn't interrupt me one bit. She waited for me to finish to give me advice.

Gloria: (sigh) "My dear Thato. When will you ever learn."

Thato: "What do you mean?"

Gloria: "I have been saying that you need to learn not to confide in people who don't have your best interests at heart. I mean look at Rami. Does she ever call you once in a while? Does she check on you? She can't even care for her own son and you think she will have your best interests at heart?"

I am not saying I am better than anyone, but you could have called me or you could have calmed down and called Kg when you got home. I am not saying do not vent, but you need to learn not to get so mad about everything. Learn to solve everything with your husband because ultimately it is only you and him in this marriage. Friends like Rami don't love you the way you think."

Thato: "What is it that you all can see that I can't?"

Gloria: "It is not easy for you to see it because you know a part of her that we don't. People change, my love, and unfortunately it is the way it is. It is just like an abused woman who just fails to see the bad in her abusive partner. No one can make her see reason until she herself sees it on her own accord. You will get your eye opener about Rami and unfortunately it might be too late by then."

I felt chills down my spine as soon as she said that.

Thato: "What do you mean, Glo?"

Gloria: "I had a weird dream last night. It didn't make sense so I prayed about it and was hoping to see a better vision or something tonight. I wanted to call you tomorrow, but well, I might as well tell you. I dreamt Rami standing before you in a very dark

room. You were dressed in white, covered in blood and she stabbed you in the back with a really big knife. She had two unfamiliar female figures next to her.

The people only appeared in shadow form as I couldn't see their faces, but I could hear them speak. They kept saying how you will finally get your downfall because you think you deserve everything. It didn't make sense to me, other than Rami is out to get you. We have been saying keep Rami out of your life. I am sorry, but she just does not love you, in fact she hates you – very much indeed. Be careful Thato, however I will keep praying for you.”

I felt a cold shiver down my spine. How could all this be true? Rami, out of all people hates me this much? Who are the two figures Gloria saw in her dream. Then I remembered my gut feeling earlier this morning. Could it be that I missed all the signs? I felt so uneasy, scared actually. That gut feeling

appeared in my stomach yet again and I found myself shaking and in tears. I dropped to the ground and let the tears stream down.

This same painful feeling I felt in my gut felt exactly like the one I felt last year when I lost my twin boys. Kg opened the door with a whiskey glass in his hand. As soon as he saw me on the ground, he immediately dropped his glass and let the whiskey spill on the floor. He isn't one to let things spill on the carpet. He is very OCD like that, but he panicked and rushed to me.

Kg: (worried) "My wife, are you okay?"

Thato: "I... I don't know. I feel this weird pain in my stomach and all of a sudden I am overwhelmed with fear."

Kg: "What triggered this?"

I explained to him what Gloria said to me over the phone and I could see the worry and panic on his face immediately.

Kg: "Come, let's pray together."

He knelt down beside me and he started praying. I still felt pain in my stomach and I felt myself sweating profusely on my face.

Kg: (praying) "Modimo wa rona yo a rategang (Our Loving God), Jehova Jireh (My provider), Jehovah Rophe (My healer), Jehova Makadesh (My sanctifier), Our Adonai (Our Master), Our Elohim (Our Creator). I bow before you lord as your child, oh God. I might not be perfect, but I believe you have made my soul perfect. I ask that you please protect us especially my wife for whatever is about to come.

Please, oh, God, help her, heal her. We have been through so much and she does not deserve this. Let your will be done and let whomever tries anything ungodly with my life be punished for the good lord knows that she is a saint. She is of a good heart and we can only ask you for your mercy and grace. Please, oh Lord, be with her. Protect her and be her guard. I pray it in Jesus' mighty name. Amen."

I found myself feeling a whole lot better and the pain subsiding immediately after Kg's prayer. I love how he is always willing to pray for us but little did I know that it was the last time we ever prayed together. Little did I know that the worst was yet to come.

Chapter One Hundred and Twenty Eight

1 Corinthians 3:3 – "You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?"

Thato

After Kg prayed for us I struggled to sleep. I found myself tossing and turning and surprisingly he was dead asleep which is very unusual. I had a very hectic dream; where I dreamt two unknown women holding me captive and laughing at me. One was cussing and swearing at me, accusing me of taking every man she ever wanted, while the other felt I deserved pain and suffering. I begged the two not to do anything to me and I kept asking them what on earth I did to them, all they said was that I deserved everything that was coming to me. I recall their voices, but not their faces since they appeared as black shadows. I was dressed in white, and one of them unleashed a snake that entered me from my vagina.

After that scary dream, I found myself waking up, sweating profusely and I have been going to the toilet ever since. I have been praying and asking

God to heal me, but the pain kept coming and going, like a knife was being drilled into my stomach. I was vomiting along with diarrhoea all night and I only managed to fall asleep again at 4am. I feel like complete shit and so weak, especially after I got my period immediately out of the blue. It felt so weird, the cramps were more intense than ever, the blood was flowing like a overrun tap, I just failed to understand what was happening. Kg was sound asleep throughout. I heard my phone ring, but I just didn't have the strength to answer it. I was woken slightly by Kg's voice, but I felt so weak.

Kg: (worried) "TT! Your phone has been ringing! What is wrong, Sthandwa sami (My love)?"

Thato: (softly) "I... eish... ke utlwa bothloko, Kg (I'm in pain, Kg)."

Kg was worried, but I could barely see or hear anything. I felt like I was hanging onto a thread. I

saw him anxiously answer my phone and nod; while responding with “yes” and “okay”. Then he hung up and rushed out of the room. I heard nothing else, and even forgot about Todani who woke up and started playing with my face. I found myself smiling briefly at him, while my eyes felt so heavy; forcing me to shut them closed. Soon, Kg stormed back in with some Mphepho (incense) and started burning it across the room. He then brought some close to my face, forcing me to inhale it. He then made me drink something from the glass he came with. I could only taste some salt and vinegar and warm water, along with some herb that I had never tasted before. I struggled drinking it, but he forced it down my throat. He probably was following instructions from whomever was calling. Afterwards, I felt like I was about to vomit.

Thato: “Kg... ke batla go hlatsa (I feel like throwing up).”

I tried getting up, but I was so weak, I ended up throwing up on the floor. Oh, my poor man. He I so cautious about things being spilled on carpets, but he really seemed more interested in my well-being than anything else. He rubbed my back while I vomited some black stuff. I felt so scared, I had never seen anything like that before and he also got really scared. Soon after my phone rang again and he answered it in a heartbeat. All he responded was “Yes, she is okay. Alright, I will do so”. Then he hung up. I felt myself feeling a lot better, but still dizzy and incredibly weak.

Kg: “Come, let me run you a shower.”

Thato: “What about Todani?”

Kg: “Don’t worry, he is fine. He is playing and watching tv. You are more important than anything else right now.”

I nodded as he carried me to the bathroom. He took my clothes off and got into the shower with me. Oh, my poor Kg. He is truly one in a million. He made me stand under the water in the shower, and I managed to feel a little bit better, but he just seemed so sad. He looked at me with sadness, pain in his eyes.

Thato: "I'm going to be okay, you don't have to be so worried."

Kg: (faint smile) "I know, baby. I know. I love you, Sthandwa sami (my love)."

Thato: "I love you too."

He got me out of the shower, lotioned my body, got me dressed and even put a pad on me, and placed me in bed. It is November, so it is still really hot, but I felt so cold, so he placed me under the covers.

Kg: "I'll go make you something to eat."

He took Todani with him and I managed to fall asleep.

Kg

I can't believe I didn't hear my wife at all last night. She was in pain and suffering while I was sound asleep. How on earth does that happen? I am a very light sleeper, and I should have heard her whenever she got up and rushed to the toilet. Why didn't she wake me? That is too selfless for her own good. She could have died! I feel so much pain right now, words cannot describe what I am feeling. How does a woman like her have stay strong after going through so much? How will I have the strength to tell her that she has just lost her fourth child?

I looked at Todani and my heart felt so bitter-sweet.

