

# HEARTS AND FLOWERS

A dark red rose is the central focus, with a bright, ethereal flame rising from its petals. The flame is composed of soft, glowing orange and yellow light, with some petals appearing to be part of the fire. The background is a dark, out-of-focus bokeh of light spots, creating a dreamlike atmosphere. The overall color palette is dominated by deep reds, blacks, and the warm tones of the fire.

WRITTEN BY BETH MACHOBANE

# ***HEARTS AND FLOWERS***

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***BETH MACHOBANE***

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**CHAPTER 01**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

"In Jesus' mighty name we pray," my mother says, closing the thirty minutes long morning prayer we have everyday.

"Amen." I say and open my eyes.

Being raised by a woman of prayer has saved me from a lot of things, but it has also robbed me of a chance to live my life and experience things out there. Mama lives by the teachings in the Bible and because of that she was strict in raising me, she still is. I was never allowed to go to parties or to drink alcohol. I am the girl that parents use as an example and the girl other children in my neighborhood hate.

"I know this isn't the job you studied for but Tebatso I want you to respect it and dedicate yourself to it," mama says and I nod vigorously. In this country any kind of job you get you have to be grateful for it.

"Get up my baby and finish preparing, your transport will soon be here," I quickly get on my feet and go to my bedroom to dress in the uniform I was given last week.

I am super nervous to start at the hotel, it's not just any hotel, it accommodates the rich and elite. If they give you bad reviews then your job is on the line but if they like you then you get fat tips. A friend of mine, Asavela is the one who got me this job. We became friends just over a year and a half ago, she and her mother moved to our neighborhood from the Eastern Cape. They started going to our church and that's how our parents met and through them we also met and became close.

The taxi hoots outside my house and I run out of my bedroom, my mother is already shouting for me to come out before they leave me behind. I grab my backpack from the kitchen table and head out. It's still dark outside and a little chilly, good thing I have a jacket in my bag. The quantum already has a few people in it, I greet them and go to the backseat

where Asavela will join me, the next stop is her house.

Atleast I know my way around the hotel, they trained us for a good two weeks. Asavela has been working here for a long while so she's not in the cleaning department, she works in the five star restaurant. Apparently that's where they make more tips and meet these rich and famous people. I would love to bump into my favorite gospel singer and maybe get a picture and an autograph.

"I'll call you at lunch time," she says to me and I nod my head. At least our lunch breaks and working hours are the same. I don't have to be roaming around alone. Yes, I could make new friends but my mother advised that I avoid bringing new people into my life, she says they will bring nothing but chaos and instability, things in which I do not need. She, Asavela and Teboho are the only friends I need, she said. Who am I to argue that? My mother has always known best.

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These suites are huge and the cleaning process is not as simple as ABC. I am already tired out of my mind and this is only the 3rd one I'm doing, I still have one more before my lunch break, after that my supervisor will tell me where she wants me. Now I understand why Asavela said I should be efficient and effective so the supervisor can move me from cleaning to something else. This department isn't for the faint at heart.

Jesus Christ! Some people are plain nasty. Why would a grown woman leave a used sanitary pad for someone else to pick up? That's personal hygiene, something an individual has to take care of themselves , or the rich don't have the same rules as us? I put on my gloves and pick it up, discarding it in the refuse bag.

"Good job, Tebatso," a voice says, startling me. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. I'm just going around to check on you guys," It's my supervisor, she almost gave me a heart attack.

"It's okay, I just wasn't expecting anyone," I say and she nods with a friendly smile. She wasn't so easy during our training, I thought she was going to be a monster but thank God for the change I see, hopefully it's not only for today.

"You're in room 206 after this, keep up the good work." she says and walks out of the bathroom.

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I am so famished, I cannot wait to devour the lunchbox my mother packed for me. We don't have much at home because we survive on the little she gets every month from her previous employer. She got injured while on duty and it caused serious damage to her leg and mama couldn't continue working. Now that I have this job I will be able to help her out where I can and ease the burden she's been carrying.

"Hey, come in here," a baritone voice says as I pass by, Is the person talking to me?

"Cleaner!" he shouts and I stop pushing my janitorial cart and walk back. The door is open but I still knock, the gentleman behind the big brown mahogany desk in an expensive suit uses his hand to gesture me in. He's looking at me from head to toe, in a manner I do not appreciate at all. I feel like pulling this dungaree down to hide my exposed thighs because right now that's where his eyes are glued.

"You called sir," I say, hoping he can tell me what he wants and I can be out of here, away from those predatory eyes.

"I have a meeting now with my partner and my PA is not in yet, organize us some refreshments," he says briskly and I don't know how to tell him that I'm just a cleaner.

"Why are you still standing there?" He half shouts and I quickly turn and walk out. I need to find my supervisor and ask what refreshments he's talking about, does he want tea, water or alcohol. I am confused, this wasn't part of my training.



"Tebatso, what were you doing in Mr Nsele's office?"  
oh thank God, that's my supervisor. She approaches me with a snapped eyebrow. What did she think I was doing in there?

"I was passing by and he called me in. He wants me to organize refreshments for his meeting, what do I bring?" I ask and only then does her face relax.

"Oh, how many people are attending the meeting?"  
She asks.

"He said he has a meeting with his partner so I guess it's just the two of them," I answer and she nods vigorously.

"Okay bring two bottles of still water, two bottles of sparkling water. Add ingredients of coffee and tea, they will choose for themselves." She says and I nod, I have registered all that in my head.

"Mr Nsele owns half of this hotel, he is also the CEO so please be on your A game, don't embarrass yourself and most importantly don't embarrass me."  
Oh my God! Talk about pressure.

I cannot afford to mess this up. The man looks like he has no heart at all, he might just fire me for bringing the wrong cups. I take a deep breath and hurry to the kitchen to get all that my supervisor counted.

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I walk back in the office and Mr Nsele is not sitting behind his desk, I hope he didn't make me run to get these things only for him to leave. I would be so pissed because this is my lunch break and I won't be allowed more time, even though it was wasted on the owner.

"Can you please make me a cup of coffee," a deep, calm voice says behind me and I yelp. Do people in this hotel want to give me a damn heart attack?

I pivot to see who it is and my breath is taken away immediately. Lord Jesus, I have never seen such a handsome and clean man. That black three piece suit was definitely tailor made for him and the color

matches that of his eyes. He is tall and built, he definitely has a gym membership because there's no way he was born this perfectly sculptured, or am I doubting Gods talent?

"Lady," he says and I snap out of my inappropriate thoughts. I need to kneel down and pray. What has come over me? I can never look at another man like that. I have Tebogo and he doesn't deserve a woman who is busy having a lustful eye for a complete stranger.

"I'm sorry sir, how do you like your coffee?" I ask and he flashes me a wide smile that exposes his perfect dentition. Is anything out of place with this man?

"Tebatso stop!" my subconscious sneers and I clear my throat. I am embarrassed.

