



**THE
DEMON'S
WIFE**

NOMPILO K. GUMEDE



This Novel Provide it

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One

MAHLORI

My father walked me down the aisle proudly he was the happiest father in the world... Who wouldn't be? It's not every day you receive half a million for a Lobola and wearing a Hartmarx suit that was tailored in Chicago.

All eyes were on us that's exactly what I wanted. I made sure to invite everyone from my noisy neighbors my mother's church mates my former schoolmates. I could have gotten married in Mauritius but I wanted everyone to witness my wedding.

I wanted to brag to everyone who thought I'd be nothing in life that includes my parents and siblings. I remember when my youngest sister Hanyani graduated from the University of Limpopo instead of being happy for her my parents decided to bash me saying I'm a failure a whore who will sell her body to make a living. Now the question is: who is richer now? She will be working her butt off from nine to five whilst I sit the whole day sipping champagne and I'd still be richer than her.

My name is Mahlari Mathebula soon to be Sibiya from Malamulele from a rural area just outside Giyani in Limpopo. My parents were blessed with three girls Ahlulani who is the firstborn. She is married to a very struggling man...I'd never love can't pay bills. Then there's me—a black sheep and the last born Hanyani who is doing well for herself.

My older sister never made it to tertiary she finished high school and got married while I went to study Accounting at Durban University of technology. I was supposed to graduate long ago

but I'm still stuck in the second year. I was doing fine during the first semester until I met these cool friends Nonhle and Mbali who introduced me to the life I've always wanted the life of luxury known as soft life. I'd be lying if I said my friends were a bad influence I chose that life for myself I was tired of wearing the same ugly clothes and eating cheap food. So I had to do something about my life fortunately Nonhle and Mbali were there to plug me. Nsfas money wasn't enough to maintain the lifestyle I wanted.

When I started flunking at school my parents started ill talking to me to our neighbors and comparing me with my sisters and blamed Durban for corrupting me. That was when I ceased going home.

My friends and I were having a girl's night at the pumpkin club in Ballito at la Montagne hotel when I met this gentleman who asked me out. My girls were furious at me for ghosting them but I wasn't going to say no to free cash plus he looked moneyed judging by his flashy suit. We went to his suite and did the deed he was good for someone who was his age and his size was satisfying but I had seen better.

I guess my sex game was that good because he kept on coming back for more gave me excess to his cards and introduced me to his wife... Yes he was married and the wife had no problem in having me as a sister wife. As long as her man was happy she was happy too... Her words not mine. She literally begged me to marry her husband because ever since he got involved with me he changed for the better and he treated her well because of me.

Me being me I agreed. Not because I loved him but I loved his money. He wasn't an attractive man either but the money he spent on me was more than that I got from my previous blessers

combined. Apparently he had shares in la Montagne hotel and owned a few clubs around Durban... What more could I ask for?

My parents were not happy at first about me being a second wife but when Muzi (my husband) promised to pay a million for Lobola my father changed his mind within a blink of an eye. My mother was reluctant because Muzi was almost twice my age and she felt like one million was too much for a bride price her words like "I can't accept a million for my daughter she is not for sale" was when my father reduced the amount to five hundred thousands. That was how I came into having a luxurious wedding.

After we exchanged vows and did all the necessities went to do a photoshoot and went for the reception. As expected people have been giving speeches about how I should respect and take care of my husband and whatnot...as if I was going to take those silly pieces of advice. My husband was filthy rich all these chores were to be done by a helper or his first Lady. I had a manicure to maintain the only chore I was going to do was to give him the coochie.

And then my extended family who always cursed me were now pretending to like me because I was marrying a rich man. If they thought they were going to get a cent from me they had another thing coming.

After the wedding we went home. When I say home I'm referring to my husband's house where I will be living with him and Ntombi my sister wife. Muzi said we were going for our honeymoon the following day we firstly needed to go home so that we could perform a ritual that was a custom that had been practiced from generation to generation whenever someone was getting married. He didn't elaborate on much so I was yet to find out about everything since I was the new family member.

"Welcome to our home Mahlori. This is your house too you can do anything you want at any time. I hope we'll all treat each other with respect" Ntombi said as Muzi and I got to the house. She was smiling widely her voice was honeyed. I'm still wondering why she accepted me without a fight? Maybe she was planning on slaughtering me in the middle of the night... Jesus!

"Thank you" I said with a fake smile. I was nervous. She was scaring the shit out of me. She was a beautiful mature woman. She had a beautiful afro she was light-skinned and had a beautiful curvaceous body. She looked much younger than she was.

When Muzi introduced me to her I found out that she was forty-one years old eight years younger than our husband while I was only twenty-five.

"Here" She handed Victoria's Secret's Pink bag. I was reluctant to take it. She was beautiful but her aura was the opposite.

"Take it dear. It is a wedding gift from me" I took the bag and peeked through. It was lingerie I think it was red and black. I hadn't seen it well but I could tell that it was beautiful.

"Thank you"

"I'd like you to use it today. " She winked. "I will leave the newlyweds to enjoy themselves. Muzi remembers at midnight... Muzi nodded and turned his attention to me while the first lady disappeared into the hallway.

"Since the first lady is out of sight... How about we explore this beautiful house" I said sucking and licking my lips seductively.

"That's a good idea but..." No No No.

He never had butts when it came to sex. He was scared of his wife! I knew it was a bad idea for the three of us to live under the same roof. He had to get me my own house —far away from this one.

"Shhh" I sat walked closer to him I didn't want to hear any of his complaints. I spent the whole day smiling at my fake acquaintances all I needed was a dick. It was my wedding night for goodness sake!

"Baby we can't. We need to do the ritual first before we can be intimate"

"We have been having sex ever since you met me" what difference was it going to make not have sex that night?

"We weren't married by then but now we have adhered to the rules so that our marriage can be blessed"
I checked the time it was half-past eight. I could wait a few hours...

#TDW - Nompilo Khayelihle Gumede

Two

MAHLORI

I expected the burning of incense and the slaughtering of a goat or chicken but it was distinct from what I had perceived. I was given black clothes to wear and we went to one of the rooms on the top floor. It was almost unfurnished cold and dull. There was no artwork in the walls it was just Grey walls. Muzi took a pocket knife and slit my wrist when I least expected I screamed in pain as blood oozed from my vein to the small enamel plate that was

on the floor. He did the same to himself and his wife. He mixed our blood and started drinking...sies.

He gave Ntombi to drink and when it was my turn I refused. The metallic smell and taste of my own blood was hard to bear how much more if I drink someone else's blood?

"Mahlori"

"Muzi I'm not drinking blood!" I stood up and made my way to the door when I tripped and my temple collided with the wooden floor. I cursed in pain and tried to pick myself up but my ankle wouldn't bulge.

"Mahlori you are going to hurt yourself. Just calm down please"

"No I don't want to drink blood I want to sleep!" I never heard of a ritual involving human blood.

"This is the way of binding the three of us so that our polygamy will be peaceful. I wouldn't want to see my beautiful wives trying to kill each other because of me. If you don't do this the ancestors will punish us"

I looked at my swollen ankle and thought about my honeymoon. How was I going to enjoy it with a wrenched ankle?

"Will I be okay if I do it?"

Muzi nodded and picked me up bridal style and helped drink the vampire beverage. I don't even want to talk about the taste I was on the verge of puking but I tried by all means to hold myself before the ancestors cut my tongue or seal my mouth forever for disrespecting them.

I can't believe I went to this extent in the name of marriage with the man I barely loved. At least I was safe from HIV since I was taking Prep daily. Yep! I'm a cautious whore. Some of these men would want to hit it raw and I wouldn't say no bec I'd lose cash.

I once caught this man drinking some big pill I knew exactly what it was but I asked anyway. He said it was a pain killer...

I wasn't surprised that people are scared to die alone they want us to tag along. At least STI was treatable.

Even when I got involved with my hubby I always made sure not to quit my pills because I don't trust him. If he was able to cheat on his beautiful wife with me. He wouldn't hesitate to do the same with someone who was much younger and fresher than I was.

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The following morning I woke feeling nauseated and pressed so I ran for the bathroom and puked. I expected my vomit to be something that I ate the previous night . I'm not the type to inspect the vomit but the strange color of it made me remove my hand from the flushing button and shifted my focus on the black liquid that came from my stomach... It was probably blood. I flushed and peed. My head rolled back as I closed my eyes until I finished my business. My vagina was painful like I've been having rough sex my hand went to it... It was swollen. How? I mean after that odd ritual my libido decreased to zero and I told Muzi to spend a night with Ntombi because I was no longer interested in sharing a bed with him. I was still angry about my sprained ankle -ankle!

I looked at my leg it was back to normal there was no pain or swelling no wonder I ran to the bathroom with no problem.



I guess the ancestors fixed it. But my coochie... Did Muzi come in the middle of the night and have his way with me while I was unaware? No it was impossible. I was sober as a poster. If anything happened I would have felt it.

It was no use in asking myself questions that I can't answer so I fixed myself a bath. I'm sure bath salts were going to make my swollen vagina. They always helped when I had a rough night. While I was waiting for the enormous bathtub to fill I pushed time by touring my bedroom. Yesterday I was too tired and angry to admire it

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I pushed time by touring my bedroom. Yesterday I was too tired and angry to admire it I only used the bathroom.

Beautiful was an understatement I had no apt words to describe how exquisite my room was it looked like a presidential suite in a hotel. It was like a mini house. It had black couches on the other side and white coffee table with fresh flowers on them. On the other side It had a desk a bookshelf a computer and a few note pads.

Then there was a king sized bed with a simple Yet beautiful headboard and white wooden nightstand and a side light. On the far corner there was a big beautiful piano and the violin was hanging in the granite wall that complemented the marble floor.

The interior design did a number in this room. It had many useless things that made this room beautiful like a piano and the violin I can't play to save my ass but they were beautiful art pieces for decoration. About the desk... It Was also a decoration I won't be using it. I just need to fill the shelf with many books and add a frame of my picture on the desk to complete the look. It also had a balcony and a view to die for.

After I finished bathing a maid came to me and introduced herself as Zodwa she was going to be my personal maid. She was in her fifties I assume. I left her to do her work and went to eat breakfast with my new family.

"Good morning dear how did you sleep?"  
Ntombi greeted

"Morning I slept well thank you. Where is Muzi?" I asked noticing his absence.

"He is in his study finishing some paperwork"  
On his honeymoon day?

"He said he wants to settle something before you depart. In the meantime we can eat and tour this house"

After eating breakfast Ntombi showed me around the house and I went back to my room to chat with my friends.

"Mrs Sibiya instructed me to help you pack" Zodwa said

She was my maid but she took instructions from Ntombi? That woman doesn't understand the boundaries I see. I married her husband but we were not friends!

"I don't need help thank you"  
Instead of going she stood still and looked at me sternly

"Is there anything else mam Zodwa?" I was confused.

"Are you sure you want to be here?" she asked gruffly.

"Yes?"

"Be careful my child luxury comes with a price"

"mam Zodwa!" I yelled as she shut the door behind her.

I need to find my own helper I'm certain that Zodwa had been here for years so she is probably Ntombi's sidekick and she is here to spy on me. If this hag thought I was going to entertain her madness... shame on her. She was jealous that I was young and rich while she was nothing but a maid.

### Three

My husband and I spent our honeymoon in Maui. We spent two weeks doing my favorite activities such as helicopter tour sunset cruise beach hoping to mention a few. I made sure to post everything we did on Instagram and my followers were growing rapidly. Many kids wanted to be me... Everyone could be me if they knew how to use the precious gem between their legs. But people are busy fussing about school as if a piece of paper will bring food to the table... maybe it could just not in my country shame!

Now we were back and everyone had to go back to their normal lives except me...I needed to find a new hobby because school was a no for me. I decided to give myself a tour around the house starting from the bottom floor since dear hubby went to deal with his businesses ... The house was rather too big for three people. I was in the hallway on the top floor when I heard a weird sound from the room where we did the ritual someone was crying for help. It was a female voice. I leaned my ear on the door to

listen carefully and heard a hissing sound... that was definitely a snake. Could it happen that the girl was trapped with a snake in that room? My fingers slowly made their way to the doorknob.

"Mahlori What are you doing up here?" my body froze for a second before I turned to look at an angry Ntombi.

"Huh?" my voice barely came out.

"What are you doing here?" her question was scolding.

"I was touring around—" she cut me off before I could explain further

"it looks like sneaking around to me"

"Aren't you the one who told me to do anything I like because this is my home?"

"Yeah yes you're right... I have visitors. Would you like to join us?" she said trying to smile but it was obviously a grimace that she gave rather than a smile.

"I would like to but..."

"They are nice to chill with trust me. Come" she extended her hand for me to hold but I kept my eyes on the door she noticed my discomfort and sighed.

"Nothing is interesting there dear." She opened the door and looked at me "See?" I nodded. She then shut it.

"Let's go and meet my friends. It's time you associate yourself with people of your caliber"

I follow her still spooked by what just happened. There was really nothing in that room but I swear I heard something I can't be hallucinating... No. Where there's smoke there's fire and I will make it my mission to find out what is happening in this house.

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The dining table was full of glamorous women there were five three of them looked like my peers while the other two were older. Ntombi introduced me to them. It was Lilly Bongiwe Mpumie treasure and Aliyah. They were a diverse group of friends because Treasure was white a brunette while Aliyah was Indian. The rest were Africans just like me.

"Nice to finally meet you sister wife" Even a blind person could see that this bitch was pretending. Ntombi had introduced her as Lilly

"She is beautiful she just needs an upgrade in her style" I almost laughed at her statement. She thought she was stylish but all I could see was a peacock it was Bongiwe... it was true that money cannot buy style. Her dress had too much bling and furthers and she was overdressed for someone who was here for an ordinary dinner.

"Hey Mahlari I'm Mpumie" she came and hugged me. I liked her she looked genuine.

I sat beside Mpumie and sipped my wine as I listened to these trophy wives talking about their rich husbands.

"Shut up Lilly your husband is overseas probably cheating on you with Cuban girls"

Bongiwe mocked they were talking about sex.

"You see this one Mahlori her husband comes back maybe thrice a year. That's why she is this bitter sexual frustration is no child's play" Mpumie said laughing. I glanced at Lilly and she was no longer smiling.

"At least I have kids unlike someone who's barren" Lilly said and the atmosphere changed instantly. I followed everyone's eyes and they led me to Ntombi. I gasped holding my mouth.

"I'm going to have a baby Lilly" Ntombi said gazing at me.

Hell no! If she thought I was here to bear babies for her she had another thing coming.

"Are you going to be her surrogate?" Lilly asked now all eyes are on me... Was this why Ntombi didn't have a problem with me marrying his man?

"No I have a body to maintain" I don't even want to imagine what would become of my body. I'm not one of those girls who have hourglass bodies with ass for days

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weeks and years... No. I had belly fat and flat ass by nature but nothing gym and supplements can't fix. It's been three years since I started training my body eating clean and boosting. I managed to get my figure and a bit of ass. So I won't let all my hard work go to waste because of a child I don't even want.

"You're married you will have to conceive sooner or later" Lilly was busy shame I bet she was my marriage's cupid. I was about to respond when Ntombi snapped.

"She won't have to!" We all looked at her. She doesn't want me to have her husband's kids?

"I'm sorry I just —"

"It's okay I won't have kids. As I said I have a body to maintain" I assured her to make her feel better I'm sure she was scared that if I were to give Muzi kids - something she had been failing to give him all these years he'd leave her barren ass and love me more.

"You have a beautiful body" Mpumie complimented touching my defined abs.

"Yeah she is right but you have to cease a bit we don't want you looking like a man"

"Shut up Bongsi"

"It was just friendly advice you can always go for surgery and have the body of your dreams" She was a bitch but she was right. If I go under the knife I wouldn't mind how I eat. I had considered that a few years ago but I was not able to afford it. I did not want to involve myself in cheap cosmetic surgeries that would backfire in the long run. Now that I have money I can do anything I like without worrying about anything.

"Hlori how is your background?" I thought I liked Mpumie but if she was going to embarrass me in front of these slay queens then it wouldn't be good.

She noticed my change of mood "You don't have to be ashamed I'm from a less privileged community I was poor before I was rich. Now I'm giving back to my community and that's what I want you to do. Only if you don't mind"

I smile a little my family would be proud of me. My jealous neighbors will know my name and it will do me good on social media.

"I'm interested" I told them about my growing experience and Mpumie suggested doing a funding event and using the money on food parcels and taking a few kids to universities. After hours of the briefing wine drinking eating and taking selfies the girls left. Muzi came back from work and we ate dinner. When it was time to sleep Muzi went to Ntombi and I was left alone. I took the opportunity to go and find out what was going on with that room. As I took the steps I bumped into Zodwa.

"It's not too late to leave" There we go...

"What the hell are you on about?"

"If you don't leave now it is going to be hard later until it becomes impossible" How the hell was I going to understand her when she was being cryptic about her nonsense.

"Mam Zodwa I want you out of my house before the sunrise. I will hire my personal helper" Old age was getting to her and she needed to retire.

"A lot is going on in that room don't tell me I didn't warn you" She said before heading to her room. I proceeded with my way I closed my eyes and took steady breaths before I opened the door. Just like earlier on there was nothing not even the enamel plate was there. I sighed before going to bed when I realized I was inheriting Zodwa's madness.



I was woken up by the tickling feeling on my neck I moaned in pleasure as Muzi kept on kissing me from side to side. My hands were pinned on the headboard as he massaged my boobs. I wanted to open my eyes and look at him but the pleasure was too much.

"Please fuck me" I barely uttered those words the urge was too much and foreplay was going to be nothing but a delay. I wanted him in me. Just as I wished I felt him on the opening as I opened my legs wider to give him more access. He pushed in with force making me scream not sure if it was pain or pleasure. Did he enlarge? Whatever he did to his penis was good because I love it when the walls of my coochie are stretched to their full extent fully filled with the stick of joy. His penis felt three times bigger than an average one. His sex game was on steroids today he never gave it to me this rough and hard at some point I felt like my womb would explode but I liked it like that. I couldn't hold my screams as I reached climax after climax. He usually went for twenty minutes or so but an hour had passed without him coming we were still in the same position my hands were still pinned. I was starting to lose energy from all the orgasms. after what seemed like forever. He shot his load and got off me. I wanted to open my eyes and ask why he was with me instead of Ntombi but I was too tired so I kept them closed and drifted to sleep.

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I opened my heavy eyes feeling the urge to pee my body felt like I was hit by a train. I looked at the other side and noticed that it was empty and it looked neat which showed that he didn't sleep there. So he left his wife asleep and came to have sex with me

and rushed back to her? Maybe they had a fallout and Ntombi refused to give him her cake and he decided to use me. What was I to him a sperm dish?

I ignored my painful body and went to relieve myself. I was walking with my legs wide open because of the pain in my coochie. As soon as I urinated a shrill scream escaped my mouth as an unbearable pain shot through my vaginal opening. I couldn't stop my tears from gushing. I ran a bath and put all kinds of salts I came across with and soaked my body. Even water brought pain to my whole body. You'd swear I was a junkie beaten by community members for robbery.

I dragged myself downstairs to eat breakfast since I had no one to bring it for me in my room. Zodwa didn't show up to open the windows which meant she listened to me and left.

"Morning dear how did you sleep?" Ntombi greeted with her famous grimace.

"I'm good ahh" I flinched as I sat down. You'd swear I was sitting in thorns and needles.

"Are you okay dear?" I would be if she could stop being a nuisance and shut up before I wipe that grimace with a fist.

"Yes" I said coldly

"I see" she said furrowing her eyebrows. She looked like someone who was going out she was all dressed up and beautiful as always her make-up was beautifully done.

Muzi made his way to the table he pecked me on the forehead and did the same to Ntombi. "How are you my beautiful ladies?" he was in a good mood while I was dying on the side. I

just nodded and Ntombi told him about how good her morning was and how she was looking forward to continuing with her day. He took the fruit and rushed out saying he will grab a coffee along the way... Rich people and being unnecessary. How could he leave the coffee on his breakfast table only to buy it elsewhere?

"So how are you settling in?" I swear this woman doesn't hate being tired of grimacing

"Fine"

"Why are you in such a dull mood?"  
Because I don't want to talk to you.

"And why are you in such a good mood?"  
I asked sarcastically.

"I'm pregnant" She blurted out happily her smile was genuine this time.

"Wow! Congratulations. Muzi must be happy" I smiled at her genuinely.

"He is it's been long since we've been trying. I just hope I make it to nine months"

"Are you concerned about your age?" she nodded

"Don't worry you are still fresh I mean look at you" I was happy for her I won't have to be her baby carrier. Besides I was genuinely happy for her since I discovered they have been trying for a baby for too long.

"I know I was genuinely happy for her since I discovered they have been trying for a baby for too long.

"I know I'm a fresh mama" we laughed. My mood was uplifted.

"I marry your husband and you get pregnant I'm such a blessing in disguise" I said playfully.

"You really are" Her face was no longer playful. She looked serious... Was I really a blessing? I guess so. We ate in silence after I was done. I stood up I invited my friends over Nonhle and Mbali so I had to ask my chauffeur to fetch them.

Again I flinched as I took the first staircase.

"Are you okay Mahlori?" asked Ntombi.

"Yeah I will be fine"

"Okay dear you will get used to it" huh?

"I beg your pardon?"

"Uhm no... I mean ehm our husband he is gifted but you will get used to him... I have to go" she stuttered and took her handbag and car keys and left.

I shook my head at her bizarreness and went to tidy my bedroom since mam Zodwa was gone. I was making the bed when I saw a blackish stain where I was sleeping. It was shiny and smelly. I didn't know what to think but all I knew is that I had sex on this spot which meant that was scum. Something was wrong with Muzi and I had to address it before it was too late. Especially that

there was a baby on the way. if he had some sort of infection it had to be treated.

Men tended to deny when it came to their sexual health rich or not rich men will always be men. How was I going to address the issue without bruising his ego? Or I should just talk to Ntombi.

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I heard a hissing sound I followed it and it led me to the 'ritual room'... Again. When I tried to open the door it was locked. I punched the code but the door wouldn't budge. Which meant it was locked with the manual key. Where was I going to find a key in this enormous house?

I looked around a house trying to find something that would help me break the door. It didn't take long for me to find a screwdriver. I took it and used it to unscrew the doorknob screws from the outside and used my fingers to turn it open. I slowly opened the door carefully so as not to make noise and chase away whatever creature was there. Just like the last time there was nothing but that didn't stop me from moving forward to inspect the empty walls.

The door suddenly slammed behind me startling me my chest tightened as I felt the cold breeze on my back. I knew I had to run for my life but I didn't. I was too eager to find out what was happening so that when I addressed it to my housemates I would have enough details not to sound like a mad person. So the dread wasn't enough for me to abort my mission although whatever was happening was diabolic.

I lunged forward with my eyes barely open when I heard something moving I opened my eyes fully and I noticed that the room was no longer empty. There was a small black table that had three red candles there were two mirrors in between them there was a picture of me in my wedding gown. On the wall there was a drawing of a pentagram with a pattern of a goat. The walls had crosses that were upside down and many other crucifixes. On the table there was enamel the same one that was used for blood in that ritual the blood was still there. Normal blood would have dried out by that time but it still looked fresh. A small sword was there too.

My body shuddered at the sight. I was more spooked by the fact that there was a picture of me as if that altar was made for me.

I sank in that that was witchcraft the couple welcomed me at their home for their diabolical purposes. I was married to a ritualist. What if they wanted to sacrifice me for their riches? I had to get out. I ran to the door and opened it but I couldn't get out the door was wide open but there was an invisible seal that locked me inside. I started screaming in fear the brave side of me was long gone. The room dimmed and I started seeing shadows on the walls the cold breeze became stronger the hissing sound became louder. My head started spinning and I felt light-headed. I collapsed and it was lights out for me.

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When I opened my eyes I was on the floor. I didn't know how long I'd been out but the room was bright and empty. I took my stand and marched to the door. That time around there was no seal.

Thank God.

I was certain that I wasn't dreaming what I saw was real and I had to get out of that shame of a marriage before it was too late. Mam Zodwa was right. I should leave while it was still possible.

I had tons of missed calls from Mbali so I called them back and sent a driver to pick them up. One thing I needed at the moment was the company of my friends.

"Bitch is this all you?" Mbali asked admiring my castle. My house was incredibly beautiful Ntombi outdid herself.

"This is all me chommie" I looked at Nonhle who wasn't herself she looked disinterested.

"Nonhle are you okay?" I was concerned because she was the most bubbly person on Earth.

"I'm good Mahlori. So tell me why is it only now that you make contact?"

"I don't follow..."

"Ever since you got married you totally forgot about us"

Because I was on my honeymoon!

"But here you are" I did not understand her attitude. I was still spending time with my husband—who was soon to be my ex.

"We are only here because you want to gloat you forget that you are here because of us. You came to the city smelling dirt now that you have few cents under your name you think you are better"

She snapped earning a gasp from Mbali and me.

That was another thing I had nothing under my name so far. And if she thought I wanted to gloat...\*sighs\* I had nothing to gloat about.

"Nonhle—" Mbali tried to intervene.

"No for once Mbali please stop ass licking. Stop kissing her ass. She needs to know the truth." She then took the last sip of sparkling wine.

"Nonhle stop with your bullshit you expected Hlori to hang with us every weekend like we used to? She is now married for Christ's sake!"

"Okay sorry" why was she rolling her eyes?

"Mxm no one has time to nurse your mood swings" Mbali said before shifting her attention to me

"Babe you sounded aghast on the call. Are you okay?" Mbali asked brushing my shoulder.

I was hoping she wouldn't ask about my dull mood. I didn't want to talk about it. This kind of issue was unbelievable to slay queens like Mbali.

"Eerie things have been happening in this house. I don't think I want to be married to Muzi anymore"

They gave me that 'continue' look.

"I think I have a spiritual husband I always wake up with a swollen pussy while Muzi isn't with me and today I heard something peculiar" I thought that was the decent explanation I



could come up with. I didn't want to tell them about that room because I'm sure they'd see nothing when I take them there.

"And on our wedding day they made a ritual where they mixed our blood mine Muzi's and Ntombi's"

Mbaki gasped "No friend you're not serious..." she then laughed hard in disbelief "You are so strong to be petrified by something of such prestige"

"Why did I even bother telling you?"

"She might be right" Said Nonhle. Her mood had improved. "He has a snake"  
Just as I thought.

"Guys come on did you see it Mahlori?" Mbali was definitely not a believer. I wasn't too until then.

"No Mbali! Hlori is not crazy if she thinks there's a snake there is a snake. Divorce this old man before you die!"

"Nonhle! Divorce is too much" - Mbali

"It's not. This marriage was a shame from the beginning. I wanted to stop it but I didn't want to be labeled as bitter so I kept my opinion to myself. This man is creepy. I'm sure he sacrifices people for his riches. Why doesn't he have babies to begin with?" She was literally shouting and on her feet. This seemed personal to her more than it was to me.

Mbali and I looked at her in awe I think she noticed her outburst.  
"Sorry"

I had to change the topic because Nonhle and Mbali started throwing insults at each other because of this issue. They had a clash of beliefs but I didn't want them to have a fallout on my account. So I gave them a house tour and made something to eat while I listened to their funny stories about their blessers. Mbali was telling us about her disabled rich daddy who gave her money but just touched her pussy.

Nonhle told us about her new relationship with the rich man but didn't reveal his identity. The Nonhle I knew was not secretive at all. Something had changed with her but I had serious issues to deal with.

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Ntombi came back with Muzi they looked happy... too happy for a polygamous couple.

"How have you been dear? ` ` Argh!

"You don't have to always be grim Ntombi. It's not appealing"

"Don't talk to your sister wife like that" Muzi said kissing me I pulled back in disgust.

"Why are you sour?"

"I'm sour because I want to know what is happening in this house! Why the fuck did you marry me?" The tears that I should have shed hours ago were now gushing like a waterfall.

"I married you because I love you!"

"Lies! I hate lies!" My whole body was feeling hot because of anger I feel like hot flames were coming from my ears.

"I don't know what's wrong with you"

"Ntombi why did you let your man marry me?" I was key to her pregnancy! She probably wanted to sacrifice me so that her baby would survive.

"He loves—"

I didn't want to hear any of it.

"Shut up! The two of you are witches. You want to make me a sacrifice for your witchcraft."

" I don't know what you are talking about baby"

"Fuck you fuck your wife fuck your money. Fuck this marriage. I want out"

I wanted to leave we were married in a community of property but I didn't want any of his possessions. I just wanted my freedom.

"You can't just divorce me"

"Watch me!"

"You are not going anywhere Mahlori" Ntombi stepped before me her voice was threatening and gravelly.

"And who is going to stop me? You?" I was intimidated but I stood my ground.

"You can run if you want but you belong to us. You sold your soul to us the moment you set your foot in these premises and that divorce you want won't help because the three of us are bonded

by blood. The only way out is death. The piece of paper won't untie the knot of blood. Now stop whining and accept your fate"

My chest closed up the fire was long gone. All I possessed was fear.

I took steady breaths and calmed myself.

"It would be in your best interest to bring back Zodwa. If you try to bring someone else into my house... Their blood would be in your hands" She wasn't shouting. But her tone was deadly.

"You are bluffing"

"I dare you" she then left her heels clashing against the marble.

I looked at Muzi the affection he always showed was no more. His eyes were dark.

"It wasn't you was it? You didn't come to my room last night" I already knew the answer but I wanted to hear it from him.

"No. I'm Ntombi's husband not yours" as much as I hated him but sought some sort of compassion. His cold words stung.

"You married me for a snake!"
What have I gotten myself into?

He gave me a wicked chuckle.

"A snake is just a pet. You are yet to see your real husband"

'A snake is just a pet. You are yet to see your real husband' those words were still ringing in my mind like a mantra. If a snake was just a pet there was a whole lot more.

A huge part of me wished Ntombi and Muzi were bluffing so I went on and hired my own personal maid. I expected Ntombi to give me a headache but instead Muzi and her went on vacation and left me alone with the girl I hired only for her to disappear without telling me. I also got another and she disappeared too.

Something was chasing people out of this house perhaps they found themselves in my circumstances and ran for their lives. A week later the agents of Satan came back. Just like our last encounter they didn't bother showing affection. That was fine with me and I wouldn't have to deal with Ntombi's fake grimaces.

"I need Zodwa's contacts" I blurted out without even greeting.

"Why?"

Was that a rhetorical question?

"Madam of the house ordered me to bring back Zodwa. Remember?" I said sarcastically.

"Oh that I will contact her. Don't be confused... Zodwa will come back for me she'd be working for me not you."

"What?"

"This is my house Mahlari. I gave you a chance to live freely here but you ruined it. Now no one will be cleaning after you except you."

What did I ruin? All I did was discover the truth now I was being crucified?

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The next few days were extremely hard I would have wet dreams and wake up with hickeys swollen coochie and I was always horny. Ntombi ordered me around treating me like her maid. " Why are the dishes not washed?" Ntombi questioned spitting fire.

"Who's dishes?" I have heard enough.

"This is my house you will do whatever I tell you"

"Your house your dishes. I have somewhere to be" I left her still shouting and went to get my handbag and went out.

"You will regret walking out on me!"
Mxm.

I requested a ride and didn't even want to use my driver unless he was a witch too.I don't know where I was headed all I knew was that I had to get out of that hell hole before I killed Ntombi with my bare hands.

I was sitting at the back I couldn't keep my eyes off the rearview mirror. The ride driver was cute his bright eyes and soft gaze made me feel a certain way. I started feeling hot my swollen coochie started itching I tried to ignore it but the urge to touch

myself was unbearable. I hid my hand with a bag and unzipped my jeans occasionally peeking to see if the driver could see me. He was focused on driving.
Good.

As soon as I touched my clit intending to relieve myself from the itch my clit started twitching hard it was like it was getting bigger and bigger with each passing second. My undies were soaked. I slowly rubbed with my thumb my breathing escalated as I felt a wave of pleasure.

"Are you okay Ma'am? The driver asked noticing my loud breaths

" Y-yes" instead of being satisfied the arousal kept on getting worse Increasing the pace of my thumb.

"Oh my word!"

Obviously that caught the driver's attention did I care? No. My body was jerking up and down and my screams were so loud I had inserted two of my fingers but it didn't do what I needed. The wetness of my slit was making noises as I fingered myself but neither of my tries was satisfying

"Sorry ma'am you have to get off the car" He said

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that's when I realized that he had parked on the side of the road.

"What? I'm a paying passenger!" I was frustrated not even once in my life had I been this aroused and sexually frustrated. My thighs were squeezed for dear life. I was even shivering.

"What you are doing is inappropriate. This is a public car. You can't be doing such"

A normal guy would have gotten a boner.

" Well maybe you can help me" I squeezed my boobs with my free hands.

I don't know what I was doing. I searched for my morals and dignity but they were buried somewhere deep inside me. I was horny If I don't get a fuck I was going to explode.

"Look I'm not that kind of a guy I'm married" he lifted his hand to show me his cheap ring "I believe you are too judging by that huge rock" he added.

'Huge rock from hell' I can't believe people think my life is a bed of roses. Little did they know that my freedom and happiness Was lost many moons ago.

"I got a new request please get off before you stain my car"
I protested but he threatened to call the police on me. I had to get off I wasn't too far from my place so I took off my heels and walked back. Surprisingly I was no longer horny.
I pushed time by calling my mom.

"Mahlori how is marriage treating you?"

I couldn't stop my voice from breaking "They're abusing me manana" mom.

"Yhoo Hosi yanga nwananga khongela loko switika unga kanakani ku vuya ekhaya" Oh my God. my child pray if it gets too hard don't hesitate to come back home."

She said melancholically before I heard my father's voice in the background "I Mahlori loyi?" (Is that Mahlori?)

"Ina vukati bya yena abyi khomanga kahle"
(Yes her marriage is not treating her well)

"Hikwalaho ka yini aku byela timhaka ta yindlu ya yena? U lave ku tekiwa ahari ntsongo a ehleketa leswaku ukurile. Sweswi a khodeleli. Ndzi lovorile ndzi hete khale

(So why is she telling you matters of her house? She decided to get married at Young age thinking she is mature enough. Now she must deal with it. I finished the lobola money a long time ago)

"Nunawamga—" Mom was begging but he didn't want to hear any of it.

He said he didn't want someone's wife in his house.

I decided that I've heard enough I hung up

I can't believe my father was choosing money over his daughter.

I know maybe he used most of the money but Muzi was rich five hundred thousand was a small change to him. So returning the bride price wouldn't be a problem for my father.

All he cared about was his reputation he used to call me a black sheep but as soon as I married Muzi he had been singing my praises. If I were to divorce I would be a disappointment again!

I received a call from Muzi I rolled my eyes before answering
"Yes"

"We have a family meeting where are you?"