How does God bless people like Rami with children and not Thato and I? I mean, we have been having sex without her being on contraceptives and nothing happened. We just assumed that it would be placed in God's hands and that she would fall pregnant when the time is right. Now it happened yet again without our knowledge and now she has lost the baby without us even getting a chance to know or even reel at the exciting news. I found myself kneeling down right in the middle of the kitchen with Todani in my arms.

Kg: (in tears) "Modimo (God), goreng o re sotla ga kana (Why do you punish us so badly)? Is it because I have killed people? Is it because I have a harsh tongue? Is it because I am indeed undeserving of your merciful grace and blessings? If indeed that is the case, then please, rather punish me by killing me and not punish my wife for my sins. I know, you have said that sins of the father shall fall upon the children, but I beg of you, my wife and I have been through so much. It is indeed time for you to stop

punishing us. If we do not deserve the happiness of hearing a child's laughter in our house, then please, rather not give us any children at all. I ask you to please spare my wife the pain and suffering. I can take it, but I am not sure if she can. Please, I beg of you, oh, Lord. Amen."

I found myself crying with Todani in my arms, and I didn't even hear the door open.

Queen Nandi: "You will be blessed abundantly, my son. Of course, you will be blessed when you least expect it, but when it happens and please, emphasis on the when, you will be blessed two-fold. Believe me when I tell you this; this too shall pass, Nkosinathi."

I turned around as soon as I heard my grandmother's voice. She was standing right next to Nana who was consumed with tears. I didn't even have the strength to say anything more. She came

to hug me. She hugged me for a long while, with Todani in my arms, while Nana looked at me and cried even more. After we got over our moment, I finally managed to speak.

Kg: "I was just about to make her some soup."

Nana: "No need. You go upstairs and be with your wife, while we prepare the food. We have to prepare special herbs for her anyway."

I nodded, as I was about to go back upstairs with Todani, my grandmother stopped me.

Queen Nandi: (firmly) "Leave that one with us. His useless mother needs to be taught a very big lesson."

I wasn't too sure what she meant, so I left him on the

floor and headed back upstairs. I found Thato sleeping and I didn't even want to wake her by using the vacuum cleaner to clean up the mess on the carpet. I used water and a scrubbing brush. I needed to get over the shit I had been feeling anyways. The person who did this to us, will indeed pay for this.

Thato

I must have been dozed off for a while because I was awoken by Nana, Queen Nandi and Kg by my side. Kg decided to sit next to me in bed, while Queen Nandi had a tray in her hands.

Nana: "Wake up, sweetheart."

She really looked sad; really consumed with pain. I just don't get it. Why does it seem like we are at a funeral or something. I didn't die, mos?

Thato: “Nana, why do you look so sad? First Kg, and now you.”

Nana: (fake smile) “I thought I lost you, that’s all. I am just glad you are much better.”

Queen Nandi: “You know your grandmother. Here, eat this soup and we also made you some coffee with a kick of course.”

Thato: (chuckling) “You guys are so dramatic.”

They managed to tell Kg and I all about their trip around the world. Nana was feeding Todani some pumpkin squash, while I was eating. I really missed these two divas. Afterwards, Kg offered to take the tray back to the kitchen. Yes, that is my man, cleanliness is next to Godliness. He came back and they looked at me in a very serious manner.

Queen Nandi: “I am afraid whenever we pitch up, you know it has to do with serious business, angithi (right)?”

They are so right. They never really pitch up out of the blue like this. I nodded.

Queen Nandi: “I need you to relax, we will figure out exactly what happened to you. We are just waiting for Zenande to get back to us. We sent an urgent message to her elders and I hope she will respond soon.”

I felt my heart race instantly while Kg held my hand and squeezed it tightly. Todani was playing alone on the floor, and we didn't really mind him. A few minutes later, my phone rang and it was Zenande. Kg answered it and put it on loud speaker.

Zenande: “My family, apologies for the late response.

I was at the mountain.”

Queen Nandi: “It’s alright, my daughter. How have you been?”

Zenande: “Same old, same old. I have cut my trip short and I am on my way there as we speak. Please prepare the following for me: Imphepho (Incense), white, yellow and red candles, grof salt (Sea salt), and please. Let Thato change her pad but do not wash the linen she has stained. I am an hour away. I will be there soon.”

I found myself feeling a lot more anxious than I felt an hour ago. What is happening to me or what is wrong with me? They are not saying anything, they are just speaking to one another as if I am not in the room, and that really frustrates me.

Queen Nandi: “Okay. We are on it.”

She hung up and they all looked at me and smiled, but I know that smile – it is just one of those smiles they give you when they don't want you to panic. I tried to stay calm but my gut feeling arose again. Something is not right and that dream I had has everything to do with it. I can only hope that Zenande can come up with a way to fix this.

They really tried to entertain me with tv and silly stories, but my mind would occasionally drift off. After an hour, we heard the door bell ring and indeed it was Zenande. Kg went down to open for her and she came up to my bedroom. She looks so beautiful, glowing and has lost a lot of weight, but she looks a lot more like a prophet now than anything else.

Zenande: "Did you get the things I asked for?"

Nana and Queen Nandi nodded while I looked at her

anxiously.

Zenande: “Okay, before we start, I think we should clear the air. Thato, I know you are scared and confused, but I assure you, we will get to the bottom of this. We will get the fucker who did this. Before I get to unravel your dream, let me ask you this question: ‘where did you leave your black lace underwear you wore the other day?’

Her question made me dizzy. Why on earth would she ask me about my panties? Right then and there I remembered that I wore it just yesterday when I went to Kg’s office. Oh, no!

Chapter One Hundred and Twenty Nine

Job 5:2 – “Surely resentment destroys the fool, and jealousy kills the simple.”

Thato

I couldn't believe it. My heart started pulsating and I felt like I was about to drop right there. All eyes were on me, making me feel like a complete idiot. I felt like I was being judged.

Zenande: "I am not judging you, Thato – no one is. Please, I need you to remember. Where did you leave them?"

Now I feel like a complete idiot for giving into my fantasies. But who one earth has the audacity to take your underwear from your husband's office, though?

Thato: (looking down) "I left them at Kg's office. I think underneath the desk."

Zenande: (nodding) "Please note that none of this is your fault. You did nothing wrong. People just tend

to be evil beyond measures.”

Thato: “But, the only person who might have done this is... ReINETTE.”

Zenande: “I am glad to see that you are finally learning to see the world through my eyes.”

Tears started streaming down my face.

Thato: “Why?”

Zenande: “You should have paid more attention to that the day you met her. She has some sort of resemblance to someone you know, isn’t it?”

I thought slowly and carefully. I thought of ReINETTE, but I cannot recall who exactly she looked like.

Zenande: “Those dimples; the complexion, the voice. Who does she remind you of?”

And then it hit me.

Thato: “Oh, my God! She looks like Khanyi!”

I felt Kg tighten his grip anxiously around my hand. What the fuck have I done?

Zenande: (nodding) “You should have asked Kg more information about her the day you met her. You would have noticed a whole lot. I don’t blame you for anything, Thato, but yes, you could have been more observant. You would have realized that she does share the same surname as Khanyi and that she comes from the same hometown as she does. You would also have noticed that she now attends at the very same University you attend at and that she

has sort of been stalking you. She has been watching your every move on Instagram and when she realized you weren't posting, she waited for the perfect opportunity – the job offer at Nkosinathi's office. She studied your relationship for months, trying to get as much information as she could from Nkosinathi and when she couldn't get anything out of him; she resorted to this."

Thato: "But how on earth did she get all that information so quickly? It does not make sense. Khanyi does not have access to my life."

Zenande: "Do you remember a year or so ago when I told you to be careful of your friend Rami?"

I nodded.

Zenande: "Well, you didn't listen of which I don't blame you. You really love that girl, so much that

you have become blinded and you cannot seem to see through her – and worst part is that she has noticed. Whenever she would occasionally call you out of the blue, you unwittingly gave her information about your marriage; you confided in her, complained to her about certain things and you told her that Nkosinathi was looking for a PA at his new company. You forgot because you were just too happy to hear from her.”

My heart sank right to the pit of my stomach. At that moment I felt like I could just shit my own heart out. Am I really that stupid to lure the snake right into my den?

Thato: “So what now? Why did I have that dream and why did I fall sick afterwards?”