"Black, strong with two sachets of sugar," He says and I nod, turning to make him a cup. I wonder if he is aware that he just described himself.

I don't think I have ever been so affected by any man, I don't know if it's because he's an important person in this hotel and my job might be on the line if I don't make him the best cup of coffee, or it's simply because I find him attractive.

"Your mother better not hear you say the last part," my subconscious says, wearing her church uniform and holding a King James Bible. She is very forward today but she's also right. My mother would freak if she knew I was looking at another man, she would quote verse after verse that forbids my behavior right now.

I stir so the sugar can dissolve, hopefully this is the best cup of coffee he has ever tasted and he demands that I'm moved from the cleaning department to the kitchen. I turn to give handsome stranger his coffee.

"Here you go sir," I let go of the cup before he could take it from me and it falls down, breaking and spilling the contents on the floor. Oh this is not happening.

"Ahh fuck!" He cusses and steps back.

I grab the dry dish cloth and go down on my knees to help wipe his pants and shoes. I am already crying, my first day at work is about to be my last. My mother is going to be so disappointed in me. This job gave her hope and my clumsiness just messed it all up.

"I am so sorry, sir," I say with a shaking voice and he's busy mumbling under his breath. He must want to kick me for ruining his expensive trousers and leather shoes.

"What's going on in here?" Mr Nsele asks walking in. I am on my knees, wiping coffee off his business partner. He is going to freak.

"I am sorry sir, I didn't mean to spill coffee all over him," I say without looking up at him and he just bursts out laughing, I mean a belly roaring laughter.

"What's your name?" Mr Nsele asks and I close my eyes. He's about to tell me that I'm fired and who can blame him honestly.

"Tebatso sir, Tebatso Morake," It comes out in an almost whisper.

"Well Tebatso, you have just become one of my favorite people." I frown and look up at him. He has a mischievous grin on his face. Is he being serious right now? "Go get something to clean up this mess," he says and I get on my feet and look at the gentleman in front of me. His eyes are fixed on Mr Nsele, he looks like he wants to strangle him right this minute. The tension between them is so thick one could cut through it with a knife and I doubt it started today, it looks like they don't get along at all. So how are they business partners?

## MHAMBI MABIZELA

To say I am pissed would be an understatement, I am livid. If I wasn't a gentleman I was surely going to slap the living shit out of that girl and definitely punch Langa and knock out his teeth. How dare he disrespect me in front of the help? He might be the CEO but that hotel belongs to the both of us, every staff member must know this and respect that. But how will they when they see him disrespecting me? What am I even saying, Langa is an immature spoilt brat who has no regard for anyone but himself and his money. I cannot believe that I once considered him my best friend, bloody son of a gun.

I get to my brothers nightclub, it's not far from the hotel. I needed to change out of this coffee stained suit because I have back to back meetings, I know he keeps a few in his office and thank God we are the same size and height. I couldn't go to my house

because it's far and I would be late for my appointments, if it's something I respect it's time.

I kill the engine at my reserved parking space and climb out of the car, I have less than an hour and a half until my next meeting. I was supposed to sit for forty five minutes with Langa to discuss the hotel but after what happened with the coffee I had to leave because I was too angry to be in same space as him. I will have my PA contact his PA and come up with a new date for our meeting.

I walk inside the club and I honestly cannot get used to seeing it so empty. It's always so buzzing with people and music, I am not really a fan of such scenes but I do come once in a while and sit in his office and watch everything from the tinted glass. Mzamo and I are totally different people, one would swear we do not have the same blood running in our veins. I am more reserved and that one is out there and loud, most times I am ashamed to tell people that we are siblings.



I open the office door and he's sitting on the couch, legs spread and shirt unbuttoned. There are two strippers dancing for him and this stupid fool is enjoying himself, this one will never change. I heave a sigh and walk in then close the door behind me, you'd think he'd stop the girls and tell them to leave the room but no, he just looks at me and back at the naked women.

"Okay, that's enough ladies," I say and they stop and look at my brother for confirmation and he nods. The two women grab their robes and put them on before leaving the office.

"You are such a party pooper, you could have just sat down and enjoyed the show," he says and I roll my eyes. I would never give another woman the time of day, I love my wife and that's it.

"Some of us have to work," I say, removing my blazer and kicking my shoes off. my brother quickly gets on his feet with a frown on his face.

"Ehh baba! What the fuck are you doing? Just because you disturbed my private dance doesn't mean I need you to finish what they started," he says and I smack my lips. If my parents were still alive I would ask if they truly gave birth to this clown.

"Don't be stupid, I just need to change my suit," I say.

"What happened to yours?" He asks, settling back down on the couch.

"Some girl at the hotel spilled coffee all over me," I say and take a deep breath, thinking about it just infuriates me more. "That incident came to Langa's amusement. The fool couldn't hide how happy he was, disrespecting me in front of the help. How are they supposed to respect me if he doesn't?" I complain and he chuckles.

"Why don't you just sell him your shares Mhabi? You honestly don't have to work with your enemy," he says and I shake my head.

"Over my dead body, I will not give them the last of our fathers blood, sweat and tears. Nsele senior took everything from baba and taught Langa to go after everything I touch," I say and he closes his eyes.

He doesn't like talking about our parents demise and I respect that but I will not let go of the hotel. It's the only thing they couldn't steal from my father, selling Langa the shares mean they get everything and to me that would be like spitting on my father's grave.

I open the storage cabinet and there are five suits, shitty colored suits. I look back at Mzamo and he chuckles, he knows I don't appreciate his style but I am kind of desperate right now. I look back in the horrific storage and pull out the grey, checked suit. Who still wears checked suit like? Thanks to Langa and that girl I have to walk around looking like an outdated Mafia boss.

"Please get one of your waiters to take my suit to the dry cleaners," I say and he nods in agreement. "Thanks bro, I'll see you on Saturday." I say, putting on my shoes.

"What's happening on Saturday?" How can he remember when all he thinks about is women, more women and how those women can be useful to him.

"My father inlaws birthday celebration," I say, annoyed that he forgot.

"Oh yes!" I click my tongue.

I told him about this the same day my wife told me because I needed him to clear his schedule. I cannot survive my wife's family on my own, they are...uhm I don't even know how to describe them. For me to sit through their gatherings I need my brother there with me.

**CHAPTER 02**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

It has been a whole entire week working at the hotel and I will say that I've been trying my best to do my job and not spill coffee on co-owners. That day the man I came to know as Mr. Mabizela, fifty percent owner of this hotel, stormed out of the office angrily and that seemed to make Mr. Nsele very happy. I still don't understand why he wasn't angry at me for what I did to his partner nor why he found it amusing. But even a blind person could sense the tension between the two men so maybe that's why he didn't care to act.

Luckily the news didn't reach my supervisor and I couldn't have been any more relieved. She is happy with my work and has been singing my praises and referring the other newbies to me to show them how it's done. My mother says I am the supervisor of the newbies when I told her this and I just laughed. And No, I didn't tell her about the coffee incident.