"I will be there shortly"

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"I decided that I'm taking a third wife" that's what he said as soon as stepped in. He didn't even wait for me to take a seat.

It's been barely three months since we married but he already wanted another wife.

I laughed sarcastically "How many snakes do you have?"

"Excuse me?"

"I know I'm not your wife. You made it crystal clear that Ntombi was your only wife. So the third wife?"

"You will serve the same purpose at least you will take turns and get yourself some rest" he explained like it was a normal thing. I don't know why they informed me about this because I don't care! Maybe it was my chance to escape.

"How was your trip sister wife?" Ntombi asked grimacing as per usual. She gave a wink before laughing...

She did say I would regret walking out on her she bewitched me!

Seven

NONHLE (MAHLORI'S FRIEND)

I will be moving in with Muzi just like he did with Mahlari I will also be living with them I don't mind. Unlike Mahlari I grew to love Muzi. And I knew that he was a ritualist... He never told me but I did my research on him. I didn't take a lot of time to see that something was off with him. I Googled his name and found out that he had other wives they both died of heart attacks... Maybe they didn't adhere to the ritual rules.

Muzi and I have been dating for a while. I stole his number from Mahlori's phone a few weeks after they started dating. A man like Muzi would never say no to free pussy. I was very jealous when they got married why would he want to marry a girl from a village? Mahlori wasn't even that beautiful she was just an average person who knew how to take care of her body... in fact she wouldn't be where she was or how she was if it wasn't for me. I invested in her sometimes I borrowed her clothes so we could hit a club and score some cash on her account. I don't know what men saw in her everyone would want to take her home.

I wasn't going to sit and let her live my life so I made my move on Muzi. I couldn't believe my eyes when he popped the question I didn't think he would want to marry me. When Mahlori told me what happened in that mansion I confronted Muzi and told him I wouldn't leave him no matter what. He denied it at first but I knew it was a lie I once found myself in a situation where some old man took me home I passed out the moment put my head on the pillow but in the morning I woke up feeling like I have been having sex. It's only a fool who wouldn't know the meaning of that... Just like Mbali at least Mahlori was smart enough to suspect.

Muzi finally spoke the truth. It was not entirely the truth because he didn't specify his deeds. He just said a few sacrifices were made so he could be rich and said he trusted me he should. I would never tell on him I still want to live. And I will abide by whatever rules he will set for me so that I will have a lavish life. And he would consider leaving Ntombi for me... As for Mahlori she is the least of my problems she was probably getting ready to go back to Limpopo.

I finished packing my bags and the driver was already waiting for me. I wonder how my dear 'friend' would react. I know I was being a foul friend but I didn't think my thing with Muzi would be serious until I fell in love so Mahlori will have to forgive me for that.

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I made my way to the entrance Muzi and his creepy wife were waiting for me by the door.

"Welcome home dear my husband told me a lot about you" The wife greeted with a big smile too big for my liking.

She opened her hands for an embrace I hugged her and whispered "I'm not your friend bitch"

I then broke the hug and wore a smile.

"I hope you are going to treat each other well my beautiful ladies"

I was still wondering where Mahlori was when she made her appearance.

"Nonhle" she wore a frown

"Mnganami" (My friend)

Muzi intervened "Hmm to clear the confusion... Nonhle is the one I was telling you about"

"The third wife?" Her reaction was unexpected I thought she'd look surprised or agitated but she looked bored.

"Hmm welcome"

"Well since that is out the way Nonhle and I have to go and tie the knot today at home affairs so we can proceed with the ritual"

Muzi got me a beautiful gown it wasn't a wedding gown though. It was just a ball gown worth a few thousands.

"A ritual?" Mahlori once told me about the ritual I guess I will be joining.

"If you want to be part of this family you will do whatever it takes" - Ntombi
I ignored her and turned my gaze to Mahlori.

"Mahlori can I talk to you?" she nodded and we moved to the dining room.

"I want to explain—"

"Explain what? Explain that you told me to leave Muzi so you could marry him?"

"You were scared of a snake" was a lame excuse I know...

"And you are not?"

"No why are you bothered? I know you never loved Muzi all you care about is money"

"And you love him? Well he doesn't. The only person Muzi will ever love is Ntombi."

"He loves me too. Ntombi will be out of the picture soon. So you better be in my good books. We are friends there's no need for us to be foes"

"You were dating my man behind my back and you dare to threaten me? You're nothing but a bitch"

"A bitch that has a good pussy unlike you farm girl you failed to satisfy your man in bed and he came for me because I'm beautiful I'm smart what about you? Dumbass that couldn't even finish university...that's why your parents sold you off no parent would want to have you for a child. You are nothing but a disgrace" Her expression changed from fury to melancholy. Served her right...

I was trying to be nice to her but she decided to be a bitch...

"Didn't you tell me you were filing for a divorce?"

" I'm not going anywhere Nonhle. In fact welcome I'm sure your stay would be the best"

"You are not going anywhere because you have nowhere to go. Your own father doesn't want you"

"Nonhle I confide my problems with you and you use them against me?" She had unshed tears I guess that hit home.

"It's the truth you are here because you are forced to stay here... But let's not dwell much on that maybe we could have a three sum you know sharing is caring" I winked before I left to dress. Muzi was already waiting for me by the lounge.

"Nonhle I love you but if you won't respect Ntombi we will have problems"

"I don't know what you are talking about"

"I know what you said to Ntombi and I won't tolerate it"
So madam went to report me to her husband?

"I will apologize to her." I needed to get rid of Ntombi before she ruined things for me.

"Good"

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We went and got married and had lunch at our favorite restaurant when we came back I found Mahlori on the veranda looking restless. Her hair was messy her blouse unbuttoned and her jeans unzipped. She was even shivering. As soon as she spotted us she ran to Muzi and kissed her aggressively. Muzi pushed her back confused by her reaction.

"Muzi baby it's been long since we did the deed. I want you" she unhooked her bra and inserted her fingers inside her panties still shivering. The drivers and gardeners were looking at her. Muzi picked her up and went inside the house with me following. Mahlori used the opportunity to grind on Muzi.

"Mahlori have you lost your mind?"
Muzi asked infuriated.

" Maybe we could do that three sum we spoke about" She was now referring to me. Her hands were all over the place of not on her jeans it on her bra or her hair. She had dark circles around her eyes. She hissed jerking her body up and down shaking vigorously.

Ntombi came when Muzi and I were still surprised by Mahlori's madness. She didn't look surprised...

"We have to talk" Muzi said to Ntombi before they disappeared into the hallway.

I hope that wasn't Ntombi's doing or else I would have to myself a strong Sangoma or a witch that would protect me from Ntombi. That would also help me to make Muzi love me more and maybe she'd sacrifice Ntombi instead of Mahlori. Then I would have sex with Muzi without worrying about anything while Mahlori feeds whatever creatures are in this house.

I also left her there and went to plan my honeymoon. I like Maui... I've never been there but judging by Mahlori's pictures it was a beautiful place. I needed to choose a better one...Mbali would have helped but as soon as she discovered that I was dating Muzi she gave me a piece of her small mind and never spoke to me again.

Eight

MAHLORI

I was woken up by the ringing sound of my phone I forced my heavy eyes open to see the caller it was an unknown number. I wasn't in the mood to talk to anyone. All I needed was more of my nap.

I don't remember what happened all I knew was that I was horny and I used my hand to masturbate. I remember Muzi coming with Hlori and that was it. I had no idea how I ended up in my bedroom or how long I've been sleeping. It was dark which meant it wasn't the following day.

My phone kept on ringing it was another unknown number. I ignored it and went to take a quick shower. I stood in front of my

mirror and looked at the person I saw. It didn't feel like me I was totally a different person I was no longer the bubbly and happy self I used to be. I had bags under my eyes my hair was messy. My eyes screamed dread and great sadness. For the first time in my life I regretted my decision. I wasn't the kind of person who regretted anything. No matter how wrong I was I always forgave myself and moved on. But I will never forgive myself for committing myself to Muzi I should have slept with him took cash and moved on to the next blesser.

It was amazing how people especially on social media wished to be me. They wished to live in a mansion the size of a castle-like I did not knowing I was in solitude a deserted place with a facade of a palace.

Something brought me back to Earth my body. It was bruised my breasts had scratches it could be me when I felt horny but my arms had marks like I had been grabbed by large hands. I've seen something like this in horror movies something was haunting me...

I thought about calling mom but I knew dad would give me a hard time so I resorted to her advice... To pray. That was what she'd have said anyway. I sighed...

It was moons ago since I last prayed I think I was seven years if I wasn't mistaken. I quitted when I realized God had his favorites. Mom was praying every day but we remained poor. What was the point? If God really loved us as Christians claim why would he let his people suffer? I was in this mess because he never answered my mother's prayers. If it wasn't for my poor background I wouldn't have been sleeping with old men to secure the bag I wouldn't have married a man I didn't love I wouldn't have found myself in this servitude I wouldn't be stuck in with the witches.

I looked at the mirror again the bruises were no more. I took my eyes off the mirror and looked at myself to confirm... My skin was clear. I felt a cold breeze on my back I noticed there was someone behind me He was probably ten feet tall.

Let me paraphrase...there was a ten feet tall a red-eyed shadow behind me! No English words would describe how grotesque the thing was. I didn't even get the time to analyze the creature because it disappeared. The only thing I saw was its silhouette and piercing red eyes.

Instantly I was on my knees.

"Please God help me I know I sinned I know I don't like you and I'm not much of your fan but please please..."

I stuttered I was saying please it was the only thing I could say. I wasn't sure what my plea was but God really exists he'd know already.

"Please help me Jesus. Please kill whatever this is before it kills me" my whole body shuddered Jesus. Please kill whatever this is before it kills me" my whole body shuddered I was scared"

HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA!

HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA!

A peal of evil laughter echoed I closed my eyes before it was too loud.

A foreign language was spoken drawers opened and closed themselves. I sat there in a fetus position and rocked myself back and forth.

A hand touched my shoulder and I jumped in fear... it was Mbali. What was she doing here and who let her in. If she saw the mess

in my room she'd think I was crazy and take me to asylum... perhaps that was where I belonged.

I realized that my room was clean the drawers were closed. The only messy thing was my bed because I had been sleeping on it. It was official... I was crazy.

"Mbali what are you doing here?" The question came from a place of confusion but mostly it came from relief. She came at the right time what if she came a minute later? A lot could have happened to me.

"I wanted to check if you alright"
Thanks.

I stood embarrassed by my appearance I was still naked. "I'm sorry you found me in this position a lot has been happening and..."

"It's okay." She went to my closet and came back with a robe.

I hope she didn't notice anything about that episode that happened a few minutes ago. Mbali was not a believer she wouldn't believe a word I told her.

My phone kept on ringing...

"My friend I'm so sorry—"

"it's okay it wasn't your fault" I knew she was about to tell me about Nonhle. Even if she knew about their affair there was nothing she could have done. "Nonhle decided to be a bitch and take my man don't worry she will suffer the consequences soon enough. I see she thinks being married to Muzi is a ticket to Paradise." I explained.

It was fun and games for me in the beginning but look at me...

"Mwali don't shy away from it. We'll have to talk about it. I know you have no one else except me. There is not much I can do to help but I will be there for you throughout until it blows off. People will soon find something else to talk about and I suggest you deactivate your social media accounts for the sake of your sanity—"

"Wait wait... Mwali. What are you talking about?"

She closed her eyes and sighed "you don't know do you?"

"What? Why do you suggest I deactivate my accounts? Oh goodness everyone knows my best friend took my men" If that's the case then I couldn't care less. I had bigger problems.

"Well it's kind of something more..."

"Just get straight to the point please!"

Her riddles and cryptics were frustrating me even more.

She signed again and handed me her phone "Hosi yanga!" I exclaimed and dropped the phone.

It couldn't be happening No!

"Mwali this is not me Mwali it can't be" I picked up the phone and watched the video again. It was really me taking my clothes off and grinding on Muzi begging for sex he picked me and went to the house with me.

When it rains it pours.

"Who would do this to me?"

Mwali took her phone and gave it to me again. It was another video of me.

I was sitting on the outside bench my hand was on my pants and the other one was squeezing my breasts I was panting moaning. I spoke to whoever was holding the camera I was inviting him to my bedroom and said my husband won't know and I would reward him with five thousand rands.

"Mbali I don't recall anything of this"

It was the truth I don't remember myself doing any of this but It was me. In the same outfit I was wearing hours ago.

"Did you maybe have too much wine?"

I was damn sober even if I was drunk I would never do such. I always had self-control when it came to alcohol. I was actually the one who made sure Mbali never embarrassed herself. She was the weakest of the three of us.

I looked at her and thought carefully about my answer "I had few glasses" I lied.

It was the only sane explanation. Alcohol only alcohol could make people behave like that.

But for me it wasn't. It was something malicious and inhumane but I wasn't going to say anything that will make me look like a maniac.

"Maybe you had too much and didn't realize it's okay my friend. This too shall pass."

Nothing was going to pass. The Internet never forgets.

This had Ntombi written all over it. Wasn't it enough that I was trapped in her house I was her slave I was a sacrifice? Why did she have to include the internet? Did she want to prove that she was the only good wife and I was nothing but a whore who always longed for sex with anyone?

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andiswacele_

The first wife bewitched her... LoL that's what you get for being a homewrecker

Karabelo_mokoena

Lmao... a hoe will always be a hoe

iampearl

Her hubby is probably diabetic and can't satisfy her lol. Or maybe a small d*ck

King.K

C'mon bby I can give it to you free of charge

Kwanda_

LOL she drank expensive alcohol she is not used to haha

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"Okay it's enough. Forget about these silly comments from low lives"

Mbali said taking her phone. I couldn't stop my tears how was I going to face the world? My parents... My noisy neighbors. I was already a disappointment to my father... and these videos were going to hit the last nail. Nonhle was probably throwing a celebration party wherever she was.

It's true when they say life was a series of unfortunate events. My life was all about problems after problems.

Nine

NTOMBI

"What the hell are you doing Ntombi?"

Muzi barged in fury rapidly inching in his features he took off his tie and threw it at me.

"I don't follow..."

"What did you do to Mahlori?"

Why would he defend Mahlori? Was he in love with her?

"I prevented her from leaving this house what if she left?"

After she found out the truth she was probably considering leaving.

"Mahlori was never gonna leave I made sure of that. Why on Earth would you do that to her?"

"I had to teach her a lesson"

The fact that she was living under my roof was too much as it was. But to disrespect me? I remember when Muzi told me he was seeing someone. It hurt so much but it was the only way I could ever have children.

"We still need her!".

I know. She still needed to get pregnant so we could sacrifice her children instead of mine.

As for the other rude bitch... we have a lot in store for her.

"I wanted to teach her a little lesson"

"A lesson that would have cost us our baby. Ntombi are you out of your kind? What if Mahlori decided to go and cheat? What if that garden boy agreed to sleep with her?"

I didn't consider all of those possibilities I just wanted to embarrass her. Why didn't I think of the cheating possibilities? Mahlori wasn't meant to sleep with anyone. The demon we made the deal with wanted her to only himself.

" I didn't think —"

"That's the problem Ntombi. You don't think! Now she is all over social media. I don't even want to imagine tomorrow's headlines... Muzi Sibiy'a second wife is not satisfied in bed and resorted to seduce his Gardner... Sies!"

Eish that would taint his reputation. I didn't mean for something like this to happen I just wanted Mahlori to feel some heat. Being filmed and being posted on social media wasn't part of the plan. I had made the video disappear before dawn. I know someone who could help me with that.

"Ntombi how many times do I need to tell you to stop using voodoo?"

It was the only way I could punish her. But it backfired. I had to go to my altar and find something to reverse what I did to Mahlori.

"Not only this would affect my reputation my businesses as well" he was pacing up and down panicking...he hated the spotlight but he also didn't want people paying attention to him all they needed to know is that he was a successful businessman. Now that his personal life was out there the attention might put us in trouble.

"I'm sorry my love. I will fix it"

"Fix it! And don't ever play your silly games using our sacred altar"

That altar was for us to make sacrifices to Arazyal the demon that we were subject to. We didn't mean to invite a demon to our lives we were fooled by someone who was our witch doctor.

Fifteen years ago I met Muzi. I was a customer at the local pub he owned. It was love at first sight. He took care of me and my family. Everything was good until his business started struggling he was working at a loss since he had to pay his workers. I loved him too much to leave him at his weakest.

I stayed beside him supported him even. He finally sold his place before he drowned in debts. As a good girlfriend I found a solution to our problems.

He told us riches came with a price...

"As long as we wouldn't have to kill our families" those were Muzi's words agreeing to a problematic solution.

The witch doctor demanded nothing but our blood. Instead of us paying him for his services he gave Muzi the capital to start his business. It didn't even take a month we were already millionaires. Three months later

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the witch doctor came to give us the resources to use for our altar and summoned the owner of our riches.

When I asked why he didn't charge us he said the richer we were the richer he would become.

Problems started when I got pregnant with my first child. We were required to offer him to Arazyal. We made people think I was having miscarriages while I induced labor when I was five

months pregnant the memory of my baby boy still haunts me he was tiny fragile because it wasn't his time to be born. I was shattered when I had to stop his tiny heart from beating when I had to cut him open and take his heart to the altar. I buried him with no heart... And the worst part is I didn't know what happened to the heart. The last time I saw it was when I placed it on the enamel plate. Muzi and I wanted a way out but there was no way we already sold out to him and he needed pure souls to submit to him to gain more powers on Earth. He made me his wife and impregnated me many times but I wouldn't get a chance to meet my demon babies because they are usually in spirit. Losing a demon child was much better than losing Muzi's baby... Perks of being a demon. Demons can be invisible or live inside a host. We never saw Arazyal in his true form. We can hear his voice when we're on the altar.

It turned out Nyang'enkulu the witchdoctor was one of the Arazyal servants. He was dutied to get more souls and we were victims now it was our turn to give souls to Arazyal for survival. Slay queens like Mahlori were easy targets. When Muzi married her I was freed from sleeping with a demon and Mahlori took my place. Her children were the ones to be sacrificed in the place of mine but that little freedom came with a price again... Arazyal took five years from Muzi's life span.

Nonhle is meant to be his host... I wasn't even interested in why he demanded a female host we are yet to find out. She and Mahlori thought we had a snake... I wish. Dealing with a creature of hell was far worse than an average snake. So there was no snake.

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I made my way to the altar this room gave me some kind of powers I was able to practice any voodoo. That's how I got to Mahlori.

I took her blood sample and bound it to a doll. I also got hold of her underwear and put some herbs that would make her coochie itch. The doll was kind of my remote to her life. Everything I do to the doll happens to her.

The plan went wrong when I tickled the doll's vagina she felt it but it was supposed to stop whenever I stopped touching the doll. It continued to happen to her I lost control of her and Arazyal was probably punishing her for desiring another man...

So I summoned Arazyal. Only he could help Mahlori...

"Arazyal!"

Silence

"Arazyal!" silence again...

"Arazyal!" The atmosphere started to change the temperature rose and I started sweating it was too hot to a point where I was close to suffocating.

"YOU ABUSED THE POWER I GRANTED YOU AND ATTACKED MY WIFE" his voice echoed my ears. Again... I never heard his real voice. It was just the painful whisper that could destroy your listening ability if you are not strong enough.

"I was trying to ground her my lord" I explained myself in the most humble way you could ever imagine.

"EVERYTHING YOU DID TO HER WILL COME BACK TO YOU UNTIL SHE GETS PREGNANT WITH YOUR HUSBAND'S CHILD"

"Yes my lord" the temperature went back to normal. He was gone.

I signed as I realized what would happen to me he was going to drive me mad as I did to Mahlori. On Top of that she would sleep with my husband again...

I was just grateful he didn't demand my unborn baby's soul.

Ten

MAHLORI

I've been hiding from the world for three days. The only good thing about the past three days was that I didn't get any wet dreams arousal and marks on my body. Whatever was taunting me was either taking a break or moving on to Nonhle I really hope so. My phone had been ringing nonstop. It was probably the journalists seeking my perspective on their gossip.

I didn't know being famous came with such a nuisance. Someone knocked...

"Go away!"

"Mahlori open this door before I break it"

It was Muzi what the hell did he want from me? I hope he was there to chase me out.

"Break it burn it eat it or shove it on your smelling arse I don't care! Get away from me!" At this point I had nothing to lose. He could burn me down with a fortress I wouldn't care. Death was a

scary thing to imagine but if you thoroughly think about it you'd know that death was the most merciful situation the universe could ever grant you. You'd feel empty quiet free of pain and sorrow.

"Mahlori!"

I lunged furiously to the door "What the hell do you want from me bloody witch!" I slapped my hand across his cheek. I had slapped him hard because I also felt the stinging pain in my palm.

"You need to eat and we need to talk" I had expected him to be angry and maybe slap me back instead his expression softened.

"If you not granting me my freedom we have nothing to talk about"

"I'm sorry for everything that happened to you Mahlari. The tape was taken down three days ago and if someone talks about it on the internet he or she will deal with the lawsuit" he explained as if that was supposed to make me feel better that embarrassing memory of me would just be wiped off their minds.

"And when will Ntombi face the lawsuit?"

"She is already suffering Mahlari please. If I could I would free you but I can't"

"Why?"

"Arazyal won't let you go. He'd be everywhere you go"

"Who the fuck is that? Just tell me what I need to know without me having to ask you questions!"

Sighs

"Your husband..."

"That disgusting thing I saw in the mirror was my husband? You married me off to a ghost!" I couldn't believe my ears.

"He is a creature of darkness. But there's one thing that could help you"

I gave him a death stare. Did he want to ask?

As if he read my mind... It could happen that he did. "Bare me a child"

I laughed in disbelief "I beg your pardon?"

"Bare me a child and you would be free"

He was out of his mind. I did say I wasn't ready for a child but I would never trade my own blood and flesh because of unguaranteed freedom.

"I won't have sex with you not to mention carrying your seed. I'd be damned. Now get out my way I'm hungry"

"But I brought you food"

"Thanks but no thanks I don't like pasta. Too many carbs"
I like pasta with all my being...just not the one prepared by a witch sorry.

~ ~ ~

"Please forgive please. I didn't mean to hurt you I beg you" I was in the kitchen dishing up chicken and vegetables. Ntombi was on her knees her palms locked together as if she was praying. I kept my peace and continued with what I was doing.

"Mahlori"

Her wails were irritating I was the one who should be wailing—wait she was moaning.

I gazed at her thighs that were locked together. Her thing was beside her. It didn't take me long to figure out what was happening. I laughed my lungs out. There was this idiom Mbali always used when I did something and it backfired. She'd chant 'mudle kudla kwakhe'. I'm not good with isiZulu but I think it was about having the taste of your own medicine.

"Mudle kudla kwakhe!" I shouted still laughing at her only if I had a phone with me to film her. Journalists would love to publish such juicy details.

' Both of the famous businessman's wives are sexually starved" it would bruise Muzi's ego. It would be a nice thing to watch.

That would also help me clear my name from people who thought I drank expensive alcohol.

I also noticed that she had a small vibrator hidden between her big boobs.

Muzi came at the moment already embarrassed by his wife's behavior.

"Ntombi I told you to stay in our bedroom while I fix this"

"She has to conceive please convince her" it was too late for Muzi to stop her from spilling the beans.

"Ehh... What are you people taking me for?"

"Please Hlori. It's the only way you could help me. If you don't it will pass on to Nonhle and come back to you again"
At least we would all suffer.

"In that case I'd love to see you and Nonhle suffer. Even if I'd have to suffer along with you." I gloated while stuffing my food. Now that the anger I had perished I realized how famished I was.

"Sacrificing your child is the only way to be free from us from Arazyal" Ntombi Ntombi said while panting.
She was lying! I remember when she told me the knot of blood was only to be broken by death.

"The nerve! Why don't you sacrifice yours?"

"Your blood is needed"

"Unfortunately my blood is thicker than tomato sauce" I took my food and left them there. I made a mental note to bring my cellphone next time...

~ ~ ~

I decided to go through my phone to check if Muzi was right. There was no trace of my tape even those nasty comments were gone. An incoming call from Mpumie flashed on my screen. I reluctantly answered.

"Mpumie"

"Hello Hlori. Are you okay babes" I really liked that girl but It didn't change the fact that she was Ntombi's friend.

"Yes" I wanted her to sense my coldness.

"I'm sorry for what's happening to you. Are you okay?"

"Yes"

"You can talk to me about anything"

"No"

"Mahlori—"

"No I won't tell you a thing! I don't trust anything that is associated with Ntombi. Even if I do. You won't believe me! And you can't help me with anything you won't take away the ghost from me you won't stop the wet dreams you won't stop the wicked voices you won't stop me from seeing things and you won't fuckin' help escape this nightmare!"

It was after I recovered from my rambling when I realized that I had told her everything.

" Oh my God Mahlari. That's what happened to Muzi's late wives. No one believed them including me. Now that this was happening to you too...oh no. I think there's someone I know who would help you"

I didn't trust her a bit.

"I don't need your help. Stop calling me I'm not your friend" I hung up. I went to put the plate on the sink... I was a lazy person but I've been sleeping too long and walking up and down the

steps was the exercise I needed. I took my phone with me just in case I found something nice to film.

I dropped my plate when I saw Nonhle sitting on the floor eating raw meat. The blood was dripping on the corners of her mouth. I closed my eyes hoping I'd see something else when I opened them Nonhle had passed out...my little sister Hanyani was standing looking down upon her.

"Hanyani!" She lifted her eyes and winked before she disappeared.

I quickly dialed her numbers it rang a few times "I thought you'd never call after that drama with your video"
Mxm I hung up. At least she was safe.

Maybe I should give Mpumie me and hear what she had to offer.

Eleven

MAHLORI

Today Mpumie was taking me to someone who was an exorcist. So today we're going to him so we could consult with him. I prayed for him to find the solution so that I can get out of that hell hole.

It was awkward riding with Mpumie we were not close but you could see she was fond of me that was what scared me the most. I didn't know who to trust. Why would she suddenly show interest in helping me? She saw Ntombi's friend. Surely she knew her deeds. If she was genuine towards me then she was a foul friend to Ntombi. That also raised another suspicion if she could betray

her friend she could do the same to me since I meant nothing to her.

At this point I didn't know which decision to take. I was already in the front seat of her Porsche Macan so there was no going back. The only thing I could do was to stay hopeful and give her the benefit of the doubt.

"The nice car you have" I said breaking the loud silence. I needed small talk to prevent myself from over-thinking.

"Thanks baby. Once your life get back to normal I will borrow you since you like it"
I don't see that happening.

"Why do you like me so much?"
She signed "I see myself in you you are the reflection of myself. You remind me of my original self"

"Are you fake?" silly right? But I had to ask

"Yes I was just like you when I met my husband. I was just a girl from a less privileged home. I came to the city met my husband and got married and forgot about school. After a few years of acting like a trophy wife I remembered my background. I missed the life I lived I thought money was everything but... Never mind. Just so you know Ntombi and the other ladies are nice to hang out with but we are not on the same page. So how are nerves?"
She wasn't making any sense but since I was being dismissed I will mind my own business.

" I don't know" I had mixed emotions I wanted to be happy that I might get help but I was scared confused and hopeless. My mind was just in a gray area.

"Just cool your jets. Everything shall be fine"

After an hour we reached our destination. The gate automatically opened I guess we were expected guests. The yard was immaculate had a jeweled lawn and flowers were blooming. It was a perfect example of greener pastures. I could live here forever. It was peaceful.

A white middle-aged man welcomed us. His home was beautiful modern stylish. Just not as beautiful as Ntombi's. Why was I even thinking about her?

He led us to his office and offered us some refreshments.

" We have a lot of work to do ladies" straight to the point. Thank you!

"Mahlori Mpumie gave me a little brief about your situation. But I need you to tell me everything so we can evaluate every detail. I need as much information as possible to help us identify the demon... if it's a demon" He had introduced himself as Lucas Acker. He had a notebook and pen in his hands ready to jot everything I told him.

I explained everything from wet dreams to where Muzi said I was yet to meet my husband I then told him about the creature I saw in my mirror.

"So you think you married a ghost?" I nodded.

"Ghosts usually make their appearance in foul smells

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you married a ghost?" I nodded.

"Ghosts usually make their appearance in foul smells whispers chilly temperature movement of objects. Did you experience any of these?"

"except for the foul smell I experienced it all... I saw its silhouette it was red-eyed"

"This means if you are not possessed there will be no need for exorcism. Getting rid of ghosts can be complicated because some are stubborn but it is much easier than dealing with a demon. Go back home and pack your bags there is a safe place in this house. We can't do anything in that house because the owners of it are the ones that are bringing evil to their own house. "

" What if it follows me Ntombi said we are blinded by blood"

"That's exactly what we want for it to follow you here we will then evict it from Earth I don't deal without ghosts so a friend and a colleague of mine will help in this case if we are really dealing with a ghost it wouldn't be hard to break the blood bond"

"Thank you so much"

"As I said earlier we have a lot to do. There are other possibilities. It could be a demon. If you said it was red-eyed it could be the demon given that you said you saw your sister and she disappeared. Demons can change appearances and be anything it wants you to see. Especially people who are closer to your heart" He explained as my heart dropped the little hope I had was gone.

If it was a demon Lucas would have to collect the evidence and work with mental health care to make sure I'm not suffering from any mental illness. Sometimes people think they are seeing

things or possessed while it was just hallucinations. Those were Lucas's words. Apparently the law doesn't allow exorcism to take place without medical assessments by qualified doctors.

I did not even understand how health and possession relate. Doctors always have some diagnosis what if they say I'm crazy?

"It is going to be hard because I sense no demon in you. We still need to identify its rank was well"

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"At Least you will be out of that house should anything happen Lucas will be there to help you. I will also come and see you until the problem is found" Mpumie said noticing my restlessness. We were on our way back.

"Yeah that's what I'm grateful for" I won't be dealing with Ntombi and Nonhle anymore.

"Ntombi shouldn't know I'm helping you okay"

"Okay"

The first thing I did when I came back was to pack. Lucas gave me a crucifix to get me through the night. He suspected that whatever was that we were dealing with might sense that I'm leaving and attack.

Lucas said if I remember anything I should tell him immediately. I sent him a text.

**\*IT'S NAME IS ARAZYAL\***

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Thanks to Lucas nothing happened to me during the night. I woke up and went to eat breakfast. All my housemates were gathered at the dining table. They seemed to be getting along very well.

"Good morning dear" Ntombi said age was badly trying to smile but she looked like a mess. I guess she was still suffering from whatever made people aroused.

They all smiled at me. Fine... I played along. I didn't want them to suspect anything. I would sneak out when they were out of sight. I was planning on taking important things only but I decided against it just in case they used my belongings to bewitch me. Ntombi dished out for me.

"How did you sleep?" Muzi asked.

"Well thank you" I said stuffing myself with a greasy breakfast.

"So did you consider having a baby with me?" I wasn't going to entertain that topic.

"No"

"Well you will" I stood up fed up but I was feeling drowsy" Nonhle ran to me and helped me sit down I wondered what they were up to. I regretted eating their food. I thought I was playing them but they were the best players. I Iaid my head on the table and drifted off to sleep

Twelve

MAHLORI

I woke in my room wondering what they did to me. My phone was on the side stand I had tons of missed calls from Mpumie and Lucas.

I was about to call Mpumie when Ntombi invited herself in with a fruit platter.

"I'm not going to eat that" I snapped before she could say 'eat dear'

"But you've only eaten in the morning" I've never seen such nuisance in one person.

"I can make my own food" my stomach was rumbling but I knew better than to eat anything from Ntombi.

"Trust me I'm not here to fight I just want peace" Peace left foot.

"By drugging me? Ntombi I don't want to talk to you. Please get out or I will. Choose... It's your house after all" I was really tired of doing the same thing every day telling Ntombi and her husband to get away from me.

"I just want peace—"

"Take your peace where the sun doesn't shine. I don't want it" She sighed and placed the platter on the dressing table. She looked a bit better from the past few days. Maybe the curse had been passed to Nonhle. I had to get out of here before it came back to me. I would never understand the deeds of this household.

"You need to eat even if it's not this. Please go to the kitchen or order in just eat"

Why does she care? Oh my word I can't be pregnant. I cannot be pregnant. What if they drugged me only to rape me so I could

conceive. If that was the case then I would need a morning after.

"Fine get out" I order her presence suffocated me. That woman always intimidated me from the first first day I met her. Now I understood why she had a dark aura of wickedness. Even when she was smiling.

After she left I called Mpumie "I've been worried sick!"

"I know I'm sorry. I fell asleep"

"For the whole day?"

That was when I realized that the sun had set.

"I think they know about our plan I fell asleep after I ate breakfast with them don't judge me I didn't want to raise suspicion"

"You raised suspicion the moment you dined with them. They know you hate them. It would be normal for you not to eat with them. We need to get you out of there as soon as possible"

I walked to my closet the luggages were in the same position as I left them. I did well by locking them there.

"Maybe they don't know I wanted to escape" I said they would have confronted me or let me go since they knew I would always come back to them because we are 'binded by blood'. I think they drugged me because they had another agenda that I don't know of.

"I will come to visit Ntombi. Maybe we can figure out how to get you out of there. Lucas was worried too. Please call him" We bid each other goodbye and hung up.

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I was about to call Lucas when I felt an agonizing sensation on my lower abdomen. It felt like period pains but it was too early for me to ovulate I know I missed my date for contraception but I'm sure I hadn't wore off as yet.

I went to the kitchen to myself something to eat I also brought along hot water hot water bottleit usually does the trick in easing pain.

"Are you okay?"

"You told me to eat Ntombi I'm eating"

I closed my eyes as the pain got worse. One of the reasons why I'm always on contraception was to avoid period pains.

Ntombi didn't say anything she just left but came back a few minutes later with Muzi. It was suprising that he was always around. But when we got married he was always out and busy. When I reflected back to everything that had been happening I felt like I fool. The signs were there those two were creepy. Another thing that confused me was the treatment that Nonhle got it looked like I was a foe to the three of them while Nonhle was their ally. Why do I feel like Nonhle knew everything that was happening in that house? She suggested I devorce Muzi a few days later she moved in. She got better treatment than me she never had problems with spiritual husband. Maybe they worked together way before I met Muzi.

My thoughts were interrupted by Muzi holding my hand he led me to the lounge. I was in too much pain to protest.

"What did you do to me?" I knew what ever was happening to me had to do with whatever they put on my food.

Muzi pinned me down and injected me on the neck. I started feeling drowsy like I did earlier on

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he led me to the lounge. I was in too much pain to protest.

"What did you do to me?" I knew what ever was happening to me had to do with whatever they put on my food.

Muzi pinned me down and injected me on the neck. I started feeling drowsy like I did earlier on the cramps we still sharp.