Zenande: “The two women Gloria told you about in the dream along with Rami are Khanyi and her cousin ReINETTE. Rami has been feeding Khanyi

information about you after they formed a little friendship with one common goal in mind – to make you suffer. They both are so envious of your life, hence I warned you to stay away from her. Kgabo told you that the one you confide in the most will stab you in the back. That dream Gloria told you about was real, Rami did indeed stab you in the back – both physically and spiritually. You see, you dreamt of a snake entering you. Spiritually, it happened, hence you had painful cramps and the vomiting and diarrhoea. The bad news is that they want you not to have any children so that they can finally get their hands on Nkosinathi.”

Thato: “Are there any good news?”

Zenande: “The good news is that they didn’t succeed forever.”

Thato: “I sense a but.”

Queen Nandi: "Don't tell her now."

Zenande: "I am afraid she has to know."

What are they on about?

THato: "The bad news is that you lost another pregnancy. When you instantly bled, that was when you had a miscarriage."

That, for me, was the final straw. I felt myself going mute; deaf and blind at the same time. I didn't see nor hear anything further. Zenande's voice became fainter, while Kg's voice was something I couldn't hear at all. Okay, clearly I am being punished. What is it that I need to do to have eternal peace? I felt each and every one of them talking to me at the same time and that overwhelmed me. I couldn't take it anymore and I screamed.

Thato: (screaming) “Get out!!!!”

They looked at me like I was crazy, while Todani started crying. I curse the day I met Khanyi and Rami. I curse everything to do with them including that child!

Queen Nandi: “Thato, please – “

Thato: (interrupting) “Everyone of you – get out! Take that thing with you!”

By thing I was actually referring to Todani. How could I have such a sudden, immense hate for an innocent child I fell in love with not so long ago? I felt myself breathing fire; my whole body was hot and I felt like I couldn't even breathe properly. That is just how angry I was. Even Kg let go of my hand and got out of the bed. He looked at me with tears in his eyes, while Zenande calmed them all down.

Zenande: “Let her be. Nana, Gogo (Granny), masihambeni (Let’s go).”

Queen Nandi: “What about Nkosinathi?”

Zenande: “He will stay with her. She won’t harm him.”

Kg seemed like he was in his own world as he stared at me while the rest left.

Thato: (crying) “O sa emetse eng (What are you still waiting for)?! Etswa, Kgaugelo (Get out)! Leave me alone! You can see I am a failure – a fucking failure! I have failed to bear you children – all four children in the past two years! Please – we both know that you pity me, so do us both a favour and leave. I can’t bear this pain anymore!”

I wailed as I dropped to the ground. I didn't even realize how much Kg was crying too. He knelt down beside me and didn't touch me.

Kg: (crying) "Don't you think I feel the same pain you feel every time you go through another miscarriage, TT? I feel as much pain as you do. I am in pain because my wife is going through immense pain; I am in pain because I cannot stand to see the disappointment and pain on your face whenever we lose a baby. I cannot stand to see you like this anymore, but please, don't shut me out. I feel your pain, Sthandwa sami (My love)."

Thato: "Don't feel sorry for me. You don't know what it is like. You have no idea. Please, do yourself a favour and go be happy elsewhere."

My words might have cut Kg deep, but I have had

enough. It is not fair for him to always be hurt like this.

Kg: "Perhaps you forgot that I took vows when I married you. I vowed to love you in sickness and in health; for richer for poorer, til death do us part. I am not going anywhere, TT. You can do all you like, but we are going to deal with this together."

He kissed my forehead and walked out. I am at a stage where I just honestly can't deal with this anymore. I really feel so numb; absolutely dead inside. I really cannot think properly anymore. At this point I feel like I could die. I guess I am truly not worthy of having a child. I am not worthy of being a mother to Kg's children. What is the point of living then? I found myself drifting off to sleep after Kg had left our bedroom. I think it had been a few hours that I had dozed off, because I was woken up by Zenande knocking firmly on my bedroom door and she opened without waiting for my response.

Thato: "What do you want?"

Zenande: (sigh) "Thato, I really need you to do this. I need to cleanse you before midnight. If I don't do this, then you will be inviting problems into your life. You will be letting the enemy win. Please, let me do this for you."

Thato: "What is the point of getting cleansed, Zenande? I mean after all, I am doomed, right? I have no children, and most likely won't be getting any. People don't want me to be happy, I guess ke shwela gore ke nyetswe ke Kgaugetlo (I guess they hate the fact that I am married to Kg), so it is better that we end all this."

Zenande: (sigh) "Thato, please. You can deal with all of that emotional baggage after I cleanse you. Please, mntwana ka ma (my mother's child). Let me

do this.”

Thato: “There is no hope for me, Zenande. You are truly wasting your time. I am not interested in being cleansed or naming another child I have lost. So please, let me be.”

Zenande: “Thato, please – “

Thato: (shouting) “Get out!”

She hurried out and gave me one last look before she left. I really cannot take this anymore. I am tired of people pitying me. I just need to be alone. I locked myself in and cried myself to sleep. What would be the point of praying if the God I pray to favours others instead of me? I am deeply wounded and I just cannot take it anymore.

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Rami

I must have been so out of it for hours, because I woke up at about 2am with over 20 missed calls from Khanyi. Ag, this bitch is so annoying. Ever since I spilled the beans about Thato's inability to bear children, she has been such a nuisance. She even thinks we are friends. I am so annoyed and she knows that, but just won't quit. I was about to get up, but she called again.

Rami: (annoyed) "Khanyi. Keng (what is it)?"

Khanyi: "Don't you dare "keng" me! Where the fuck have you been?"

Rami: "I've been busy."

Khanyi: "Get your shit together, Rami, or else I will

tell your parents about your little unhealthy relationship with drugs.”

Rami: (chuckling) “How old do you think I am? Twelve?”

Khanyi: “Let’s wait and see if that will be your response after they take your precious Todani from you.”

Rami: “Did you call me at 2am to tell me this kak, Khanyi? You know I can ruin you in a second.”

Khanyi: “Control yourself. We have bigger issues to discuss. Reinette managed to get Thato’s underwear. We have started with phase one of the plan. She has officially lost her fourth baby.”

For some reason that really dampened my mood. I

mean, Thato has always been a good friend to me and here I am forming an alliance with her enemy. I mean, I never meant for everything to go so far, but the overwhelming envious feeling I have had towards her just keeps growing. I can't help it. Thendo left me because I always compared him to Kg. Lord knows Thato would never forgive me if she found out that I was the reason she lost her babies. I zoned out for a second after Khanyi said what she said.

Khanyi: "Hello?! Are you still there?"

Rami: "Yes, I am. Eish, Khanyi, you have caught me at a bad time. I will call you later."

Khanyi: "I know you are having second thoughts. I am warning you. You are already in too deep, so if you decide to fuck us over, I will make sure that you regret your choice."

I really regret talking to her, really. I hung up and actually felt a bit of regret piling up in my stomach. How the fuck did I even get here?

Reinette

My name is Reinette Buthelezi, I am Khanyisile's cousin. We met after she had been cut off from her family, and after she told me that that useless idiot Thato was paying for her fees after her parents disowned her, we formed an alliance. She told me that she really was jealous of Thato, and of which I totally understand. Thato is a beaut, a real beaut, highly favoured and kind hearted as well. I never thought I could ever have such an evil heart, until I met Kg. Khanyi's intentions was to win Kg over by getting rid of Thato, but well, I saw him and man, all I can say is that Khanyi has some serious competition right now.

I have seen how much love Kg gives to Thato, just by him talking about her. His beautiful dimpled smile reassures me that we can make beautiful children of our own. I mean besides, Thato is not 100% black, so she must chill and make way for the rest of us. That day she came, my goodness, I really needed to bring her down from her high horse. I waited for Kg to give me some sort of a loophole, but he didn't give any. He really loves that bitch, of which I am set to change. When we realized that she was pregnant, via our spiritual mother, I had to just put the plan in motion and steal her underwear.

I was hoping for a breakthrough, but thankfully the evil spirits came to my rescue – right before Kg fired me. I mean really? How can he fire me all because his wife does not like me? I am really setting the bar high. Thato needs to go while I claim Kg as mine for life. Khanyi can sit down and be at peace because Reinet Buthelezi is soon to be Reinet Ncube.