"Ready to go eat?" Asavela asks from behind me and I pivot and nod, holding my lunchbox up.

"Yes I am babe," I say and we walk out of the locker room, making our way outback to eat with the other hotel workers who are on their lunch break.

We find Muna, the supervisor talking to the workers, holding a clipboard and a pen, I wonder what's going on. We sit down at our usual spot and open our lunch boxes, my mother made fat cakes and I'm having them with atchaar and polony. Asavela has sandwiches, she gives me two slices in exchange for two fat cakes, that's how we have been doing since I started working here.

"Girls," Muna says, standing in front of us with pleading eyes.

"Is everything okay?" Asavela asks, with a mouthful of my mother's delicious fat cakes.

"No, I have just been asked to make 10 waiters available for this Saturday to work at some elite party," she says then exhales sharply, "I'm in need of

three more people and I'm hoping that you two can agree to this. I know it's short notice but the pay is good," she says and Asavela and I exchange looks.

"I'm all about the money Muna so I am all in," she says without any doubt and I bite my lower lip. Tomorrow Tebogo is hosting a Sunday school event and I promised him to be there.

"I am sorry but I can't," I say and Asavela nudges me with an elbow.

"Please Tebatso, you will be getting R3500 for just one night. They are desperate because the catering company told them this morning that they can no longer work and we were asked to take over," that much money for only one night?

"Are you serious?" I ask and Muna nods vigorously. That's a lot of money and it will definitely help my mother and I out, pay day is still very far.

"If that's the case then I am in," I say and my supervisor heaves a sigh of relief and writes our names down.

"I will sms you all the details by the end of the day and you'll be paid at the end of the night. Thank you both so much, I'll see you tomorrow." She says and walks away.

"This money couldn't have come at the right time, I have my eye on this dress I want to wear to a party next weekend," Did she just say party? How does she attend parties with a mother like hers?

"Party? Do we have something at church next week?" I ask and she laughs, shaking her head no.

"Church? Psssttt! My friends from Eastern Cape will be in town next week for one of their cousins birthday party," she explains and I'm still confused.

"Uhm, does your mother know?" I ask and she's thrown into a fit of laughter, how is my question funny?



"Tebatso, you know very well that we have mothers who believe in the same things. My mother would call the pastors from church to come talk to me," she says and that's exactly why this party thing is confusing me.

"Exactly, so how will you leave her house to go to some party at night?" I ask and she rolls her eyes, chewing on her food.

Once she swallows I get an answer, "Babe, I work at a hotel so I tell mama that I have nightshift overtime then I go partying," she says and I gasp in shock. I have never lied to my mom, she would see right through me.

"So this wouldn't be the first time you're doing this?" I ask and she nods.

"I am twenty six years old Tebatso, my mom wants to treat me like a child because she wants me to live a certain life. I am young and I want to explore

before I settle in the role she wants me to play,"  
wow, I don't know what to say to that.

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Tebogo called me before my lunch break ended and told me that he will come pick me up from work since he is knocking off early. We haven't seen each other much since I started working here, when I was still unemployed he would come to my house during his lunch break to eat with me. He works as a male nurse at a public hospital not far from my house. That's how we managed to spend some time together on weekdays, then on some Saturdays I visit his house and Sunday it's church. Both our mothers advised that we spend all of our time together so we can know everything about each other before we get married and truth be told it's all suffocating. As much as I love him, I also need time to myself, that's why I thank God for this job because I get to escape seeing him everyday.

My co-workers and I are walking out through the back door, I am so tired I just want to go home and

take a bath then relax. Imagine if cooking duties were still mine, I'm thankful to my mother for taking over since I started work. I will only help with house chores on weekends because I don't report for duty.

The rest of the group goes to the waiting staff taxi and I head to the parking lot where Tebogo said he is parked. I offered Asavela a ride and she said no very quickly, apparently on Fridays the taxi first stops at some bottle store and they buy alcohol to enjoy while making their way home. All that I've found out about Asavela today shocked me, I thought me and her were the same all around, but my friend is basically living a double life. I am not judging though.

"Oh my love," Tebogo says as soon as I climb in his car. I smile and lean in for a quick peck.

"Hey, thank you for fetching me," I say and he takes my hand.

"I just had to come because I miss you so much Tebatso," he says and I look out the window

blushing. As much as I enjoyed the few days of not seeing him I am glad he's here.

"I missed you too," I say.

"Can we please start at the mall, I need to buy everything that will be needed tomorrow for the Sunday school function," he says and I close my eyes, "We are going to have so much fun praising the Lord," I feel guilty instantly because I am about to disappoint him.

"About that Tebogo," I say and he furrows his eyebrows.

"What's the matter?" Oh good God, how do I say this to him? He takes his church duties very seriously.

"I honestly wanted to be there but I have to work tomorrow, my supervisor only told me today," I say and he closes his eyes.

"No Tebatso, you promised to be there with me tomorrow. Most importantly you promised the Lord

that you will serve him tomorrow," he says, making me feel more guilty. I know I promised but God will understand that the money I will make tomorrow will help my mom and I so much.

"Tebogo I know but you also have to understand that this is my job and I only just started. I couldn't say no to working," I say and he chuckles. "You want to tell me that you've never pulled out of doing the Lord's work because of your job?" I ask and he swallows, causing his Adams apple to bob up and down like a monkey on a stick.

"You know what it's fine, Tebatso. I will pull off the event with those who will be available," I throw my backpack in the back seat and strap my seatbelt. He is just being unnecessary right now and I am not in the mood to fight over something so petty.

## **MHAMBI MABIZELA**

"You look absolutely breathtaking babe," I say and she blushes, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear.

"Thank you my love," Makhosazana says, turning away from the mirror to face me.

I make my way to her and circle my arms around her waist.

"Let's have some fun tonight, we have both been working tirelessly this past week," I say and she throws her head back and groans.

"I know right, we need a vacation," she says and I chuckle. I know my wife, she is just saying that for conversation sake, she is invested in running her father's company so much she would still work on our vacation. We have never been on one since our honeymoon five years ago and it's been really hard because I love travelling the world.

"We should really go babe, maybe we will come back with a third person," I say with a smile and she

chokes of her saliva and starts coughing violently. She wiggles out of my hold and I shake my head, this is what happens everytime I talk about having children.

"Makhosazana, you still want kids right?" I just had to ask this one directly because I cannot hold it in anymore.

"Uhm, can we talk about this some other time love," she says and I shake my head. I just need a yes or no answer.

"Its a simple question Khosi, do you want children or not?" I ask once again and she folds her arms across her chest.

"Not now okay, maybe in a few years," she says unsure and something deep inside of me tells me that Khosi doesn't want to have children. All she wants to do is work like a robot and sometimes forget that she is someone's wife. Please don't get me wrong, one of the reasons I fell in love with my wife was because of her work ethic, how committed

she is to the company. But we are married now and we have acquired so much to not have children to leave it behind for.

"You'll find me in the car," I say and turn to leave the room.