"It was supposed to be three days" Muzi said to Ntombi looking confused she shrugged... my vision was blur but I could hear what they were saying although I didn't understand what they were on about.

" I know but she was having period pains we have to be fast" That was the last thing before my body gave in to darkness.

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When I opened my eyes Mpumie was sitting beside me. "You're are finally awake what's with you and sleeping?" she was her jolly self as usual.

"What are you doing here?" I whispered.

"Dude I told you I was going to come by. Don't worry about Ntombi I told her we are planning the charity party...remember the one we spoke about the first day you had lunch with us?"

yeah I remember that day was when I started seeing signs when I heard a hissing sound that led me to that room. When Ntombi told me I was sneaking. The same day Zodwa told me to get out of that house. I should have listened to her but I was too gullible to smell the coffee.

" Yes so how are we going to get out?"

"The gardner will help us. Throw your luggages through the window but first dress up because we are going for shopping" I couldn't believe Mpumie would go into this extent helping me.

I dressed up and did my make up it's been long since I actually looked glam. A lot had been happening in my life and I forgot to even take care of myself. I didn't even remember when was the last time I worked out.

Mpumie'a plan worked we were able to walk out with just our clutch bags.

Mpumie even offered Ntombi to join us but she wasn't interested... Good. I wonder if she agreed. Mpumie was a sucker for danger.

My body was still tired from being drugged. I told Mpumie about everything and suggested we see a doctor. The doctor took my blood samples and got them tested for any toxins. Thanks to rich Mpumie we were able to get results within two hours. Ntombi used sleeping drugs for me to fall asleep so the doctor flushed it out. I also did a pregnancy test It came back negative. I also asked to be checked if I wasn't penetrated —I mean raped in my sleep... Nothing seemed to be odd which raised many questions why would they drug me twice?

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"Arazyal is a demon that came to earth and slept with human wives. He had been defeated and commanded back to hell long time ago. I don't know how he came back or who helped him. With each soul he owns he gets too powerful. Let's hope he has a few souls on his name otherwise we are doomed. The demon's draw power from human souls the more people subject to him the more he becomes unstoppable. It's tricky because he didn't possess you. We need someone he is using as his host so that we can exorcise that person. It's hard to deal with a demon in its true form"

He explained by the time he finished I was dead scared I didn't know this thing could be this deep. I thought Muzi was just a ritualist who had a snake for a pet or he married me off to the ghost... A whole demon? How did he pull this?

"What if he has no host?"

"We'll have to summon him and talk to him and then trap him in a circle. My friend who is a demonologist will know what to do"

"Okay let's go for it"

"Since Arazyal is into you we'll have to use you as a bait. And what you need to know is that if you are not spiritually strong you could even die. You only saw his shadow but you almost lost your mind. It would be worse if you meet him in his true form. Are you up for this?" I swear my heart was on my throat I was in the verge of vomiting it out of my body. I was between the land of the living and the land of the dead.

I was sure Arazyal was going to kill me in the end so this was the matter of death and death.

" I'm not a believer. Well not until now"

"Now that you know the devil exists it should tell you that God exists too. I can not help you if you don't have faith. Faith is power your weapon while fear and doubt will make Arazyal will feed on it and be powerful. We won't perform this until you are sure. Get rid of doubt get rid of fear."

## Thirteen

### MAHLORI

For the first time in a long time my life was peaceful. I was able to sleep at night with no fears. The only challenge was to convince Lucas that I was more than ready to face Arazyal. I've seen him before he had caught me off guard that's why I was scared I think Arazyal was nothing but a coward that was chased from heaven and came to Earth to seek power because obviously he had no chance in hell because Satan was in charge. If he was as strong as Lucas said he wouldn't have to use people to do his dirty work. I was ready to face him and tell him to fuck off...

"I'm ready!" I said Marching through the kitchen door. I was living with Lucas but my room was specifically designated for his clients I think... I wasn't sure what I was to him.

He was with a woman she stared at me. Maybe she was just a jealous girlfriend. So I ignored her "I'm ready for Arazyal"

"Mahlori don't make a hasty decision"

"Why? You wanted me to be strong. I'm strong I can feel the bravery in me. The sooner get this done the better I want my normal life back"

"You're too ambitious" ambition was a good thing.

"Why does it look like you're scared? Are you having second thoughts? I see you are scared of Arazyal. So much for preaching faith rather than fear" Lucas would never understand my urge to be free. It's been a week since I've been here if we delay a day longer... Arazyal might be too powerful. How do we know how many lives he was destroying with each passing day?

"There is a large distinction between bravery and anger. With this bravado you will find yourself lying on your back carrying dirt with your chest" I did not want to die. I sighed...

"Lucas—"

"No don't beg. We'll do it in three days time" He said as his attention shifted back to his guest who was still staring at me.

"Mary?" Lucas called out but she didn't snap out of it. My heart started beating hard against my ribs as she stood up from the barstool and slowly made her way to me without blinking.

"Lucas..." I whispered silently begging him to come at my rescue.

"Are you seeing something?" Lucas asked Mary who had put her hands on my shoulders.

"Get away from me!" I have her a hard pushed because she was starting to squeeze the life out of me.

"I'm sorry" She whispered "There's a profane aura I feel around you. There's a pure soul in you that is in danger"  
I don't like clairvoyant people because they always speak in riddles. How can profane and pure be in one sentence.

"I'm sorry. Lucas can we talk... in private"  
Lucas looked confused but after an unspoken conversation they had. He asked me to excuse them.

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I called Mpumie for the fifth time today. It went straight to voicemail. I was beginning to get worried. She had promised to visit me everyday but not even once did she come. The last time I saw her was when she dropped me off. Ever since then her phone never went through. I hope Ntombi didn't bust our plan and chastised her.

The phone rang in my hand I clucked my tongue in irritation as Ntombi's name appeared on my screen. "What" I said coldly I wouldn't have answered her but I was worried about Mpumie and I wanted to find out if she knew about our plan.

"You ran away" her guttural voice gave me shudders.  
Of course I ran away.

"What do you want from me Ntombi?"

"Mpumie was worried sick about you you went to the bathroom and never came out. Why did you run away?" so Mpumie pretended to have lost me. Why didn't she make contact though? This bitch could be lying.



"I am not coming back you can bewitch me all you want give it your best shot but I am gone. Nonhle might be a good wife for Arazyal they complement each other anyways" I hung up and added her contacts to blocklist. Lucas would help me find out if Mpumie was okay.

Speaking of the devil Lucas knocked and I invited him in.

"We have a problem"

No I didn't want any problems.

"is Mpumie okay?"

"It's been long since I last spoken to her. But I'm sure she is okay. I would know if she wasn't"

"Then what's wrong?"

"Ntombi made a deal with Arazyal. Mary didn't get any details but Ntombi promised to sacrifice your baby for her healing"

So Mary was seer she stared at me because she was being shown something.

It also made sense why Muzi wanted me to bear a baby. I remember when he said it would set me free as well. They wanted the baby to take my place.

"Muzi once mentioned that if I beared him a baby I would be set free"

"Don't tell me you fell for that"

Marrying Muzi was foolish but I'm not as foolish as Lucas thought. I wasn't going to let him deceive me for the second time.

"Of course not."

"You need to know that anything that has to do with evilness is a lie. I'm sure your husband and his wife were deceived into living this life they are just too deep to come out. Don't let the same thing happen to you. Demons like Arazyal are like windows they seem transparent they give you hope they give you the view of everything you desire. Only find that there's a barrier." He stopped for a few seconds and pointed at the window." If you look through the window you get the beautiful view but you can't really pass through because it is just a transparent glass that is a barrier." What he was saying made a lot of sense.

" I was lucky enough I met you. You are going to get me our of the devil's territory" I said smiling widely.

"Yes but you are already deep as it is. The mistake you did was doing what Muzi asked you to. The baby that you're carrying is a leverage Arazyal has against you. Ntombi gave him this child and he will want to claim it—" I shut him off before he could get farther and farther with his nonsense.

"I did not agree!"

"Oh but you are pregnant anyway" it couldn't be true. I couldn't be pregnant not with Muzi's child not with the demon's child.

"I did a pregnancy test the day I came here. It's been months since I last had sex with Muzi or anyone for that matter. If it was his I would be showing already"

"You said you were drugged before you came here?"

No I went to the doctor for a check up. I was not raped...

"Or I'm carrying a demon child" That was the explanation of that whole nonsense. Arazyal had been having sex with me on my sleep and left his filthy seed.

"Mahlori Mary saw Arazyal demanding a child that is made by you and Muzi"

I let out a loud sob. When I thought I was getting my freedom now I have something inside me that is binding me with the Sibiya's. I guess Ntombi was right when she said we were bounded by blood and the only way out was death.

"Fine! We'll give Arazyal his little devil so he can leave me alone!" I said on my knees still sobbing.

"Sacrificing your own blood will not free you. Instead you will be subjecting to him giving your soul and blood to him means you will have to serve him"

"I'm going to abort!"

When I thought I was seeing light at the end of the tunnel this happened. How do I even abort a demon? The western medicine was never going to work.

"That is what they want you to do. To kill your child by the time you abort his or her soul would jump in the hands of Arazyal. That would be you sacrificing your child.

If it's a demon child like you say of which it's not there's no way to abort it. To be sure we need to see a doctor and perform a sonogram. If it doesn't detect your baby it would mean it is a demon. If it does detect it would mean it's a human Muzi's child. Both circumstances have no solutions though we struck between a hard place and a rock"

MAHLORI

My heart skipped a bit as I saw my father's incoming call it was the last call I've ever expected. I was praying that he changed his mind about me coming home maybe he was worried about my well being. I never called since that day.

"Hello dad"

"Mahlori are you okay in your head?" judging by that raucous voice I guess I was wrong.

"Muzi picked you from the streets he married you he gave you a home. You are a rich woman if it wasn't for him you'd be still whoring around destroying your already blur future. I'm sure you'd be dead because of HIV. Is this how you thank him? By running away?" How mature of him to run to my father.

" Dad mother told you I was being abused and you shouted"

"Being abused my left foot! Are you not the one who said you wanted to get married? I told you the man was too old for you and you can't be a second wife. Did you listen? No" he forgot to mention that he changed his mind when he was offered money. If it wasn't for my mother he would have taken that million without hesitating.

That alone should have alerted me... who pays a whole million for a lobola? It was the first sign that I was nothing but an investment to him to make him more millions. I was just too green to notice.

My father brought me back to Earth with his shouting "I want you to go back to your house fix your marriage otherwise you can forget about me as your father. I will never allow you to set your foot in my house don't call my wife and my children. Look at Ahlulani it's been years since she has been married she knows how to be a wife. Unlike you whore!"

We were back to square one I was being compared to my older sister and now I was being disowned.

So I had to get back to Muzi or else I would have no family. I couldn't live with Lucas forever I would have to go once I was safe. I wouldn't want to burden Mpumie.

"I'm not going to go back dad sorry"

"That's why I never wanted you to go to Durban look how that city had spoiled you not only did you lose your morals you have the nerve to defy me"

"I'm sorry"

"You are selfish Mahlori. Didn't you say you want to change the situation of this house?" he had calmed down his voice was no longer tout as before. That was what I said years ago when I came here for university that I would change the situation at home

"Yes

**Sponsored**

I did. I will go back to school"

"and who will continue with the renovations in this house? Who will buy us food and take care of us when you are at school. What will people say? Do you know how much respect we have earned

in this community. What will become of us if Muzi stops sending money for us?"

When I thought it couldn't get any more worse. Muzi had been sending my family money. My own father chose money over me. Using Arazyal'a money means you belong to him...

"I have to go dad bye" I hung before he could further curse at me. I went straight to Lucas who was busy with the other clients.

"Why is he giving my father money Lucas?" I blurted out assuming he would understand what I was on about.

"Mahlori I'm busy" these days he had been dismissing me on everything. I did my research on him and found out that he was one of the greatest exorcists in the world. He has dealt with higher ranks demons together with his team. So I doubt he was ignoring me because he didn't have a solution to my problem. Something else was bothering him.

"I'm just scared" I know my father and I doesn't see eye to eye but I wouldn't want him to find himself under Arazyal reign.

"We'll summon him as soon as I make sure your baby is safe" His face and voice softened a bit.

Speaking of a baby a few days ago we went to a doctor. I was indeed pregnant with Muzi's child. Two weeks pregnant I didn't know how that happened because I've never been intimate with Muzi for more than two months. The doctor suspected that I got pregnant through IUI process. I showed her my ovulation calendar and it didn't correspond with the date I got pregnant with. She assumed my ovulation was stimulated with fertility drugs and semen was inserted straight to my uterus. She also stated another possible pregnancy procedures that doesn't

include copulation. No one had an accurate knowledge of how I got pregnant except the demons themselves Muzi and Ntombi. I also suspect witchcraft I don't think they were clever enough to use the western processes. Perhaps they used voodoo on me that doctors wouldn't detect.

So I'm pregnant and I have no choice but to accept my baby the very same one who could be the delay for my freedom. I won't only protect myself but him or her too. Another thought hit me once I'm free from Arazyal I won't have a home my father doesn't want anything to do with me. I would be wondering on the streets with a baby...

My heart sank when I thought of my innocent child who would be a street kid from birth. I know circumstances forces me to accept my baby but I think I'm falling inlove. I would die before I let Arazyal get to her. I'd like a girl. A girl who wouldn't find herself in a situation like mine because of poverty. Only if I had a stable job.

I found myself in my knees my forehead against my bed. "I know I may not be your favorite person but I know my little bundle is innocent his or her soul is still pure from all the evils of this world. Please release me from this prison if it's not for me let it be for my baby. May my child not suffer for my sins may my family not suffer for my sins. My mother always says you are a good person and you answer prayers. Please answer mine as well. Amen"

I took my stand and sighed this prayer was much better than the last one. I hope it will reach heaven. I forgot to pray for Mpumie. She was still in no reach and I was now scared for her life. What if something had happened to her?

"Did I interrupt?"

I jumped a bit startled it was Lucas.

"I'm sorry the door was open"

"It's okay" it was his house after all.

"I just wanted to let you know that Mpumie is okay I haven't talked to her but Mary confirmed that she is okay. However she also needs some rescue. Please promise me that once we're done with you you will you help me save her"

Without asking anything "I promise"

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Fifteen

MPUMIE

I was in the basement of my house no one knew about it except my husband and I. I was sitting in the dark the bruises on my body were agonizing I was still going to get more if I didn't speak the truth about Mahlori's whereabouts.

My husband was Muzi's puppet he did everything to please him so that he could get more richer and richer.

Growing up being called crazy was what landed me here. I have a gift I'm psychic. I honestly looked at it as curse because it brought nothing but misery to me ever since I was a kid. I was able to foresee the future. It started as small incidents where I would warn my friends about petty things such as tripping and falling. My friends always called me magic girl because everything I foretold would happen. Even at school everyone would want to



befriend me because of my 'magic' it was fun no lies but it turned tragic when I saw my mother's funeral. Although I was only eight years old I was mature enough to understand what my dream meant. I told my family but no one believed me they believed in a myth that if you dream of someone's death it means they'd live longer.

The day my mom died I told her not to go to work because the taxi she was going to ride with was going to have an accident. My father scolded me not to say such things my mother asked what was I going to eat if she doesn't go to work. I sobbed as I watched her exiting the door promising to bring me sweets from work I knew I wasn't going to get those sweets because she wasn't going to come back. Guess what my father did? He gave me a good beating because I was a naughty child who didn't want to listen.

Just like I had precogitated my mother never made it home. Again I got a beating because I spoke evil words to life against my mother I was called a witch. I didn't know how the news spread across the Phikela village but everyone was made aware that I spoke death upon my mother. Some blamed me some blamed my mother saying she was a witch she saw her death coming and as her only daughter I was going to take over.

I was treated with nothing but hostility by my family the villagers and at school. I was no longer the magic girl but I was renamed to the little witch. From that era I cursed my gift I hated it and I swore to never use it again. I held on until I finished high school and came to Durban. I foreseen accidents diseases and many more. The visions no longer came as dreams but I would see everything by just looking at a person. I then started getting dreams the dreams were warning me to use my gift because God and guides gave it to me to save the world from the evil other

wise I would suffer for the rest of my life. I didn't get the point of using the gift because I was suffering even when I used it so what was the point?

I met this fine man who was so loving and caring he worshiped the ground I walked in. His name was Sbusiso. Just like his name he was a blessing to me but only for so long. When we got married he made do some ritual thing. He was tying my soul to him with our souls as one I would also belong to Arazyal. Well he doesn't know anything about Arazyal he was just Muzi's clueless subject and he was doing a good job in controlling him. Thanks to my gift I already knew what was too happen so I refused. He begged and begged giving excuses of how much that was needed to be done so our marriage would work. With time he started getting frustrated and started abusing me mentally physically and sexually. Part of me stayed because I loved him I was hoping he would be free. The other part of me loved money just like Mahlori.

When I married him I knew there was something malicious about him

### **Sponsored**

I knew there was something malicious about him but money! Money makes the world go round. I thought I could save him with my gift but I couldn't because I was nothing else other than a fortune teller. There was nothing I could do about the future I see except warning. Warning wasn't a useless thing because It could prevent unfortunate fates. Especially the ungodly ones. For instance I can't prevent death. If someone had to die they had to die. But if their fates were tempered with something could stop that. Like my mother that accident wasn't supposed to kill her but her stubbornness led her to an early grave.

Sbusiso always made efforts to get my bloodlike drugging me but they wouldn't work. I remember when he made me a cup of latte. When he gave it to me all I saw was blood. I knew something was wrong.

I think my guides got angry because I only used and embraced my gift when I benefited me so I wasn't going to get out of that marriage alive unless I stopped being selfish. I also saw my fate Sbusiso was going to kill me involuntary in control of Arazyal because I knew too much. That fate could also be prevented if I helped people.

He also forced me to be friends with Ntombi because she was older mature and the only good person to be friends with.

Since I wanted out the shame of the marriage alive I started to help people. The first person I helped was Lucas. He was going to inspect the place where he needed to trap the demon and command it back to hell not knowing that he was the one who was being trapped. One of the demon's saw him as a threat and used some old women as vessel. He thought he was helping an innocent woman but the demon was going to trap him as soon as he stepped in the house. I told him what was going to happen and he proceeded with the exorcism ready and was able to defeat it. Exorcists sometimes let their guard down and forget what they were dealing with.

After that him and I became friends and more. So I was cheating on my husband with him. We agreed that we were going to keep under the carpet until I was free from Sbu. The second person I tried to help was Muzi's late wife. She married Muzi a few years after he married Ntombi. I invited her for dinner and gave her Holly water so that her blood won't work in knotting the bond of blood. When Arazyal refused her soul Ntombi killed her.

I know there was no happy ending in the story but at least her soul was free. It didn't belong to Arazyal. I wasn't able to save her flesh but I did save her soul. Muzi married another wife I warned her not to proceed with the wedding because she was going to be a sacrifice since she was a virgin. Did she listen? no I was labeled as crazy. That was how Muzi and Ntombi found out about my gift. Ever since then they have been keeping an eye on me. When Mahlori disappeared I was the first suspect since she was last seen with me.

That was why I was locked in the basement my husband gave me painful whips with something like a sjambok but it was more than a typical one it was meant to weaken my spirit it did work but I have done a good job in mastering to hide my thoughts and visions from him. They have tried several times to make illusions in my mind but I knew how to distinguish an illusion from a vision. The world thought I was a trophy wife or a slay queen but ever since I started embracing my gift my relationship with God grew rapidly. I was a prayer warrior.

My bruises were stinging I've been locked for weeks here. That's how Sbusiso gotten the truth out of me sometimes I would use lies and be caught. Sometimes he would give up. For Muzi's wives I told the truth but for Mahlori I was never going to tell him where she was. Even if they do find her it would be hard to get to her. But to forbid them from trying I was not going to admit that I helped Mahlori.

"Honey do you want to spend another week here?"

"Sbu you always claim to love me but you hurt me"

"You make me do it honey. It's your fault just tell me the truth" it was evident they hurt him to hurt me but the love he had for

me was not enough to dominate Muzi's control. He hurts me even if he doesn't want to.

"Sbu I know what Muzi and Ntombi were doing to Mahlori but I never told her anything. It would be unnecessary to tell her because they were not going to kill her." half of my statement was lie but the other was true. They were not going to kill her because Arazyal was obsessed with her it looked like she was her favorite victim. Mahlori was the one who was going to take her life.

I hoped my answer was good enough to save me. I was certain that Lucas was worried sick he wasn't allowed to contact me unless I did. Mahlori I blocked her numbers and saved them as my dad. Sbu knew how much I hated my father so he wasn't going to ask why i blocked him. So there was no trace of Lucas or Mahlori on my phone.

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Unedited

Sixteen

NTOMBI

Things have not been so good since Mahlori left. Our businesses started to face a financial crisis it was still manageable since we had a lot of money lying around but if we keep on working on a loss we might go broke in less than a year. We made some sacrifices for Arazyal but nothing worked. Usually he shows the sign of acceptance or refusal to sacrifices but this time it was nothing. Even when I summoned him he did not appear.

"My love don't stress too much. Remember a baby is growing inside of you?" Muzu held my hand to comfort me.

"Sibiya what if Arazyal abandoned us?" As much as he was a pain in the ass his riches were keeping us going. Should he decide not to work with us everything that we had would disappear like it never existed.

"I don't think so. Maybe he is currently satisfied with what is happening"

"Your thoughts may be wrong. The only solution to this is Mahlori!" I never understood the obsession Arazyal had with Mahlori. Muzi could still marry someone else. There are a lot of naive girls out there. Nonhle was even available she was just a piece of useless furniture that does nothing other than eating shopping and sleeping.

"What if it didn't work Arazyal wants a naturally conceived baby?" it couldn't be. Technology is the devil's field.

"He should communicate with us then!"

I would say there was a possibility that Mahlori wasn't pregnant but I was sure she was. I went to my altar and drank the blood that we mixed when Mahlori first came here. It was still hot and fresh. Arazyal made sure of that. After I drank the blood I could feel Mahlori's heartbeat. It was strong and I could also feel the baby's. The challenge was to locate her she was somewhere safe and that was bad for us. I was hoping she would At Least abort so maybe we could get hold of the baby's soul.

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What annoyed me more was this Nonhle. All she did was eat like a pig and expect everyone to clean after her...

I groaned in anger as I picked up the plate she was using on the floor.

"Nonhle how many times do I have to tell you to wash your plates. You don't have a maid in this household" she ignored me and continued to watch the TV like I wasn't there. I marched to and grabbed her by her neck threatening to strangle her but I was sent flying across the wall.

I picked myself up surprised by her strength "You forget what I can do to you" her voice was loud and feminine but her authority wasn't hers. That wasn't Nonhle.

She came to me her hand on my neck. "I will show you how it's done" she tightened her grip. I peed on myself because of suffocation. My feet were still on the floor but I was already struggling to breathe. Her eyes had turned black.

"I'm sorry Nonhle" I said although I knew who I was dealing with. She put her hand on my belly it was starting to show. I froze at her touch my body felt cold

"Just because you are pregnant you think you are better. You forget that I gave you this baby I could stop his heart with the snap of my fingers"

"I'm not powerful enough to get to Mahlori I need seven virgins by the end of today. If I don't get those virgins or Mahlori by tonight. I will take this baby. His little soul will give me more power I want"

After that she removed her hand from my tummy and let go of my neck. She then collapsed. After I nursed my sore throat and got enough air I shifted my attention to Nonhle

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I shifted my attention to Nonhle who was in her deep sleep. "Nonhle!" I shook her she opened her eyes. They were back to normal but her skin was pale to a point where you can see the green veins. It didn't help that she was light-skinned.

"Was I sleepwalking?" She looked disoriented but I had too many problems explaining things to her. It seemed like Arazyal had left her. Nonhle looked dead by just occupying Arazyal's spirit. It meant he was getting powerful.

"Baby" Muzi had gone running some errands I guess he was back.

"He wants seven virgins by tonight where are going to get them?" I looked at the time it was half-past four already. We only had a few hours to find the girls. Many girls were still sealed out there but they were not written on their foreheads!

He drops the documents he was carrying as his hands went to his head. "Arazyal is demanding too much" tears were threatening in his eyes.

Muzi had always been a weakling. If it wasn't for me I don't know what would have become of him.

"Is Sbusiso winning with Mpumie?" the answer was not but I ask anyway. I always wondered how a young girl like her could be so strong and stubborn.

"No"



"I'm done being nice! Make sure Hanyani loses her job kill Ahlulani's husband and burn that house in Limpopo. I want Mahlori's family to suffer until she comes out of her hiding" I ordered this was too much for me I never signed up to be a demon's slave. Arazyal was selfish we gave him everything we had but he did not appreciate anything.

I felt cramps on my tummy. "Muzi!"  
Muzi rushed me to the hospital the gynecologist was already waiting for us.

"You should get used to this since you are approaching the second trimester. The cramps are caused by the expansion of the uterus causing the muscles and ligaments to stretch" she explained with a smile as she helped me lay on the bed.

The pains were severe there was nothing normal about them. The doctor checked the heartbeat it was normal. There were no complications. "You see I told you. It's good that you're cautious about your pregnancy given your age. The pains should cease soon"

I guess she was right the pains had stopped.

"If you experience such in future try to do relaxation exercises or change your sitting position. Don't forget to drink a lot of water. if the pains last more than just a few seconds don't hesitate to come here"

We were on our way back home when the cramps came again more brutal this time "Muzi we need to go back" I was in a panic I've been wanting to keep my baby for years I couldn't afford to lose this baby.

I gestured for him to stop the car I was nauseated. I vomited before I could get out of the car. Muzi came to my side with a tissue and wiped my sweaty face. It was starting to get dark we were running out of time. We needed to find the girls before I lost my son... I assumed I was a boy because Arazyal was referring to my baby as he. He already knew the gender.

"You are swelling" tears were already streaming he was shaking. I followed his eyes to my tummy. It was growing. I looked like someone who was seven months old. How could a tummy grow this rapidly in a few minutes? All of this screamed Arazyal.

## Seventeen

MPUMIE

Sbusiso seemed to believe my answer but I still got a few more whips because I was last seen with Mahlori. I was almost free from prison —the basement but I was still imprisoned from going anywhere unless it was Ntombi's house. So I had to obey and lay low for a little while before I made contact with Lucas.

"Baby Muzi called" - Sbusiso

"Oh" what did he expect me to do with the information.

"Ntombi is in trouble" hmmm

"Oh"

"Baby we have to help. They are coming from the hospital and they didn't get help"

"I'm not a healer Sbu"

"I know but you might figure out the problem" he was pacing up and down you'd swear it was his wife that was in trouble.

"We all know the problem" Ntombi was dealing with his deeds with her demon. I won't sit and pretend I didn't know the problem.

"Don't make me angry Nompumelelo!" he banged the glass table and hurt himself.

"Sorry" I stood up flinching my body was still in anguish but I had to pretend to care so I wouldn't get another beating.

"Ahh" he cried out as I applied saline solution on his cut.

"Sorry" I continued cleaning up his wound but the blood wouldn't stop coming out it started with the thick drops until it was oozing. My hand became bloody too as well as my clothes everything turned red around us. I looked at Sbusiso but it was no longer him it was Ntombi. Her stomach was becoming huge with each passing second she was also bleeding from the ears nose mouth and she was shedding blood.

"Mpumie!" Sbusiso snapped his other hand on my face "You are hurting me damn it" he shouted removing his hand from mine. I looked at the cut. It was clean the gauze that I was using had some blood a small one not the one I just imagined. It was the vision Ntombi.

Just like Sbusiso said she was in trouble. And the fact that I was shown it meant I had to do something about it. Now you see why I sometimes despise my gift? I was coerced to help someone I hated.

"Baby we have to go to Sibiyas" I said. I have a feeling that if I ignored this I would regret it.

"Why?" was that a rhetorical question or this man was just being stupid.

"Dress that would I'm going to change" I ran to my bedroom and grabbed the first dress I came across in the closet.

When I came back to the lunge it seemed like Sbusiso had come back to his senses because he was waiting for me by the door.

His cut was newsy dressed... men!

The car keys were in his hands. As soon as he saw me he opened the door.

I swear the car was parked on the veranda. Whatever Muzi did to this man was cruel. I don't recognize him anymore I doubt he knew who he was.

When we arrived at Muzi's house there was blood on the driveway I quickly made my way inside. There she was on the floor she looked like she'd pop five twins... oops I mean quintuplets at any moment. I ran in her direction and held her tummy. Now that I was here I didn't know what to do. Just like I had to Sbu I wasn't a healer. I didn't know how to stop the bleeding.

"Please help me Mpumi. I don't want to lose my child" she begged panting her dress dripping wet you'd swear someone spilled water on her.

Muzi on the other side was on the verge of losing his mind. When I made my way in he ran to me like a little kid there was a sign of relief when he saw me. When I held his wife's tummy he kept on kneeling and standing up. It was funny to watch but there was no time to laugh. So I was going to laugh at him later.

"I was shown you are in trouble but I don't have a solution" I was ashamed to say these words when these three had high hopes in me.

"Mpumie no! Please think of something my love. I'm sorry for hurting you

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I love you so much." I looked at him puzzled before I frowned. What does loving me have to do with helping Ntombi?

"He means he will never lay a hand on you again. I will make sure of it. Please help" Muzi intervened seeing my surprised face.

Ntombi wasn't even crying or panting anymore. It was like she was giving up her skin was paling. "Please keep your eyes open Ntombi. If this is not a medical issue then what do you think is the cause of this?" the question was directed to Ntombi but it was obvious that she wasn't going to give me an answer so I shifted my eyes to Muzi.

He shrugged while shaking his head.

" Ayike I don't know" His wife was in trouble but he was busy lying. It's not like I don't know their evilness.

"Okay okay hmm. Well He wants Mahlori"

My heart stopped beating for a second If I had to choose between Mahlori and Ntombi I'd choose Mahlori and let the witch die. God would have to understand the world would be a better place without Ntombi.

"or seven virgins by the end of today. We've already run out of time"

I signed seven lives were almost lost because of greed if it happened that Ntombi survives the night innocent lives would be still in danger. If she dies there is a possibility that she will die along with Muzi and maybe Mahlori because they are tied and the blood bond has not been unknotted.

I gasp in terror when I realize the possibility of Mahlori feeling the same pain maybe not because when Mahlori was sick-Horney Ntombi did not suffer. Maybe they didn't feel each other's pain but I wasn't going to risk Mahlori losing her baby at least not like that.

I had to take this risk at least Mahlori was safe and her name will save the day. I might be putting my life at stake too but I have no other choice. To save Ntombi Mahlori and seven innocent girls out there who would soon find themselves dead because they chose to stay pure...not that I'm saying someone who is not a virgin was not pure but that is how the devil looks at it. Their purity would give the demon more power the more he gets powerful the more it's impossible to defeat him. I had to do this.

"Summon him" I said everyone except Ntombi looked at me like I had grown horns.

"Summon Arazyal I want to make a deal with him" I said to clarify.

Making a deal with a demon was like giving away my soul. I will try to make a deal with him without having to subject to him.

"Mpumie we'll have to go to our prayer room lets go I will carry Ntombi" Yeah he wasn't even going to fake reluctance.

"is he not everywhere?" I ask I didn't want to find myself in a devil's trap.

Muzi was about to say something when we heard things falling in the kitchen it seemed like the plates and glasses were being thrown everywhere. The lounge started getting really cold. A figure emerged from the kitchen... I almost rolled my eyes when I saw someone I assumed was Nonhle. She walked like a programmed machine and came towards me.

"Who are you?" I asked

"What do you want from me" she said it was more than two male voices that came from her throat.

"You must be Arazyal I thought you'd be brave enough to show your true self. Kodwa ke ask lapho —let's not dwell on that. Save Ntombi and I will give you what you want Mahlori" Muzi and Sbu gasped.

"But-" Sbu was about to say something when I cut him off

"I know where Mahlori is I will bring her back tomorrow. But you will save Ntombi now." Nonhle or should I say Arazyal looked at me without saying anything. I continued "if I don't fulfill my promise I give you the permission to take me and make me your subject"

Nonhle collapsed and the temperature dropped into its initial degree. Some blackish fluid came out of Ntombi's mouth. Her tummy went back to its normal size.

"You saved her" Sbu said when Ntombi opened her eyes.

I heaved as I thought of what I just did. I permitted a demon to take me. The easiest way a demon could possess someone. I

have to find a way to revoke my promise because I was not going to bring Mahlori to the lion's den.

## Eighteen

### NTOMBI

Muzi insisted that we go to the doctor for a check-up we decided to see the difference one so that we don't raise any suspicion. We had to make sure that Arazyal did not tamper with the baby's health.

Everything seemed to be normal with the baby I still had back pains and my throat was sore and scratchy. I think it was because of that weird puke.

I couldn't wait for everything to go back to normal. What Mpumie did was going to make my job easier. Arazyal was going to get Mahlori and give me time to breathe. The past few weeks were nothing other than torment. If it wasn't for Mpumie my baby would be gone. She had proven to be useful for the first time in forever.

"Does it not bother you that Mpumie helped I always thought she'd love to see you die" Muzi asked glancing at me before focusing on the road again. I gave it a thought Mpumie had always been on my way. But the sudden change of heart was suspicious.

"Sbusiso gave her good whips" I bet she had no energy to go against Sbusiso's orders. I really worked hard on that sjambok.

"Or she was lying when she said she'd bring Mahlori"



"She wouldn't dare. If she did she would suffer the consequences of lying to the great Arazyal." I wouldn't mind seeing her suffer from Arazyal's anger. She was a threat to me anyway. Not only a spiritual threat but a threat to my marriage. I always saw how Muzi eyed her all the time when she visited. It did not help that she was young beautiful and well-bodied. She didn't have a body of strict diet or stricter workout regimen like Mahlori. She was naturally fit. Muzi's type... I knew she liked them younger.

"She made a serious oath"

"And she will deal with it alone" even if she had to die I don't care. She saved me but I still distasted her.

"I think we should invite her for lunch tomorrow"

"No I don't want to dine with her. Not in my house" I snapped insecurities were taking over.

"To thank her for—"

"There's nothing to be thankful for. She owes us her life. She is the one who always delays our progress. If it wasn't for her Mahlori would be here. Now she comes and saves the day so she would be seen as a heroine"

"You are right"

"I'm sorry for snapping. I think it's the hormones" I said crying I was the master of fake tears. That was how I got away with everything. I did want Muzi to know that I was feeling threatened by Mpumie it would be a huge turn-off.

"Please don't cry honey. You are breaking my heart" I nodded and wiped crocodile tears.

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. .