Chapter One Hundred and Thirty

Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

A few days later

Thato

I have been feeling like shit, no appetite, and just lack of a perfect sleeping pattern. My soul feels empty, my heart feels so hollow, and I just don't see any will to live any longer. I have been lying in bed for the past few days, not eating or doing anything else. Apparently Todani was taken to Rami's mother and I finally can say that I just don't want to live anymore. Kg has been trying – really trying.

It breaks my heart seeing him in such a state. It is midday right now, but already I just feel like not getting up. I heard Kg opening the door, probably

with some breakfast in his hands. He still does not want to reason. I gave him a choice – a chance to leave me and live his life, but he refuses to leave me. I honestly can't take this anymore.

Kg: "My love, I have brought you some food. It is time for you to eat and indeed, I will not take no for an answer."

I felt so defeated.

Thato: "Kg, I already told you how I feel. Why is it so difficult for you to accept this?"

KG: (sigh) "Alright, TT. Is that what you really want? Do you really want to leave me?"

Thato: (softly) "Yes...."

Kg: (teary) "Then I want to hear you say it. I want to hear you say that you don't love me anymore."

I paused for a moment, but the only way I can set him free is to hurt him so deeply that he lets go of me.

Thato: (Softly) "I don't love you anymore, Kgauelo..."

I could see the tears in his eyes slowly fall down on his face.

Kg: (deep sigh) "Okay. I respect your wishes. But before I grant you your wish, may you please grant me one of mine?"

I just nodded with a battered heart.

Kg: “May you please eat? Give me the chance to make this coming birthday of yours a memorable one? Then after that, I promise to honour your wishes and leave you alone. I won’t bother you again. If you want a divorce, it is one you will get. Just give me the chance to be the perfect husband for one last time before we part.”

He seemed so genuine and Kg is not one to pretend. I just want to give him the freedom to be happy with someone else. I don’t think I am meant to be his queen – but I will grant him this last wish. It is the least I can do.

Thato: (nodding) “Okay.”

He smiled in relief.

Kg: “At least let me perform my duties as your husband one last time.”

That sounds so painful coming from Kg's mouth. It really hurts, but I have to let him go.

Thato: "Okay."

He seemed pleased and I allowed him to do things for me. He fed me my breakfast and I actually realized just how much I was starving. I finally managed to get my stinky ass out of bed and went to take a shower. I was not bleeding anymore, which was something really good for a change. Kg walked into the shower, and offered to wash my back. I am guessing I just missed intimacy, you know. I let him be and he washed my back while occasionally kissing my shoulders, but not in a sultry nor sexual way. After we took a shower, we both got out and he dried me as usual. We headed to the bedroom and he lotioned me. I felt so bad that I just returned the favour. I mean, it is not fair that he gets to do everything for me. It is indeed a day before my

birthday, and his launch is also tomorrow. I feel so bad that I hadn't even given him chance to focus on one of his biggest highlights. I mean, Kg has always been there for me. He is the one guy that has always managed to be my stepping stone and I failed to do that for him.\

Thato: "Is everything set for tomorrow's launch?"

Kg: (smiling) "I thought you would never ask. I was hoping we could go check out the last minute reviews and setup before tomorrow. I would also like you to choose your dress, well, two dresses, since I would like to take you somewhere special tonight, with a very special guest coming tonight."

Thato: (puzzled) "Who and where is that?"

Kg: "It is a surprise, if that is okay with you."

I feel a bit bad. I mean, Kg is here making all the

effort in the world, while I am planning on leaving him so he could go be happy. Honestly, I have been through enough and he could very well have someone that can give him children. I really feel that it is high time he chooses himself instead of me. But, since he agreed, I will put my heart on the line and do this for him.

Thato: (faint smile) "Of course it is okay."

He gave me a brief smile and kissed the back of my hand.

Thato: (frowning) "But where will I get to choose those dresses?"

Kg: (smiling) "You wait and see."

I don't even know where we are going, but knowing

Kg he has another trick up his sleeve. It is about 5pm, so I guess I will wait. He asked me to sit with him in the kitchen, while he made me a very nice dinner for us; lamb chops soaked in red wine with his favourite spices and herbs, along with potato wedges; cheesy spinach and a lovely salad. Of course, he decided to make us some raspberry cheese cake for dessert. I feel very bad about that bottle of wine, but I guess it is something that he has chosen to let go. I think this is a very good time to hash out everything before we separate for good.

Thato: "While you are cooking for us, may I take this moment to apologize?"

Kg: (frowning) "What on earth did you do wrong?"

Thato: "Come on, Kg. We both know that you are still angry about that bottle of wine."

Kg: “Oh, that. It is just wine, love. Why on earth would I be angry over such? I mean sure, I had saved it for a special occasion, but it really does not matter anymore. As long as I have you by my side, I am perfectly happy.”

Thato: (sigh) “Kg, I don’t know, but I really, really think that you and I were just not meant to be. I mean, I have lost four babies already – long before we could even hold them or meet them. Surely God has to bless you with someone who can give you what I can’t.”

I looked down forcing the tears back.

Kg: (firmly) “You hold it right there, Thato Isabella Ncube. You are the one for me. Do you honestly think that those happy couples we see all the time have never gone through a bit of hell? Sure, it feels like you and I have been through the most, but I promise you, people have been through worse out

there.

God never promised greener pastures, happiness, and everything beautiful without pain. Jesus had to show people that God actually exists by getting crucified himself. You out of all people helped me believe in God again. You helped me restore my happiness and heal completely from my pain. You have shown me that it only takes one person to make you fall in love completely.

You have made me realize that you are the owner of my heart, for the first time in my life, my soul became one with yours and that is when I knew that love is a very powerful drug. I cannot even imagine my whole existence without you. A day without your presence already makes me feel like I am incomplete. All I know is that everything happens for a reason, and God made pretty sure that he made you just the way you are – for me.

Marriage has its troubles, Thato, but I guess such is life and the key is to just keep going. I don't think all those elderly couples who have been married for over 25 years have never experienced heartache; have never had fights; disagreements and at times had to swallow their pride and apologize to the other. Life is one hell of a rollercoaster ride, and I'd be more than happy to take this ride with you."

His words really made me cry and I cannot phathom the pain I put Kg through by telling him I want out. At this point I am not even sure if I really want out or if I was just acting all crazy. He probably realized how speechless I was, when a tear escaped my eye and he gently wiped it away. His eyes were teary himself.

Kg: (teary-eyed) "Let me stop talking. I don't want to ruin your pre-birthday surprise."

I thought we were about to eat until Kg told me to

wait a bit. A few seconds later, the gate bell rang.

Kg: "I'll get it."

I looked at him walking away anxiously and wondered what trick he had up his sleeve. I took a few more sips of my cocktail – the one Kg made for me. He and I are so good in the kitchen, he reminds me a lot of my father. I usually hear that opposites attract, but it seems as if at times those who are alike in more ways than one. A few moments later, I heard a familiar voice.

Selena: (smiling) "Hello, Dea (Goddess)!"

I was so happy to see her, I just couldn't even believe that she was actually here. I jumped up and gave her one long hug. Oh, Selena. My heart pains me a bit knowing that Kg and my father had to kill her husband – well, so they said, but I guess such is life.

Thato: "Selena! You are really full of surprises. How did you get here?"

Selena: (chuckling) "Ask your husband, my love. He is the one who asked me to come. I was actually supposed to grace you with my presence tomorrow, but upon hearing the unfortunate news, he asked me to make your last few nights together memorable."

Thato: (frowning) "What sad news?"

Selena: "I didn't come here to talk of sad news, Isabella. Come, we have lots of work to do."

Selena and I headed to Kg and I's bedroom, while Kg came up with a few dresses covered in their suits.

Kg: "I'll see you ladies in a bit. Selena, please do

your best.”

Selena: (smiling) “You know me well.”

He smiled at us and closed the door behind him.

Thato: “Okay, Selena, what is happening?”

Selena: “You can be so silly, my love. I am preparing you for a very special night. You should really pay more attention to Wolfe the way he pays attention to you whenever you speak. That man gives you everything you ask her. He is so attentive, unlike Luigi.”