"Babe, Mhambi," she calls after me but I continue walking.

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We aren't saying a word to each other on our way to her parents house. I'm keeping quiet because I don't want to end up saying something I will definitely regret later on and knowing Khosi, she decided to say nothing because of her pride. My wife never wants to admit when she has hurt someone or when she is plain wrong in a situation. She hardly ever sacrifices anything for our marriage but she always expects me to be understanding and there for her. This is a two way street but I feel like I am the only one who is giving and giving but get nothing in return.



Her parents house and yard are huge and there are already a couple of cars parked. This birthday party will only be attended by close family and friends, my father in-law likes keeping the public out. The only things you will find in the media are things he wants people to know, he is very guarded and with how the world works no one can blame him.

I climb out first and round the car to go open her door, I might be pissed but I am still a gentleman. She takes my hand and climbs out.

"Thank you," she says and I nod before taking her hand and walking towards the garden where there's a set-up.

We find a waitress with a tray of champagne and I take two glasses and hand one to Khosi who takes a sip immediately. We continue walking until we find her family, that is her parents and two of her sisters and their husbands.

"Ahh and you finally arrive," my mother in-law says and my wife chuckles.

"I am sorry we are a little late mama," Khosi says kissing her mother's lips and hugging her father then her sisters and their partners.

"Mhambi, was your wife busy working?" Her pregnant sister, Hlengi asks and I shake my head no. I am lying just so her family is not on her case but she did waste time on that virtual meeting.

"No Hlengi, she wasn't. My beautiful wife was taking her time to look this good," I say and Khosi looks at me with a wide smile and leans in to peck my lips.

"Thanks for the save babe," she whispers in my ear and I want to roll my eyes.

"I am glad to hear that you're not burying yourself in your work like you always do Makhosazana. You need to take it easy and work on giving your husband heirs and heiresses," her father says and I am shocked that she's not choking on her own saliva. "I also need grandchildren," Jiyane adds.

"Oh daddy, my sisters have given you what? 5 grandchildren and Hlengi is baking another one. We still have Zandile to give you more," she says.

"You are the eldest Makhosazana and a married woman for that matter. You also need to have your own children," I want to kiss Jiyane's buttocks right now.

"Well that will happen in due time," she says, giggling her way out of this conversation. My phone chimes and it's my brother, Mzamo telling me that he has arrived. I asked to be excused to go get him at the parking lot.

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All party formalities are over and done with, we also had a three course meal and now we are enjoying the music and free flowing alcohol. I am sitting with my brother because I just don't gel with my brothers in-law, they are good people but their conversations bore me to death. So in order to not appear rude I always invite my brother to all family gatherings to

chill with me, he hates these type of chills but he pulls up for me like I do for him. I mean how could we not when it's just the two of us.

"Is everything okay between you and Khosi?" He asks, taking a sip of his cognac.

"Not really, I don't think my wife wants children," I say and the shock on his face is something I cannot begin to explain.

"What! Then who does she expect to inherit all that we are working for? I mean you need to have lots and lots of kids coz I'm not the type to have and raise kids Mhambi," he says and I laugh at the horror I see on his face. I still wonder how he hasn't fathered half of Johannesburg, I mean he has a new girl every other week.

"Well if she continues to dodge this then I guess our money will go to charity," I say and he gulps down his drink.

"That's bullshit, if Makhosazana doesn't want to give you children then I guess she will have to agree to you taking a second wife who will do what she's not prepared to do," he says and I raise an eyebrow. Me? A polygamist, I don't think so. I just need to talk to my wife and establish when she thinks she will be ready to give me kids. Time is not on our side, I am 35 years old and she is 32, I hear it gets more harder to get pregnant in your thirties.

I look up and my eyes land on the girl that poured coffee all over me, I still remember her face because she was horrified and the way I was so livid I kept my piercing eye on her. Her face will not easily leave my memory, she looks beautiful when she's not scared to death I must admit. Now the question is, what is she doing here holding a tray of drinks at my father in laws birthday party? I don't want my staff around my private life, the next thing you know there's gossip in the work place about you and that's where the disrespect starts.

"I see you have spotted my future sister in law already," Mzamo says, bringing me back from my

train of thoughts. I look at him and he is smiling like a complete fool.

"Don't be stupid, I don't plan on taking another wife. That girl is the one who spilled coffee on me the other day at the hotel," I say and he laughs.

"Oh that's the clumsy cat? She's fuckin' hot," he says and I punch his shoulder, "ouch! Dude what the fuck?" He says pissed.

"Would you stop looking at every woman like a piece of meat," I say and he chortles.

"Mhambi, I am just appreciating the beauty of Gods creation brother that's all," I honestly think the real Mzamo was switched at the hospital with this crazy imposter sitting next to me.

I, like everyone has had one two many drinks and because of that my bathroom trips have multiplied by five. I stand up and leave Mzamo flirting with the waitress who brought us drinks, my brother was baptized with women cum I swear to you. I pass by

my wife and her sister's dancing with their cousins and she pretends not to see me and that's fine with me coz we are not okay because she won't say if she wants kids or not.

I get inside the house and head to the bathroom downstairs, I do my business and when I'm done I wash my hands and exit. I need one of these waitresses to get me a bottle of water, just to sober up a little. I turn on the corridor and bump into a tray of champagne and everything spills on me and whoever was holding it.

"Oh my God, Oh my God," the woman screams as I step back to assess the damage. "I am so sorry sir," I look at the person and throw my head back.

"Are you kidding me! You again?" I say and tears are already welling up in her eyes, I see that those aren't that far when it comes to her.

"Oh my God, sir I am really sorry. I honestly didn't see you at all," she says, rubbing her hands together in an attempt to pacify me. She is scared out of her

mind but in all honesty she couldn't have seen me coming.

"Hey it's okay, this time around it's not your fault," I say and her eyes widen. She must have thought I was going to rain terror on her.

"Please allow me to clean your jacket," she says and I shake my head. I'll send it to the dry cleaners on Monday.

"Don't worry about it, it's a dark color and I'm with friends and family so it doesn't really matter," I say, but her eyes are pleading with me to let her.

"It will stain and I will feel so bad, just let me help please," she begs and I heave a heavy sigh.

"Okay, get whatever you'll need and meet me in the bathroom," I say, pointing to where it is. She nods her head and hurries back to the kitchen.

"Please get me a bottle of water," I shout after her and she looks back, nodding her head vigorously. I



make my way to the rest room to wash off the champagne on my face in the mean time.

**CHAPTER 03**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

I cannot believe that this is happening to me AGAIN, this guy must think I am some sort of an incompetent fool. I know I am, I should have held on to the tray for dear life because I haven't really waitressed before except for when we were being trained. I just hope and pray that they do not cut my pay to cover the broken champagne flutes, Lord knows I need the entire R3500.