The following day I invited my friends over for lunch. They were all present beside Mpumie whom I didn't invite. Maybe I would share a table with her once she comes back with Mahlori. She had promised to bring her today. Or maybe I should invite her as soon as the ladies leave so I can put something on her food something that would taint her body. It was going to work better if she was feeling fear I hope she was scared that she might be possessed by a demon. The reason why I want to put some dirt in her is that it would become easier for Arazyal to feed on her. Mpumie was praying and her prayers were strong the demon would not survive that long on her body because she was clean.

"What are you thinking about?" Lilly asked she was another person I hated. She liked competing with me about everything

### **Sponsored**

she was a bitter woman who wanted to be better than anyone.

"Don't worry about your businesses they will recover. The season is bad for everyone" she continued. How did she know about my business?

"My businesses are doing well Lilly thank you"

"Your husband needed a loan from mine so I assumed you were bankrupt" She was gloating for everyone to know. I needed Mahlori as soon as possible so everything would go back to normal.

"You assumed wrong. Anyways ladies my husband and I are expecting" I said with a wild smile and winked at Lilly. Remember

when she called me baren? I should kill her and give Arazyal her head.

After our sour dinner the ladies prepared for their way out I asked treasure to remain behind. Her husband was a drug lord. "I need something strong" I said I didn't even know why exactly I wanted but as long as it was a drug. Drugs are one of the things demons could feed on in the host.

"Don't tell me you are using Ntombi you are pregnant" She said with a gasp. I should have planned some backup story. No one knew about my witchcraft. No matter how close we might be I don't share such information. The only person I trusted with all my heart was Muzi.

"No sweetheart. I want some information from another girl so I need something that would motivate her. I heard she was a drug addict but I don't know the kind of stuff she uses" I wasn't good at lying. I hope she bought my story.

"Fine I will talk to Elijah" It was good that Treasure wasn't a nosy person.

She promised that she'd bring ecstasy in thirty minutes. I had sent Mpumie a message inviting her over. She always busts my plans I'm hoping she wouldn't this time especially because drugs have nothing to do with witchcraft.

I informed Muzi that Mpumie would be coming over the way he was happy that I changed my mind was annoying. When I asked why he was happy he said it was because our problems would be going away in a few hours.

"I think you should take Nonhle to the hospital while I stay with Mpumie " Nonhle had not been well ever since Arazyal possessed

her. She was pale weak she hardly talked or ate. If something was not done about that she was going to die. Not that I cared but I have to make sure she was okay just to be on Arazyal's good books. I might find her useless but to Arazyal she was not.

Nineteen

NONHLE

When I woke up on the floor again Muzi was helping Ntombi up. There was a blackish fluid on the floor which made me wonder what happened. As per usual I was laying there every part of my body in pain and I was clueless about everything. I didn't know how why Ntombi was being helped standing up.

When I married Muzi I told myself I would withstand anything that would happen.

I did not mind the snake because it wasn't like I would see when it was having sex with me I thought it would feel like a dream. Unfortunately things didn't go as I anticipated Muzi married me just for his wife to torture me he doesn't sleep with me he doesn't even glance in my direction. It was like I never existed in his life. When I threatened to move out I was told that I would come back crawling. I took the threat seriously Mahlori tried the same thing the next day she was trending on the internet.

I always woke up in weird places sometimes I would find myself in the prayer room sometimes I would wake up next to the fridge with a piece of raw meat in my hands. Whenever something eerie happened my body would be in anguish. It would take Ntombi's herbs for me to function again most of the time she didn't care I would stay in the same spot for hours starving unable to breathe properly unable to move even my finger. I would end up peeing

on myself when my bladder couldn't hold my urine anymore. That was my everyday routine. My stay in the Sibiya household was anticlimactic and deplorable.

I overheard Muzi and Ntombi speaking about almost losing her baby and Mahlori's departure being the reason. I wish I was her she was able to escape successfully.

As for me I tried but I sprained my both ankle the moment I stepped out of the main gate. It was like there was a paranormal boundary that was supposed to lock me inside the premises. That was before I threatened to move out.

Ntombi must be in a good mood because Muzi was preparing me for the hospital while She was preparing for Mpumie's arrival. Muzi literally bathed me lotioned me and helped me out on a maxi dress. The weather was chilly but tight clothing including a jersey was going to be hard to wear because of my painful temple. Every piece of clothing seemed to be heavy. After I was dressed he prepared a smoothie for me. The thing barely made it past the esophagus I was coughing as I felt the smoothie egress through my nose diluted with saliva.

"Ntombi will make you something" He said leaving my room and coming back with Ntombi who was fuming.

"It's obvious that I will only find a piece when I'm dead! Mpumie is late and now I have to nurse a damn grown-up!"

"Ntombi can you be sensitive please just this once" - Muzi?

"I'm here aren't I?" She went out for a few minutes and came with a goldish powder and made me lick it it tasted like sherbet. At least I didn't have to swallow bitter-tasting things.

"Your throat should be better soon I will also give you bath salts to soothe your body"

"Thank you" I said I couldn't wait to feel better so I could do things by myself. Being almost crippled made me a burden to Ntombi and it was giving her leverage over me.

"Don't forget to carry this on your bra or pocket you everywhere you go. Even you are pooping so you can drink it when your body fails you. My husband is not your nurse" She could have just passed the message without being rude. I never said Muzi was my nurse but he'd make a great one. He was gentle and patient he reminded me of our time together before I moved in. He used to be so loving everything changed when this beautiful hag came into the picture. Muzi loved me he was just scared of his malicious wife.

"Thank you Ntombi" I took the little bottle she gave me it was the size of a matchbox it had some goldish liquid too the smell was so heavenly. Unlike other herbs or remedies Ntombi's stuff was always fragranced.

"Mpumie better not stand me up!" I internally rolled my eyes I've never seen so much drama in one person. The hormones were taking a roll on her.

A few hours later I was able to move around I've never seen so much drama in one person. The hormones were taking a roll on her.

A few hours later I was able to move around I was still sore but it was bearable so I went to make myself proper food Muzi's smoothie was horrible I bet that was why I choked. My poor stomach couldn't accept such a horrible thing that almost tasted

like Imbiza. I was no longer a beggar so I could choose anything I wanted.

I was lazy to cook I made myself a patty sandwich and ate. After making sure that I had all Ntombi's remedies with me I settled on the second lounge and watched TV. I needed some time away from my spooky bedroom hoping not to fall asleep. Sleeping would make me sleepwalk and find myself self crippled again the only way to get through the night was to stay up. My cinema session was disturbed by the noise from the main lounge Ntombi was shouting on top of her grating voice.

"Oh my God!" Ntombi shrieked if it wasn't for my painful body I would be rolling with laughter. Satan's right-hand woman was calling upon God. It was amazing how impious people were so swift in uttering God's name when they were in unpleasant situations.

Curiosity killed a cat but I wasn't a cat so I got closer and peeked a man they referred to as Sbusiso was standing before Ntombi and Muzi his hands on his head. He looked troubled.

"She took everything she is gone. My wife is gone!" what could have happened? His wife left him instead of following after her he came to whine in another man's house. Or he wanted Muzi to give him one of his three wives.

"How did you let that happen? How did she get out of your sight? She was supposed to be here!" - Muzi

"I thought she was coming here she only left with her clutch bag. When I walked into her closet everything that belongs to her was gone. She tricked me" The Sbusiso guy explained.

"You are useless! I don't know what kind of a man you are. You fail to keep your wife on the leash you are so stupid. Now your stupidity will cost me my baby!" it was getting interesting.

"I knew there was something fishy about her help. It was ingenuine" - Muzi

"I want Mahlori!" Ntombi was losing it "Mpumie always gets away with everything. Why? I hate that girl. I did everything to defeat her but she always gets away!" she was on her knees crying "Muzi if Mahlori doesn't come back I will lose my baby"

It was dog rough.

"Don't worry honey. She might run away but she can't hide from Arazyal. She is going to regret the day she crossed us"

Sbusiso was crying as well chanting 'I want my wife please don't kill my wife'

"Although I'd love to kill your wife myself Arazyal will get to her first and do the honors" - Muzi

Was Arazyal their Tokoloshe? He sounded rogue.

"I'm also tempted to kill you and sacrifice you but you are useless you will be useless even beyond the grave"

I didn't know Muzi could be this cruel he wanted to kill a poor man for losing his wife what did they want to do with Mahlori? To kill her to save Ntombi's baby? Those questions could only be answered by the couple. Mahlori fled because she knew she was in danger...



Oh fuckin' hell No!

Muzi married a wife after Ntombi she died. He married another one she died. He married Mahlori she ran for her life because she was in peril. Who was next?

That was it! Muzi and Ntombi were serial killers. The heart attack stories about his late wives were bogus.

Muzi confirmed my hypothesis by assuring Ntombi that Nothing was going to hurt their son if Mahlori didn't come back they'd hunt seven virgins and offer them to Arazyal.

I was starting to get an idea of who Arazyal might be. I've heard enough I didn't want to know too much and end up dead. I tiptoed to my room I kept on looking over my shoulder to make they didn't see me climbing the stairs. I signed in relief when I made it out of their possible view. So much for wanting to be away from my bedroom.

I cut one of my least favorite dresses and create two long robes I wanted to tie myself into the bed so I would be restricted from sleeping walking.

**BANG! BANG! BANG!**

A hard knock came through. I went to open it before the knock knocked my door down. It was Muzi I got a little scared. Could it happen that he saw me eavesdropping? I faked a smile.

"What are you doing?" His expression was stoic. I did not let him in I didn't know if I should trust him about my plan of tying myself.

"Preparing for bed" wasn't a lie I was preparing for bed. I just didn't disclose my preparations.

"Oh you forgot this" he handed me the little bottle that Ntombi strictly told me to have with me all the time. I broke the rule... And Muzi knew I was in the lounge. Doom!

"Oh thank you I must have forgotten it after I finished eating" there was no use in denying my a few minutes ago whereabouts. I also forgot to switch off the TV.

"It was made clear that you shouldn't forget it"

"Sorry It won't happen again. I was planning on coming back for the TV when your guest leaves. I did not want to intrude. But I'm sleepy so I'm no longer going back. Goodnight pass my gratitude to Ntombi" I had to close the door before he sensed my fears. That was after he reminded me that I married him aware of what kind of a man he was and what he did for his riches. As if he was honest with that

I tried to call Mbali it went straight to voice mail. She was still angry at me for betraying Mahlori. She was being a bitch about the situation but I missed her.

After I was done plaiting my ropes. I made a plan in tying myself the bed wasn't a good one forties and it did not help that I was doing it myself. The knot was not tight but It was going to do the trick.

MAHLORI

I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw Mpumie standing by the door I was talking to my baby brushing my tummy when I heard her squeaky voice "You're not even showing what are you brushing? " I screamed on top of my lungs and jumped on her. I thanked God for her safety Mpumie became more than a friend to me.

I couldn't believe she offered herself to a demon took his husband's beatings just to save my ass.

"You shouldn't have done that Mpumie. You can't just risk your life!" I wasn't being ungrateful but I would have never been able to forgive myself if something happened to her.

"I'm fine jeez! How is my bundle of joy in there" she said brushing my flat stomach "bye bye to the abs" she added. I laughed I had a lot of work to do after giving birth.

"So how did you pull it off?" she knew what I was talking about.

" Don't ask! The witch invited me for late lunch I knew something was off. She invited the ladies over and had lunch with them. She then sent me a text after they left"

"How did you know all of that? Visions?"

"Well a little bird amongst the trophy wives told me. My visions aren't reliable at this point. It would take me a few days to get back to normal" she was a jovial person forever smiling. Escaping her husband would have been easy but a demon? Mpumie was too happy for someone who is running away from the hell's citizen.

"In that case congratulations babes"

"Yeah and I'm divorcing Sbusiso"

She had explained why she stayed in that miserable marriage I guess it was safe for her to get a divorce. I couldn't believe she had to save Ntombi. These spiritual gifts are something else.

Her mood suddenly dropped she sighed in exhaustion. "We are safe but seven innocent girls will die in your place and I can't do anything about it"

I did not get a chance to respond Lucas came to announce that food was ready.

It wasn't like I had anything to say with regards to the issue of the virgin. I should be happy that I was saved as well as Mpumie but also felt for the innocent girls. They did deserve to die at my place. If it was a few months ago I wouldn't even care I would have said 'it was either me or them' but in a matter of a few months I became a different person. I might not be as spiritual as my housemates but I have a different perspective of life.

"Penny for your thoughts?" - Lucas

"Trust me you don't want to know" We continued eating in silence wait... these two are sharing glances and unspoken conversations.

"Are you dating?"

"What?" they say in unison

I wasn't going to repeat myself they heard me.

"Well yes. It's been going on for a while"

Whoah! I didn't know prophets cheat too.

What did the Bible say about adultery? Being God's favorite must be nice.

"I thought Mary was your girlfriend" many thanks to my big mouth! Mpumie banged the wine glass on the table and gave Lucas a stare that would burn him to ashes.

"Sorry" I muttered although my sorry wasn't going to fix the mess I created. Lucas would probably throw me out of his house he didn't invite me in to be his security guard and report to Mpumie. But it wasn't my fault he should have tipped me off.

"Don't be if you didn't mention I wouldn't have known that he was playing house with Mary!" I almost choked on my juice trying to hold back my laughter. Her squeaky voice was funny now that she was shouting.

"Nothing is going on between Mary and me. She was the one who told me you were safe" An exorcist was attracting psychics

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I wouldn't have known that he was playing house with Mary!" I almost choked on my juice trying to hold back my laughter. Her squeaky voice was funny now that she was shouting.

"Nothing is going on between Mary and me. She was the one who told me you were safe" An exorcist was attracting psychics nice.

"Oh is that suppose to make me feel better?"

"Baby—"

"You know what I'm out"

~ ~ ~

## NOMTHAWELANGA

My father called for a meeting kids don't usually get summoned for serious meetings because our opinions were not needed anyway. But today I was summoned along with all my siblings. There are ten of us three boys and seven girls from different mothers. I'm the firstborn from my mother who is a second wife and the third born from my father.

"Ngiza nezindaba ezinhle(I have good news)" The last time he said this was when he married off my older sister.

"Makhanya" we all said in unison.

"Nomtha" I knew it I knew the moment I turned eighteen that I was next.

"Baba"

"You've grown it is time for you to go to your house."

"Baba" was all I could say I can never defy him unless I wanted to be homeless.

"You are educated your mothers groomed you well you have qualities of a good wife"

'educated' this man doesn't know that grade 12 is grade R in this era.

He always preached that with standard eight you would be qualified to be a Wardner or a teacher forgetting that was a long time ago. And why he didn't become a Wardner or a teacher if it was that easy to be those? I wouldn't dare ask.

"I found someone for you udla izambane likapondo indlala uyoyizwa ngendaba (he is wealthy you won't starve)"  
Rich? In the pocket and the age as well but it would never matter.

"Baba I don't think he will want me. Angiseyona intombi (I'm no longer a virgin)" lies I wish it was true though but I hardly get courted. My father was a feared man. No one wanted to mess with his daughters plus I hardly ever go out. I used to long ago but things changed when my older sister got married. Father scored himself lots of cattle: cows and goats that added to his chickens. He started a farm producing eggs and milk. The business grew rapidly even the big retailers stocked from him. My mother had a garden that turned into a farm too. My father became one of the richest men in our village. So I no longer had to go to the river to fetch water because we had taps.

Being rich in the village was different from being rich in the city. The city was was about money mansions and luxury. While in the village you are the richest of you owned a herd of cattle and land.

"What did you say?" everyone was holding their mouths shut was about to go down.

My jealous sister who was almost my age was laughing her lungs out. I didn't know what she and her mother had against me. They were always on the lookout for my downfall.

She was just happy that she wasn't the only disappointment in the family with her two-year-old child. She was my father's least favorite because she was useless 'damaged goods' no one was going to marry another man's baby mother.

My lies were going to backfire I would have to reveal the identity of my virgin breaker.

"Khuluma! Talk" he was angry. "who is the bastard?"

When I didn't say anything he attacked my mother telling her how much she failed to raise me. Now my lies had put my mother in trouble.

"I will call maMboma to confirm this. Thandazela isimangaliso ukuthi libuye leloliho ngoba eyi ngifunga makhana into engizokwenza yona!"

(pray for the miracle so that the hymen will come back otherwise you will see what I will do to you)

MaMboma was the old lady that was responsible for the virginity testing. I was doomed!

Twenty one

MAHLORI

Days weeks and months have passed. Life was peaceful. We had expected Arazyal to give us a fight but he didn't Mpumie never faced any problems. But Lucas told us not to let our guards down because he could strike anytime when we least expected. She and Lucas are still in a good relationship I'm glad the Mary issue didn't break them apart. Mpumie's divorce was settled although Sbusiso was still the pain in the arse. We bumped to him the other day when we went baby shopping in town he was a mess. I almost empathized with him but I remembered all the things he had done to Mpumi under a spell or not his hands were



the ones that hurt Mpumie. He looked like a hobbo. His hair had grown so much—not that I knew him before but anyone could see that the man was stressed his beard was not taken care of and his clothes were creased.

I was nine months pregnant I could pop at any time. I couldn't wait anymore my tummy was big and heavy I don't even want to mention the back pains and the swelling feet. I could be lying if I said my pregnancy was hard I hardly got morning sicknesses and all that drama other women go through when they are pregnant. I could be naturally lucky or Muzi was suffering the symptoms. I didn't care about him. He once made contact a few months ago claiming he dreamed of my pregnancy. That was a green lie he just wanted to check if the IUI they performed on me against my permission worked or not.

"Bile is messing with your head go and drink stamita you'll be fine" those were the exact words I said before I hung up. If they wanted Arazyal's surrogate they should look elsewhere because Mahlori Mathebula was not an incubator for little demons.

That was the last time I heard from the Sibiyas. I've also taken some time off social media for the sake of my peace. I didn't want anything that was going to mess with my soul my first priority was my fatherless baby and my possible future. I was still trying to figure out what would I do for a living when the steam blows off. Arazyal's disappearance was a drag to my progress Mpumie and Lucas swore not to let go of me until satan went back to hell. I would never be safe if he was still roaming around on earth given that I possessed something that 'belonged to him. Many thanks to Ntombi the demon thought I stole his child.

And then there was my family I missed them so much but I was still not welcome at home. Muzi had stopped maintaining them

and they had no source of income because my father stopped working as soon as I married Muzi he thought he had won himself a jackpot. What kind of man depends on another man for means of living? A father who was dependent on his daughter's pussy for money sies!

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NOMTHAWELANGA

My lies never worked for me I was tempted to beg maMboma to lie about my virginity but I decided against it. She was going to run to father and tell him everything and also add flowers spices soups and salads. Yep! That was how far the villagers would go to impress my father. They'd do anything to earn themselves a dozen of eggs or a chicken. Hunger was really an issue back home.

After the truth was told that I was still pure I expected a beating for lying and trying to defy the great Makhanya but the opposite happened. He was happy that he was going to get eleven live cows and a few more. Just like that I was forgiven and was never demoted from being a beloved daughter you could have seen Nomusa's face - the bitter sister when maMboma put a white dot on my forehead.

All the necessary ceremonies were done from umemulo izibizo izibizo umkhehlo umgcagco etc. All my imagination of a big white wedding crumbled like that along with my future plans.

Did I tell you that I was a second wife? Hmm. The first wife wasn't as welcoming that was expected. She treated me like a maid gave me a few slaps and insults. I didn't know if it was her nature or it was the pregnancy. She did not even want me to talk

to Sibiya. How absurd was that? He was my husband too. Well her jealousy worked to my advantage because it delayed the intimacy between Muzi and me.

But that was months ago things had changed I don't know if I should say for the better or the worst.

The baby cry disturbed me from mopping the floor. The house was too big for four people. I dried my hands and went to the nursery. Why was he crying because he just ate? I checked the diaper... argh! He pooped again and dirted his crib. He probably has a runny stomach.

I changed the nappy and cleaned the mess he made.

"Don't poo again please your turd is smelly" I said as if he would listen. He just gave me a baby giggle. He was a cute little human. I kissed his chubby cheeks and put him back to sleep the moment I let go of him he cried.

"He loves you" the husband was watching us from a distance.

I smiled "I love him too" it was true.

"You make a good mother kaMakhanya"

He always compliments me. And he was right I was a good mother to Khethelo an offspring of a person who hated me with passion.

Oh flip! How could I forget?

Breaking news: Ntombi died during the birth of Khethelo. Muzi said she lost too much blood. She never made it to the hospital her water broke and she pushed her baby on the floor. I never helped anyone with childbirth but Nomusa also didn't make it to the hospital because it was far. Her mother laid her on a reed mat and helped her. We were all there watching I took tips.

So I used my littlest information and cut the umbilical cord and called an ambulance Mr. Sibiya was too traumatized to think of anything.

She then died on a hospital bed they did a blood transfusion but she wouldn't stop bleeding her blood wouldn't clot after everything the doctors tried a few hours later her body gave in.

I would be lying if I said I knew or I understood how Muzi felt I don't know if he was stoic or he was trying to be strong. I didn't even know how to console him. All I did was to take care of Khethelo and gave him his space to grieve in whichever way he saw fit. I guess it worked because he was starting to be jovial again and went back to his businesses.

Ntombi's send-off was bizarre no family members came to support it it was like they both had no families. The only people who were up and down were five ladies who were Ntombi's friends. They weren't doing much except being in charge of the catering and making sure that the send-off was lavish and private —it was private because only certain people were allowed but it was filmed.

So these ladies who were busy arranging the send-off arrangements disappeared after the funeral I was left alone to do all the real chores like washing the blankets and whatnot.

I don't know how I felt about her death death was a scary thing no matter how much you distaste the deceased. My life without her was peaceful no lie but I felt for Khethelo who would grow up thinking I was her mother.

And then there was a strange person who was a few years older than me she never spoke to anyone. She was always tired on the bed because her sleepwalking always led to self-injury. She wouldn't mind not eating for the whole week. When I asked about

her I was told not to worry about her. I listened to my mother's words: a good wife never questions her husband.

Twenty two

NOMTHAWELANGA

After putting Khethelo to sleep Muzi held my hand and led me towards his bedroom when he saw my reluctance he spoke.

"KaMakhanya it's time you move in with me"

I guess the day came sooner than expected. It was better when the bitter wife was still alive all the attention was on her. Now I will have to give my all to this man.

"Are we not grieving?"

"It's been months since Ntombi left us and it's not like we will be doing something wrong. We are married she died knowing that you are my wife" justifying nonsense in the name of marriage.

"No offense Sibiya. I don't think I'm ready"

"Are you serious? I paid a lot of cows for you to marry me!"

"Why?" the question seemed to have caught him off guard "why did you marry me? Is it because my father asked you to?"

I've never seen this man in my life why would he want me as his wife.

I was tempted to lie again and say my father lied about my virginity I was no longer one. But that would land me in trouble.

"I love you" was not the confession I was looking forward to.

"Oh"

"KaMakhanya I know that Ntombi was impulsive but now it's just me and you. I fell in love with you the first time I saw you. You were so young but now you are old enough. I waited for you for years ." bloody rapist.

"I want to study" if this man loved me as he claimed he would let me further my studies.

"No wife of mine is going to the university!"
He banged the door that was behind him.

"But mamkhulu was educated am I wrong?" His anger doesn't move me even my father's anger doesn't anymore but respect is the principle that I value the most so I will let that slide.

"I was told you were groomed well now you are disregarding my word?"

What did I do? Was Ntombi not educated?

This man went to the village to get himself a village naive wife that he will take for granted. I was already a mother to someone's son all the chores were done by me I was about to give him my virginity. Now I was being deprived of my dream? I wasn't going to be his fool being exposed to smoke doesn't mean it was all I thought about.

"My apologies"

I will get what I want he will have to send me to school. Once I get a qualification and a job. I was going to leave his ass. I never signed up to be a housewife. Who said village girls were fools?

"Listen baby. I will take care of you. You won't ever worry about money. What is mine is yours? I will give you everything you dream of. All you have to worry about is the outfit for the next day which country to travel to and which wine to sip." his big hands went to my thighs and squeezed them a little." I will take care of you in every way" I felt his fingers on my panty. "I love you Kamakhya I never loved anyone as I love you. I'm in too deep and I love it" my fist went to my mouth trying to hold back laughter. The lies men told when they are horny. Look at him promising me the world.

I didn't want to be taken care of by him I wanted to take care of myself. He has made it in life and now he is depriving me of the same privilege. Not everything was about money and material.

I was scooped he took me to his bedroom while kissing my forehead and whispering things that were supposed to be sweet I was a second away from rolling my eyes when I was laid on the bed. His lips collided with me I closed my eyes and thought of my celebrity crush and returned the kiss. He moved on to my neck and squeezed my dear. He took my dress off I wonder when he took off his pants and shirt he was on his boxers and his boner was visible.

"I love you baby. I will make you happy" sex won't make me happy. In a matter of a few seconds we were both naked. He took his time admiring my body and singing its praises.

"You are so sexy"
Pervert.

He opened my legs and got in between them I felt his shaft on my clit. He was rubbing it up and down. I wanted to run I was so scared a man twice my age was going to take my most valuable treasure. He thought it was his because of the cows but I cost more than that. When he noticed that I wasn't wet he went down on me. Where was the bloody monitor? Why is Khethelo not crying?

Just I felt his tongue on my slit the breeze changed we had a visitor.

"Sibiya stop!" I said pushing him off me. Ntombi was probably turning on her grave not even one ceremony was done after the funeral. After she was laid to rest Muzi completely forgot about her and now she was angry.

"What baby?" His eyes were red and half-open.

"It's getting cold"

"Don't worry I will make you feel hot baby" he was thinking with his dick.

Something fell and broke it was a cologne.

"Muzikayise Sibiya!" I just broke one of the biggest rules in the Zulu law. Never call your husband by his first name

"KaMakhanya?" he looked angry he was about to chastise me when the mirror cracked only then was he alarmed. I knew coming to this room was a bad idea. Having sex was a bad idea. I rather die a virgin than deal with bitter spirits.

"Arazyal!" Muzi called out who the hell was Arazyal?


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MAHLORI

"Mpumie!"

Lucas was trying to wake her shaking self she was sleeping on the couch cursing in her sleep maybe it was a bad dream. On the other side I was sobbing. When I thought life could be peaceful and this happened. I thought we broke free from Arazyal but it seemed like this house was not protected as we thought. Why an earth would she cry and curse on her sleep?

After what seemed like forever she opened her eyes I ran to her and squeezed her for dear life.

"Get away from me with your big belly!"  
It wasn't the right time for clownery.

"Hey! You scared the shit out of us."

"I'm fine Ntombi is such a nuisance. Even beyond the grave" she said rolling her eyes in irritation.

"I had a vision Muzi has a new wife. They were making out on Ntombi's bed when she came and disturbed them"

"Whoaa! Ntombi... Beyond the grave—"

"She was in spirit that means she is dead"

Okay this thing of isolating ourselves from the world and the internet is outdated. The agent of Satan is gone? I will have to confirm this from Muzi himself before I rejoice for nothing.

"Wow and Muzi remarried? Arazyal wants him married I guess" who gets married more than four times?

Mpumie just shrugged "She will haunt them. The girl is pure. I guess it is one of the seven virgin victims"

"Whatever. It has nothing to do with you and you are not going to interfere" I was never going to let her go there not after it took her years to escape.

"Ntombi is going to be the problem. Not only to the poor kids but us as well"

"Until that day comes we'll mind our own business!" Call me selfish I don't care.

"You don't understand the elements that come with spiritual gifts"  
- Lucas

"Both of you need to understand that is not God. You can't help everyone"

"Fine but this vision persists. I will have to do something about it"

I can bet the witch was thrown from hell She was too much for Satan to handle.

Twenty three

Muzi decided to go to an isolated village where he was sure he would find plenty of virgin girls. One of the victims was Nomthawelanga. Getting to her father was easier because he was a greedy man.

All the plans were ruined when Muzi laid his eyes on Nomtha she was wearing a yellow dress that showed her curves silhouette. She was a bar of dark chocolate dipped in honey her sparkling eyes are what drew him to her. He was feeling things he shouldn't feel for her.

He met her for the first time when it was the lobola negotiations — although he lied to her. Right there he knew that Nonhle wasn't supposed to die. When Ntombi decided it was for the first sacrifice he confessed his feelings for her and Ntombi didn't make it right. Nomthawelanga automatically became a threat to Ntombi and had to be taken care of.

Muzi decided to feed Ntombi a herb that was going to induce her labor and a poison that was going to take up to twenty-four hours to defect the platelets and it worked way before they expected. At least she delivered before her blood stopped clotting. He loved Ntombi; he never anticipated for them to part in such a manner. But his heart was with someone else. He had to choose and he chose Nomtha. She was going to be a better mother to Khethelo than Ntombi could ever be.

He wanted to come clean and tell Nomthawelanga everything but he was scared of losing her it was already hard to gain her heart but he was willing to do everything for her and trust him. One of the reasons why he didn't want her to go to tertiary was the fear of losing to the life that Mahlari lived or to the young boys who were going to take her virginity and break her heart. He wanted her to remain humble and calm as she was.

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He decided to go to inyanga he needed to find the solution to get Ntombi out of his life for good. After the previous night it was clear that she was fighting from the grave. He should have known

that death wasn't going was not going to stop Ntombi from striking.

"As long as the demon is on this earth you won't find peace" a strange man told him as soon as he stepped into the rondavel. Muzi took off his shoes and went to sit on the Reed-mat he assumed was for him to sit on.

"You need a cleansing ritual since you took your wife's life. She is not at peace and she is an angry spirit. Your younger wife is in danger she needs protection" he continued.

"I need your help" he wouldn't forgive himself if anything bad happened to Nomtha.

The healer took something that looked like a seashell.

"Makhanya Gumede kamalandela Mnguni bokhuzwayo khondlo kayeyeyephakathwayo. Vikelani ingane yenu kwi umoya emibi bonke ubungozi obufuna ukuza ilwani nabo. Msingatheni nimulwele zonke izimpi zikamoya nezenyama." ( protect your child from the evil spirit and fight all the dangers that might come her way protect her spirit and flesh)

The healer handed Muzi a seashell after attaching it to the colorful plaited wool.

" baba why are you reverting to her maiden clans while she is a married woman?"

"because she married a man who has no ancestors. The Sibiyas have shunned you because of your ways they can never protect you or your wife because you no longer belong to the Sibiya ancestry. Even when you die your soul will be wandering around

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lost and unrest."

Muzi sighed in melancholy he knew what he was getting himself into when he made a deal with Arazyal but he didn't think it would be severe. Now that he was suffering the consequences of his actions it was no longer fun and games. And the love of his life might also suffer from the things she never knew about. He took the seashell pendant and put it in his pocket. The healer also gives him isiwasho for Nomthawelanga to bathe with.

"When you go back home don't get intimate with her. Tomorrow early in the morning we'll go to the river and cleanse you to remove her shadow from you. Then you will be free from your late wife. As for the creature of darkness you invited in your life I'm afraid I'm not the one to help you" He explained. Muzi felt like the healer could help him with regards to Arazyal but he doesn't want to. He was just grateful that Ntombi will never get to Nomtha and torment them when they're trying to make love.

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MAHLORI

I decided to turn on my phone the first person I called was Muzi. I wanted to hear the good news from the horse's mouth.

"Hlori" he answered after a few rings.

"Where is Ntombi" straight to the point my back was too painful for chit chats. I wanted this baby out of me as soon as yesterday.

"Mahlori I want my child" he mustn't dare!

"Your child? Un'wu veke kwini(Where did you put it) ?" I didn't care whether he understood or not. I wanted to annoy him.

He also used to speak isiZulu when he wanted to get under my skin.

"Mahlori please. I know you do not want me anymore. I can give you the divorce. Just don't deprive me of a relationship with my child" His voice sounded sincere if it was a year ago I would have pitied him and given in. But I knew him too well. It was a trap.

"Is she really dead?"

"Yes"

"Good riddance" I hung another call came through it was Mbali

"Friend" I answered excitedly

"Friend my left foot! I've been calling you for months unable to reach you. Why did you cut me off? Do you think I'd also take your man? Listen here Mahlari. I'm not Nonhle's Jesus don't crucify me for her sins!" She was angry I never heard Mbali shouting at anyone she was always the peacemaker between me and Nonhle. The fact that she was yelling meant I really pissed her off.

" I'm sorry baby I can make it up to you"

"Yes you will. Invite me for lunch and update me on everything! I can't believe I found out on social media that Ntombi is dead" I also didn't know.

"Fine I will organize transport for you and also text you my new address"

I felt bad Mbali was the only person who was with me during my hard times besides Mpumie. I didn't even say thank you to her. I never updated her on anything.

I went through my phone and noticed that I had several missed calls and texts from her. I was such a bad friend. She probably worried sick all these months and I was busy having the time of my life —not really but I was comfortable and she was stressing about me. I had to inform Mpumi and Lucas since I was living in their house. I couldn't just bring someone over without their knowledge.

Twenty four

The following day Muzi bought a goat and went back to the healer. They apologized to his ancestors and asked them to welcome him back to ancestry and protect him and his family. He was willing to do anything to be free from Arazyal even if it meant losing everything and starting afresh

The goat was slaughtered and they used its dung to bathe Muzi after that he got into the water and washed it. Water was supposed to wash away all the dirt he had spiritually and physically. It would also chase away all the spirits he had sacrificed.

"Sibiya your house needs cleaning too. Many lives were taken in that house. You will have to come clean and tell your wife everything and accept whatever punishment that will come. Otherwise your children will suffer for your sins. The other one is already in danger"

For the first time in many years Muzi decided to switch on his emotions and cried he had learned not to use his conscience for

many years because when you are dealing with Arazyal you have to be strong and inhumane.

"Usheshile ukukhala ndoda (you cried too soon man)" the healer said.

"What do you mean my child is in danger?"

In his mind Mahlori's child was the one in danger. Arazyal was going to come for her because she was conceived for Arazyal. She belonged to him way before she landed in her mother's womb. Mahlori also cut him off not that there was anything he could do to protect his child.

"I just want Nomthawelanga to be protected as well as my children. I don't care what happens to me"

He did care what would happen to him he didn't want to die and leave his family to suffer.

"Your ancestors have accepted your apology. Cut ties with your devil and they will fight with you. It will get darker before the light shines. Many spirits have been offered to the demon with each day he is getting powerful. Prepare for the war and choose your allies wisely many lives will be lost. Let's head to your home to destroy the devil's altar"

~~

"Sibiya Khethelo has been crying nonstop I don't —"

Nomthawelanga stop talking when she saw a traditional healer.

"Sawubona" greetings

"yebo ngane yami" he did not even look at her in the eyes "Mfoka Sibiya asingasapholisi maseko akusetshenzwe" (Let's not waste any more time let's get to it)

The healer dipped his Shoba (a traditional whisk made from a tail of a wild beast) to his medicine and sprinkled around the house

commanding bad spirits away. He then went to the prayer room he opened the door and still couldn't enter because of the invisible boundary.