Thato: (frowning) “I thought he...”

Selena: “Died? Oh, no, love. He is very much alive,

but in wheelchair.”

Thato: “Wow, you took him back after everything?”

Selena: “Well, I did and I’ll tell you why. Because I love him. Luigi has done so much good for me and not once did I question him in the past. He just got so consumed with power and money that he fell for these evil dealings. It took me a while to forgive him for trying to overrule Gringo, but we are getting there.”

She said that as she was busy doing my make-up and then eventually my hair. She was speaking some sense into me, but I really wasn’t sure if I was prepared to leave Kg anymore.

Thato: (sigh) “I suppose he told you what I said to him.”

Selena: (chuckling) “You know, one thing about being young is that you say and do a lot of things out of impulse. My dear Isabella, you have only been married for a little over a year and already you want to call it quits?”

I looked down in shame.

Selena: “When you took those vows, did you not say that you would be by Wolfe’s side til death to you part?”

I was even too ashamed to answer her, so I simply nodded.

Selena: “Were you not the one who said that you loved him no matter what?”

I nodded.

Selena: “So why are you treating him like all this is his fault?”

I sat in my chair, looking down, thinking of her question.

Selena: “Don’t get me wrong, my dear. You have been through a whole lot – serious pain, but you are so lucky, Isabella. You are actually blessed to have such a loving, caring and supportive man. A man who never demands anything from you – except love. A man who does not demand a child from you – but love. A man who would drop everything of his just to make you happy. A man who wants to buy you the world, simply because you deserve it.

Isabella, a love like yours is so hard to find, but the key is to stick it through. Is Wolfe a bad man? Does he hit you? Swear at you? Does he make you

unhappy? Does he not help you with the chores and dishes? Does he not make romantic gestures? Does he not tell you and show you how much he loves you each and every day? Has he not lived up to his vows up to thus far?"

I sunk in my seat realizing just how selfish I have been lately. Wow, fuck. Kg has done so much for me and here I am wanting to leave him. He makes sure that I am sorted above all and never leaves my sight whenever I am not well. Throughout all these miscarriages, he has been through it all with me. I have been so self-centred that not once did I ask him how he felt about this.

He has been so positive about everything, that I actually failed to see how much he has been trying. Barely three days since I lost my fourth pregnancy, yet here he is dropping work and everything important and making sure I am okay. Instead of praying with him, I decided to wallow in my sadness.

Wow. I have been a real bitch. I felt myself overwhelmed with self-pity as the tears made their famous appearance.

Selena: "No, you are not going to cry and ruin my perfection. Please, Isabella, my intention was not to make you sad. I just wanted you to face reality."

She was right.

Thato: "Selena, you are so right. I have been so selfish."

Selena: "No, dear. Selfishness and a woman in pain does not mix. You will be okay. Now, save those words for later, because you have to choose a dress. Please, I hope you choose the one I love because I didn't bring that many dresses."

Thato: (chuckling) "I have never doubted your style, Selena. Show me what you got."

Selena took out one stunning, white, mermaid dress. I looked at her puzzled.

Selena: (smiling) "What? It is your wedding dress. Do you like it?"

Like it? She must be joking. Those beautiful sparkles everywhere, that gorgeous lacey silhouette, that beautiful flowered one strap and that gorgeous backless side, I am in love already.

Thato: "Selena, I love it! You really are on a mission to make me cry."

Selena: "Don't you even think about it. Come, let's get you dressed."

Selena was kind enough to help me get dressed in it and it was indeed a perfect fit. How on earth did Kg manage to pull this off? I mean wow, this man is something else. I really am blessed. To think that I didn't realize that until now. I looked at myself in the mirror and my goodness, Selena really did a good job. She has officially managed to turn me into a movie star. My hair was tied into a gorgeous bun with a beautiful white flowered ribbon around it.

Thato: "Selena, you have a God-given talent."

Selena: (chuckling) "Thank you. Now, let's get you into your shoes and head out."

She helped me get into my gorgeous ice white pair of louboutins. They are pencil heels, but my goodness the comfort is amazing. She handed me my gorgeous bouquet made out of white and yellow

lilies. I was about to walk out until I remembered my diamond necklace – the one Kg made for me the other day.

Thato: “I almost forgot. Please help me put it on, Selena.”

Selena: “My goodness! Wolfe does not play when he says he really loves you and wants to please you. These jewels are out of this world!”

Thato: “I guess that is a man that is pussy-whipped, right?”

We both laughed.

Selena: “Whatever you do, keep doing it.”

She helped me walk out. I should have noticed by the way she was dressed – rather formal for someone coming to visit all the way from Italy. But thinking about it, I had never seen Selena dressed in real casual clothes. Before I walked down the stairs, I heard some music being played – but this was nothing like a speaker or anything. It sounded like a real life Orchestra playing from outside. Oh, my goodness. The stairs were covered in lilies all over, and the house seemed like it was decorated from scratch. How on earth did Kg pull this off? Do I even really want to leave him? Will staying mean that my enemies won't get to us anymore?

Chapter One Hundred and Thirty One

Psalm 37:4 – “Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

Psalm 126:2 – “Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy.”

Kg

I was really anxious knowing very well that Thato might be walking down the aisle. I have thought long and hard about what she proposed to me and obviously that was ridiculous. I could never force her to stay with me, but the least I could do is to give her reasons why she shouldn't leave me. Thato is my soulmate and I would be seriously devastated if we had to really end our marriage – more especially after only a mere year. If my mother or any of our ancestors really needed to speak to us – the time is now. I signalled to the orchestra to start playing. I decided on the song Matrimony by Wale and Usher.

I wanted her to relive this moment for many years to come. She has always said that she wished for a small wedding – so why not? I saw Selena walking out of the house as she went to sit at her seat. I thought about having our friends and family over, but then I want the two of us to enjoy this moment.

They can watch the video later on. I saw my beautiful rare diamond approaching. I could see her about to cry. Oh, this woman is so gorgeous. Her beauty is like the sun's beautiful warm rays in the early morning. It is no wonder earth is called mother earth, because women are the greatest gift to mankind.

I love seeing her smile. She walked closer to me and the closer she got, the more the tears were building up in both of our eyes. I just wanted to see that happy look on her face. Yes, I asked Selena to officiate our wedding. We are already married, I just wanted it to be extra special. She approached me and my heart skipped a million beats per minute. I don't think I'd ever forget that moment. I held her soft, magical hands and stared deep into her beautiful eyes. I felt her shaking. Shame, my love hates attention. The music stopped and Selena started speaking.

Selena: (smiling) "I have been told you hate speeches, Isabella. But tonight is a special night. I would like to leave you with a few good words before you two can enjoy each other and say your vows. 1 Corinthians 13:1 – " Love is patient, love is kind, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth."

Take heed in those words; for love is the purest thing you will ever find on this earth. Love does not hurt – people do. Love is not painful – people cause pain. I have learnt a lot in my marriage and all I can say is that love requires patience and you need to work on what you want to have. The two of you are a team now and make sure that it stays that way. You are stronger together – don't let anyone else tell you otherwise."

I smiled as a tear escaped my eye, but Kg quickly removed it gently from my face.

Selena: "With that said, may you say your vows?
Wolfe, you can start."

Kg: (smiling) "TT, my baby. Ndhlovukazi (Queen),
Kgosigadi ya makgonthe (Queen of Queens),
Sthandwa se nhliziyo yami (My heart's keeper), My
prayer warrior, my strength gatherer, Thembalami
(My hope), the mother of my children, My soul
provider, my Tigress. I have loved you from the
moment I saw you. I told myself that I would wait
until you were old enough to understand the kind of
love I had for you. I never in my wildest dreams
imagined you would ever say yes to me.

I have that beautiful memory of the day you agreed
to be my girlfriend engraved in my mind. Your scent
is so stuck in my head that I don't even think I can
ever forget it. I remember that time I was in a coma;
I would see you in my dreams; I would smell your
scent everywhere I went, and I just didn't understand

why. When I got my memory back, I was so hurt more especially for you.