I get in the kitchen and grab the dustpan, broom and a mop. I need to wipe the floor and get rid of the glass fragments before they hurt anyone. I am back where I bumped into Mr. Mabizela and clean up before the owners of this house can come in and see the mess that has happened. I can tell they are rich and influential and if they tell my supervisor that they want me gone, I'll be gone just like that.

"Tebatso, what happened?" I close my eyes, I was hoping Muna doesn't see this.

"I am sorry Muna, I bumped into a guest, he was coming out of the hallway," I explain with a shaking voice.

"It's okay, these things happen. The guests have had a couple of drink, I know how it goes," oh thank God she's understanding, "Just tell me he's not mad at you," she says and I shake my head.

"Fortunately he is not blaming me for the accident, I just need to help him wash out the stain before it dries out," I explain and she bends down and takes the dustpan and broom from me.

"Go do that, I'll take care of this," I nod and get up, rushing to the kitchen where my co-workers are busy with the dishes, refilling glasses and making snacks. I open the kitchen sink and take out the dishwashing liquid, luckily there's a wide container so I take it and run back to the bathroom, fuck I forgot his bottled water so hurry back to the kitchen and take one out of the fridge.

"Tebatso, why are you running around like a wet headless chicken?" Asavela asks and I just ignore her and run out, I've already made Mr. Mabizela wait.

I find him sitting on the bathtub and focusing on his phone, he looks up at me and I offer him a nervous smile and apologize for taking long. He says it's okay and asks for his bottled water, I hand it to him and he opens it and gulps half of it down. I remember that I came in here to take care of the champagne stain on his obviously expensive jacket.

I mix warm water and a drop of the dishwashing liquid and grab the towel on the rack, I dip it in the solution and gently dab on the stain, I repeat the process until I've covered the whole area. When I'm done I take the dry portion of the towel and wet it with just warm water and redab the area to 'rinse'.

"Looks like you are a pro at this," he says and I give him a lopsided smile.

"My mother knows every trick in the book, she passed them to me and I'll pass them to my

daughter," I say and he chuckles. He has a deep baritone voice, he can't even escape it in his laugh.

"You want to have children?" He asks and I nod vigorously. "Yes, I do. Show me a woman who doesn't," I say, focusing on his jacket.

"How many would you like?" What's with the personal questions? I mean he should be in a hurry for me to hand him his jacket so he can go back to the party, but here he is playing Q and A in the bathroom with the help.

"If God blesses me financially then I want a whole soccer team but if my life doesn't change then I guess two will do," I say and he nods imperceptibly, with his eyes fixed on me. He has an intense gaze, hence I have been avoiding to look at him. I remember how I wanted to pee myself when he gave me the most intimidating look on Monday in Mr. Nsele's office.

The bathroom door opens and my eyes fly there to see who it is, a guy who has Mr. Mabizela's facial

features smiles, darting between myself and the man whose jacket is in my hands. He chuckles, throwing his head back and I frown looking at the intimidating, gorgeous man I have been talking about children with. He is looking at the man at the door with a snapped eyebrow, he looks annoyed.

"So you can't knock anymore? Bathrooms are a private area and you can't just budge in like that," Mr. Mabizela says to his lookalike, I assume it's his brother. Could this be their fathers birthday party? Hence we were tasked to work here today?

"You don't waste time bro, I am glad you are already trying," he says and I narrow my eyes, what is he talking about?

"Fuck off Mzamo," he says and holds out his hand for the jacket, I hand it to him and step back so he can pass. "Thank you for cleaning the stain," he says, with no smile whatsoever. I just nod and look away and for some reason this whole thing is funny to the other guy.

"Yes, thank you so much for cleaning the stain in a closed bathroom. Me and my brother appreciate it," he says and Mr. Mabizela pushes him out and closes the door behind them.

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"Tebatso, you have to wake up now or we are going to be late for church," my mother says, gently shaking me and I groan in frustration.

"Can I please skip church today? God will understand please," I am too tired, I mean I only got home around two thirty in the morning. Those people surely know how to get drunk and have a good time.

"That has never happened in this house, Tebatso. We need to go so we can give glory to God for all the goodness he has brought us," Jesus Christ, we do that everyday though. Asking to skip one Sunday doesn't make me ungrateful.

She pulls the covers down and I want to scream and just disappear because all I want to do is sleep. I

finally get out of bed and start laying it neatly, this is also one of the most important house rules my mother has in place. You cannot leave the bedroom before laying your bed properly, you know why? Because cleanliness is next to Godliness, I told you that we take the bible very seriously here.

She walks in with a bathing dish and I start undressing my pyjamas and grab my washing cloth and toiletries. Hopefully today's service flies through and we come back home so I can cook then relax for work tomorrow. Once I'm done bathing I put on my dress, a light jersey on top and my head scarf.

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I love kids but today they just got on my last nerve, I was hoping for a quick service but they just dragged it. I forced my eyes to remain open throughout the whole thing and atleast that's a fight I won. If I had fell asleep then I wouldn't have heard the last of it from my mother who is next to me.



"As a Junior pastor and leader of our Sunday school, I would like to thank God for a successful children's weekend. As you all saw today they are filled with the holly spirit and very much ready to serve the King of Kings," that's Tebogo talking.

He hasn't spoken to me since Friday, he is mad that I chose to go to work rather than attending his event yesterday. He is being childish and I refuse to be the bigger person in this issue.

"Jesus says, let the children come to me for the kingdom of God belongs to them," the church claps and shouts hallelujah, "I want to thank each and every person who came to help me make yesterday a success for the children. Thank you for choosing the Lord's work over everything else, may God bless you," oh wow!

Now he is using the pulpit to send me a message, I cannot believe this level of pettiness from him.

I am talking to Asavela by the parking lot, we are both waiting for our mothers to come out so we can leave. She says she wants to go to the mall to get the dress she was telling me about. I ask if she's not tired

and she says she's used to staying up until the early hours of the morning, I wish I was as fresh as her. Her mother comes out alone and greets me before she and Asavela leave for home.

"So you are not going to apologize Tebatso?" I pivot and find Tebogo behind me, I frown and fold my arms across my chest.

"Apologize for what now?" I ask with furrowed brows and he chuckles in disbelief. In all honesty though, what did I do wrong?

"You missed an important event, one that I organized for weeks and weeks," I close my eyes defeated.

"I told you I had to work, Tebogo! What did you expect me to do? Tell my supervisor that I couldn't work because my boyfriend needs me to hold his hand during an event for his Sunday school children?" I snap and his eyes are widened, eyeballs threatening to fall off.

"Oh my sweet Tibi," we both turn, with phony smiles to offer his mother, who is holding hands with my mom.

"Oh, Mama Lilly. It has been a while," I kiss both her cheeks.

"It has my baby, I was telling your mother that we should all go to my house to eat Sunday lunch. Pheletso and I cooked last night," she says and I want to give an excuse to skip this but I know my mother has already agreed to it.

"That sounds good mama," at least I won't have to cook, they will definitely give us food to take home for later on.