He tried to force his way through and ended up hurting himself and bled from the nose his forehead swelled like he was banging himself in the wall.

Muzi tried to enter hoping to succeed since it was his prayer room but he was sent flying across the hallway.

"The seal is too strong"

MAHLORI

I was permitted to bring Mbali over. As soon as she stepped outside the car she rolled her eyes and looked at my tummy. "You look like a hippo" She charged at me and squeezed me for dear life.

"Bitch I missed you so much. I can't believe you're preggies. Why did you hide from the world anyway?" She was asking too many questions at the same time.

"Let's go inside I want you to meet my friend" I held her hand and led her inside.

"You have nice life problems girl. From one mansion to another" Nice life problems? If I were to choose my life or rewind time I'd choose to stay at Malamulele. My father's comparisons and naggings were better than the horror movie I was living in.

"Mbali this is Lucas and my friend Mpumie. Guys this is Mbali"

Mpumie gave her a hug and Lucas shook her hand. "Nice to meet you"- Lucas. Mpumie just looked at her sternly.

"What is it Mpumie?" I asked. It was unlike her not to be friendly.

"Nothing nice to meet you Mbali"

"So it's you right. You have been keeping my best friend from me" She was dead serious. Mbali can't be blaming people for things that were not their faults. Mpumi didn't keep me away from anyone.

"I won't even waste my time with hoodrats" Mpumie said"
Mpumie said rolling her eyes.

"Are you calling me a hoodrat? Say that again I will show you what a hoodrat is"

"Hoodrat!" Within seconds Mbali was on top of Mpumie. All she saw was red. Trust Lucas to sit down with a glass of whiskey watching a show and I had to separate them which was a huge job for my pregnant self.

"Lucas!" I was able to hold Mbali back but Mpumie saw that as an opportunity to strike back. You know what if they don't stop their nonsense I will join Lucas who had no intention of intervening.

"What the fuck is wrong with you Mbalenhle?" The Mbali I know was not a fighter no matter how much she was mocked. She would just zip her mouth and be the bigger person. She would say 'I'm too much of a lady to entertain nonsense' or say 'If I argue with a fool I'd be making a fool of myself too.'

After what seemed like forever the promise was kept. Mbali did show Mpumie what a hoodrat was. "I will sue your ass bitch" Mpumie said picking herself up. Her eye was swollen and red it

seemed like Mbali wasn't only fighting her flesh she targeted her expensive clothing as well.

"I don't care! Mahlori let's get the fuck out of here." - Mbali.
I think that was a good idea. Mbali and Mpumie can never share the same space.

"Okay Mpumie... I'm sorry for this. Thank you for letting me bring her here but as you can see—"

"You are not going anywhere!" Why was she being dramatic?

"Mpumie it's been a long time since I last saw Mbali. I miss her"

"Mahlori you can't go anywhere. You are going to labor soon."

"So what?" Mbali yelled and they started shouting at each other. It was so frustrating. I wasn't eager in watching another catfight.

"Love for your peace let them go." And the mighty Lucas decided to finally open his mouth.

"She can't go she is in danger. This is the only place she could ever be safe in. I don't trust this girl. Her aura is dark. Look at her eyes..."

"Mpumie please" I was about to beg more when Mbali dragged me out.

"Fine suit yourself!" Mpumie shouted.

She probably thought I was ungrateful. I didn't want to choose sides Mbali had always been my friend. She showed me loyalty that Nonhle failed to show. She was the one who was there when Arazyal was messing with my head. She was a non-believer but she never treated me like I had lost my mind. Mpumie was my

friend too. We've known each other for a short time but she has done a lot for me protected me from the bad spirits and helped me escape from the Sibiya's. Both of them played different roles in her life. I'd appreciate it if they would get along.

"I have a crib in town" Mbali said and directed the driver.

"Wow is it yours? Did you get a new man?" I laughed at the thought. Months ago I was living the same life. I kind of miss it. It was all about sex money and Instagram.

"Girl we have a lot of catching up to do"

I was still admiring her bachelor apartment when I felt a shooting pain in my lower abdomen and my back was in agony. "Mbali! Please call a driver for me I'm in labor"

"Let me call an ambulance—"

"I said to call my driver not an ambulance!" I had to give birth in the presence of Lucas just in case something unholy took place.

"No you are going to the hospital!"

"I'm not" I tried to sound as attractive as possible and not succumb to the pain.

"Yes you are not!" Mbali said looking at me straight in the eyes her voice was low and grating. I started feeling dizzy and nauseated. My eyes were too heavy I tried to keep them open and failed. I passed out in the middle of my silent prayer

Tweet Five

MAHLORI

I opened my eyes and inspected my surroundings. I was in a hospital room the other patients were sleeping my hand quickly went to my stomach... It was flat not as flat as before but I was no longer pregnant. I sat ignoring the shooting pain in my lower abdomen.

"Nurse!" I needed my baby with me. Where is the bloody nurse?

"Nurse!"

"Ey stops with the noise you are not in your grandmother's house. What do you want?"

Said an old nurse chewing gum like a hooker. Is she not too old to be at work?

She was one of those grannies who should be giving young graduates a space to work. She should just retire and make space for poor kids. Judging by her attitude I bet I was in a public hospital.

"Where is my baby?" I asked hoping he would say she was at the nursery for observations.

She took her good ten seconds inflating a bubble before answering.

"You came with no baby. talking about that why on earth would you perform a back door cesarean section?"

What?

"I didn't!"

"You did where is the baby? Did you give it to witch doctors for Muthi? Don't you dare tell me you dumped the baby in the bin" She was shouting for everyone to hear now people are looking at

me with judgmental eyes. "why did you get pregnant if you didn't want a baby? Don't you know of something called a condom?"

"I don't know what you are talking about"

"Liar. Do you want to tell me that you mistakenly fell on top of the dick and the sperm mysteriously went to your uterus? Thandekile! Woza uzongilalelisa" (come and listen to this)

I didn't understand her statement but judging by the additions in the audience she was inviting them over to tell them how much of a bad person I was.

"Is she the one who damaged her womb? Wow. I'm waiting for the day you get married and you will badly want kids and you won't be able to make them. You are officially barren because of your stupidity. Why didn't you come to the hospital and deliver safely then give your baby for adoption? Do you know how many women out there would kill to have babies yet you go to the streets to cut yourself open? Sies!" I was now crying. I didn't know if I was crying because of their insults or Mbali's betrayal or the fact that my womb was damaged. Where the hell was my baby?

Bloody Arazyal!

" talking about beauty with no brains!" Every nurse was having their way with me talking about things they have no idea of.

"Are you saying my baby never made it to the hospital?"

"Don't ask me nonsense you child. Only you know where you dumped your infant"

"No!"

"Hey! Stop with the noise people who care about their babies are resting and we have a lot of work to do we have no time to babysit you" Said the other nurse whose eyes were red it was obvious that she was sleeping before granny sister decided to cause the hullabaloo.

I was tempted to borrow the phone but I didn't know Mpumie's number by the head and I was so ashamed to crawl back to her. The baby she had been protecting all along was gone.

The cooks brought the food it didn't look appetizing but I was hungry. I was given a melted jelly with a horrible tasting sweetened yogurt. My body was in anguish whatever medication I was given had worn off and I was starting to feel real pain. The urinary catheter wasn't making my life easier it was full but these nurses were too busy to empty it and it felt like the urine was going back to my bladder. I tried to stand up and find the way to the bathroom but I couldn't stand and the dips were clinging to me.

The doctor came for rounds when he found me tossing and panting. "Are you okay miss?" he browsed through the file and looked at me "I'm sorry I don't have your name"

"Mahlori Mathebula this thing is painful" I said referring to the urinary catheter. He nodded and went to get a silver container and emptied it. What a relief. I thought my bladder was going to burst. He asked the nurse to dispose of my urine it was the same granny. The attitude had improved I guess she was scared or ashamed that a doctor had to do her job while she was busy chewing gum and talking.

"Miss Mathebula you were found unconscious by the reception. It seemed like an authorized cesarean section was performed on you? Do you have an idea of that?" He was polite you were found unconscious by the reception. It seemed like an authorized cesarean section was performed on you? Do you have an idea of that?" He was polite at least someone was willing to hear the side of my story.

"No the lady thing I remember I was with my friend in her apartment I asked her to call my driver because I was in labor"

"Is that all?"

I nodded.

"Well I have a right to report this case to the police. Your friend might be involved in a child kidnapping or backdoor surgery. Is that okay with you?"

I only nod although I doubt the police could help me find my child.

"I'm sorry but I'm bearing bad news. You have suffered surgical injuries during your delivery. Your uterus was bleeding non-stop and a hysterectomy had to be done immediately before we lost you"

Oh

"Thank you I guess " I said shrugging.

"That means you won't be able to conceive in the future" the nosy nurses already announced the news.

"Do you have friends or family who would support you? A counseling session is so recommended" that was nice of him. I shook my head no.

~ ~ ~

It was time for visitors I didn't expect anyone because no one knew I was hospitalized maybe Mpumie's ancestors had already informed her but I doubt she would risk her safety for the second time to save my stubborn ass.

Mbali made her way in with plastic from spar.

"Mahlori..." I had no energy to fight her.

"Mbali all I'm asking for is my baby"

"I can explain —"

"No please don't. Tell me where my child is"

"Mahlori I kept on doing things I didn't want to. A voice would order me to do something and I would involuntarily do it even if I wanted to." She should tell me where the voice took my baby.

"The first time it happened it told me to jump off the bridge I was so close it told me to stop and said it was just a motivation."

"I don't care Mbali"

"That apartment wasn't mine. I don't know where it belonged to but I was told to take you there. When you passed out I was told to leave you on the couch. When I went back to check up on you I found new tenants. Since then the voice never came again. I don't know what was happening to me but I did everything under compulsion and I don't know where your baby is"

I wanted to believe her I really did but I was angry I don't care if she was compelled or possessed. She was the reason my baby

was lost. I tried to stop my mind from imagining things Arazyal could be doing to my baby girl. Maybe she was already slaughtered and fed to the devil.

"Where are my belongings?" I needed to swallow my shame and grovel to Mpumie and Lucas.

"Here" She said handing me my bag her face was full of tears and mucus. Her salty water didn't move me she could be crying blood I wouldn't care less.

"The voice told you to keep my belongings?" I asked sarcastically. I don't even know why I was being sarcastic and stoic. My normal self would be crying to death right now.

"Mbalenhle I want my child or else hell will break loose. I will break your bones until your voice tells you to bring back my baby"

I meant it! If I didn't get my baby by the end of today. I was going to commit my first murder. And maybe offer her to Muzi in exchange for her. Muzi!

The motherfucker stole my child!

Twenty six

NOMTHAWELANGA

Muzi was busy with traditional healers these days that day the cleansing didn't go well a healer was injured along with Muzi. Different healers and pastors were up and down when I asked Muzi said he was going to explain everything to me once he was ready.

Anyone could see that the house was haunted something wasn't right. I didn't know if it was Ntombi or other things that rich people do to make money.

I was sitting in the lounge feeding Khethelo when some woman came through she looked angry and in pain.

"Who the fuck are you? Muzi!"

I hoped it wasn't one of his mistresses I can't deal with the city slay queens.

"Hello sis" I said trying to sound as polite as possible whereas I was irritated. I was trying to get Khethelo to sleep now this woman was making noise.

"I want Muzi where is he?"

"You can't just come to my house and demand my husband!"

"Whose house? Don't start with me. As far as remember Muzi and I are still married"

"Married?" How many wives does Muzi have?

"Oh you didn't know. Don't be too quick to claim things that don't belong to you." She said laughing her laughter wasn't genuine it was like she was channeling anger.

"Where the hell is Muzi!"

"since he is your husband you must know his bedroom"

"Of course oh and another thing... he isn't your husband. He is Ntombi's husband our husband is Arazyal"

Arazyal? That name was familiar. It wasn't my first time hearing this.

She winked and walked away her catwalk wasn't impressive her body was bent forward and she was flinching with each staircase she climbed.

I followed her to Muzi's bedroom "Muzi why did you kidnap my baby huh? I want her now or I will expose you to the world"

The Muzi I thought could not even move his finger sat up with the lightning speed "Mahlori —" his eyes had unshed tears.

"I want my child Muzi. I'm not playing with you. Otherwise the world will know that you killed all your wives and offered them to the demon. Before you ask if they'd believe me hell yes they will. Who marries five times and three of the wives are dead huh?"

I swear I had peed on myself. I was so close to dropping Khethelo to the floor. This lady didn't look like someone who was bluffing. I was a victim too this man was going to kill me just like the rest.

"Mahlori —Nomtha I can explain."

My lips were trembling I walked towards the bed and gently put Khethelo who was crying his lungs out. I think the noise was too much for him or he sensed the tension.

"Are you giving me my baby or do you want me to look for her myself? Just pray he is still alive otherwise..." Mahlari Marched out of the door and slammed it behind her. Muzi followed her I also did. I was tired of being treated like a nanny who didn't deserve to know any shit.

We followed Mahlari to the room that was supposed to be cleansed.

"Mahlori don't enter please. You're going to get hurt." Muzi pleaded. Mahlari only gave him a cold glance before opening the door and made her way inside.

"How—how did you get in?" Muzi asked his nose creased into a frown.

I followed her but Muzi held me back.

"Ng'yeke!" (get your hands off me)

I yanked myself and went to the entrance when I bumped into something. I looked ahead and there was nothing. I lunged forward again and something pushed me back.

"Nomtha please stop you're going to hurt yourself" he came towards me I stepped back unroll my back collided with the wall. I slowly slid down the wall and sobbed.

I wish I could easily take my bags and go back home. This was too much for me two wives dead another one is demanding a stolen child a demon... No. I had to go back home. Nomusa would throw a party and I'd be the joke of the village and be called 'umabuyemendweni' a woman who is nothing but a failure a woman who couldn't keep a man damaged goods second hand a scrub. And then I would be courted by old men because no young man deserved another man's trash. That was how things worked in a village. You have to persevere with everything an abusive man a cheater in my case...a serial killer and a ritualist.

A loud noise disturbed me from my thoughts. Something was scratching the wall or the floor. I wasn't sure

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in my case...a serial killer and a ritualist.

A loud noise disturbed me from my thoughts. Something was scratching the wall or the floor. I wasn't sure the sound was piercing. I closed my ears with my hands hoping it would ease

the sound. Instead hissing sounds came along it was like there were many snakes in the room. Things were breaking and people were screaming...people? Yes there were voices of people crying for help. The sudden wind blew hard and the thunder rumbled. I couldn't handle it. I screamed as well the sounds were making me crazy and my ears were in pain.

I don't know how long the noise lasted for but it was suddenly quite like nothing had happened. I glanced At Muzi his hands were on his ears too. I know that the Mahlori girl was rude but I felt for her what if something wrong happened to her.

It seemed like Muzi was thinking about the same thing. He made his way in and released a loud scream. I followed him in but stood by the door just in case I needed to run for my life.

There she was laying on the floor motionless. She was covered by blood her eyes were closed but you could see that she was crying blood her ears had thick drops of blood as well as her mouth. Her lower abdomen was bleeding too.

"Muzi" I hated the man who called himself my husband. It was his fault that I had to witness such cruel death.

I looked around the room it was messy. There was a table like a sculptured thing it was cracked the crucifixes were scattered all over. There were other scary sigils and smelly herbs. But I still didn't understand where all these sounds came from.

"Mahlori!" a squeaky voice came from nowhere someone else was in the house.

"Mahlori!" the voice was closer what if it was the police they would arrest me and Muzi for murder. How on Earth would we describe this terrifying scene?

A fair-skinned woman came through she was with some white man.

"Oh Jehova!" she cried out marching to where Mahlori was pushing Muzi away from her.

"She... she destroyed the altar" Muzi said sobbing like a woman.

"Lucas we are late!" The woman said to the man.

"I don't know what happened everyone failed to destroy it even the priest. Even I couldn't pass the boundary" - Muzi I was confused as fuck but they seemed to get what he was talking about.

"She was not supposed to go near the altar no one should destroy this except the owner!" the woman yelled shaking Mahlori
``wake up baby wake up!"

Who was the owner of the altar?

"But Ntombi is dead!" - Muzi

"I don't care! Look at what you have done it's all your fault."

The Lucas guy went to Mahlori and felt her pulse.

"Is she dead?" I asked with my eyes closed I was hoping for a no.

"The pulse is weak. We have to rush her to the hospital" - Lucas. I opened my eyes and silently thanked God.

"I can't feel anything. There is nothing demonic in this room" he continued there was a cross on his neck. Maybe he was a priest.

"Because there's no demon here Lucas. Arazyal ran away like the bloody coward that he is" - Mpumie.

"Is Arazyal gone? For good" There was a sign of relief on Muzi's face.

"No you fool!"

"What is happening love did the demon flee because the altar was destroyed?" Lucas asked with his eyes closed I guess he was still hunting for any demonic sign.

"Lucas the altar is not destroyed. The only person who could get rid of this is Ntombi and her dead ass is not here to do that! Mahlari wasn't supposed to touch it. Whoever tries to destroy the demon's altar will possess it" Mpumie explained earning gasps from all of us.

"The altar is now on Mahlari's temple which means she is the altar."

"Is there any way we can remove it from her?"

"Mahlari destroyed this room which was the host of the altar. Now she is the host. If someone kills her that person will be the host. If Mahlari dies naturally the altar in her will also die. This means the only way to free Mahlari is death and we can't let that happen. "

And that meant she was going to be an altar for the rest of her life because Ntombi was not here to fix her mess.

NOMTHAWELANGA

Mpumie and Lucas took Mahlari with them they said the hospital wasn't going to help her. So they were going to take her somewhere safe. I was glad the poor girl did not die and hoped they were going to find the solution with regards to her situation.

I just put Khethelo to sleep what I liked about him was that if he was well fed he would sleep one way. Khethelo wasn't that child who would scream for no reason.

After he dozed off I went to Muzi. I found him drinking painkillers and the stained bandage from his head injury was in plastic he was wearing a new one. I guess he was cleaning the wound that he got from trying to trespass the boundary with his healers. It was surprising that he wasn't allowed to enter his own prayer room I'm his own house. Served him right. That was what you get for giving your life to the demons.

"I want answers" I was done being a village obedient wife who was being taken for a fool.

"I was trying to protect you" he said his head bowed in shame. Protecting who?

"You killed innocent lives for riches just to protect me? Wow I'm feeling special" I said sarcastically.

"I didn't know things would be like this I just wanted to be with you" - Muzi "I love you Nomthawelanga."

"Uyangisanganela" (You are mad)

I had Nothing to do with his demonic behaviors. He should rot in hell along with his witch wife. I should have known something was not right with that woman. She was always angry and the

dark aura around her was too much. Only if I knew she was Satan. After all Satan is said to have a variety of appearances. Ntombi was one of them.

"I killed Ntombi" Oh just like the rest of his wives.

"I'm not surprised" I was probably the next one to die.

"It's different Ntombi and I would marry innocent girls and offer them to Arazyal to maintain our riches. We did not like what we did but we were too deep. We had to switch off our humanities and did what we had to do for survival. Ntombi knew I didn't love those girls they were nothing but sacrifices. Mahlori was one of the victims but she managed to escape and Arazyal was angry. It seemed like he had an obsession with her because he wanted her alive. Ntombi had mistreated her which angered Arazyal and Ntombi had to suffer Khethelo was going to die so Mahlori had to get pregnant to save Khethelo. By then Mahlori knew everything about us the only way we could get her pregnant was to drug her and inject her with fertility drugs the process was supposed to take three days but she ovulated within twenty-four hours. That worked to our advantage because we drugged her and inserted my seeds directly in her uterus. She fled before we could be sure if she was pregnant "

She was pregnant because she came here demanding her child.

"Arazyal was angered by her departure and demanded another sacrifice... I love you"

"I don't care about that! Talk" I was already freaked out but I wanted to know everything.

"He wanted virgin girls and you were the first one I got. But everything changed when I laid my eyes on you. You took my heart and I couldn't kill you. Ntombi found out that I had feelings for you and plotted your death. I loved her but I had to choose between you two I chose you. " he looked me in the eyes did he expect me to show some affection or gratitude for 'choosing me over Ntombi'?"

"I didn't know that Mahlori would come here and try to destroy something that belonged to Ntombi. She is dead and no one will be able to save Mahlori. What stresses me is that my child is out there I'm scared that Arazyal might have him or her. I might lose everything but I don't want to lose my babies and you" watching an old man like him sobbing was disgusting. He was about to continue when he received the call.

"Mr. Sibiya hello"

His phone was loud enough for me to hear the person on the line.

"Mr. Sibiya your club in town had 9 caught fire. The firefighters tried to save it but it was too late everything was in ashes."

Muzi just hung up without saying anything.

"Arazyal is out of my life everything that came with him will go with him"

Did this mean he was going to be poor? I'm not a bad person but I hoped so. That would mean he would take me home and my father would gladly accept me because he always wanted us to marry financially stable men to take care of us while we take care of their homes and kids. According to him

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everything that came with him will go with him"

Did this mean he was going to be poor? I'm not a bad person but I hoped so. That would mean he would take me home and my father would gladly accept me because he always wanted us to marry financially stable men to take care of us while we take care of their homes and kids. According to him no struggling man deserves his daughters.

I left him to deal with sorrows and went to check on Nonhle. I did not know her story but it hurt to see her like that so I decided to make it my responsibility to take care of her. She was quite a job I had to feed her bathe clean her poop when she shat in herself. It was the duty I didn't sign up for but I was a woman just like her. If I didn't deserve what she was going through it meant she also didn't deserve it.

I opened the door and let out a shrill scream when I saw her body hanging on the roof. The ceiling was broken I think she needed to tie her robe in a roof truss.

There was a piece of paper on the bed I guess it was the suicide note. It read as follow :

MAHLORI

I'm very sorry for everything I did I envied your life but now I regret everything. I would have wanted to apologize in person but Arazyal told me to kill myself because I'm no longer useful to him.

"Muzi!" Muzi came his eyes almost jumped out of his sockets when he saw Nonhle.

"Oh my God" his hands were on his head.

"Don't you dare cry to God? It's all your fault!" Did he think of God when he made a deal with the devil?

"I don't -"

"Shut up Muzi we need to call the police"

I said it was clear that I was the one who was still sane. I can't say the same about Muzi he was a mess. He was full of tears sweat and mucus.

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The police came and took our statements they asked us a lot of unnecessary questions "Did you fight?"

"Did she have foes?"

Enemies for that because they found her hanged and took all the evidence they could find.

Muzi had a hard time explaining who Arazyal was he just said he didn't know.

I also said it was not like I knew who Arazyal was. I wasn't going to make fun of myself and say Arazyal was Muzi's demon.

The police had just left when a woman wearing a suit came in.

"Greetings I'm sorry if I came at the wrong time. My name is Zoleka Mbhele an estate agent"

Muzi and I just looked at her and said nothing.

"As per the agreement I'm here to remind you that you have forty-eight hours to move out so that a new owner can move in"

"As per agreement? What agreement" Muzi asked looking confused "this house is not for sale"

"Your late wife gave me the deed signed by you and her. The house has new owners and it was paid in cash." Zoleka gave Muzi some documents and he went through it with a frown "I didn't sign this. This is void"

The buyer must be rich such a huge house in cash.

"Mr. Sibiya the money was transferred to your joint account. Why did you keep the money for the house you didn't sign off for? Please don't waste my time. You have two days to move out" with that she took her documents and went out.

It was really pouring for Muzi first he lost his child his club burned a girl hanged herself and now the property?

Twenty eight

MPUMIE

Mahlori was still unconscious in a car Lucas wouldn't let her near his house because by that we'd be inviting Arazyal in since we have 'his altar'

" You know the hospital can't help her and I'm not leaving my friend in the streets"

"Mpumie I'm not saying we should not help her but we need to do that elsewhere. We were born to help people but that does not mean we should invite demons into our lives. We are not immune to evil please don't forget about that. We are not God Mahlori did say it too. There is nothing we can do. It would be better if Mahlori was possessed by demons because I would be able to cast it out but she is not." I can't believe he was losing hope just like that. Everything has a loophole we needed to find it and free Mahlori.

"She is the alter we can use that as bait. When Arazyal tries to make his way to Mahlori that's when you will perform an exorcism and make sure that he goes back to hell" I suggest if we cast Arazyal out of the world of the living and condemn him back to hell all his demonic possessions would go with him we just need to do that without hurting Mahlori. He may have temporarily won but Mahlori belonged to God not him.

"Arazyal won't possess Mahlori he doesn't need to because he already has control over her life. There is nothing we can do except wait for her to die."

Die and then what? Her soul would be wandering everywhere and she'd end up being an angry spirit and taunt people. The poor lady didn't deserve to be Arazyal's slave even after death!

"Let's keep her at my old house" was the only place I could think of. Even if Arazyal comes there he would find no one except me Mahlori and Lucas if he was willing to help me. Sbusiso would have to move out until we finish our quest. It was the least he could do to help me after everything he put me through.

"Where? There's no way I'm letting you go back there" - Lucas.

"Why are you jealous?" I asked with a raised eyebrow.

"No It took you years to finally be with me. Now you want to get back to him? Now that he is no longer under Muzi's control you want him back. I can't believe you used me"

I can't believe this man he was twisting everything I was saying he was making all this about me and him. We are trying to save a life for Christ's sake!

"You are being ridiculous Lucas. I won't even entertain you. Are you helping me or not?"

"There is something we can do!"

"There is. Ntombi will have to come back and destroy her altar."

"She-is-dead!"

"She will wake up and fix her mess. She can't create havoc and then die just like that!"

Ntombi died too soon she should have suffered the consequences of her actions. She deserved her fair share of misery death was too merciful for someone like her.

"She needs to be reincarnated" I said.

"Love are you sure you are okay?" he touched my forehead I think he was testing my temperature. "Are you not hurt or sick?"

"Don't patronize me!" He was condescendingly looking at me.

"I'm not I'm just a concerned citizen. Why in the world would you suggest such nonsense?" it was the only choice.

"It is the only way to save Mahlori!"

"Well I cast out demons. I don't wake the dead. That is probably God's duty"

I rolled my eyes.

"I wasn't expecting you to wake the dead. Find me someone who will"

"Count me out of your nonsense. Some of us are still sane."

"Lucas why do you Mahlori? What did she do to you?" This person saved the work for a living. Why was it so hard for him to help my friend?

"I have nothing against this girl. I would do anything to help just not this. If we try to disturb the balance of nature we would be as evil as Ntombi. What if we open the gate and it doesn't close? Imagine if the dead get access to the world of the living?"

He was making sense

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waking up the dead is not for humans to do. Something could go wrong and hell would be on earth. Most of the dead people have unfinished business on earth they'd use the opportunity to come back. I don't even want to imagine the innocent people who would die. Remember there has to be a balance if Ntombi comes back someone will have to die. If more people come back more will die. And Ntombi might get a chance to live again and continue spoiling the world that was already rotten because of her. It might cause more problems than solutions. The question was: was Mahlori's life worth all the trouble? The answer is yes. That was how much I love her but I dismissed the idea. Maybe there was an alternative that wouldn't cause problems for the living —and the dead.

"Okay fine. I admit the idea was bad-"

"Ridiculous!" okay

"Yes ridiculous. But we still need a place where Mahlori can be kept until we think of something. I bet there's some loose end in this altar thing" I hoped he would agree to help me. Lucas knew many people from the pastors prophets seers healers and more. I'm sure he knew someone who would help in destroying the altar without killing Mahlori.

He sighed before agreeing on Sbusiso's house.
"Thank you baby. I love you."

Mahlori started panting and mumbling things we could not understand she looked like she was fighting. I hoped not spiritual fights needed people who were spiritually strong and Mahlari was still an infant in that department. There was no way she could conquer a spirit world. For her sake I prayed it was just a bad dream.

"Mpumie she is bleeding!"

"Let's take her to my old house. Please find someone who will be able to stop the bleeding" she was bleeding from the nose mouth ears and eyes. She was still speaking in tongues that I didn't understand.

We arrived at the house. It looked deserted the windows were dusty. We found him lying on the bed that he used to share with me. The bedroom was awfully smelly. When was the last time he visited the crocodile's crib?

"Sbusiso wake up. Go and bath" Lucas was standing by the door looking angry as hell. I had no bad blood against Sbu. I loved him but I fell out of love. I still care for him regardless of what he put me through. He wasn't himself. I helped him up and helped him with bathing. He had lost many kg. I swear a hairdryer would blow him from Durban to kwaPhikela village.

After checking on Mahlari and cleaning her up. I made food for Sbusiso and cleaned the house by the way Lucas clucked his tongue and left when I offered to bathe Sbu. I wonder why it was so hard for him to trust me I have zero feelings for Sbu. I was to get back to him I would be signing my death warrant because I

was shown my fate with him but that was beside the point. He was sick I think it had something to do with Arazyal or Muzi.

Another thing I needed to do was to find Mahlori's child. With her baby girl maybe she would be able to fight off the evil in her. Where was I going to start looking? Waiting for my guides to show me was going to delay me. Where would I start looking? Mbali.

I scroll through my phone to find the PI's contacts. The first step was to locate Mbali. She was last seen with her.

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(Please excuse the errors)

Twenty-nine

NOMTHAWELANGA

I was going back home I never vowed to stay with him through sickness and health and whatever that had to do with richness or poorness.

The only thing I could help him with was to take Khethelo with me. At Least he will be safe and sheltered.

"The insurance company will not be paying off for the burnt club" you see why I was going home? Problems after problems. What if he becomes broke and decides to sacrifice me too? no.

"I'm going home Sibiya. I'm taking Khethelo with me." it wasn't a question or a request. I was taking the kid whether he liked it or not.

"Nomtha please don't leave me. I need you"

"Maybe you get Khethelo back once your mess is fixed. As for Nomthawelanga Makhanya sorry.

He still needed to bury Nonhle and the police tried to hunt down her family but they never succeeded. The only person who might have had information on Nonhle was Mahlori who was practically dead at that moment. He was going to get a grave and coffin and bury her just like that. She was treated like Zombie and she was going to be buried like a dog!

"I can't believe I'm losing everything. The investors and clients are pulling out on every damn business I own." he was doomed to shame. He was trending on the news. And black Twitter did not do any justice either.

The whole world knew that he lost his house and people assumed that he was losing everything because he killed his wives...their assumptions were not wrong though. Some were saying his snake had died that was why he was losing everything. Other people went on and said his Tokoloshe's were not fed and got angry. Others spoke about baboons and what not. It was almost funny.

I didn't know what happened but there was also a hashtag on Mahlori. Apparently Mahlori was missing and her followers wanted justice for her. Now Muzi was being investigated for Mahlori's disappearance. Many things were happening. I needed to go back home so that my father could give him his cows. He was going to need them anyway.

"What are you going to do don't you have other houses or something?" No truck was going to transport anything because we were living with nothing other than our clothes the new owner even bought the furniture. I was just going to need a van for my

clothes and Khethelo's things. Luckily when the house was sold Khethelo wasn't born which meant everything that belonged to him was safe. At least I wouldn't have to buy him clothes a bed a bathtub and other necessities. Even his food was enough to last him for months.

"No I will sell my cars and the apartment in town and rent a room in the township. I don't know what I'm going to do with my shares" Shame from Hero to Zero. That was what happened if someone cheated on the ladder of success.

"Good luck Muzi. Everything will eventually fall into place" I hoped so he needed to bounce back if not for himself but his child or should I say children? I pray Mahlori's baby is alive. These little creatures were innocent in all of this.

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Muzi had asked me to keep one of his cars but I refused I didn't want anything that had to do with his demon. What if it followed me home?

Everyone is out of their rondavel when they see a van in their homestead Nomusa and her mother are ready to gloat and call me names but I couldn't care less. At least I was still in one piece. Their insults won't break a thing from me. Not even my soul that would have belonged to the devil.

"Seziyabuya njalo?" (trouble in paradise already?)

It could only be Nomusa. I ignore her and ask the driver to help me move my stuff to my mother's house.

"Ubusuzibona Ungcono kunami tshitshi mbumbulu" you thought you were better than us fake virgin. "You are now a scrap just

like me " Nomusa continued. Why on earth would you call yourself a scrap? That girl had self-esteem issues. Even if Muzi broke my virginity and left me I would never call myself a scrap.

"Nomthawelanga are you coming back for good?" my mother asked she looked scared for someone who missed her daughter. "who's baby is this? He is so healthy."

"It's mamkhulu's baby but she is no longer with us

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she looked scared for someone who missed her daughter. "who's baby is this? He is so healthy."

"It's mamkhulu's baby but she is no longer with us so I'm taking care of him"

Mamkhulu is a guest wife. I never bothered to inform my mother about Ntombi's passing. I didn't want to bother them with my marital problems.

"Oh my baby I can't believe you've grown into such a responsible strong woman"

Was that a compliment? No I couldn't be.

"Can you ask for the meeting?"

I asked that was another challenge a village child had you can't just go to your father the head of the house and enquire. You tell your mother and she would be the one to pass the message for you.

My mother did as asked fortunately my father didn't give me the hard time as I anticipated. I guess he was also curious just like everyone. I couldn't imagine the look he would give he would be disappointed and disgusted with me.

"Nomthawelanga Sibiya what are doing here?" The way he emphasized Sibiya was enough to signal that I no longer belonged to the Makhanya's. They married me off I left with a kist and Sibiya poured bile on me which meant the only way out was death hence the kist. Even a piece of divorce paper wasn't going to separate us.

"My husband is in trouble"

"You haven't answered my question"

"We have nowhere to sleep" I hoped it would make sense to him. He can't be expecting his daughter to sleep on the streets.

"You should be with your husband"

"on the streets?" I asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Hee! The city has changed you. You now have the nerve to look at your father in the eyes and question him." my older brother scolded me.

"Thula wena!" Shut up.

My father roared. At least he defended me this time.

"You can't come back Nomtha. You don't belong here" his tone was surprisingly tender.

"I know father. I have our child with me. We'd like to stay for a few months until Sibiya gets on his feet again. He doesn't want us to suffer while he fixes his financial crisis" I didn't know if I was lying or my truth was diluted but it seemed to be working.

"Uthwele?" huh? He was asking if he was a ritualist.

"Angiqondi ubaba ubuza ukuthini" (I don't understand my father's question)

"Your lobola cows died" what? Tjo

"I'm sorry baba" I didn't know what to say.