I imagined what you went through without me. I promised to love you and never hurt you intentionally, and that is what I want to do til eternity. You are my missing rib, you literally stole a piece of my heart, TT. You know I am not a man of many words, I am a man of action. If you allow me to prove it to you, I'll gladly show you why you shouldn't leave me."

I couldn't even stop the tears anymore. By then my face was soaked in tears which Kg would occasionally wiped away. He looked at me with a broad smile on his face and I guess it was my turn to speak. Thank goodness he didn't buy or make me another ring because wow. I have so much jewellery.

Thato: "Kgaugelo, you are the kindest, most loving, most caring and most supportive man I have ever met. Throughout my entire time with you, I have

learnt how to love unconditionally. Most importantly. I have failed to show you equal amount of support you have sown me. You have been with me throughout the loss of our babies. I can honestly say that I have failed to even ask you how you felt about everything. Meanwhile, you kept on giving and showing me love. I love you, Kg. I love you more than words can describe. Most importantly, I love you because you have never given up on me or even felt the need to. Allow me this chance to prove myself to you and show you the same love you have shown me. For you are a very good man and you also deserve the perfect love.”

I saw a tear escape Kg’s eye and I took my hand and gently wiped it off his face. Oh, my man.

Selena: “I have nothing else to say other than you may kiss your bride, Wolfe.”

Kg: (chuckling) “I thought you’d never say.”

Kg gently yet passionately kissed me. I am so grateful because everytime we kiss, it just feels like the very first time all over again. We broke the kiss after a short while and just stared at each other for a while, as they Orchestra played John Legend's Love me Now.

Kg: "I love you, MaNcube."

Thato: "I love you too, my King."

Selena led us to the beautiful set up Kg had for us right behind the house. Just the two of us, under the stars. The table was set with the aromatic food which he cooked for us a while ago. Ja, neh, Kg is really a hopeless romantic and I am seriously not complaining. He pulled my chair for me and I sat down as he sat opposite me. He even had a waiter serve us the food and drinks.

Kg: (smiling) “Does this mean you are not leaving me anymore?”

Thato: (smiling) “No, I am so sorry for even suggesting that. It was seriously uncalled for.”

Kg: (smiling) “That’s all in the past. Just as long as I just get to have you by my side.”

I felt so touched, so blessed to have him there. I don’t even know what I was thinking. I guess my birthday this year is going to be a whole lot of awesome. As I relaxed and enjoyed my food with Kg’s hand literally in mine, his phone rang. He ignored it and it rang again.

Thato: “Answer it. It might be important.”

I regret saying those words to him because right

there and then, shit went down and I felt like I had lost my Kg.

Kg: (Answering) "Hello?"

I don't know who it was or what the person said because he got up in an instant.

Kg: "Okay, I'll be right there. Just hang in there."

He got up so frantically, leaving me so worried.

Thato: (puzzled) "Kg?! Kgaugelo o ya kae (where are you going)?"

Kg: "Reinette just had an accident. She needs me. I have to go."

Just like that Kg left me in my wedding dress, sitting on the table all alone as he ran after Reinette. What the fuck just happened?!

Chapter One Hundred and Thirty Two

Phillipians 4:8 – “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”

Thato

I was left defeated, in tears, as if my heart was ripped out of my chest. How could Kg do this to me? I thought of calling Selena and venting, but tears kept streaming down my face. I decided to go through my phone and scroll who I could call. I felt so bad for the way I had spoken to Queen Nandi and Nana and more especially Zenande. But I was in

need of serious help. There was no way that could have been real. I decided to call Nana.

Nana: "Isabella. I have been expecting your call."

Thato: (crying) "Nana... He... He... He just gave me the best wedding ever and now... Reinette called and..."

I tried speaking further, but the tears just kept streaming. I felt my chest closing in.

Nana: (Deep sigh) "Do you honestly believe that Wolfe would do such to you, Isa?"

I kept quiet for a while and thought long and hard about her question.

Thato: “But... he just left me here, didn't he?”

Nana: “Yes, he left you there, but for a purpose and one purpose only – to save your marriage and to prove to you what his vows meant tonight.”

Nana likes speaking in riddles.

Thato: “Nana, can you just be frank with me please?”

Nana: “The only thing I need to do with you is to be honest and make you realize the truth on your own. You are a strong woman, Isabella, but you lack consistency. The moment you embark on a painful journey, you forget everything Petunia taught you. You seem to lose yourself and in that you even forget to realize what a wonderful man you have by your side. Now, I am asking you again, do you think Kg would actually cheat on you?”

Thato: (hesitant) "No."

Nana: "Good, now what do you plan on doing after he just left?"

Thato: (crying) "I have no idea, Nana."

Nana: "Isabella, I won't always be around. You need to toughen your skin and learn to be a bitch at times. Learn to be the prayer warrior you have always been. I am asking you again; what are you going to do about it?"

Thato: "I am going to pray."

Nana: "Good. Now wipe those tears off your face. Now is the time to pray harder than ever. Your willingness in this situation will determine what happens before tomorrow morning. Are you ready

for whatever comes your way?”

Thato: “Yes.”

Nana: “Good. Now go light your candle, and speak to the lord. Don’t worry, Selena is there to comfort you. Stop crying. I’ll see you soon.”

She hung up before I could thank her or even apologize for my behaviour. I don’t know, but I guess she is right. I need to stop crying and I need to start being a strong woman – the queen that I was born to be. I decided to head upstairs to my bedroom and lit my candle and I started praying.

Reinette

Oh, what a lovely day it has been. I can’t believe that my little spell worked. I took the remaining money

that Kg paid me for my few weeks of service, and I went to one of those sangomas who post their flyers everywhere and I did what I had to do. Khanyi is such a dumb bitch, she actually thought that I would let her get Kg after I did all the hard work. I managed to put a very tough spell on him, and she did say that after just one phone call he would be mine. I had to pay R5000, but fuck it, it is so much worth it. I can't wait for him to actually find me naked at my place. All I need to do is just consummate our relationship and give him an heir – something Thato clearly failed to give him. Can you believe that bitch? She actually told me not to call Kg by his nickname. Talk about territorial. I put on my lacey robe and waited for him, since I have nothing underneath. I seriously can't wait to be Mrs. Reinette Ncube. Oh, the smirk on Khanyi's face. I am going to wipe her and Rami out like old bread believe me. As I sat there on my couch, sipping on my wine, I heard a stern knock on the door.

Reinette: "Who is it?"

Kg: "It's me, Kg. Open up for me, baby."

I got up swiftly and opened up for him. I looked at him and fell in love all over again. I inhaled his gorgeous scent. Shit, this man makes me horny every time I stare at him.

Kg: (smiling) "Aren't you going to invite me in?"

Reinette: "Of course."

I walked back into my flat backwards and as soon as he closed the door, I took off my robe and he smiled at me mischievously.

Kg: (smiling) "Well, well, well, you are one dirty minded lady. Didn't you say that you had an accident?"

Reinette: (chuckling) "Okay, you got me. I just wanted to be near you."

I got puzzled by his reaction. I mean surely he was supposed to have gotten an erection already. I walked closer to him and attempted to touch his shoulders, but he gently removed my hands.

Kg: (smiling) "I'm thinking we should drink first, don't you think?"

Reinette: (irriated) "Don't you like me, Kg? I mean am I not hot enough for you?"

Kg: (smiling) "Of course, you are, Reinette. I just want us to talk about a few things before we go to the next level. You don't want us to start our first night on honeymoon on a bad note now, do you?"

I suddenly saw a glimmer of hope. Finally Kg and I were going to be together. My face beamed immediately.

Reinette: "Honeymoon?"

Kg: "Of course. You think I would just marry you and not take you on a trip around the world? Come on. Get dressed and pour us some wine."

I anxiously took my robe and put it back on and poured him a glass of wine. I refilled mine as well and handed it to him.

Reinette: "So, tell me, now that you are serious about marrying me, what is going to happen to your wife?"

Kg: "Well, I will divorce her, of course. I just need to

know one thing from you.”

Reinette: “Anything.”

Kg: “How did you manage to cause my wife’s miscarriage?”

I choked on my wine, for a bit and he didn’t seem bothered. He gave me one straight face and I knew he was not joking.

Reinette: “What do you mean?”