"In that case let's get in the car, Tebogo please go find Pheletso and tell her we are leaving," mama Lilly says and her son hurries to go find his sister. I get in the front of Tebogo's Polo vivo and our mothers get in the back and save space for Pheletso.

## **MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

A knock comes through my door and I get annoyed because I told my personal assistant to hold my calls and not allow anyone in here. I mean I am on an important virtual meeting trying to get these people to sell me their company, it's currently struggling but I have plans to make it a success.

The door opens without me giving any permission and my PA walks in looking nervous, she better be because I told her to not disturb me. I mute myself so that the people I'm in this meeting with don't hear anything.

"What?" I say, snapping my fingers and she jumps startled. If she wasn't efficient I was going to fire her for being so soft Christ!

"I am sorry ma'am, I know you said no disturbances but your husband called. He says he cannot get a hold of you and he's waiting at the restaurant like...uhm a complete fool," the last part comes out in a whisper and my heart drops into my stomach.

How the fuck did I forget about lunch with my husband?

"Oh my God, please call him back and ask him to give me ten minutes. I need to wrap up this call," I say and she nods before heading out of my office. To think I was ready to kill this poor girl.

I unmute myself and tell the participants of the meeting that I have an emergency to attend to and I would like to reschedule. They understand and say they will wait to hear from my people for a date and time. I end the meeting and throw everything I need in my handbag before running out of my office.

I know Mhambi is mad at me and I honestly cannot blame him, I mean I begged him to meet me for lunch because I wanted us to fix things. My husband has been giving me the cold shoulder ever since we had the little talk about kids on Saturday. Can you imagine being in the same house as someone who isn't talking to you? It has been three days already and I'm over it, hence I wanted us to sit down and talk things over.

I get to the restaurant I made a reservation at and find the hostess by her desk near the door. She smiles sweetly at me and I return it quickly, she's a lovely girl and we normally have a chit chat but today I just need to get to my husband before he blows a fuse.

"Mrs Mabizela, how are you?" She asks and I nod, looking around the restaurant.

"I am fine thanks Phumla, what about you?" I honestly don't care to know today because I have a fuming husband waiting for me.

"I am well thank you," she says and I nod vigorously, clutching at my expensive handbag for dear life.

"Uhm can you please show me where my husband is sitting," I say and her smile fades away. That facial expressions has my heart thumping against my chest.

"Uhm...I'm sorry ma'am but he left about 15 minutes ago," she says and I close my eyes. This is bad, really bad. Mhambi is pissed and it's going to take a lot to make him forgive me for this.

"How did he seem?" I ask but I think I already have an idea.

"Well he seemed really angry, I have never seen him like that before," she explains and I quickly take out my phone and try his number, it rings until it takes me straight to voicemail. Aibo kushibile!

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I came straight home when I left the restaurant, hoping to find him waiting because he hates being around people when he is mad. But I got here and his car wasn't in the driveway and I knew from there that he wasn't home. I continued trying his phone but nothing, I also called his office and they said he left to meet with me for lunch and told them he wasn't coming back in.

It's 9 pm now and he's still not home, I am tempted to call his brother but I know he probably told Mzamo not to answer my phone calls. I don't want us to go to bed angry, it will just make matters worse. I take my phone again to call him and it still takes me to voicemail. Shit Mhambi, where the hell are you!

I blow out the candles on the dining table, I ordered out and set the table to make up for missing lunch but it looks like it won't be happening. I take my phone and go sit in the lounge with my glass of wine. I go on WhatsApp and notice that he read all my messages but there's no reply, I mean his last seen is also just a minute ago. I quickly try his phone but this time it goes straight to voicemail, Khosi you really messed up this time around.

I open my eyes and realize that I'm still on the couch with a glass of wine and the bottle on the side table. I reach for my phone and gasp for air when I see that it's eleven minutes before the hour two in the morning. I slowly get off the couch yawning and pick up the remote to switch off the TV. Sluggishly, I



make my way to our bedroom while trying him on the phone again but it's still on voicemail. I am worried now but there's nothing I can do at this hour, hopefully he slept at Mzamo's house to cool down.

**CHAPTER 04**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

I didn't want to take my problems back to Mzamo, I am the type that likes dealing with his own issues before taking them elsewhere. Yes, I will share what I'm going through with him now and again but my brother is a free soul and most times his advises don't make sense to a man like me. We are the same coin but I am heads and he's tails.

I decided to check in at my hotel after I left the restaurant Khosi made a reservation for us but never showed up. Who does that? I mean what kind of wife puts her job before everything? How long am I expected to remain second to her company? When will our marriage be a priority to Makhosazana? I am only human and Lord knows I can only take so much.

I won't be going to the office today, I told my personal assistant to forward everything that's important to my inbox so I can get on with it. I will only leave this room to go see Langa, we need to discuss a lot of things regarding the Hotel. We could

have done that last week but the coffee issue happened and I left angrily. Funny thing is the same girl spilled champagne on me this past weekend at my father in laws birthday party, but this time around it wasn't her fault. She also helped me remove the stain on one of my favorite jackets and I was grateful for that.

A knock comes through my door, "Housekeeping," I quickly check my phone for time and It shows that I should have showered and left the room to meet Langa. I quickly get up from the couch and place down the cup of coffee.

I open the door and scoff when I find the clumsy cat at my door step.

"Please don't spill cleaning detergents on me today," I joke and she laughs nervously.

I step to the side and allow her in with her janitorial cart.

"I can come back when you're done," she says softly and I shake my head, she can't fall behind with her job because of me.

"No, I requested for housekeeping to come this early so I should have been out to give you a chance to do your job," I say and she nods her head, looking everywhere but me.

I've realized that she doesn't like looking at my face, I know I am not ugly so it can only mean that I intimidate her. Mzamo always says I am a scary man and I need to smile more.

"I will just go shower quickly and be out of your hair, you can start with the bedroom while I'm in the bathroom," I say and she moves to the bedroom but I stop her in her tracks. "We have bumped into each other so much and I don't even know your name," I say but she doesn't turn to face me.

"My name is Tebatso, Mr Mabizela," she says and I repeat her name in my head.

I wonder what it means, my sotho is so bad.

"Tebatso, okay."

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My meeting with Langa was good, we agreed on everything and that was a first after so many years. We are normally at each other's throats and looking to have the final say in matters concerning the hotel. I am glad that it went smoothly because I wasn't in the mood to fight with him today, I have a lot on my plate and a pissing contest with Langa wasn't in my plans for the day.

"I heard you slept here, trouble in paradise?" Langa asks, with a smirk on his face. Will he ever just allow us to part ways without saying anything stupid.

"Yes Langa, trouble in paradise, Khosi and I are getting a divorce and I am so miserable, I don't even know what to do with myself," I say with a serious face and that seems to wipe that smug off his face.