"Your Lobola cows are all dead and you come back because you and husband have nowhere to live. Ichilo lelo(bad luck)"

"Makhanya a lot happened. My husband and I did not get a chance to go to bed before his late wife was restless. You can still get another lobola for me"

There was no such. My father was not allowed to take my lobola twice. If someone had to take the Lobola if I remarried it was Muzi because I was a Sibiya. I don't know if it was the culture or its habit or custom people of nowadays used since the divorce rate was very high.

I could say the meeting went well my father told me to stay as long as I wanted just like my mother he was proud of me for taking care of my husband's child.

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"You stayed with a man for months and never did the deed?" not so long ago she was throwing insults now she was prying.

"Yes"

"Why does he have a small dick? Is it even erect?"

"Hhayibo Nomusa!" even that was the case I would never disclose such information to her to anyone for that matter.

"Okay. What is your child's name?" why was she happy?

"Khethelo"

"Can you reserve Khethelo's clothes for me please" she begged
Why?

"Are you pregnant again?" my eyes were close to popping out my
sockets.

"Shhh. Why are you shouting?"

Nomusa didn't deserve a viginia it should be sewed because she
was misusing it or should I say overusing it?

Thirty

MAHLORI

"Mahlori! Mahlari!"

Who was calling me? My eyes were open but I couldn't see
anything.

"Mahlari please free me!" It was the voice of a crying person.

"Who are you?" The echoes were deafening.

I saw a shadow coming towards me. It was a woman. "Please let
me go " the place started getting brighter I could see the
person's face but I still couldn't fathom the place. I looked around
to see something like a wall or a fence. All I could see was
darkness.

"Mahlari " a second voice called out. It was the two women I
hired when I let mam Zodwa—Ntombi's helper go. I remembered
how they mysteriously disappeared.

"Why did you do this to us?" one of them asked I was confused. Where was I? Why were they with me? And what did I do?

"We are trapped inside you we are forced to worship you and do your dirty work. Look at you sitting on that big chair while we suffer." They looked pained and angry. But they were cryptic. There was nothing I hated more than a person who couldn't get straight to the point.

The environment started to clear up. I was sitting on a gold chair that looked like a throne. There weren't only three of us but there were many people. Most of them were crying blood while others were busy —I didn't know what they were busy with. They were doing things I didn't understand.

"I want my mom" about ten kids were laying on their bloody cots. They were still infants but they kept on crying for their mom. When I thought I've seen it all then BOOM! The infants that looked no older than three months were talking. Their voices were tiny but piercing.

"Mahlori we are slaves. We've been trapped in this servitude ever since our souls separated from our flesh." one of the women said was crying they joined her and cried. Their tears dropped on the golden floor and turned into blood. The number of tears rather blood was all over the place and it was starting to drown me. The shrill cries pierced through my ears painfully.

" FREE US FREE US FREE US"

"MAHLORI MAHLORI MAHLORI!"

I couldn't breathe I was drowning in blood. Just when my lungs were about to fail me a loud whisper came through.

"They are misbehaving"

I wished I could open my eyes and check the owner of the voice but the fresh blood was blocking me from opening my eyes. I was still having a hard time breathing so I decided to shift my focus to the metallic smell of blood. I didn't know why I felt like this but the smell was soothing it smelled like something I could drink.

"Their misbehavior is destroying us Mahlori" -an unknown voice.
"You were nice to them you gave them home. Is this how they thank you? Put them to order!"

How the hell was I supposed to do that?

As if he read my thoughts he answered "Their blood is our power your power. Feed on them feed on their soul. This is your reign make the best out of it"

I couldn't hold it anymore I couldn't hold the urge to drink the blood the same one I was drowning in. I opened my mouth and let it in. Surprisingly it was sweet I kept my mouth open and drank. I couldn't stop it was too nice for me to stop so I kept going. With each gulp I felt so much power. By the time I opened my eyes all the amount of blood that was all over the place was finished it was all in my stomach. Wait... Did I drink acres of blood? Okay maybe I should have used liters but no. Acres was a good term given that there were thousands of people here the place was so enormous but all that blood was in my tummy and I still craved for more. Maybe I should make them cry more often so I can drink from them.

Did I look at the kids? They were so innocent and fresh.

"Mahlori" a familiar voice called me oh! How nice my dear best friend was there.

"Nonhle how sweet of you to follow everywhere" I said with amusement

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" I said with amusement I liked it that she was here.

"Mahlori please forgive me. Free me"

Tears were gushing down her cheeks. I felt her melancholy and fear. It was a nice feeling to bear with.

"Do you have a gift for me?" I asked with a smirk.
She shook her head no.

"Oh I need a gift. I'm short of babies. Can you find one for me?"
Her heartbeat increased rapidly giving me more power and control over her. Everything she felt I felt it too. It was like her soul was in the palm of my hand. What if it was? I decided to test the waters and looked at my palm. I gently squeezed my hand into a fist. Nonhle started suffocating her struggle to breathe was soothing as well. What was happening to me?

I opened my hand and she was able to breathe again.

"I want a baby. You have only a few days."

I instructed. Ntombi and Muzi wanted my child dead right? It was time for revenge.

An eye for an eye a tooth for a tooth and a baby for a baby. I wanted their baby in my possession.

I can already imagine the scent of his blood the blood of an enemy.

The strange whisper "Do you see the power you have? All their souls are yours.

Their flesh is as good as their blood. Especially the little ones." I still didn't see the owner of the voice. "I have a gift for you"

A boy came and knelt before me he was carrying a tray with lots of organs." My queen here is your feast". He said.

"Hmm liver intestines what is this? Is a lung?" I said in disgust the owner of this lung was a heavy smoker it was blackish and damaged. I looked at the liver... It Didn't look clean enough. I settled for the heart.

I gently sucked on it... Yummy. Why did I waste my time eating food? I missed our Shame. I finally put it all in my mouth and indulged blood was licking on the corners of my mouth. I swallowed and burped while licking and sucking on my fingers.

"Get rid of this rubbish and bring me the brain!"

"Yes my queen." he bowed and left.

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"The brain is my favorite part too" - the voice.

"Who are you?" I asked I was tired of speaking to an invisible person.

"We've met before only for a few seconds though" he said

"Show yourself Arazyal!"

I felt a cold hand on my spine. "I spent centuries looking for the right one. I can't believe I finally found you. I never connected with a human just like I did with you."

Fuck!

"Muzi was a fool but he made a good choice on you. You're the only good thing that he brought to me. You're beautiful flawless."

"Arazyal show yourself!"

A tall figure appeared in front of me. Just like the last time his eyes were red. This time I could see his face. Handsome was an insult to this creature he was ridiculously beautiful. His skin was fair his red eyes were sexy. He smiled—fuck!

I thought demons were ugly. This one was more beautiful than any human being I ever met. His eyes changed to blue green yellow. They stopped changing to grey. Wow!

"Arazyal!" no matter how much amount of air I was taking in I was still struggling to breathe.

"My dear wife" he leaned forward and kissed his skin was freezing cold as well as his lips but they tasted so good.

Things started happening fast I don't know where he got a jar of blood but he poured it on my coochie and started licking it off. I moaned as the wave of pleasure hit me. A few minutes later his shaft made its way to my core. Its thickness was the size of the arm. I expected to feel pain but my walls expanded for him. He hasn't moved but my body was already trembling.

"Arazyal!" I cried out his name as I reached my climate.

"It's time we mate for real baby"

MPUMIE

It had been three days and Mahlori was nowhere near waking up she would bleed a few times and the bleeding would stop. Lucas brought someone but he couldn't help. Mahlori was feeding on blood I flesh and souls which made it hard for her to recover.

I was having dreams of Mahlori feeding on a baby's blood I was shown the gender but I knew that baby had Muzi's blood.

The vision had many loopholes I had to find Mahlori's baby before she killed it.

I suspected that Arazyal used Mahlori's child to get her. The child went missing Mahlori went straight to Muzi's pray room to seek her and destroyed the altar that ended up in her body. This was the plan Mahlori's baby was just baited.

"What are you thinking about love?" - Lucas he had gotten over the little tantrum he was throwing.

"Mahlori she is looking for blood. Muzi's blood"

"There's —"

"Just shut up!" he was going to say there was nothing we could do. "the baby's blood it could be hers or Ntombi's"

"I guess we should get both of the babies"

Yes! But it wouldn't be possible I don't know where both of the babies are. It was all over social media that Muzi was homeless his latest wife took his baby and left. Tracing down the girl was another job itself and it needed time I didn't have. I was losing Mahlori with every passing second. Mbali was nowhere to be found I only had one option. Ntombi had to come back and fix her mess. God will have to forgive me for tampering with the balance of nature.

There is a witch I knew around eMpendle it was hard getting to him because he was using strong muthi that could only be handled by real men. I had to find someone who was going to get it for me since females were not allowed in his premises as they would weaken his powers with their menstrual blood and whatnot.

I heard that sometimes he doesn't charge money or livestock he could charge you a few years of your life depending on the cruciality of what you enquire about. Sometimes it would be two years or more. If he charges two years his life span would be extended by two years and yours will be short by two years. I was willing to give up those two years it wasn't like I had many years to live but that was the story for another day.

"Lucas I need to go somewhere"

"Can I tag along?" he said

"No I'm not going to Mahlori" I said rolling my eyes. He always wanted to tag along just to keep an eye on me and Sbusiso.

"I didn't say that Mpumie"

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I hired two men who were going to help me in digging Ntombi's body. It wasn't hard finding her grave because Lilly streamed her burial from the beginning to the end. It was more of a show than a funeral

Her grave was a mess its tombstone was built like a little house but it was demolished.

"Someone was here" I said with a frown.

"Should we go on ma'am?" one of the men asked.

"Yes please. Do you have an extra shovel?" They looked at each other before simultaneously shaking their heads. I wanted to help them to save time and energy.

"Don't worry madam the soil is soft" argh they think I would pay them less if I helped them?

It took them less than twenty minutes to dig there was an expensive casket.

"There is nobody" my eyes popped out I almost tripped and fell inside the coffin. Where the fuck was the corpse?

"No wonder the soil was soft. Someone came before us"

Who could be?

This ruined everything! It was my last chance of saving Mahlori. Someone robbed me of a chance to save the mother of my kids.

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Ntombi's body was laid in a glass box the cold temperature and some herbs were used to prevent the corpse from rotting.

Mbali was also unconscious in another box that looked like an incubator.

"You've been quite useful Mbali" their keeper or capturer said

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" their keeper or capturer said brushing Mbali's cheek.

"I don't know if I should dispose of you or wait for a little. I think I should keep you here. Who knows? I might need you in the future. I'm sorry that your innocent self got caught up in this situation. But Mpumie needed to be taught a lesson" Being a

psychic worked to her advantage. She was able to be a step ahead of Mpumie.

She knew that she would act impulsively when the Mahlori girl was involved so she used Mbali to get Mahlori outside Lucas's house and kidnapped her baby.

When Mpumie thought about waking Ntombi from the dead she decided to get to her first. It was only a matter of time before she finally resurrected her. She was the perfect person to deal with Mpumie.

With her out of the picture she was going to get her happily ever after with Lucas.

Seven years ago she met Lucas. They were on a quest. She was shown a family that was having troubles with a demon no one was going to help the family except Lucas. By then she didn't know Lucas he only knew him in the dream but her gift made it easy for her to hunt him down and find him. They went on a quest and won. When she saw him she saw a person whom she was going to spend the rest of her life with her soul mate the father and her children. Her whole future. Lucas also showed interest in her so they ended up dating. Their relationship was personal they planned the exorcism together she made Lucas's job easier and vice versa. Everything changed when Lucas saw Mpumi they met almost the same way.

Lucas fell in love with Mpumie. He did date Mary but it was because he liked her and he knew she was a good person but he did not see any future with her. He dated her thinking maybe—just maybe he would learn to love her. And he did. But with Mpumie it was love at first sight. He knew Mpumie was a missing piece of his puzzle.

Lucas being an honest man broke things off with Mary and she didn't make it right. She felt betrayed by the man he spent years

with. The love of her life left her for a married young woman who has the same gift as her!

She made all the efforts to make Lucas realize that only her was perfect for him but his heart was with Mpumie.

Mary developed so much hatred not only towards Mpumie but towards the existence of the world towards herself and God. She lived all her life-saving people making them happy but God failed to protect and save her from a simple thing such as heartbreak!

What was good about fortune telling is that you were not only shown the bad you were also shown the good which gave you the leverage to prevent it from happening. Being clairvoyant did not only work against evil but it could also work for hand in hand with it and against the good. That was what Mary was doing. In her mind he wasn't a bad person she was fighting for something that she loved something that belonged to her. She also found out that Mpumie was pregnant stressed about Mahlori and her baby she wanted to carry the whole world on her shoulders. It was enough of a distraction for her. Being a spiritual person requires peace and focus. With Mpumie's world upside down she was highly unlucky to get a clear vision or to be able to interpret them. Jackpot!

When she discovered that Lucas was worried about Mpumi (when he was kept in a basement by her ex-husband). She decided to play the hero and went to his house to be his shoulder to cry on and assured him that she was safe.

It was just a strategy to get closer to him deep down she was hoping Mpumie would die but it didn't happen she moved in and found out that Mary once visited and got angry. Lucas has to cut ties again with her she went too far. She took her man and took her life. She deserved to die. Even if it meant innocent people like Mahlori her baby and Mbali were to suffer too. At least Ntombi

was evil and her mission was going to benefit both of them. Ntombi wanted Mahlori and she wanted Mpumi. It was a win-win situation.

Not only was she psychic but she also knew spells. She used this to help people with regards to her visions but now she was going to use them to fight against his enemy.

After she spoke with Mbali —she was basically talking alone but that was not the point.

She went through her spell books there were hundreds of them but she had so much time on her side to go through them study them and find the resurrection one.

She needed to find the one that was going to protect her from the wrath of nature and also find the one to open the gate that separated the dead from the living. Then she was going to get Ntombi and reunite her soul and flesh. Then close the gate. It was quite a process but it was going to be worth it.

## Thirty-two

### MAKHANYA HOMESTEAD

It was exactly midnight when Khethelo started bleeding from every hole in his body. Nomthawelanga screamed at her mother who also did not know what to do. It was chaotic everyone was now awake.

"We have to take him to hospital" a wailing Nomthawelanga said a part of her was regretting ever taking Khethelo in. What was she going to say to Muzi should his son die under her care?

"Hospital is far he might not make it. Let me call Gwala"  
Makhanya said Gwala was the village's traditional healer.

Everyone runs to him when someone is sick and he has proven to be useful.

Nomusa and her mother were standing by their rondavel with their arms folded. The mother was angry for being woken up especially because it was her turn to be with Makhanya while Nomusa was just unbothered.

"Have you thought about the request I made-Khethelo's belongings?"

Not only she was stupid insensitive as well. Nomtha just eyed her and said nothing.

After what seemed like forever Gwala made his way into the yard.

"an evil spirit is out to get the baby" that's what he said the moment he set his foot in the yard. He was still in his sleepwear. He wasn't those typical healers who wore imiyeko carrying the wild beast's tail around he had a few beaded bracelets and goatskin bangles.

"Gwala this house is protected!" -Makhanya

"The little boy is not a Makhanya you invited the spirits into this home the moment you let the big stay here. He was conceived and born out of evil." Gwala explained how to take Khethelo from Nomthawelanga. He sprinkled water on him from the sprite container he was carrying.

"Uyaybona imikhuba yakho Nomthawelanga(do you see your deeds) ?" Nomusa's mother said to work for her hands on hips.

"Mbuyisele kuyise"

(You need to take this boy back to his father)

The same father who just disappeared in the air. Nomthawelanga had been trying to call him but his phone didn't go through. Maybe he lost it too since he was losing everything that belonged to Arazyal. Did the baby also belong to the demon? Was he here to get him?

Nomtha's lips started trembling and she began to wail again. She had grown fond of Khethelo. He was her baby she was the only mother Khethelo knew. She couldn't even imagine the thought of losing him...

"Don't cry my baby. Gwala is going to keep him safe"

"He is safe for now but the spirit might come back it won't rest until it gets his soul. We have to do a cleansing ritual for him and protect him from evil. Nomthawelanga you will be the one to be in charge because you are a Sibiya. You will apologize to the Sibiya ancestors for the sins of your husband. They are the only ones who can protect the child not the Makhanya's. The evil could easily get to him because he had been shunned by the ancestors."

At Least there was hope it was obvious that Khethelo was now her child since Muzi disappeared into thin air. Her dream of going to university had shattered

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no one was going to nanny Khethelo and she did not trust anyone around him.

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### **MATHEBULA HOMESTEAD**

A few days ago the Mathebula house was flooded by sudden rain. It turned out the bricklayer didn't do a quality job in renovations.

Every single block and brick was broken into tiny pieces. It didn't help that Mathebula had chowed all the money Muzi had given him. Now they were living in a shack while Hanyani was busy trying to save up to build At least two rooms.

Not only were they house-less but their shack was haunted. Mathebula had been seeing Mahlori eating his flesh in her dreams. Everyone thought it was just nightmares and hallucinations but it got worse with each day.

"Why on earth would you do this to yourself dad?" Said Ahlulani who temporarily left her husband to take care of her father since Hanyani was working. Her mother never bothered to take care of her husband because she blamed him for everything that happened to Mahlori. News had traveled to Limpopo that Muzi became broke and Mahlori was missing.

She accused Mathebula of selling off her daughter to the witch and he was suffering the consequences of his actions.

Despite Mahlori being a rebel their family was perfect. They sometimes were financially struggling but they were good and Hanyani finding a job was going to change their lives for the better. But ever since Mahlori got married there was always chaos. Mahlori had put herself in that situation But her father should have accepted her back when she wanted out of the malicious marriage but Mathebula only cared for money!

Ahlulani was inspecting her father's bite wound.

"Mahlori was trying to eat my flesh" Mathebula defended "Andziti lumangi" (I didn't bite myself)

Hanyani rolled her eyes.

"Manana anga antswi"(Mom he's getting worse. We have to do something)

"Endla xan'wa nchumu xo fana na yini n'wanandiwena xan'wa nchumu lexi ngata endliwa iku kuma n'wananga a hanya" (Do something about what Child? The only

the thing that needs to be done is to find my daughter alive!)

No mother would peacefully sleep at night not knowing if her daughter is safe or not. At least the greedy man he married was alive just mentally ill. Served him right!

"Andzinge hlekisani ni wanuna loyi angati vavisa hivomu n'wu yiseni la vapengaka kona" (I won't entertain an old man who decides to injure himself. Take him to asylum)

"Ndzi kombela ndzivalelo nkatanga. Ndzi n'wu dyoherile u lava ku rihisela uri ngati ya mina yitan'wu endla ava ni matimba swinene hikuva ndzi tata wa yena"

(I'm sorry my wife. I wronged her and she wants revenge. She says my blood would make her powerful since I'm her father.)

"He is really crazy." Mahlari's mother just clucked her tongue and went to get water for herself. Living in a shack was a struggle. Corrugated iron got really hot when it was hot and freezing when it was cold.

"Ndzi kombela ndzivalelo n'wananga ndza kombela ungandzi dlayi" (I'm sorry my child please forgive me! Don't kill me!) Mathebula screamed and ran out of the door. Mind you he was wearing only boxer pants. The nosy neighbors were now looking at him. Some were laughing and filming. Mathebula was still apologizing to Mahlari and begging her not to stab him with his golden sword.

Ahlulani went to get him when he attempted to take off his underwear because it was 'burning'.

After winning in getting him back to bed she googled the nearest mental institutions She got the number and called



Her heart tore to pieces when the buff men held her father like a sack of potatoes. He was screaming and kicking begging them not to take him. He didn't want to leave his wife his family. He assured them he wasn't crazy and promised that he won't ever dream again. It was the first time Ahlulani saw his father's tears. Part of her regretted her decision but it was for the best. Her husband was waiting for her at home and she wasn't professionally trained to take care of mentally disturbed people. At the hospital he was going to get help and later come back home to fix things with his family. Hopefully by then Mahlari would have been found.

Thirty-three

There were four beds in the ward but it seemed like he was the only patient since the beds were empty. The nurses were minding their business when Mathebula saw Mahlari wearing the nurse's uniform. She slowly made her way to him her heels clucking against the floor leaving the spooky echoes that freaked her father out. He wanted to scream for help but decided against it before they fed him other pills or injected him when he became resistant.

At Least she was smiling unlike the last time he saw her.

"Dad" her beautiful smile brought light to his dark day. Something about her eyes reflected hope and peace.

"Mahlari my child" he said as tears streamed down his face he took his chances and opened his arms to embrace her. Their temples collided he ran his hand through Mahlari's soft hair.

"You forgave me?"

"Yes dad" Mathebula couldn't believe his ears and couldn't help but smile. The last time he was that cozy with her daughter was

when she left for Durban. He was against the idea but he was still proud. She was going to be the first person in the family to go tertiary since Ahlulani chose to get married and Hanyani was still in high school. He prayed that Durban wouldn't change her as it did to most people from the neighborhood. Unfortunately his worst fear came true. Mahlari changed for the worse.

He became happy when he found a man. Although he was old he took care of her family and he was going to ground Mahlari from sleeping around.

"They think I'm crazy " he said ashamed. Not even in his wildest dreams did he imagine breaking down before his rebellious daughter.

"They are the ones who are crazy. I will get you out of here" She said extending her hand for him to hold. "Let's go"

He held on to her daughter and they started dodging the nurses who were sleeping. Mahlari managed to steal the keys. "Where are we going?" whispered Mathebula who couldn't wait to see his wife and show her that Mahlari was alive and working as a nurse. "Somewhere peaceful. No one will ever accuse you of being crazy"

"What about my wife?"

"She will find us there."

They just exited the gate when one of the security guards shouted "Where are you going? Come back here!" he said already calling for backup through the intercom.

"Let's run before they catch up" Mahlari whispered as they both increased their pace.

"No!" the security exclaimed as the speeding taxi blew its horn to warn Mathebula to get off the road. It became chaotic as people screamed in terror the screeching sound of a tire against the tar became louder and louder. A second later Mathebula's blood was all over the place. His braincase was also in tiny pieces almost unrecognizable.

The paramedics weren't essential to declare him dead even a zero-year-old would know that there was no sign of life in him—he was faceless too.

Everyone in the institution was aware of the tragedy. It was the first time something like that had occurred. It was common for patients to try to escape some end up succeeding but Mathebula's case was distinct and peculiar. All the staff mysteriously fell asleep and Mathebula was seen in the CCTV footage talking to himself getting lockers and going out of the gate and intentionally walking in front of the speeding vehicle. It was suicide.

Ahlulani was called and informed about his father's suicide. She called her mother still in shock.

"Hanyani bring back my husband!" Those were her first words when she heard that her husband had passed on. "You took my husband away from me" she was angry not sure if it was herself or Ahlulani...

"Manana-"

"Don't manana me you ungrateful child. Your father worked hard for you

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he raised you to be the old woman that you are. What did you do? You took him away from his own house and gave him to the vultures. You wanted him dead right?"

"Mother you are the one who suggested I take him to the mental institution"

"Did you see me calling those muscled boys to take my husband? Did you see me Signing those damn forms? Please do this for me girl. Don't ever set your foot in my house without my husband. I want him alive." with that she hung up.

It was probably shock and grief that made her mother speak to her in that manner so Ahlulani thought.

As unbelievable as it was burial preparations were to commence. The news had traveled around the neighborhood. Everyone was running up and down like headless chickens. Neighbors were coming to pass their condolences.

"What do you want?" Mahlori's mother asked the moment her eyes landed on Ahlulani who Just came back from the hospital to get Mathebula's belongings.

"This is my home too"

"Is it?" Her mother asked sarcastically

"Eya" yes

"Is my husband alive?"

"Hawa mom..." (no)

"Then you're not welcome in my house. Famba(go) don't ever come back here. You killed my husband now go back to yours. You are no longer my child"

"Ndzo kombela kurivaleliwa(please forgive me) " Ahlulani was on her knees. Tears were gushing uncontrollably it was sinking in that everyone was blaming her. The neighbors were gasping and making nasty comments on how ungrateful a child she was.

Ahlulani tried to protest but Hanyani told her to go.

"Don't do this to me little sis"

"I'm sorry. For peace's sake please don't come to the funeral. Leave swilo swa yena and lay low until mother calms down"

Hanyani said taking Mathebula's belongings and pushing her older sister towards the door she was still on her knees.

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All the way to her house she was thinking about the condescending looks she got from the neighbors. She was an abomination in the family. Everyone even her sister believed she was the one who confiscated their father from them. The look of hatred her mother gave her was going to haunt her for the rest of her life her father's cries when he begged those bulk men to let go of him when he tried to convince everyone that he wasn't crazy.

She found no one at her house; her husband was probably still at work.

She decided to take a very selfish decision a decision that would probably make everyone hate her even more but she was going to choose peace mercy quietness emptiness and dullness over mystery and torture.

She took her husband's tie and a small ladder. It was good her house had no ceiling. She tied the knot leaving enough space for her head to fit.

She regretted her decision when the fabric obstructs her breathing leaving her to gasp for air. It was too late she had already kicked the ladder and no one was near to rescue her. It didn't take many seconds for her spinal cord to give in after peeing and pooping.

When his husband came back there was no sign of life on Ahlulani. Her eyes were open and rolled up and her tongue was stuck out hard as a rock.

The note she left was almost quiet. It didn't give any clue of what it was that was so hard for her that she decided to escape life.

I DO NOT DESERVE A PROPER SEND-OFF.

BURN MY BODY TO ASHES IT'S NOT LIKE HUMANS WERE MEANT TO REST IN BOXES.

DON'T CRY OR GRIEVE FOR ME

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FORGET ABOUT ME AND MOVE ON.

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MPUMIE.

I just discovered that I'm three months pregnant and Lucas had been overprotective. He forced me to ignore most of my vision to protect our unborn baby from evil spirits. I also have been having a lot of illusions lately. Someone was trying to get to me and it wasn't Arazyal. Whoever was ought to get me did a good job in hiding.

Things were getting out of hand Mahlori's body was still in my old house but her soul was out there seeking blood. Not just anyone's but her family's and Lucas said it was none of my business.

"Love" I called out. The conversation I was about to start wasn't going to end well but I was going to take my chances.

"I think Mahlori is possessed" I said

"Mahlori again. Mahlori this Mahlori that. I'm even scared to open the fridge because I'd find Mahlori inside" his nose was red because of anger but I couldn't stop myself from laughing. The way he was pronouncing Mahlori was to die for. Xitsonga was going to be the death of him.

"Am I a joke to you Nompumelelo?" My full name? Trouble.

"I don't want you near Mahlori she is dangerous. I know she is your friend and you care for her but she isn't herself."

"We failed to help her the last time because she wasn't possessed but now she is controlled by Arazyal which means an exorcism can take place?" Arazyal had to be defeated before he killed Mahlori. If he got too powerful inside Mahlori her body wouldn't

be strong enough to withstand the power of the demon. It would die.

"We cannot chase the devil out of his territory. Even if I succeed in casting Arazyal from Mahlori he'll always be able to come back because she is his altar."

"We won't let him back condemn him back to hell" I silently said 'duu' in the end. He was an exorcist he should know better.

"He will go with his belongings Mahlori —his altar"

"Fuck!"

"Okay okay. It's clear I won't ever hear the end of this. We'll resurrect Ntombi and find the way to make her destroy the altar. Hopefully we'll be able to destroy it without killing Mahlori. Arazyal is the one who is in charge now. He had always been but at least Ntombi was the middle woman. I do not know "

" I have to tell you something please don't get angry"

"What now?"

"I went to Ntombi's grave and her body wasn't there"

"You did what —"

He was about to shout when a doorbell disturbed him.

Whuuuh. Whoever was at the door was a lifesaver.

I poured myself some juice as he went to attend the door. I became dizzy and dropped the glass. Something was wrong. I was dripping sweat as if someone had poured water on me. Did my sweat glands grow bigger?

"Baby who was that?" I asked when minutes were passing without him coming back.

"Lucas!"

I got the surprise of my life when I saw Mahlori.

"Lucas?" I looked him in the eyes. I wanted him to assure me that it was really her. Not the illusion that Mathebula saw and led him to his death.

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"She is not herself though" I said.

"Yeah

## **Sponsored**

I will take her to her previous room. I have a trap there remember when we planned to summon Arazyal?"

Thank God. The trap will buy us some time to figure out how to deal with her.

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MAHLORI

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discussed the trap they set for me. They were at a safe distance but thanks to my demonic ability of sharp hearing. I heard them as if they were talking next to my ears. They should have kept it more down because they were too loud for my liking.

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I stepped on the carpet and felt my body heating up. I guess I wasn't as strong as I thought but that was despite the point. What was important was that it wasn't going to trap me. It was uncomfortable but I was going to deal with it until I got my child. Whoever had her was cloaked.

I needed so much blood and souls to up my rank in the underworld but my own blood was going to make things faster for me which meant I had to get to my family.

That fool by the name of Nonhle failed to do a simple task for me to get Khethelo. I want to use him to taunt his mother's spirit. I never got a chance to avenge myself the witch died too soon. But if she thought dying was an escape from my wrath she was wrong. I was coming for her and Khethelo was a good tool.

As for my father I got him good as well as Ahlulani. The only person who was left was my mother and I was coming for her.

Hanyani was more useful alive than dead. I was going to spare her for now.

"Hlori!" Mpumie said with a fake smile. I had to hide my grin and fake pain. Was I supposed to feel pain right?

I pretended to attempt to get out of the trap and failed. I screamed.

"Fuck Mpumie!"

"Mahlori please come back" she begged.

"I'm here what did you do to me?" I groaned pretending to be in anguish. I hope I wasn't over acting.

"You need to fight Arazyal. I promise I will get you help." She gave me a glass of water. I was thirsty for blood not water but I had to drink just for the sake of it...

"Ahh!" It was holy water! My tongue was on fire. Now I was in real pain. Mpumie pinned me down and forced a cross on my neck. I was losing energy. Lucas started speaking the language I didn't understand. They were performing an exorcism

"RUN!" Arazyal whispered that was my queue. I exited my body and ran off leaving it collapsed and unconscious on the floor.

I had to go back later I knew Mpumie was going to lead me to my daughter. She'd help get the highest rank in the underworld. Even the demons themselves were going to bow for me. With Arazyal by my side I had all the power especially when I killed Father and Ahlulani.

In the meantime I had to go to the Makhanya's and get Khethelo since Nonhle failed. She was useless even beyond the grave.



It didn't take much time to find the house. Muzi and I were still bonded by blood as well as Ntombi so Khethelo's blood was the one that channeled me to him.

Someone pushed me when I tried to enter the premises.

"You are not allowed in this home. Play far!" an old man said there were thousands of people behind him. They were ready for the war. I was powerful but not enough to fight all of them alone.

"Arazyal!"

Silence I was on my own. If Arazyal could run away from this gang. I was nothing. They had to be strong.

"I'm not here for your descendants. The person I want is not a Makhanya" I said lifting my hands over my head to show that I wasn't fighting.

"The person you want is inside our home and you are not allowed." the man said

"And who said you will get your dirty hands on Sibiya?" another man appeared behind me.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Muzikayise's great grandfather. I won't let you near my bloodline. Don't start a war with my ancestry because hell will break loose. Not even your demon husband will save you" He threatened before I was sent flying painfully and landed on my body at Lucas' house.

I could not believe Muzi's ancestors would ally with the Makhanya's to protect Muzi's offspring!  
Bloody dead people!

## Thirty-four

MPUMIE.

I just discovered that I'm three months pregnant and Lucas had been overprotective. He forced me to ignore most of my vision to protect our unborn baby from evil spirits. I also have been having a lot of illusions lately. Someone was trying to get to me and it wasn't Arazyal. Whoever was ought to get me did a good job in hiding.

Things were getting out of hand Mahlari's body was still in my old house but her soul was out there seeking blood. Not just anyone's but her family's and Lucas said it was none of my business.

"Love" I called out. The conversation I was about to start wasn't going to end well but I was going to take my chances.

"I think Mahlari is possessed" I said

"Mahlari again. Mahlari this Mahlari that. I'm even scared to open the fridge because I'd find Mahlari inside" his nose was red because of anger but I couldn't stop myself from laughing. The way he was pronouncing Mahlari was to die for. Xitsonga was going to be the death of him.

"Am I a joke to you Nompumelelo?" My full name? Trouble.

"I don't want you near Mahlari she is dangerous. I know she is your friend and you care for her but she isn't herself."

"We failed to help her the last time because she wasn't possessed but now she is controlled by Arazyal which means an exorcism can take place?" Arazyal had to be defeated before he killed Mahlori. If he got too powerful inside Mahlori her body wouldn't be strong enough to withstand the power of the demon. It would die.

"We cannot chase the devil out of his territory. Even if I succeed in casting Arazyal from Mahlori he'll always be able to come back because she is his altar."

"We won't let him back condemn him back to hell" I silently said 'duu' in the end. He was an exorcist he should know better.

"He will go with his belongings Mahlori —his altar"

"Fuck!"

"Okay okay. It's clear I won't ever hear the end of this. We'll resurrect Ntombi and find the way to make her destroy the altar. Hopefully we'll be able to destroy it without killing Mahlori. Arazyal is the one who is in charge now. He had always been but at least Ntombi was the middle woman. I do not know "

" I have to tell you something please don't get angry"

"What now?"

"I went to Ntombi's grave and her body wasn't there"

"You did what —"

He was about to shout when a doorbell disturbed him. Whuuuh. Whoever was at the door was a lifesaver.

I poured myself some juice as he went to attend the door. I became dizzy and dropped the glass. Something was wrong. I was dripping sweat as if someone had poured water on me. Did my sweat glands grow bigger?

"Baby who was that?" I asked when minutes were passing without him coming back.

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**Sponsored**

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**Download Here: <https://askcaty.com/>**

Thirty-five

#TDW (please excuse the errors.)

MAHLORI

When I was attacked by those ancestors I had to bolt back to my body. That push was too strong for me and I felt weak. I couldn't believe Arazyal ghosted me when I needed him the most so much for my husband.

With the tail between my spirit leg I hopped back to my flesh. I thought I was off the hook when I realized that my body was tied with chains. Which meant I wasn't going anywhere unless I'm in the spirit. The same spirit that is currently shattered. I couldn't go back to the underworld in this manner. I needed Ntombi's child! The offspring of Muzi and the witch herself.

"You are back?" Lucas asked I used to like him but not anymore. He thought he was God's right-hand man.

"Yeah let me go" my body was on fire not only was I trapped this flour-colored man was sprinkling holy water on me.

Mpumie was standing by the door with her arms folded. Lucas had a black book in her hands exorcism?



"THIS BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD HIS CREATION. WHAT WAS bound BY HIM SHALL BE SEPARATED BY HIM—" he recited sprinkling water on me. My body had turned blackish because I was being burned.

"RUN!" Arazyal commanded swiftly. I started jerking my body up and down

In an attempt to break free from the robes.