Kg: (Angered) “You really want me to beat it out of you, don’t you?”

I seemed so confused. I mean, the lady said her spell would work. In fact she reassured me

countless times. I am puzzled by Kg's reaction right now.

Reinette: "Kg, I don't know what you are on about."

I didn't see his next move coming. He slapped me so hard across the face, that my wine spilled all over my carpet. I felt my ears ringing and my whole face burning at the same time as I landed on the floor. I looked at him and he slowly got up. He looked infuriated, enraged.

Kg: "I won't ask you again, Reinette Buthelezi. How the fuck did you cause my wife's miscarriage?!"

I felt as if the whole ground was shaking as he roared his anger towards me. I felt myself trembling just by looking at him.

Kg: "Well?"

Reinette: (scared) "I... Kg, please, I..."

I didn't get to finish my sentence when he kicked me in the stomach so hard I felt as if my whole intestines were about to get out of my body.

Kg: "If I have to ask you again, I will kill you!"

Reinette: "Okay! It was Khanyi's idea. Please don't kill me, I beg you! I just wanted you , that's all."

Kg: "So you decided that you would cause my wife pain by taking her fourth baby?! Do oyou have any idea the damage you caused her?! Us?!"

Reinette: "I didn't mean to do it. I just wanted you..."

I felt him kick me a few more times and I cried out loud. I felt my whole body on fire as if I was in fire already.

Reinette: "Kg, please... forgive me."

Kg: "You should have asked around before you did your shit. You should have asked people about me. I am not one to be messed with. Do you know what I do to bitches like you? Do you have any idea what I do to people who mess with my wife?! Why would you think that you can enter someone's marriage and become number one, Reinette? Don't you have any self-respect? I mean you are attractive but clearly you lack brains. Haven't you learnt anything from what I have taught you? Haven't you learnt anything from the past few weeks you have been working for me? My wife is my fortress, she is my life, my world. I live and breathe for her. I do everything FOR HER. I love her so much, that any woman I see is nothing compared to my Thato.

Haven't you noticed just how much of a prayer warrior I am? I pray for my wife and with my wife. I put God above all else, because without Him I would have never been the man I am today. Wena, you decided to play God with our lives and now you will reap the consequences. Anyone that takes a life from me does not live to tell the tale. Call your whore of a cousin, right now."

I jumped up in fear and ignored my pain for a moment and called Khanyi. She answered on the first ring.

Khanyi: "Jah, wena. Where have you been, bitch?! Kudala ngifouna (I have been calling)."

Reinette: "(scared) "I'm sorry, I have been busy. Listen, can you come to my place right now?"

Khanyi: "For what?! You were supposed to meet me

so we could finalize the end of our deal.”

Reinette: “Yes, we can do that, but please, come to my place. It is an emergency.”

Khanyi: “Mxm, I have no time for games. If you are dying then so be it.”

Kg snatched the phone from me before I could even respond.

Kg: “Hello, Khanyi.”

Khanyi: (happy) “Hi, Kg?”

Kg: “Yes, the one and only. See, I was planning on surprising you, but you just had to ruin it all, didn’t you?”

Khanyi: (Blushing) "Oh, Kg. I see you haven't changed one bit."

Kg: "Yes, now come on. We are waiting for you. I have such big news to share with you."

Khanyi: (Excited) "You didn't have to ask me twice. I am on my way."

Kg: "Good. Please bring Rami with you."

Khanyi: (puzzled) "Rami, why?"

Kg: "If you want a good time, you will bring her too. Got it?"

Khanyi: "Okay. I'm on it."

He hung up and looked at me.

Kg: "Now you will know to never underestimate a praying man."

Khanyi

I am so excited. Kg called me out of the blue with Reinettes phone of course. I mean, I was supposed to do a ritual to get Kg to be mine and I was actually supposed to sacrifice Reinettes, but the bitch just didn't pitch. I don't know what happened, but Kg has had a change of heart. He has probably realized that he needs me and loves me more than that barren bitch. It is officially time for us to be together and I seriously cannot wait. I decided to call Rami immediately.

Rami: "Hello?"

Khanyi: “Yey, wena. Kg is at Reinet’s place. He asked me to come. Apparently he has a nice surprise for me, but he wants me to bring you with.”

Rami: (puzzled) “Kg? As in the Kg?”

Khanyi: “Duh, are you slow or what?”

Rami: (chuckling) “You cannot be serious, Khanyi. Haven’t you learnt anything from Rendani? Kg loves Thato too much to even go meet women like you without her. Something is up. This is a trap.”

Khanyi: (annoyed) “Mxm, wena unejealous (you are so jealous), Rami. Why can’t you just be happy for me?”

Rami: “I can’t be happy for you because you were

never meant to be with him in the first place. I am telling you. Kg has set a trap for you. This does not sound nor feel right.”

Khanyi: “You are just jealous, Rami! You and Thato have always been jealous of me. You two never saw the light and spark within me and now, I am going to outshine you both. I am going to get Kg for myself and you two will be left with tears in your eyes.”

Rami: “Alright. Good luck.”

She hung up on me, just like that. I didn't even give a shit. I was prepared to go meet my Kg. it is high time I take what's mine.

Kg

I am deeply disgusted by these two women. Well, all

three of them, including Rami. I tried so hard to hide my pain from my wife by giving her the best wedding she deserves and one she has always wanted. I just wanted her to have a great evening without any care in the world. I know, I left her in such a state, but I actually did it purposefully. I needed to see if Thato will be ready for times of sorrow, I need to know if she won't break everytime we go through something bad in our marriage. I need my wife, the warrior I met years ago. She is my world and it pains me that people she once trusted decided to turn our lives upside down. These bitches don't know that I am protected by the blood of the lamb, my ancestors have sung praises for me and it is not my time to die – nor is it hers. I am doing this for her and tonight, I am ending these miserable bitches for good. No one dares take my child away from me and cause my wife pain and lives to tell the fucking tale. In fact, I want her to see this – to see the pain I am about to cause these two. I thought of sending her an sms, but she won't believe me. She is probably too devastated to talk by the way I just left. I decided to call her and she took a while before she answered it.

Thato: "Hello."

Yep, she is definitely angry at me.

Kg: "Thato, I can't talk much. I am sending you an address. Come as soon as possible."

Thato: (puzzled) "What's happening, Kg?"

Kg: "You will know as soon as you get here. I promise you, after tonight, no one will ever hurt you ever again."

I hung up before she asked a few more questions. Knowing Thato, she might just ask me a million questions within a minute. I sent her my location and awaited Khanyi's appearance. I had tied up Reinette to a chair and her face had already swelled.

I am not a woman basher, but a woman who decided to be a part of a plan to execute my fourth unborn child, is out to get me. I have to teach her an unforgettable lesson. Barely five minutes later, Khanyi made her appearance. I didn't even hesitate to open the door. She smiled so widely and hugged me, but I couldn't even stand her disgusting, filthy stench. I immediately removed her from me and of course she was puzzled.

Khanyi: (puzzled) "Kg, what is going on here?"

She looked at me and saw my bewildered eyes. Then she looked around and saw the bruised Reinet, tied to a chair and immediately got rattled.

Khanyi: (scared) "What is happening here?"

I looked at her and thought of everything that my wife did for her. How we let her go after her shit

stunt back in Enande, how Thato went ahead and gave her a chance despite our warnings and paid for this whore's school fees and she still decided to hurt Thato where it hurts the most. I couldn't stomach her filthy, evil stench and I slapped her a few times and she landed face first on the floor. She quickly turned and looked at me with immense fear in her eyes. I want her to feel this; imagine how my poor wife felt when she had to get up and go to the toilet all night. She didn't even want to wake me, and she went through all that pain alone. How fucked up can a person be? The more I thought of everything she did to us, the angrier I got. I walked closer to her and I could see the fear I had instilled in her had grown.

Khanyi: (terrified) "Kg, I can explain."

Kg: "Explain what, Khanyi? Explain how you tried to kill my wife, but chose to kill our baby instead? How you decided to go back to your evil ways and forget all the good she did for you and cause her so much

pain?!”

Khanyi: (petrified) “I can explain, Kg, please.”