He would rejoice if Khosi and I were to really divorce, I know he would run after her again to try his luck because Langa wants everything that I have or had. I remember how he persuaded my wife shortly after we got married, he told Khosi that he was the better

man and it wasn't too late to divorce me but my wife told him off and came to tell me everything. Our feud goes back to our fathers, no let me correct myself, Nsele senior is the one who started this whole thing when he betrayed my father who was his best friend and business partner. I don't like talking or thinking about this whole thing because it brings back so much pain. My phone vibrates in my hand as I walk back in my hotel room, it's my brother.

"Mzamo," I answer.

"Ehh baba, what the fuck is going on?" He asks and I frown, placing my laptop and the files I got at the meeting on the coffee table.

"What are you talking about?" I throw myself on the couch and wait to hear what this ranting is about.

"Makhosazana just left the club crying like a widow, she says you didn't sleep at home and you won't pick up her calls," smh!

Oh now she wants to act like she cares.

"Did she tell you what she did?" I ask and I hear him heave a sigh on the other end of this call.

"I know I always give her grief but come on Mhambi, she was just a few minutes late ndoda," He says and I chuckle.

She calls being an hour late just a few minutes? She can't even own up to her shit, I was planning on going home today but her lying to my brother to make herself look good and turn me into a bad guy just pissed me off. I hang up my phone and throw it on the cushion next to me.

## **TEBATSO MORAKE**

"Tibi, can I come in my baby?" My mother asks, knocking on my door. I am honestly tired from a long day at work, I am in no mood for a chat.

"Come in mama," I say, sitting up right. Hopefully she doesn't stretch whatever it is that she wants to say to me because I want to sleep.

She walks in wearing her night gown and holding a Bible in her hands, I close my eyes because she's about to preach something to me. If only she knew how hard I work at the hotel then she would allow me to rest, God will not banish me to hell for being exhausted. My mother can be too much at times. She sits down at the edge of my bed and heaves a heavy sigh.

"I wanted us to discuss something before you retire for the night ngwanaka," I want to scream at the top of my lungs but that would get me in a lot of trouble.

"What's wrong mama?" I ask.



"Tebogo was here earlier on," she says and I mentally roll my eyes. "He says things between the two of you aren't good because you won't apologize for breaking a promise," she adds and I chuckle, what else can I do?

"I didn't do anything wrong ma! Yes, I said I will be there for his event but work came up, I couldn't say no, so what more does Tebogo want from me?" I half shout and the shock on my mother's face has my subconscious hiding under the bed.

"Why are you raising your voice Tebatso?" She asks, calmly.

"It's just so frustrating mama, Tebogo is acting like I didn't show up for our wedding. I had to work, we prayed for this job and now that I have it you both want me to not go so I can hold his hand for an event?" I say annoyed and my mother blinks rapidly, she didn't expect this at all but I am only human.

"Promises you make to your future husband and the Lord are important Tebatso," she says and that just pisses me off more.

"Okay mama, what would you have done if you were me?" I ask and she swallows hard. I fold my arms across my chest and wait for her to think about it.

"I would have made efforts to show my future husband that I am sorry for breaking a promise and not act like I did nothing wrong," wow, just wow!

"What did I expect? Of course you will take his side," I say meekly and get under the covers.

"Tebatso! What has gotten into you?" She snaps and I huff.

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My mother woke me up thirty minutes earlier so we could have our daily morning prayer and after that I stood up to go boil water and prepared for work. We didn't have our usual chit chat because I am still

annoyed with her for taking Tebogo's side. What's so hard for them to understand that I had to work? How many times has Tebogo stood me up for his job? How many times has he skipped church because there was an emergency at the hospital? Why is it different when it's me who has to go to work?

Today I am going to eat alone, it's chaotic in the restaurant and they needed all hands on deck. Asavela will have her lunch when things die down. I take my lunchbox out of the fridge that's in the staff kitchen and warm it up in the microwave, my mom still made my lunch box even though I was mad at her. I leave the kitchen to the garden outback where we normally eat because it's not as cold as the kitchen in the basement. I take the elevator to the ground floor and when it pings open I run into Muna who is pushing a room service trolley.

"Oh thank God I ran into you," she says and I frown. "Please take this to room 306, Mr. Mabizela has been waiting on his lunch for an hour now," she adds and I want to disappear, must I always be in that man's face? How do I say no without making my

supervisor pissed? "I know it's your lunch hour but the kitchen is chaotic and we are short of hands," I heave a sigh and place my lunchbox on the trolley and press the elevator to the third floor. "You are a star, thank you so much," she scurries off.

I am in the corridor praying to God to send one of my colleagues my way so I can ask them to take this food to room 306 instead. I can't be in the same room as that man one more time, he's too intense for me. Each time he looks at me I feel like he is piercing through me, I don't even trust myself to not be clumsy in his presence. He makes me too nervous and I hate feeling that way. I am outside his door and still no one comes to my rescue, I can't stall and have his food go cold. This time he will report me and get me fired for real.

I knock on the door, announcing that it's room service and he shouts come in from the inside. I take a deep breath and turn the door handle.

"What is happening in the kitchen? I hope our guests are not receiving this slow service!" He asks, sitting on the couch with his back towards me.

I clear my throat, "They say they are short staffed and they have so many orders," I say and he quickly turns to face me.

"Oh, Tebatso." He remembers my name. He gets up from the couch and makes his way to me, loosening his tie.

"Here is your order sir, is it correct?" I ask and he starts removing the lids to check if everything is here.

"Yes, this is correct. Thank you," he says and I offer him a polite smile before taking my lunch box. "Wait what is that?" He asks.

"Oh I'm sorry, they caught me when I was on my way to have lunch." I say.

"What are you having? The aroma is making me dizzy," He asks and I blink rapidly. Why is he asking me this? Also is dizzy good or bad?

"It's pap, tomato gravy and ox liver," I say, looking down. He must be disgusted by my food, I mean the man is about to eat food I can barely pronounce. Things that cost my days pay.

"You got to be kidding me! I don't remember the last time I had such a homely meal," he says and I quickly look up to find him smiling. "I know this is probably a lot to ask but Tebatso can we please exchange our lunch," my eyes widen from shock.

"Excuse me sir?" he takes a deep breath.

"Can I please have your lunchbox and you can take my food, please," he says meekly and I look at him then at my lunch box, is he being serious? He holds out his hand and I know he's not joking. I hand him my lunch box hesitantly and he grabs it and goes back to his couch already opening the Tupperware container.

"You can come with the trolley and eat in here," Is that allowed? I don't want to get into trouble.

"Tebatso," he calls and I snap out of my shock and

push the trolley to the lounge. I sit on the comfortable single couch and look at the food I am about to eat, it's a lot. I doubt I'll finish everything. Maybe I will take some home to my mother, even though I'm still pissed at her.

I watch him roll up the sleeve of his crisp white shirt and dig into the food with his bare hand, the moans of pleasure he lets out has me amused. I didn't think rich people could crave our basic foods, but look at Mr. Mabizela licking his fingers. I decide to stop looking at him eat like I am some creep and start eating these fancy foods before me. A knock comes through the door and we look at each other.