"COME HOME TO ME. I'M YOUR HUSBAND. THOSE ARE NOTHING BUT ROBES YOU ARE STRONGER. YOU HAVE THE SPIRIT AND THE AURA OF THE DARK WORLD. THE WIFE OF ARAZYAL. THE MOTHER D'ARCY-THE DARK ONE." - Arazyal.

Darcy - the dark one? Was that the name of my baby? Okay. I was going to deal with that later.

I used all the forces I had I was still weak but I wasn't going to be defeated by a mere christian human. I was stronger than that. The dark world granted me the power of pestilence and destruction. I had to destroy the robes and escape. As long as they had my body they'd have some control over me. And I did not want that. No one controlled me not even Arazyal. I just mated with him to enjoy the perks of being his wife. Soon enough I will be stronger than him then I will destroy him and build the legacy and the reign of my child. Darcy? That was a good name. Suitable for the Queen of darkness.

I was able to break the robes. All I had to do was to endure the burning sensation and get away from the pentagram it was uncomfortable as 'heaven'. Hell can never be uncomfortable.

Just as I was about to stand up Lucas pinned me down.

"WHAT WAS BOUND BY THE LORD CAN ONLY BE SEPARATED BY HIM. I CONDEMN THIS SPIRIT TO REMAIN IN THIS FLASH UNTIL

GOD SAYS OTHERWISE. IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT —" He recited.

"No!" there was no way I was going to be trapped in this body. With the speed of light I attacked Lucas and threw her across the wall Mpumie took a step towards me.

"If you want that fetus to live don't come near me" I warned gesturing for her to remain in her position.

I made my way out of their mansion. I had to drag my body wherever I was going since that fool decided to play God. I guess I had to do whatever I wanted in my flesh.

The street was empty I stood there and waited for my meal to serve itself to me.

I smelled blood. "Someone is around!" I said sniffing around. Someone had to be around before I invaded someone's house. The sound of the tier against the tar confirmed my suspicion. A silver-gray Chevrolet was speeding people no longer respected road rules. What happened to 40km/hr? When the car was a meter away from passing me. I swiftly stood in front of it it was too late for the girl to hit the brake. The vehicle collided with me I let out a shrill scream as I fell. I closed my eyes and waited for her to aid me. She shouldn't dare try the hit and run thingy with me it wouldn't end well.

"Oh my God!" the girl cried out with a shaky voice. She was near...

Good!

"Are you okay?" She touched my neck to check my pulse.

I'm alive baby I'm almost immortal.

I opened my eyes and set up.

"I'm sorry I did not see you. Are you hurt?"

"No I'm hungry" I said grimacing and stood up.  
"Break the mirror!" I ordered my look was now deadly.  
"I said to break the mirror or I'm calling the police on you."  
After seeing that I wasn't joking with her she used her hand to  
break the mirror. "Hey sis I meant the window"

"No my sister. I can't do that. Please let's go to the hospital"  
I ignored her and used my fist to break the car window and used  
the broken to slit her throat open I licked the bloody glass.

"Your soul is now mine bitch!"

~ ~ ~

## MPUMIE

Dealing with Mahlori was dealing with the devil himself. Her  
speed and strength were supernatural. After she left I raced to  
Lucas who was having a hard time breathing.

"Baby are you alright?" I asked as I helped him sit up. He was  
bleeding through the nose.

"I'm fine honey." I wish to know who came up with indoda  
ayikhali idiom. Not only Zulu men believe in this but Lucas also  
does too. He was in anguish bleeding but he insisted on being  
fine.

"Let me help you" I pleaded as if I was the one who was in  
agony.

"Mpumie there are so many people who need your help. Look..."  
his eyes went to the open door.

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"Help me! Help me!"

The voice was familiar but I couldn't see her. "Mpumie!" Even if  
the voices were similar

## **Sponsored**

I knew exactly who the owner of the voice was.

"What do you want?" I asked piqued by her honeyed voice.

"Show yourself Ntombi" She appeared from the hallway. She looked disgusting.

"What are you doing here? Stand there don't come closer." The room smelled of rot and death. My body started heating. A lot was going on but what?

"The door was open I followed the noise"  
She wasn't answering me.

"Two people are fighting they both want to use me for evil" I rolled my eyes she was evil. She deserved everything evil that was coming her way... wait!

She was dusty and a bit rotten. She was not in spirit she was reincarnated. She was...wow.

"How can I help you?" maybe just maybe I can use her to save Mahlori.

"Protect my baby Mahlori is out for his blood—"

"Ntombi how did you get here?" Did she walk all the way? This one could never be trusted.

"The gate is open"

What gate? As if she knew I was confused she further explained.

"I pretended to be dead I made her believe her spell did not work. I then escaped when she was not looking. Mahlori's friend is there too with her baby".

Her explanation was in riddles but I did catch that someone brought her back to life and that someone has Mbali and Mahlori's child.

"Who are you talking about Ntombi? Who went ahead of me?" I didn't know if I was angered by Ntombi's presence or that my plans were ruined.

"Ntombi find Mahlori and bring her back to life!"

"She will kill me"

"You are dead!" Why would you be scared of your own creation? We were in this mess because of her greedy ass.

"Let her stay until we come up with something" Lucas finally managed to get himself to the Bed and now he was suggesting nonsense.

"She is a corpse. I won't let her stay here Lucas how do you know she has pure intentions?"

Even if she did have pure intentions I wouldn't know the spirits she came with. What if she had other bad spirits tagged along? I had a baby to protect.

"She is the only one who can save your friend. I will personally make sure she doesn't try anything stupid" - Lucas  
He had a point. But it was perilous to keep Ntombi with us.

"Mntanami" (My child)

"Nompumelelo" My mom came through was she also alive?.

"Mah what are you doing here?" I didn't know if I should have been happy to see her or be spooked. Her body was also rotten but she was regenerating a bit. Same thing with Ntombi.

"My child I shouldn't be here. But I wasn't resting in peace. I knew you were special but I was in denial. I never believed you when you tried to save my life. You suffered a lot of hostility until you almost lost yourself. I've seen how the community treated you I know how your father treated you. I wanted to help you but there was nothing I could have done anymore beyond the grave. All I seek is your forgiveness." I was in tears I didn't know I missed my mother until that moment I felt like I've gotten all the validation I needed.

I attacked her with a hug

" I forgive you mother. I love you "

" That's all I needed to hear now my soul will be at peace. Don't cry baby. We'll meet again very soon. Now I'm going back to my resting place. It is quite messy though"

"I will come and clean it" I promised I had abandoned her for many years.

"Goodbye my child"

How did she come here and how would she go back to his grave?"

" Mom transport? Shower?"I said with a shrug I hoped it did not come as an offense. I was just a concerned citizen.

" Don't worry baby. I don't want to leave the aura of the dead. I will wash in the river and go back. Don't worry about me nature will take care of me."

"Okay it's a good night I guess. Rest in peace" it was weird saying this but it was what it was.

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"So dead people know their way to your house?" I asked Lucas. Ntombi was apparently taking a shower.

"I don't know maybe they are following you. You communicate better with spirits" he teased.

"Lies you speak to demons and ghosts for a living" I said laughing.

"I think it's because they have been observing everything from the other side"

"Oh my God!" I exclaimed as I scrolled my phone. The world had come to an end.

**BREAKING NEWS: THE GRAVES ARE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN BODIES ARE MISSING.**

"Lucas dead people are roaming around in the world of the living" This cannot be happening! The more reincarnation happened the more lives will be lost. The balance has to be maintained a life for a life. Innocent people will die in place of those who have woken up.

"Everyone's life is in danger!" - Lucas said alerted. "Billions of people will die Mpumie. The gatekeeper will claim many lives."

Who the hell opened the gate?

Thirty-six

#TDW

Mary couldn't locate Ntombi's spirit she thought maybe the spell wasn't working so she went to her spellbook to check.

When she came back Ntombi was gone not only her spirit her body too. That was not supposed to happen I should have gotten the chance to manipulate her.

But that was the least of her problems. Her spell had loopholes. It meant to release Ntombi but all other spirits crossed over and the whole world was in trouble.

Most of the dead have unfinished business with the living. It was official that I had ghosts enemies being psychic required one to ruin the plans of the supernatural.

My own life was in danger!

Mbali who had been unconscious all along opened her eyes they were red and scary.

"What the fuck" cursed Mary who was spooked as far as she knew Mbali was alive.

Why was she behaving like a ghost?

"Hello Mary-Mary" She helped herself with Mary's green tea.

"Mary did you know green tea never goes with sugar and creamer? What do you think this is Glen tea? C'mon" She said rolling her eyes in boredom.

Mary didn't dare open her mouth.

"You took very good care of my Darcy. It's time she meets her dad"

It then sank in that Mbali was possessed.

"Who are you?" she asked nervously.



"Darcys's dad Arazyal. I knew humans were naive but I never thought you could ever think that you can open and close the gates of the living as if it's your backdoor" The voice started to change almost exposing the real voice of Arazyal.

Mary had heard about Arazyal from Lucas she never thought she'd have to directly deal with him.

"Your stupidity worked to my advantage. Now I have my wife my child and all the power I seek. Thank you Miss Mary for giving me access to the gate. Not only will I be the king of the dark world but I will also be the gatekeeper. In that way I can claim whomever I want during their death. In a matter of days I will have more souls more than Lucifer himself."

"What - what will... What will happen to me?"

"You are mine Mary. Unfortunately you aren't a virgin Mary so you won't be my wife. Not that Mahlori was a virgin but you are not her" Mbali —rather Arazyal said with a burst of wicked laughter. Mary didn't get a joke though...

'So I messed with the demon's wife?' Mary internally asked. How did he find her? Mary was not a beginner in cloaking spells unlike with the reincarnation spell which she was just taking chances on.

"It was nice to meet you Mary. Your green tea was almost nice too but I have to go. My regards to Mpumie. Oh also never try to play God again look at you... The reincarnation spell destroyed your Cloaks and clairvoyance. I will take this body with me as well"

Him in Mbali's body exited the cave with the baby. Now that he had Darcy Mahlori was not going where. He also knew about the little plot against him having Mahlori's baby was leverage he needed. He was going to be the hero that found the baby. He saw her going to Mpumie's old house and followed. He found her washing something on the sink.

"Mahlori" He said in Mbali's voice. Her back was against him.

"Arazyal

**Sponsored**

" He said in Mbali's voice. Her back was against him.

"Arazyal" Mahlori said without even looking back—she felt him way before he entered the gate. That was how connected they were to each other.

"I have our princess"

As soon as Mahlori registered what he meant she irruently swiveled her body and snatched the baby from Arazyal.

For the first in a while Mahlori felt some emotion other than anger. The tears of joy streamed down her face. She was meeting her daughter for the first time she had grown she was robbed weeks of being her mother but now that she was there with her she'd do anything to protect her just like she did when she was still pregnant.

"Thingo" she said

That was the name she gave her Thingo it meant rainbow. The triumphal creature that fills the sky when the storm parts. The glow Bridge of the arch will bridge darkness with light. A smile covering the earth with Colours of hope —

"Stop it!" Arazyal roared in frustration.

Mahlori snapped out of it after she realized that Arazyal might have read her thoughts. Why was she thinking like that anyway?

"Mpumi is the one who stole your baby" Arazyal said to fuel anger in Mahlari who suddenly had a melting heart. He needed anger to settle in her bones for the long haul.

~ ~ ~

## MATHEBULA HOMESTEAD

The community was convinced that the Mathebula's were cursed from their rebellious daughter the head of the house committing suicide as well as the eldest sister. Even the one who was known to be the strongest—Mrs. Mathebula was also losing her mind. The rumors are saying her daughter's spirit was haunting her others were saying she was guilty because Ahlulani's death was her fault.

Hanyani wasn't directly affected by her family's scandalous events but things are also going south for her. She couldn't focus at work she ended up getting a written warning for always messing I'm things. Not forgetting that no one wanted to associate themselves with her because she would infect them with her bad luck.

Those who said Mrs. Mathebula was crazy had to swallow their words when Ahlulani made her physical appearance neighbors ran for their lives those who were brave enough filmed and followed her to her mother's house... The one she was compelled not to set her foot in.

"What kind of a mother are you?" was the first thing she said to her mother who was in shock.

Okay maybe it was one of her hallucinations.

"I lived all my life trying to make you proud. And you failed to grant my last wish"

On the suicide note Ahlulani stated that she did not want to be buried but to be cremated. Her mother put her foot down and demanded that her daughter would be buried with dignity. Her husband being the man of peace agreed.

"Had you listened to me I wouldn't be here. My ashes would have dissolved or precipitated somewhere in the world or water but as per usual you never considered my feelings" She continued with tears streaming down.

"I'm sorry my daughter. I wanted to give you a dignified send-off" Mrs. Mathebula said trying to restrict the wails.

"Dignity? That word is too rich coming from you. Don't ever utter that word until you re-evaluate its concept. You failed to dignify me when I was still alive. You chased me out of my home like a dog and deprived me of a chance to bury my father.

You blamed me for his death while you were the one who never cared and believed when she told you that Mahlori was torturing her. I was the one who tried to get help and ended up suffering. Don't you dare talk about dignity? Something you failed to give to your husband Mahlori and I."

" Oh my God please forgive me Ahlulani. I didn't mean for things to be like this"

"Well God will forgive you mother. Since you failed to burn me now I'm back. Guess who will take my place? You!"

No

"since you are a prayer warrior. Pray mother pray. Pray for God to claim you before Mahlori and her husband do. Your daughter is the queen of the dark world and I'm suffering her wrath because of you" With that she left after apologizing for coming into her house knowing that she was not welcome.

Mrs. Mathebula started praying scared that her sunset had come. Not knowing that she already belonged to Arazyal. Her prayers were going to the dark world instead of heaven.

She felt something around her neck her hand went to check but there was nothing.

Something pulled her up. "oh my God" she cried as she was hanging

[I won't entertain an old man who decided to injure himself. Take him to asylum]

[you're not welcome in my house. Famba(go) don't ever come back here. You killed my husband now go back to yours. You are no longer my child"]

Her venomous words to her husband and daughter were echoing mantra-like as the invisible rope squeezed her neck and obstructed her breathing.

Thirty-seven

#TDW

MPUMIE

Mahlori decided on banging the door instead of using the bell talking about showing off preternaturally. "We know your supernatural strength okay we get it but spare my door please" I said opening the door. She didn't even wait for me to make space for her she just pushed me aside and invited herself in.

"As if it's your door" she mocked `` too rich coming from her the earth was on fire because of her.

"Says the demon's wife" I said clucking my tongue.

"Are you seriously judging me Mpumie?"

I met her gaze and couldn't believe my eyes. Did I just catch a glimpse of emotion from her?

"The last time you were here you ran off. Now what brings you here?"

Probably it was a broom. I was doing this to piss her off make her cry laugh or whatever. I wanted her to feel something. Even if it was irritation or annoyance.

"Mpumie I trusted you. I trusted you! How could you do this to me?"

What?

I frowned and said nothing.

"Don't give me that face Mpumi you were supposed to be my friend. How could you keep my child away from me for this long?"

Her voice was breaking. So I wasn't dreaming when I saw Mahlari holding a baby and calling her the rainbow.

"If Arazyal did find her how long were you going to hide her?"

Arazyal? Okay. I wasn't surprised.

"You are not fit to be her mother you were probably going to sacrifice her"

I had nothing to do with her baby being missing but if blaming me for that was going to work to my advantage so be it. I was going to play along.

"How dare you! I'd never do they to Thingo"

"Then what are you going to do with her?" I probed.

She opened her mouth to talk but said nothing.

"Mpumie can I —" the witch decided to show herself talking about bad timing.

Mahlori's eyes that were initially soft and teary turned red as she charged at Ntombi and pinned her against the wall strangling her. Killing her for the second time perhaps?

"Lucas!" I shouted on top of my voice.

"I'm here already —" yeah right

"You are a witch you old greedy hag!"

"Says a demon's wife" Ntombi repeated the same words I uttered not so long ago.

Mahlori screamed with her hands on top of her head "Wow! A demon's wife. You are also calling me a demon's wife? The same demon that you married me off to. Did you forget that you brought Arazyal into my life? Now that he loves me more than you you are jealous. You are jealous because you are useless

your child is useless the same thing with your husband! At least I'm a queen and his wife. You thought he was going to kill me right? You thought wrong bitch."

" You think that demon loves you? Don't be ridiculous Mahlori" - Ntombi

"It doesn't change the fact that he gives a good fuck. I can't say the same about Muzi"

I was too focused on the live show and didn't notice that Lucas had disappeared and came back with chloroform.

Will he —

He held Mahlori from the back and forced the cloth with chloroform against his nose and passed out.

"She could leave the body and run off you know"

Who was he? Hee someone was tempting my faith. Out of every day she chose this one to come and seduce my man.

"And who asked for your opinion?" I said to Mary who just budged in. I had nothing against her but I never liked her energy. Sixth sense never lied.

"Hello Mpumie" she looked at Ntombi who was close to shitting on herself. Did they know each other? They were probably birds of the same breed.

"Hello to you too Ntombi"

"Mpumie she is evil" said the frightened Ntombi. I held my fist against my mouth to stop myself from laughing my flat ass off... my ass was not flat though.



"I know Mpumi. I did something-I was bitter and not so over Lucas and did things that I'm not proud of. I was playing with spells and —"

"She had woken dead!" - Ntombi

"Mary! You out of all people should know better"

"I thought I had it all figured but it was just a trick Arazyal tampered with my spells and it had loopholes—I'm really sorry" She was sorry because things went south. As if sorry was going to fix anything.

"Mary you play with spells now?" I asked

**Sponsored**

as far as I knew she was just a clairvoyant.

"Mpumie I know you don't like her I'm sure the feeling is mutual. You don't like each other. I don't like Ntombi either but we are at war. We need unity. You can deal with differences later and maybe a catfight would do but for now we needed to ally and shame the devil" - Lucas

"Fine! Can you reverse the spell?"

"I'm not sure but I can work on it. Hopefully Arazyal won't be a step ahead of me just like the last time"

"We won't let that happen. Right now we are reversing all the Devil's work. Mahlari's humanity seemed to be on. I've been praying and God showed me the way. We are winning this war God was able to restrict Mahlari from body jumping he will also break the Devil's bond between Ntombi Mahlari and Muzi. Whatever bond they have with Arazyal will be destroyed. We just

have to have faith I noticed that we haven't been praying. Arazyal distracted us and we ended up forgetting to face our fears with faith."

My heart skipped a bit it registered that we were in a war. We've been trying to solve our problems with flesh. We hid in these big walls and f got that Lucas and I were given a duty to save God's people from demons and twisted fates. Instead we protected only ourselves and things spiraled out of hand. No matter how much we protect ourselves if the world is not saved then we are doomed. This time we put an end to all of this havoc.

"We are fighting in spirit now" I said as they all nodded in agreement.

Nice! I wasn't clear...

"Yes honey. Let's go fast and pray."

"Lucas we don't have much time. Mahlori knows the way in and out of the dark world because of Thingo she represents good and evil. I'm a spiritual fighter I've been calling myself a prayer warrior for years now it's time I put that into real action...Mary choose your side"

"I'm - I'm with you"

"Lucas?" I had to make sure everyone was on the same page as I. As expected he gave me a nod.

"Ntombi?"

"I'm on your side. But I've been evil and I don't know if—"

"Choose a side Ntombi!"

"Yours" good

"Mahlori is not in a state to consent. She will make her choice in the field" Mahlari was still lying unconscious on the floor. And everyone else was looking at me like I had lost my mind.

"Lucas you have the means to command Arazyal back to hell. Mary you will put your spells into good use. You will temporarily separate Mahlari's spirit from her flash and do the same thing with me and Ntombi. We are going to the Devil's territory"

They all gasp and shake their big heads. Bloody cowards. I was not going to give up now. I've committed myself to saving Mahlari so I was finishing what I started.

"Mpumie we cannot do that. We can fast for seven days and pray"

Knowing Lucas he can but not me. I couldn't survive two hours of not eating and I was pregnant.

"Lucas I said I'm going to the dark world. Ntombi and Mahlari are coming with me. You and Mary will be our link to the land of the living. You will fight with prayer from this side while I fight from the other."

"You might not come back!" fear? Was that fear? No ways

Corinthians 16:13: Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong.

"I will win this Lucas"

I might not come back only if I lose but I will win . Nevertheless that doesn't change my fate! I kept my thoughts to myself.

"Lucas think about this havoc on earth the dead are living while the living are dying. If you don't want to do this it's okay. I will do it with or without your aid. And whoever wants to pull out. It's not too late. Because once we go there there's no turning back!" I didn't want traitors who'd switch sides in the middle of a quest.

" We only have a few hours before it goes down" It was good that Mahlori was emotional she had a baby to think about.

One thing I knew was that Mahlori thought she knew Arazyal but she did not. She was yet to know her husband for who he was.

Thirty-eight

#TDW

MAHLORI

"Mahlori!"

"Mahlori!"

I ignored the voices that kept on shouting who were they calling for? — Mahlori! Oh

They were calling for me. I opened my eyes and I was in the middle of nowhere was I in hell? The place was dark and on fire I bet it was one hundred degrees hot.

"Mahlori!" a voice called again my vision was a bit blurry but I knew it was Mpumie's voice. But where was she? Where was I? I took my stand the first person I saw was Arazyal holding Thingo. He was holding a damn baby in that heat!

"She is the warrior this heat feels like ice to her" Arazyal said after reading my thoughts. Invasion of privacy!

"Arazyal"

"Come to me baby. Your family is waiting for you" my stomach became the host of butterflies. His voice was different this time it was soothing and cooling my body off from this heat. It was as sweet as the melody.

"Mahlori! Don't you dare?" That was Mpumie she'd the hell was going on?

Before me there was a figure my vision started getting clearer as I inspected the beauty of God's creation. He was tall caramel-skinned his lips were to die for. I've seen handsome men but this one was painfully beautiful. His features were out of this world. Where was Arazyal?

"It's time you see my true form my love. This is your husband Arazyal."

He smiled shut showing his dimples his eyes shining bright with the color blue. I never thought a man could have such thick and long eyelashes maybe men did have such lashes but I never bothered to pay attention to lashes either way Arazyal was the most beautiful creature in the history of mankind. I couldn't fathom his race he had European and African traits the shape of his eyes was Chinese. His long silky hair was messy making him more pretty.

"Where is Thingo?" I asked my eyes glued on his muscular physique. He was big but not annoyingly bulk like those crazy powerlifters who resembled an improper fraction or a lollipop.

"It is Darcy baby. We named him Darcy."

I didn't remember naming her Darcy but because he was such a fine piece of art. I was going to let that slide.

"Where is Darcy?" I paraphrased.

Arazyal extended his hand and said "come with me let me take you to her. We'll go to paradise I made for you and you won't have to worry about anything other than choosing the color of your crown or your throne. But gold would look good on your sweetheart" his extended hand glowed in gold. A golden crystal eloped; the roads were gold some were silver. I was sitting on the throne with the glowing crown everyone subjected to me. One of my subjects was polishing my nails while the other was washing my feet. Everything was gold and silver it was beautiful and peaceful. The unicorns were grazing on what I can call greener pastures I've never witnessed such beautiful grass. Daisies were white as snow lavender was soft and strong everything was blooming. The sky was clear its blue color reflecting on the lakes rivers and sea. Colorful butterflies became a cherry on top. I wasn't much of a Bible reader but my mother always briefed me on what heaven looked like—not that she'd been there but one can only imagine.

"Don't fall for it this is a prestige!" Mpumie said from wherever I couldn't spot her. I know she could be standing next to me or behind me but my eyes couldn't leave the sight of Arazyal.

"It's paradise" I whisper as I take the first step forward.

"It's only a parody Mahlori" Okay Mpumie wasn't next or behind me. She was far away I could hear she was shouting but from afar.

"This is not him

## **Sponsored**

I could hear she was shouting but from afar.

"This is not him he is a demon not a man. He is luring you!"

"Don't listen to her remember she tried to steal your child. She is a hyner hiding behind a sheepskin" Arazyal said oh yes. That was the reason I went to Mpumie's place in the first place. Lucas suffocated me with chloroform. They wanted to keep me captured as they did with Thingo—I meant Darcy.

I made my way to Arazyal whose eyes glowed with happiness. I couldn't wait to touch his face and feel the smoothness of his skin.

I used my hand to fan myself it was really hot. But Arazyal was hotter than the fire.

"Mahlori come back otherwise I will come and get you myself" - Mpumie.

"I'd like to see you try dear Mpumie."

For the first time I decided to look at my surroundings the fire was circular I couldn't spot Mpumie though so I assumed she was outside of the fire. The flames were too high for someone to jump through. There was no way Mpumie could get in here. My eyes traveled back to Arazyal who was still smiling no it was a grin but he was still goddam pretty.

His grin turned into a frown when the flames turned blue and red on the top.

"She is invading my space!" The frown turned into anger when I saw Mpumie. She looked different though. She was wearing gold armor and a helmet.

How did she pass through that fire without getting burned? The fire was more vast than the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar. I thought she was just a naive fortune-teller who possessed no preternatural forces. She walked on fire as if she owned it. You could swear she was four in one — Meshach Shadrach and Abednego not forgetting the fourth man Jesus himself.

"Arazyal if you are confident that she loves you. Take off that mask and fight like a real demon"

"Why are you dressed like that little human?"

"Today we are going to end this fair and square" Her head was held too high for someone who was taking a demon on.

"Is that a challenge? Haha don't be ridiculous" Arazyal was finding the act amusing. This I wanted to see.

Mpumiw took out her sword and gestured to be ready for a battle. Her other leg was inclined on the back while the front one made an acute angle. Her sword was pointing at Arazyal.

"Oh feeble human. How pathetic can you be? Challenging me with that little toy you call a sword?"

"lose that facade and stop distracting Mahlori. She had a decision to make!" She said boldly. Her determination was going to be the end of her.

"Invading my territory is one thing challenging me is another. For the first one you are going to feel my ire and for the other one your baby will work for me and do the deeds of the dark. Welcome to your doom."



"Satan would dance on my grave before you get your hands on my baby!"

"Hmm impressive. Let's begin shall we?"

"With pleasure" Mpumie said charging to Arazyal who was suddenly in his armor too. Perks of being the creature of the paranormal.

She swapped at him and missed.

"Let me show you how it's done human"

Arazyal said and threw the fire sword at Mpumie. She stumbled as it penetrated through her breastplate.

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"Lucas!" Mary gasped as Mpumie's blood oozed from her chest. She was attacked and what was used to hurt her was perilous.

Lucas stopped praying and looked at Mpumie.

"Mary break it off. Bring her back"

"No!" not that she wanted her to die but she had promised her that she'd hold the spell until the end of the battle. She knew that she had a hand in all the havoc at least she could do was to honor her promise to Mpumie.

"Why did you break the prayer Lucas? Pray fight with her. Fight with strength not fear!" Mpumie needed a backup to aid her from this side. Ntombi and Mahlori were not reactive there was a possibility that they switched sides and fought with Arazyal against Mpumie. She was on her own.

The circle that represented the spiritual world was drawn with iron and salt. White candles were clustered into a circle. Their bodies: Mpumie Ntombi and Mahlori were laid next to each other. Lucas kneeling outside the circle while Mary knelt outside too but on the opposite side. Her hands were raised and she had to keep them like that to hold a spell.

"Lucas closed his eyes again and started praying. A few minutes into his prayer Mpumie's body jerked up and down. Mary wished she could stop the bleeding before she lost too much blood.

Was she losing the fight? Mary closed her eyes and thought of plan B. She had to join them in the spiritual world and fight with Mpumie of which it was going to be the challenge holding the spell while fighting because if she dies the spell would die.

Thirty-nine

#TDW

MAHLORI

She laid on the floor motionless. I knew she wouldn't last long. I thought she'd expire way before she crossed the fire.

I guess I was wrong because she pulled out Arazyal's sword from her chest and rose again.

"I don't go down easily Mr. Arazyal"

She spat before throwing the sword back to Arazyal he caught it before it reached his skin. I never knew swords could be thrown around.

"Nice I'm impressed. You are a bit stronger than I anticipated" Arazyal said with a grin.

"Mpumie lunged at him and threw a fist with her free hand that made Arazyal stumble and bled from the nose. As he wiped the blood Mpumie's sword made its way to his neck and slit her. I must give it to her she was fast for a human.

Mpumie's attack alerted Arazyal. He realized that Mpumie was not here to play.

All the amusement and the bragging were gone it was fist after fist stab after kick after kick. I swear I saw kung fu and karate moves there. If it was a normal fight I'd be jumping up and down cheering for my favorite.

But it was not fun to watch at all. Each fist was accompanied by fire Mpumi was burned all over. I don't know when her sword was dropped. Where was it anyway?

My body was wet and sticky with sweat.

Mpumie gasped for air as Arazyal's hand squeezed her neck. But that was short-lived because Ntombi appeared with the sword I believed belonged to Mpumie and stepped Arazyal's hand causing him to drop Mpumie. Under normal circumstances Mpumie would be coughing but she rose like she never fell.

It was now two against one. Ntombi was now a team with Mpumie. The whole Ntombi the devil herself repented? Somehow Ntombi still possessed some force because she was spitting fire.

It didn't take them long to get Arazyal on his feet. The mighty Arazyal was on his knees.

"Aid your husband" Arazyal's voice whispered in my head. I guess he was using telepathy because according to my eyes or ears he said nothing.

"Mahlori they want to take our daughter" she whispered persisted.

I looked Mpumie in the eyes and saw her taking Darcy. She and Lucas put her in a glass box intending to train her to deal with demons. They knew the power she had so they were planning to use her while they got credit for nothing. I saw Darcy as the slave who knew nothing other than spells prayers clairvoyance and exorcism. I saw them starving her for weeks in the name of fasting.

I blinked several times when I realized that wasn't real but it was me reading Mpumie's thoughts. She was here pretending to be my savior while she wanted to keep my daughter for her selfish reasons. She wanted to be the noble gallant Mpumie who did nothing wrong in the world the heroine who saved lives while she was filthy and selfish.

It was too good to be true her saving me from Ntombi and Muzi trying to protect me from Arazyal. It was a ploy!

I marched to her and grabbed her by the hair "You bitch you thought I wouldn't find out? I know you want to enslave my daughter. I read your thoughts" I shouted.

"You are more gullible than I thought. Since when can you read thoughts? Arazyal is playing with your mind. All those events you see are illusions that Arazyal wants you to see. Block him from your thoughts. Only you can stop him from toying with your petite brain!"

"Shut up! Mahlori is mine. My wife"

"Stop stop!" I pressed my hands against my ears I felt dizzy. They were confusing me.

"Baby look at my beautiful eyes." —the whisper again. Darcy then cried. But I couldn't see her. "She is with me honey"

I swear I was losing my mind the heat was getting to me I was hearing and seeing many things at the same time.

"IN THE NAME OF JESUS I PRAY FOR CLARITY UPON MAHLORI." that was Lucas's voice was he here too?

On the other inside it was Ntombi telling me how he was lured just like me but ended up killing her kids and family and ending up dead.

Arazyal didn't have to say anything

Sponsored

with one just wink at me my knees became wobbly while my stomach turned.

Mpumie was telling me how stupid was I and commanding me to fight with her because she was not going to be Arazyal's conquest.

I had to choose my husband. I know it sounded weird and wicked but Arazyal gave me goosebumps and I liked spending time with me. He believed in me he worshiped me he never compared me to anyone not even Ntombi.

My feet decided to go to Arazyal without my consent my heart raced and foreign magnetic force drew me to him. it the first time I had felt like that in my entire life.

"You know what I'm tired of begging you!"

"Mpumie keep this one away from me while I deal with this fool"
Ntombi ordered Mpumie.

"What are you going to do with her? Don't hurt her please"
Mpumie begged but Ntombi was hearing none of it. The sword
was still in her hand she marched to me.

"What you possess belongs to me. It is my creation and I want it
back!" Ntombi said grabbing me. Mpumie was already out of my
grasp and fighting my demon lover. They were fighting over
coming to me. Ntombi made it first.

"Kiss your supernatural powers goodbye"
The sword started to flame. My body uncontrollably shook as the
hot weapon penetrated my temple. I felt hot liquid between my
legs. I screamed as my body stung like I was bitten by the bees
or rolling in thorns. Scratch that —the lightning had struck me.

"S s s t—s-t-o-p" I couldn't hold my shrill screams and tears. I've
never felt such agony in my life. My ears eyes nose and mouth
were on fire. I saw black smoke coming from my mouth. I'm
maybe in another world with another creature but I knew I could
never shapeshift even if I did but to turn into a car? The smoke
that was coming out of my mouth was similar to my father's old
Tazz.

By the time Arazyal got to Ntombi the sword had made its way in
and out of me.

"How dare you destroy my altar bitch!" Arazyal said as he held
Ntombi's neck and broke it. It seemed like the strength came
back. Because after ending Ntombi- he went for Mpumie.

"Touch me and feel the fire!" Mpumie said opening her arms for Arazyal to do anything to her. Arazyal threw a fist but it never made it to Mpumie's flesh something like a thunderbolt was shielding her.

After the black smoke the white one followed until no smoke exited my mouth. All the feelings and butterflies I felt for Arazyal vanished replaced by an unexplainable fear. I glanced at Arazyal whose body was changing. He started getting bigger and bigger with each second the body that was sexy again started to have visible green and black veins that covered his skin tone. Her blue eyes turned red. His hair rapidly grew everywhere until he resembled an enormous ape. He was about three hundred feet towering.

I covered my mouth at the horrific scene
He started laughing very loud and his voice was piercing and ugly not forgetting the fangs.

"Jesus Christ!" What was that?

When I thought I had seen enough his lower body remained an ape but developed a huge rough tail that looked like rocks. His upper body was that of a snake he had two heads and one-two-three-four - five! Five noses no ears.

I couldn't count the number of eyes because they were too many and they were hard to look at with their tryphobic look. Just by glancing at him my body cringed and developed a rash at the same TimeThree sharp horns were flaming.

I closed my eyes the sight was too much for me.

DIH!

DIH!

DIH!

The sound of the heavy footsteps made me pee on myself for the second time because of dread.

"Look at your husband my love" ugly voice was back to being honeyed. I opened one eye to take a peek. I was the dwarf to the monstrous giant that was towering over me.

I was shaking with fear was this the real form of Arazyal? I've been sleeping with a monster. Muzi and Ntombi married me off to the monster.

Forty

#TDW - final season

MAHLORI.

I took about five steps back and the monster only took one to get to me.

He bent and stroked my face with his big finger. "Get the fuck away from me!"

I said stepping backward again.

"You are mine. Alone" he gripped me by my dress and put me in his palm—Yep! That's how huge he was. I was like an ant to him. I was already scared of the height but my fear turned into reality when Mpumie stabbed him in the foot as big as he was he groaned in pain and I had to suffer the consequences as I dropped on the floor and hurt my back.