The more she spoke, was the more I started to beat her up. How dare she decide that my child was not worthy of living?! I found myself beating the blue out of her when someone knocked on the door and I didn't even hear. I found myself seeing red while I was beating Khanyi up until I heard Thato's soft, calm voice.

Thato: “Kg. Stop it!”

I managed to stop and looked at her. I felt my whole body shaking and my hands trembling immensely. I slowly looked at my hands as I saw the fear in Thato's eyes. My hands were covered in so much blood and my knuckles were bruised. I didn't even feel the pain; all I needed to do was feed my rage.

Thato: (scared) "Kg, what happened?"

I turned to look at Khanyi and I saw her barely breathing and coughing some blood. I don't regret it at all.

Kg: "I did all this for you."

I saw the tears in her eyes, but she fought them back with all her might.

Thato: (teary) "Kg, my love. You really didn't have to. This will only inflict more pain."

Kg: (shouting) "Take a good look at her! She is the woman who chose to kill your child! Our child!"

I found myself crying as I dropped to the floor. Every ounce of pain I had been hiding from her had suddenly manifested itself.

Thato: (teary) “Kg, it’s going to be okay. Remember our vows to one another earlier on tonight? I don’t want to enter my 20th year of life with blood on my hands, my King. You are such a beautiful person – both inside and out. I get so jealous because already women will even go to such extremes to get you. I didn’t realize how much pain you were going through yourself. You are such an amazing husband, Kg. You have finally made me see the light; you have made me realize that only God can say no. Yes, we have lost four children, but only He gets to decide whether that child lives or dies. You are bigger than this, baby. You are my warrior, if you get consumed by all this hatred and anger – who will protect me when you are gone?”

Please, Kg, let’s go home. I love you so much and I

need you even more. I cannot imagine my life without you. Please, give us another chance to be together and try again and being happy. I know for a fact that God has put you in my life for a reason. For you always ensure that I remember your favourite verse : Isaiah 60:22 – “When the time is right, I the Lord will make it happen.” I know you also like my favourite verse: Phillipians 4:13 – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” I have realized how much you love me and how much I need you. I cannot live without you, Kg. You are the reason I am who I am today and I cannot imagine life without your pure and perfect presence. Please, let’s go home.”

Kg: (crying) “I have failed you, my queen. I have failed you.”

Thato: “If you had failed me then I wouldn’t be here. Kg, you have taught me what the real meaning of love is. You have taught me that I need to get up no

matter how hard it gets tough. You have taught me that with you by my side, life becomes a whole lot easier. You have taught me that the triangle is the strongest shape in the universe: God first, then us on either side. I love you so much that I feel that I can't even exist without you by my side. Please, Kg. leave these to God and let's go home, my love."

I slowly got up after listening to my wife's calming voice and walked out of the flat hand in hand with her.

Thato

I was bewildered – shocked rather to find Kg in such a monstrous state. The last time I saw him like that was when he taught Sonto and Sophie a hard ass lesson. I didn't believe it, but I had to tap into my soul and help my husband. I had to be there for the love of my life. We drove home and asked one of the guards to drive my car back home. Kg was in a

bad state I won't lie. He was shivering and crying hysterically. I think he had bottled up so much pain and I didn't even notice. I took a shower with him and washed his back, occasionally kissing his back and shoulders as he always does to me. He felt a lot better when he got into bed, and I lit some imphepho for us and two candles. I am amazed by Kg's spirit, really. I went downstairs and made him some potatoe soup and got back to feed him. We slept for a while and he actually woke me up at midnight to wish me happy birthday and so that we could pray together. Wow, just then I had thought we wouldn't pray together, but he showed me that he is a man above all men. He showed me that he won't succumb to withcraft that easily.

Kg: "Happy Birthday, my love. I can't wait to see the look on your face at my launch today."

Thato: (smiling) "Can you honestly have any more surprises up your sleeves?"

Kg: (chuckling) "For as long as I have you by my side, I will always have tricks up my sleeve. Just you wait and see."

He gently kissed me and we slept. I got up early in the morning, at about 5am. I had decided to call Zenande at 4am just to tell her I am ready to get cleansed. I needed to do that before my birthday went ahead. Zenande was more than happy to see me even. She came along with Queen Nandi and Nana. Selena was sleeping until about 8am. She was probably tired. Queen Nandi and Nana were so happy to see me. They didn't even seem angry or anything at me. Wow, I am truly blessed to have the people I have around me. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for me.

Seven years later....

Thato

Life has been such a breeze. Yes, I am indeed 27 years old and what a hectically interesting seven years it has been. Kg, my darling King is 34 years old and yep, we are still childless, but nonetheless, we are happy. I finally managed to finish my degree and Kg's company has been blossoming greatly. We did move to Enande, and Kg gets his diamonds from our mine. We have become billionaires and wow, I must say that the community has grown and has fallen in love with us even more. I cannot imagine life without this man of mine.

Rami decided to commit suicide on the day of my 20th birthday. She left me a note that left me a bit saddened, but I guess such is life. Khanyi and Reinette left without a trace and Gringo was very disturbed to hear about what they did. He made sure they had left without a trace, so I am just glad they are out of our lives. Nomsa was finally let go

and released from prison a changed person. I can finally say that our family is happier than ever. We are also growing because Gloria has three children already and Nurse Portia and Soks have twin girls whom they adore so much. Kg and I currently are in the Maldives, and we decided to take the whole family with us on the trip. I hadn't been feeling well lately, so Kg insisted that we go to the doctor here nearby. I know, he still loves to exaggerate as always. I was in my bed with Kg right by my side. Yes, we have been inseparable ever since. The doctor walked in a few moments later and Kg stood up and held my hand.

Doctor: "Hello, Mr and Mrs Ncube. How may I help you today?"

I was about to speak, but Kg thought it would be better for him to tell the doctor about my problems.

Kg: "Hi, Doc. My wife has been feeling horrible lately.

She has been feeling quite queasy, she can't stomach a lot of foods, she is moody and sleeps a lot. Apparently my cologne is horrible to smell lately. Can you imagine that? After a whole 7 years?"

The doctor and Kg chuckled together leaving me so annoyed.

Doctor: "I understand. Mrs Ncube, do you know if you might be pregnant?"

Thato: (laughing) "Doctor, I haven't been able to fall pregnant in seven years, so I highly doubt that is possible. I have been eating a lot of seafood lately, so that might be the cause."

Kg: (smiling) "Oh, Doc. I know for sure she is pregnant."

Doctor: "I like a sure man. Now, shall we take a lot, Mrs. Ncube?"

Ag, I hate that vaginal sonar. It is really unpleasant, but hey, if we can stomach a penis every now and then, a cold stick shouldn't be painful. I relaxed a bit and spread my legs as the doctor got busy. I was in my own world because I knew that I couldn't be pregnant. I mean, it had been 7 years since I last had fallen pregnant. Before I knew it I heard what sounded like a heartbeat or two. I got up shocked and looked at the screen. I noticed Kg's excitement and I stared at the doctor, awaiting the news.

Docotr: "Well, congratulations, Mr. Ncube. Your suspicions were correct. You two are indeed expecting."

That felt like such a dream. What the fuck? This can't be true. I looked at the screen a few times, then at Kg and then at the doctor. I even blinked a

few times.

Thato: (teary) “Kg, pinch me please. This can’t be true, can it?”

Kg: (chuckling) “It is true, baby. You are indeed pregnant. I saw it even before you started having the morning sickness. My mother appeared to me and told me that we would finally have what we have always wanted. We are going to be parents, baby.”

I felt my cheeks being warmed by my fresh tears. I don’t think I had even cried so much in years. Not even tears of sadness, but tears of actual happiness. And there and then, I remembered Kg’s favourite verse: Isaiah 60:22 – “When the time is right, I the lord will make it happen.”

Indeed we have been through so much, but with patience and faith and trust in the Lord, His will

happens – no matter who is against it. I cannot wait for the journey that lies ahead of us. I love my husband and I love my life. This has indeed been an incredible journey so far. My name is Thato Isabella Ncube, Queen of Enande, the Wife of Kgaugelo Nkosinathi Ncube. A once too often bruised but not broken girl, but I turned out to be a pretty okay woman. This was my story.