What did I do? He was big enough to squash his attacker but he chose to drop me as if I was at fault. Cowardice in its greatest degree.

He turned to Mpumie and lifted his foot he was going to step on her!

I went up —the foot bit by bit—it went down. Mpumie was going to die like a bug. I closed my eyes to spare my eyes from the terror.

I waited for a few seconds before I opened my eyes his foot was in the exact spot where Mpumie was.

"You missed buddy!" Mpumie said from the other side. So she was able to duck? Nice!

Arazyal attempted again and missed he got frustrated and spat fiery like a dragoon The flames grew bigger and bigger but Mpumie did not seem to burn.

He released a hiss and discharged snakes from his mouth one of them charged towards me. I used my natural speed to run off only to find out that I had no supernatural speed. I was dead scared but being an adrenaline junkie helped as I gripped its head before it bit me I threw it in the fire. I did the same thing with the next one and so on. Arazyal had turned on me and made things easier for me because I did not have to choose sides. I had to fight along with Mpumie who had my best interest at heart.

Mpumi simply told the snakes to die and they just collapsed. The creatures eloped most of them were reptiles although I couldn't fathom what they were. The demon decided to sit or stand. I wasn't sure but it was at the back watching the grotesque creatures fight us.

"Mahlori submit to me and I will grant your powers. If you fight against me I will serve Darcy as dinner to my friends" Arazyal's petrifying voice echoed.

When I looked at him Darcy was on his big palm. Oh my God! If he decided to close his hand into a fist my daughter would be dead!

'Mahlori you can do it. You can win this' my inner voice said. Why did Darcy keep on appearing and disappearing in the hands of Arazyal?

"Arazyal where is my baby?" I shouted. That thing on his palm wasn't my child. Ig couldn't be.

"Come and get her!" he was pretending as if I was the one who turned against him while it was the other way around. He just got intimidated by the fact that I saw him get who he was.

"Where the hell is my baby!" If he thought he was going to use my baby as bait he had another thing coming.

"Arazyal you told me you love me. You promised me peace not fiery. How can you threaten my baby's life? Your baby!" I got emotional tears were threatening to come out.

"Ohh little human. How foolish can you be? Darcy is Muzi's offspring well he is mine now. She carries a lot of souls with her the ones that were sacrificed by Muzi and Ntombi. You —his mother all the people from your bloodline you've been killing are now belonging to Darcy who belongs to me. If you want to spend eternity with her come to daddy or I kill you. You are useless to me anyway!"

I suddenly got angry and sprinted to him he was a giant but I didn't care. I wanted to slap the shit of his demon self. He hissed again and the reptiles came to me I fisted the first one and missed. I felt a sting on my arm but I didn't give I ignored the bites and stings that were coming for my body and ran to him still. Before I made it he blew air and It sent me to the fire. That was when I noticed that I wasn't alone. Because the fire didn't burn me like Mpumie. I made my way to him again and he looked quite surprised by my fire immunity but quickly wiped the look and spat fire again. But It blew off before it could reach.

"No! You are not praying. You can't pray!"

He roared in anger.

Thank me Arazyal for reminding me of prayer. I closed my eyes and said a silent prayer. I didn't have much faith in him at the moment because I believed angels had no access to the dark world.

'Everyone and everything is the creation of God he has excess to everything he created' - the inner voice said.

"God this fight is beyond me please fight for me" were the only words I had to utter. I felt my jerk a bit my energy changed. I felt possessed by a force a grace.

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MPUMIE

I was ready to pray to God to accept my spirit because I felt like I was fighting a losing battle. But my hope resurrected when I saw something glowing I had to shield my eyes because the glow was too much.

I gazed at Arazyal

Sponsored

the creature groaned before it disappeared —that's what I thought before he turned into a big snake.

I looked at Mahlori I still couldn't see her clearly because of the force that was surrounding her.

After some time she got clear but her eyes were glowing and...

Are those wings?

The sight was too beautiful to be real too good to be true. Those wings looked like Tinkerbell's wings but bigger and transparent. If maybe they had feathers or something I'd think she was an angel. But I wouldn't know.

. She had a sword with her it was glowing and transparent as well. I looked at the winged Mahlori and the largest reptiles in the universe staring into each other's eyes. The snake attacked Mahlori she flew back a bit before the seeped penetrated through the snake. He hissed and shape-shifted into different things in just two seconds. I guess he didn't know which form to take.

He settled for a man a big winged man with flaming eyes and the flaming sword he swung his sword. It landed at Mahlori's. They started fighting with each swing slit or stab the lightning flashed thunder boomed the dark world lit up the wind blew and there was smoke everywhere. My view was obstructed by the smoke and I couldn't see anything. All I heard was the piercing sound of the swords against each other. I was just sitting on the surface praying for the best. Another glow eloped. I tried to peek through the smoke but the two creatures were covered by a cloud. go

It was official the world was coming to an end!

"God please show us your mercy" I whispered.

"Dŭq mĔo ỳl-ả"

Mahlori chants but I didn't understand the language.

A groan followed and it turned into hiss which turned to a roar. Then the fire turned into ashes the smoke vanished as well as the cloud.

When the havoc perished it became quiet and Mahlori was laying on the floor looking clueless.

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Things were getting worse on the other side the world just suffered an earthquake fortunately it was only for a second but the storm heavy rain wind and floods destroyed buildings and took lives. Lucas didn't stop praying but the spell was taking a toll on Mary who was bleeding from the nose.

"I can't hold it anymore! " Mary cried out as the spell became heavier and heavier.

"No I can't!" Lucas noticed that May was barely holding on.

"Mary please. Please bring them back"

Lucas begged if the fight was too much for Mpumie it was better if she came back to him. If that was when the world of humankind ended it was okay but Mpumie did not deserve to die in the twisted spiritual world or hell as if she never served God.

"I can't!" Mary felt weak she had to reverse the spell so they'd come back to the world of the living.

If she failed to hold the spell or reverse it until it breaks on its own they would never come back. Mary was their only link to the living.

" Do something damn it"

"I can't —" A lightning came through and Mary was sent flying across the room.

Just like that Mary's spell broke.

"Noo!" Lucas screamed with his hands on his head. He sprinted to Mpumie and shook her vigorously "my love please wake up. Come back to me Mpumie."

Lucas begged but Mpumie didn't move. He went to Mahlori's side hoping for the sign of life —nothing.

The already damaged world crumpled on him. He was never going to forgive himself for allowing the nonsense of the spiritual fight.

Forty-one

TDW

Unedited

MPUMIE

My body jerked a few times before I sat up my eyes were still closed. I felt hands grabbing me on my shoulders. I shuddered in pain.

"Mpumie baby you scared the hell out of me!"

I kept my piece trying to register what was being said to me.

"Mpumie!" the voice called out his hands were still on my shoulders as he slightly shook me. I quickly open my eyes letting out a small scream at the shooting pain on my body. My voice was hoarse and my throat was on fire.

"Oh baby are you okay?"

No I'm in agony. I felt like my lungs were failing me each breath took a toll on the barely remaining strength.

"Hmm..." Then I came back. Everything came back. I crawled - scratch that I dragged my body in Mahlori's direction trying to ignore the pain on my lower abdomen and chest.

"Mahlori! Wake up please" it didn't take long for her to half-open her eyes. They were swollen and red.

"Mahlori are you okay?" unlike me she had no injury but her skin was pale veins were visible especially on the face her mouth was cracking.

"Lucas" finally I decided to acknowledge the presence of my boyfriend.

"You both need to go to the hospital if we still have one though" he said shrugging. And disappeared to the kitchen.

I took inspection of my surroundings and there Mary was laying. When I was about to shout her name she woke up. Her hands were on her forehead as if she had a headache.

"Oh my God. You made it back" She charged at me flinching a bit.

"You are losing blood oh Lord the baby. Lucas!"

"I'm here!" he had a basin water bandages and a cloth. He ripped my already torn shirt and rolled the bandages around my upper body. Mary wiped my face only God knew for what reason. She

helped drink water and I choked in the process. My throat was sore and I couldn't swallow a simple thing as my saliva.

After they were done tending me he scooped me I bit my bottom lip trying to endure the anguish until I was out in the backseat of the car.

"These bondages are useless Mary could you please apply pressure on her wound while I drive?"

I opened my lips to say something but Mary quickly shushed me "Don't say anything"

But Mahlori? As if Lucas read my mind. He went back to the house and came back to Mahlori and put her on the passenger seat while Mary sat with me at the back with my head on her thighs.

"Hmm" I moaned as my eyes began to feel heavy I tried to keep them open but darkness won.

~~~

I woke up feeling the awful smell of chemicals and medicine Lucas was by my side holding my hand.

"Baby" He said standing up ready to do the usual culture of offering me water. I was supposed to drink from the straw and swallow I guess water didn't like my body because it came back through the nose choking me in the process which was another round of pain throughout my body.

"Hmm" that was all I could utter.

The doctor came through with the report I guess.

"Hello Nompumelelo. How are you feeling?" That script of doctors asking patients how they felt was ridiculous. We were in the hospital because we were sick!

When I said nothing he gave me a weak smile "You suffered a lot of blood loss fortunately the blade or whatever stabbed you didn't penetrate any organ"

So everything that happened while in spirit also affected the flesh?

"Sir

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the blade or whatever stabbed you didn't penetrate any organ"

So everything that happened while in spirit also affected the flesh?

"Sir can you please excuse us. There is something I want to discuss with my patience"

Hhaybo! You can say anything with him around. We have no secrets.

Well even my mouth was too painful to say that so I shut up. Luckily Lucas was no man of drama. He simply nodded gave me a perk and left closing the door behind him.

"Misa I'd like to know what happened to you. Are you a victim of abuse?"

I saw this one coming I internally rolled my eyes. The next thing he was going to tell me was about protocol.

"I know you might be scared but no one will ever touch you again. The police will protect you" He said this time I rolled my eyes for him to see.

"I'm not prying. I'm just following the hospital protocol. Gender-based violence is another pandemic in South Africa."
What did I say to you?

"Dea...ad" I utter taking all the pain. I was not going to let this man accuse my sweet Lucas of abuse.

"Was it your dad?" he asked.
Dead you educated fool not dad"

"The dead"

"The dead stabbed you?" he asked slightly shocked. Under normal circumstances a psychotherapist would have been called on me questioning my mental state. But the world had been burning lately the dead rising from the Graves and dealing with their unfinished business.

He sighed "Jesus is coming back I knew your injury had to do with the supernatural force. I mean whatever that stabbed you went through your chest it missed all the organs and came through your back but not even a vertebral column was touched. Judging by the severity of your neck your trachea could have been damaged but it did not while you look like you've been strangled by the bare bone. Not to mention that your baby was not affected"

Thank goodness my baby was not affected!

"I think God has taken his children this is hell. You know most of the mountains are almost burned to ashes by the volcano?
At Least the dead seemed to have gone back to being dead"

This doctor was a blabbermouth. He chased my boyfriend just to update me on current affairs. But the dead going back to the dead got to me. Could this mean the gate closed and Arazyal was conquered?

Lucas opened the door rescuing from the doctor chatterbox.

"I went to check on Mahlori" Lucas announced as soon as the doctor left.

"I can't wait for you to recover so you could brief me on what happened down there"

He said shaking his head. She looked frustrated and cute.

"The doctors can't find out what is wrong with her she suffered no physical injury.

She is just staring into space she hardly blinks and never talks and never moves even a finger. They suspect emotional trauma but I suspect the spiritual one."

Even though I didn't know what exactly happened there Arazyal was overpowering me when Mahlori transformed into something angelic. I didn't even get to see how he defeated him because the clouds obstructed my view. I wonder what she said to Arazyal before he disappeared. Only Mahlori had answers.

She was the one who fought against Arazyal and won. I guess I was just there to be the catalyst of the spiritual fight since there wasn't much I did there.

Ntombi was the one who destroyed the altar and died for the second time.

"I don't think the therapy is going to help her something was wrong with her soul. That Mahlori on that bed is not Mahlori. She is just a vessel" - Lucas.

Did Arazyal die or go back to hell?

What if the altar or Arazyal was killed with her spirit? Ah she wouldn't be alive though.

The world could be saved by our fight but if Mahlori does not pull through all my fights would be in vain.
Another concern was Mahlori's baby!

Poor thing she was conceived without her mother's consent she was taken from her mother when she gave birth to her. She was in the hands of a demon.

Wherever she could be I hope she was safe. The child was just an infant but she had suffered like a thirty-year-old.

Babies usually don't respond well to bad spirits I hope she survived. I was still amazed that Mahlori's Mary Lucas and I are still alive. In situations like that there was likely to be death to visit. I hope Mahlori wasn't the victim.

Forty-two

TDW

MPUMIE

A week later I felt better. Although my wound was deep I was able to do things on my own and breathe without chest pains. It seemed like Arazyal was gone and the world was getting back to normal. The dead returned to where they belonged.

Unfortunately they did not return to their graves so the world was full of rotten bodies and bones and the government had to do something about it like re-burying them since most of them were not recognizable and the DNA was going to be a long and expensive process because they were dealing with millions of people.

Also the lives that were claimed by the dead didn't resurrect.

I was discharged as well as Mahlori. There wasn't any progress with her and after the spiritual fight I never had any visions so I didn't know how to help her.

We were going to trust the western ways for her mind but I was sure that it was more than that.

"Where are we going to start looking for Mahlori's child in this messy world?" I asked Lucas.

"God will show us the way"

"Hmm so Mary?" The last time I saw her was when she and Lucas brought me to the hospital.

"What about her? Mpumie we have bigger problems. I won't entertain your jealousy tendencies"

It wasn't jealousy. I was just taking caution. That woman tried to bewitch me for the man. The feelings she had for Lucas couldn't just vanish because she helped us.

"Lucas don't walk out on me we are still talking!" I shouted.

"Someone's at the door for Christ's sake!" He put his palm on his forehead as he attended the door"

"Oh" I thought he was walking out on me.

Who was at the door anyway? South Africa was upside down and people decided to invade people's houses!

"Who are you?" I shout without looking at the visitor.

"I'm sorry Mbali her hormones are all over" - Lucas

Whose hormones are all over? Mbali?

I lifted my eyes only to meet Mbali Mahlori's friend with the baby in her hands.

Mahlori's baby!

I took the baby from her and looked at her the little princess was sleeping.

"You brought the baby back. The one you stole from your friend?"

I knew it wasn't her. Under the spell Mary was the one who used her. But I was still angry at her beating me up.

"Mpumie!" - Lucas

"Okay I'm sorry. Where did you get the baby?" I asked Mbali who was in tears. I think I went a little harsh on her. She was a victim in all of this.

"I woke up in a stranger's house with her in my hands. The house owner said he was Sbusiso" Oh okay. It made sense. Arazyal possessed Mbali. It was good that he left her body and the baby in Sbusiso's house. What were we going to do if it was elsewhere?"

" Okay you look terrible. How are you?"

I was surprised Mbali was walking being possessed by a demon was usually hard for a vessel. A human body could not handle the demon for so long. It usually died after the demon was cast out.

"I'm tired. I want to sleep."

"Okay but you need to bathe while I make you something to eat. You can't eat on an empty stomach. What would you like to eat?"

"Anything is fine " she said shyly.

"Okay I cooked pasta."

"Mpumie where is Mahlori" she asked.

"I will take you to her after you finished eating"
I gave the baby to her and went to the kitchen to warm her food.

"Mpumie I'm sorry for everything. I do not know what came over me. The lady I remember was when—"

"It's okay baby. It wasn't your fault. But everything is fine now"

"You know Mahlori and I were just naive slay queens who lived a luxurious life. We had nice life problems and I miss that life. Where people called us names like shores and stuff. That didn't get to us we didn't care. We never cared about anything except money. Our life was simple-messy as that. I don't know how we got here. From being troublesome girls to Mahlori marrying a demon and Nonhle taking her friend's man and dying. Me being possessed and stealing my best friend's baby. The dead rising and claiming people's lives. You know I called Mahlori's sister and I found out that she was orphaned. Her father mother and sister killed themselves. How did things become so messy?"

I honestly had no answers to get questions I was also asking myself the very same thing. My only answer was 'it is God's will'

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## MAHLORI

I was in a foreign place everything was white. Three people were standing in front of me calling my name.

"N'wananga" (My child) a man said with a smile.  
I just waved to acknowledge them.

"ndza khensa n'wananga" ( thank you my child" the man continued my face creased into a frown I don't remember helping him before.

"Undzi khensela ini?" (what are you thanking me for?)

"uhi ntsuxile mimoya ya Hina ayiri emunyameni. Ahi xaniseka"  
(you freed us

### **Sponsored**

our souls were in a dark place. We were troubled).  
The lady I assumed was a wife commented confusing me even more.

"Hi n'wuna va mani?" (who are you all?) Maybe these people were going to tell me who they are so I can tell them they got the wrong person.

"Hi ndyangu wa wena uhi lwerile" ( we are your family you fought for us)

"Andzi swi tivi swaku mi vulavula hi yini" (I don't know what you are talking about" I state honestly. Their riddles were driving me crazy.



"Swi tshamisekile n'wananga hinkwaswo swita huma erivaleni when the time is right" (it's okay my child everything will be revealed to you).

The father said.

"Loko nkarhi wu fika tiva leswaku haku rhandza" (when the time comes just know that we love you)

"Hita tshama hiku langutule ntukulu wa hina Kwangulatilo ra Hina" (we'll forever look upon You and our grandchild our rainbow)

"Ndzisana yanga yi kurile ha tsaka hi wena" (My sister had matured we are proud of you)

The lady spoke for the first time.

To be frank I was fond of them although I did not know them. I walked towards them but they gestured for me to stand where I was.

"Sweswi inkarhi waku utlhelela n'wananga" (it's time to go back my child)

After that I felt something pushing me back. I tried to resist the force and lunge forward but my family kept on disappearing.

"Please don't go" was my last plea when I was pushed hard and landed on something soft. I opened my eyes and gasped for air. I was in bed and there was a lady next to the bed.

"Mahlori!" She excitedly squeezed me for dear life. "you came back baby!"

Who was she?

"Hello" I said shrugging. I've never been clueless like that in all my life —life?

I tried to reflect on my life and got nothing. I had no memories of anything except the people I was talking to earlier on that said they were my family.

"We should celebrate I mean we saved the world you saved us all by getting rid of that demon. Tell me how did you pull that off?" She was beautiful and I liked her energy but everything about her was confusing. She was speaking about many things at the same time!

" Girl you were speaking in tongues glowing and winged!"

" I don't know what you are talking about" I said. "Who are you?"

Her bubble burst her eyes became teary. "I'm Mpumie don't you remember me?"

I shook my head no.

"Oh my God. Lucas!" she shouted a few times before a white man came through.

"Is everything okay —" his eyes found me. "Mahlori"

"Hello Lucas" Mpumie called him Lucas right? His name was Lucas.

"She lost her memory" she said with soft sobs her fist was on her mouth trying to block the wail. "She lost her memory Lucas!"

"ah you said she spoke tongues and fought the demon behind the cloud" Lucas whispered well his whisper wasn't good enough because I heard everything.  
Mpumie nodded in agreement.

"Do you remember what she said?"

"Hmm no"

"I think she was given some grace to fight the demon. Perhaps she was speaking an angelic language that wasn't supposed to be heard understood or spoken by a human. The cloud was shielding you from seeing the fight between them. Whatever was happening between them wasn't human friendly and Mahlori got to experience that"

"Jesus! She can't lose her memory Lucas! God was the one who decided to give Mahlori his grace then why punish her for it?"

"We can't question God"

Forty-three

#TDW

NOMTHAWELANGA.

Khethelo's well-being took a huge toll during the havoc. He would occasionally bleed or faint. The hospital was not an option since everything was a mess and hospitals were overcrowded. The services were poor Khethelo needed a quick one since he was gravely sick.

I resorted to Gwala the healer that helped him initially. I was forced to move out and stay in Gwala's house. He had many houses that were designated for his clients or rather patients. Ever since our arrival Khethelo's health had improved.

I suspect he was going to be troubled health-wise because of the way he was conceived. He wasn't naturally convinced it included witchcraft.

I had Khethelo on my back while I washed tons of dishes outside. Don't you dare tell me he was too young! I know that already but he was on my back either way.

"Nkosazana can I lend a hand?"

Sbusiso said already rinsing the few dishes I had already washed. That's been the case since he arrived.

"I'm sure you have your duties"

"Yes and you will also help me"

Great! Everything came with a price even at the healer's premises.

"No I won't" I said with a straight face.

"Yes you won't. I'd never let a beautiful girl like you do the garden" I smiled at that statement. He always gave me compliments.

"a man is not supposed to wash dishes you know?" I said.

He just cracked with laughter "who came with that rule Langa?" He was the only one who referred to me as Langa. I was always called Nomtha. Langa was boyish I admit. But I liked it from him.

"I don't know" I shrugged it was how I was raised. It was always the question I had asked myself but I never dared to question Makhanya.

"I'd do anything for you. I can even wash your undergarments"  
It was my turn to burst into laughter. " hehe!"

"I'm dead serious Langa" Khethelo decided to wake up and cry his lungs out.

"Take care if I will continue with the dishes" I looked at him reluctantly but swallowed my protests. I went to fix his bottle and came to sit next to Sbusiso while feeding my boy.

"Why do you feed him a bottle?"  
Because I was his borrowed mother... Sighs.

"It is more convenient" I said hoping no further questions would be asked.

"Where is his father?"  
Damn it Sbusiso stop prying!

"It's a long story" my eyes teared up.

"Langa I'm sorry. I didn't mean to open up old wounds.

" No it's okay. It's just that I might lose him"  
What if Muzi came and claimed him?

"He will get better" - Sbusiso.  
I once told him I was here because Khethelo was not feeling okay.

"Yeah so why are you here? You don't look sick?"

"I made terrible decisions in the past for money and everything is coming back to haunt me" I regretted asking him that question because his mood suddenly changed he looked pained and troubled. I preferred the jovial Sbusiso who always made me laugh he always made me forget about problems.

No one needed to tell me about the bad decisions about riches my mind automatically went to Muzi. He had too much blood in his hands because of money and ended up losing everything.

"I lost everything even myself. I don't know who I am anymore. I feel like an animated vessel and nothing more other than that. I feel inhumane. I considered psychologists but they were never going to help me reverse the decisions I made and their consequences." he continued.

"Are you getting better though? Now that you are here?" I asked.

"It's been days since I last had nightmares and illusions. I'm feeling better physically but my conscience is eating me every second"

"one step at a time everyone will be already. We all made bad decisions in the past. No one is perfect."

"If I tell you about my past. You won't like it. You will hate even the earth I walked on"

I don't have it in me to hate anybody. Not even Muzi.

"I would never hate you Sbusiso. Please don't cry

**Sponsored**

you're hurting me."

Oops!

The last part wasn't supposed to come out.

To be quite frank I didn't want him to cry.

"I'm sorry I didn't mean to hurt you. I don't want to see you hurt" once again everything was about me. But I saw him wiping his tears and getting back to the dishes.

Khethelo was sleeping again I went to put him on the bed —the sponge I meant. It was better than a Reed-mat.

"KaMakhanya" Gwala's voice startled me a bit.

"baba" I said with a slight bow.

"Ngilandele" (follow me)

I followed him to his hut and sat on the Reed mat.

"uKhethelo useluleme sesifikile iskhathi sokuthi ubuyele ekhaya" (Khethelo is well the time has come for you to go back home)

That was music to my ears! The stay here wasn't that bad but the chores. Cooking for thirty-something people was no child's play. Some of them were too lazy to do the chores some were too sick to even lift a finger. For the sake of peace I always made sure it was clean thanks to the few people who knew how to clean up including Sbusiso.

"Ngiyajabula ukuzwa lokho" (I'm happy to hear that)

"Khethelo's father needs cleansing and without that the boy will suffer for his father's sins. We need to find him and cleanse him. That's what the ancestors needed for them to fully accept him after they turned their backs on him for years."

How the hell was I supposed to find Muzi!  
What if he died when the dead claimed the lives of the living?

"Is he alive?" I asked.

"Yes. If he isn't well wherever he is Khethelo won't be well too"  
Mothering Khethelo wasn't as easy as feeding bathing and taking care of him.

I was required to look for an old man for a damn cleansing to protect Khethelo.

"Okay" what else could I have said?

"Ungakhathazeki ndodakazi. Akekho kude kunzeka azifikele kuwena mathupha" (worry not my girl. He is not far he could find his way to you)

"Baba" (father)

"I have made a friend. Can I visit him?"

I held my breath not prepared for the response.

Gwala just smiled shaking his head. "you are still someone's wife"

I know!

"You can visit him my child. He needs you" He continued grinning like a fool.

Does he need me?

"Thank you"

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. .  
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When I went back to Sbusiso he was done with the dishes. "You are such a sweetheart!" I said happily. He rolled his eyes.

"I know Langalami"

I gasped at my newly found name.

"Langa-lakho?" I said amused.

"yes you are my sun. You bring warmth and bright light to my life. The first day I laid my eyes on you my heart became exposed to your sunlight. You are the light at the end of my tunnel"

That's a ton to my cocoa-shaded skin I would have been red with blush. My eyes wandered around the ground.

'You are still a married woman

"Thank you Sbusiso but I have to go. Thank you for the dishes." I said running off to my rondavel. I had a lot of packing to do. My son and I were going home!

Forty-four

FINALE

MONTHS LATER...

"Arazyal! Hey bring back my children. I want my wives!"

He screamed at the man who was coming back to his workplace.

"Arazyal!"

The man just looked at him and covered his nose and walked away to the hobo who was sticking and speaking crazy things.

"Arazyal I want my riches!" When the man disappeared from his sight he moved on to another. "you took my riches!" The man laughed and walked away as well.

"I'm the richest man in Durban! I own hotels and clubs. This tar you are all walking on is mine. I have many wives!"

His eyes landed in the doggy bag from KFC. He lunged for it and tore it apart feasting on the few remaining fries and what's left of meat.

" Even KFC is mine!"

Most people were seeing a mad man minding their businesses. Those who recognized him took pictures while laughing at the irony of eating leftovers while you own the damn restaurant.

"Nomthawelanga!" he marched towards the dark-skinned girl who was carrying a baby. "Khethelo"

~~~~

NOMTHAWELANGA

"Did you tell father why exactly are you here?"

Yes I was back at home. I was going to be the victim of Nomusa's nuisance.

"My knows Khethelo was sick?"

I said rolling my eyes.

"Your husband is doing crazy things in town look"

She showed me a video of Muzi shouting and eating from the bin.

"Is that why you left him?"

"Could you please stop Nomusa!" I snapped "where did you see him? his son needs him"

"Hee! Hhayibo!" Nomusa clapped dramatically "are you going to host him as well?"

"Of course not idiot. I will take him to baba Gwala"

"And who the hell is going to pay Gwala. Is it our father?"
I had no answer to that but Gwala was the one who suggested the idea. Surely the guy was going to pay off his debt once his life got back on track.

A call rescued me from Nomusa's endless blubbering it was M.r Gwala. Just the person I intended on calling.

"Baba" (father)

"Is Sbusiso with you?" The panic was obvious from his voice.

"No baba but I have located Khethelo's father"

"He is missing if you hear from him please inform me."

"Are you talking about Muzi?"

"I'm talking about Sbusiso he is not supposed to be out here. He is unwell and is a danger unto others and himself too."

That was confusing I was with Sbusiso a few hours ago. He looked fine and he told me Gwala was going to let him go soon.

"Nomthawelanga if he makes contact let me know he is fighting with guilt and fighting the wrong way"

"Yebo baba ngzokwenza njengoba usho"
(I will do as you say).

"Woza nazo" (out with it). Nomusa said as soon as I hung up.

"Hey! You should be worrying about how you are going to disclose your pregnancy to your father"

"What are you saying Nomthawelanga?" Dad appeared from nowhere seeing red.

"Dad—"

"Did you say Nomusa is pregnant?"

Ah why was his ire directed to me? Was I pregnant?

For the first time in my life I walked out on my father. Well I got away with it because he was too angry at the news to pay attention to what I did.

"I don't know dad. Here she is ask her" I said walking off leaving him and his daughter. He was going to find out anyway.

I had bigger problems on my side I'm a guardian to a beautiful baby boy and tasked to guard two grown men as if they shared their riches with me.

~ ~ ~

It was a big day for Mpumie and Lucas. They were getting married. After everything they went through it was time they put their happiness first. Although Mpumie was reluctant about the wedding Lucas couldn't hear any of it. He wanted to marry his woman.

Lucas thought Mpumie's worry was because no family of hers was going to be present.

She had no one.

"You seem nervous are you okay?" Lucas asked the absent-minded Mpumie.

"We don't have to get married you know"

"I'm not going to do this with you all over again."

"I love you"

"I know now let's get married"

Mpumie sighs restlessly "We have to talk"

"My love please. Please don't do this to us. Don't tell me you are having second thoughts"

Something was really wrong with Mpumie she even lost weight whereas she should be gaining weight because she was pregnant.

"I'm not Lucas. Do you love Mary?"

"Mpumie stop it! It's our big day for Christ's sake"

Mpumie sighed again "Fine let's get ready. We are getting married. Please go we are not supposed to be together" she said pushing him out of their bedroom.

The wedding was going to take place in their garden. It was big and beautiful to host a wedding. Mary was one of the not more than twenty people who were mostly Lucas's acquaintances.

Mahlori was going to be her only bridesmaid she hadn't gotten back her memory but

The friendship and sisterhood bond that they made was never broken. Their relationship blossomed as Mpumie took care of

Thingo most of the time since Mahlori wasn't emotionally okay. She was always stressed about her unknown past. When she asked about her family no one was brave enough to tell her the truth.

"You are getting married! What with the long face?" Mahlori asked as the make-up artist did the final touch-ups.

"It's —I'm happy. I'm just happy that I'm finally getting married to the love of my life." Mpumie said with a faint smile.

"Okay let's go Lucas is waiting for you in the alter"

They stood up and went to the garden and the pianist started playing. She walked down the aisle. Her mood had improved her smile was brightening the day. Her dress accommodated her huge belly. She could pop anytime but Lucas wanted his child to be born after getting married. Luckily the pregnancy didn't ruin Mpumie's nose.

"I lived half of my life ashamed of my gift I felt cursed and manipulated. And I met you. In a short while we were together you showed me what true love is. You became the light in my shaded life. This journey we walked was worth it. Not only were you a good partner but you were also a friend a brother and a father I rarely had. I have no doubts that you are going to make a good husband and a good father to our daughter..." said Mpumie who was supposed to make a vow after Lucas did the diamond ring shining against her finger it was now her turn to put the band on her husband. Tears were leaking from her eyes like blood from the artery.

" Please take care of her like you took care of me—"

" Love what are you on about?" Lucas cut her off seeing that she was off-script.

"I love you Lucas. I will forever love you."

She said smiling while Mahlori was wiping her tears carefully enough not to ruin the face beat.

"Okay! That was —emotional. Now let's move on to the best part where I announce you as husband and wife. Lucas you may kiss your bride.

There were not many ululations what do whites know about that? However

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what do whites know about that? However the cheerful screams as the couple kissed. Their left hands-on Mpumie's huge belly. The baby visibly kicked causing Lucas to go on his knees to give a baby a peck. Mpumie giggled at the silly-cute gesture.

"Why wasn't I invited?" a loud croaky voice said it was Sbusiso. How did he pass the security?

"Look at you Nompumelelo. You came into my life I loved you with your silly illusions. I was the only one who could put up with all of your craziness. Do you think that Whiteman loves you? No he is crazy as you and he is using you. Using you the way you used me. I gave you a flashy life you've always sought it's funny how you pretended to hate the riches while you benefited from them—" the garden was full of gasps

"Sibusiso..." Mpumie tried to say something but words failed her...

"You failed to give me a baby but you were too quick to bear him a baby you left me at my weakest you used my house to shelter this slut" he pointed at Mahlori with his head.

He burned he was drunk and mentally disturbed.

"What you did is called trespassing. if you don't get out I will be forced to call the security on you. Now please leave with your dignity before embarrassing means are taken" Lucas demanded angered by Sbusiso disturbing his big day.

"I will leave not only with my dignity. With her as well. Before everyone could register Sbusiso's world he drew a pistol from his waist and fired three shots at Mpumie.

" No!" screamed Lucas who had Mpumie in his arms.

" Mpumie! Someone call an ambulance Mpumie my love please stay with me"

"It's okay my love —"

"Shh don't say a thing love. It will be alright the ambulance is on the way. Please hold on for the sake of our daughter."

"I've met my fate I've fulfilled my purpose. It's time to go now. I need to rest be free—"

"Hey! No love don't you dare close your eyes. Don't leave me. We just got married dammit! Okay okay my love. I did not mean to snap okay. Just hold on for a few minutes. Help is coming"

"Mpumie please don't leave me. Thingo still needs you" Mahlori wailed.

"It will be alright"

"Shhh Mpumie" —Lucas

"Lucas you need to drive her. The ambulance is taking too long" if someone did bother to call it.

Another shot boomed unexpectedly Sbusiso was lying still in the pool of his own blood he had shot himself. No one paid attention to him though.

Lucas scooped Mpumie and rushed her to the car Mahlori was on their side. While Lucas was driving Mahlori was tendering Mpumie putting pressure on the wounds.

"She is losing so much blood—drive carefully Lucas"

"Shut up Mahlori shut the fuck up. Two important people in my life are endangered and you have the nerve of whining. What you should be doing is stopping the bleeding and making sure they survive. You owe that to Mpumie. She made sure you and your demon daughter were safe. Reciprocate the damn thing"

"A demon? What do you —"

"Shut up okay!"

"Sto-stop it Lucas" Mpumie pleaded blood was now coming out of her mouth.

"I'm sorry my love" - Lucas.

"This day was planned and known before I was born we can not go against God's will. My sun has set I've served my purpose in this world. I have to take another journey to the other side of the

world and this is not the end. I've not been conquered this is the end of my chapter in this world my story continues beyond the grave through your memories."

Mahlori and Lucas tried to get her to keep quiet but she was determined to say her piece. It was surprising that she managed to utter every single word clearly in her situation.

"Please don't die" - Mahlari.

Mpumi tried to laugh but the laugh turned into a painful cough "who spoke about death? I'm not going to die"

Mahlari almost believed her before she added "I will continue to live just not in this sack of flesh." She laughed at her own joke a joke that only she found funny.

Something will come out of this I promise"

" Mpumie don't close your eyes please. Mpumi! Lucas she is not breathing!"

Lucas hit the brakes hard his world crushing on him. "Lucas we need to go to the hospital please drive" Mahlari wailed begging Mpumie not to leave her.

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THE END.

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