"Come in," he shouts after swallowing and the door opens and in walks the guy who looks like him, the one that found us in the bathroom. The first thing he does when his eyes land on me is laugh.

"Mzamo, what are you doing here?" Mr. Mabizela asks, not pleased at all.

"Did I disturb something?" He is smiling from ear to ear. I quickly get on my feet and pull down my dungaree.

"Mr. Mabizela, I will leave you to it," I say nervously and this intense man points me back to the couch.

"Sit down and eat your food Tebatso," he didn't have to tell me twice. I sit back down and pick up the knife and start eating.

"Uhm Tebatso, that's her name?" The man says, settling next to Mr. Mabizela. "It's nice to meet you nommer...", he holds out two fingers and I frown. Mr. Mabizela shoots his a fulminating gaze but that doesn't seem to scare the man next to him. "My name is Mzamo, I am his little brother and I'm more fun." he says with a wide smile and I just nod, what more could I have done?



**CHAPTER 05**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

"I just want to know if you have smashed or you are trying to smash," Mzamo says, completely annoying me.

"I am not you dude, I don't feel the need to sleep with anything in skirt. Incase you forgot, I am a married man," I say and he just laughs, following behind me as I pack the few things I bought to change while I stayed at the hotel.

"I've found you behind closed doors with this girl twice Mhambi and I saw how you looked at her at your father in laws birthday party," he says and I roll my eyes.

"I told you that I was wondering what she was doing there," I say slowly as if talking to a child.

"I don't buy that. I know you, you are my brother and you've never let any other woman close to you

like this, let alone eat their food," this is stupid, I don't know why Mzamo is making a big deal out of this.

"Dude, she brought my food and she happened to have her lunchbox on her too, I asked what she was having just to be polite and her answer had me salivating. It has been a while since I had a home cooked meal so I asked us to swap," he stops laughing and shakes his head.

"You're not the type of guy to cheat bro, I know you and Khosi are having problems at the moment but please sit her down and fix your issues," he says, calmly and I nod my head in agreement.

"I am not cheating, I don't plan on doing it and I'm going home to sit down with my wife and have a conversation with her," I say and he heaves a sigh of relief.

"One of us has to be straight bro. I know I always joke about you getting a side piece but it's just that

Mhambi, a joke," he says and his statement has me furrowing my forehead.

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I love Makhosazana and just because we are facing problems in our marriage it doesn't mean I would want to step out, It won't fix things but rather make everything worse. The only way to overcome everything is to tell her exactly how I feel and what I expect from her in this marriage and allow her to do the same thing. Hopefully from there we will find a way to move past all our issues.

On the other hand Mzamo is being silly thinking I am seeing Tebatso, I've only seen the girl a few times and it has been due to work. I agree that today was a little different because I overstepped by asking her to give me her lunchbox in exchange for my food, but God knows how my stomach grumbled when she mentioned ox liver. I don't remember the last time I had a home cooked meal, not to mention the kind I enjoyed this afternoon. My wife doesn't do much cooking, everyday after work she comes with our

dinner. I have addressed this and even asked her mother for help but nothing has changed.

I get home and Khosi's car is in the driveway next to one I don't recognize. I just park and climb out, leaving my things in the car. I take a deep breath before walking inside and making my way to the lounge, she is with one of her sisters, one that comes after her. They are enjoying champagne over a conversation, there's also music playing in the background.

"Ladies," I greet and they both turn to face me.

"Hey Mhambi," Hlobisile greets excitedly with a wide smile on her face. She has always been the warmest of all sisters.

"How are you? Where did you leave your squad?" I ask and she laughs.

"I am fine thanks. My squad went to KZN to visit my in-laws and I came to spend time with my parents," she says and I nod.

"Okay, I had a long day so I'm going to hit the shower," I say and she nods, taking a sip of her drink.

"Okay love, I'll see you in a bit," Khosi says and I just nod my head. I will be waiting because there's a lot we have to talk about.

I walk into our bedroom, strip off my clothes and head straight to the adjoining bathroom. I step in the shower and open the tap, adjust the temperature and stand under the soothing cascading water. I wash every inch of my body with the sponge smeared with my shower gel, this one I use only at night because it has the ability to calm me down and in turn I sleep peacefully.

I walk back in our bedroom and find Khosi on the bed legs crossed, she's fiddling with her fingers nervously. I just drop the towel that's around my waist and start moisturizing my skin. I am not going to rise above and be the first person to say something to her, she needs to do the talking

because she's the one that fucked up here. I finish applying lotion and she's still not saying anything.

"I was very worried babe," she finally says and I scoff.

"I'm sure you were," I say briskly.

She quickly gets off the bed and hurries towards me, she attempts to touch me but I step away to the closet to get myself something to wear.

"Mhambi I know I messed up and I am so sorry, I was on a virtual meeting and I lost track of time. Baby I have been working on an important deal that will take my company to new heights," she says and I close my eyes, chuckling because it's always the same reason with Khosi.

"It is always the company, it's never me or our marriage. Makhosazana why did you get married if you knew you didn't want to tone things down?" I say and she gasps in shock.

"That's not fair though, you knew from the very beginning that I love my job. I never hid the fact that I was my father's heiress, I have to protect my family's interests," she says and I nod.

"That's very true but when we first spoke about getting married you told me you'll tone it down, that you'll delegate so we can focus on building our own family Khosi," I say and she swallows hard.

"And we will babe, I just need a little more time," she says, coming near me and I sigh.

"I have given you enough time, I have understood and supported you always," I say and that's the honest truth. Even her mother once asked how I deal with her because she's forever thinking about work.

"Can't you just compromise this timeline you've set for us Mhambi. Allow me to finish what I've started," she didn't just talk about compromising.

"Compromising has been my second name ever since I married you Khosi. I compromised my career

for us, I turned down big deals because they would have taken time away from our marriage but that was stupid because I have all the time and you are forever at work. I have compromised my family plans because you needed more time to work on your career. I have compromised my love for travelling because you are always attending to some emergency that has to do with work. What else have I compromised? Oh yes, our sex life! Who has to make an appointment to sleep with their own wife Khosi? When was the last time we made love? When was the last time you slept with me because you wanted to and not because it's your duty?" I ask and she has tears welling up in her eyes.

"I understand this and I am so sorry Mhambi, I promise I just need a little time to get things right at the office and we can start travelling, having sex frequently and spending time together like we did when we first met," she says and I seriously laugh out loud.

"That's the problem Khosi, you want me to give and give but I get nothing in return. I am tired now, I am



tired of begging you to be my wife, to give me everything we planned and agreed on before we got married. I am not forcing anything on you, we agreed on marriage and having kids soon after," This is tiring, it's like I am talking to a rock.

"Mhambi, I love you so much baby. I want to do this life thing with you forever, to give you kids and everything we ever dreamed about but right now I need you to exercise some patience." She says and I close my eyes. I am just wasting my time with this one, she is listening to me but she's not hearing me. I can't force her to be what she doesn't want to be, I don't even what it if I have to be the only one pushing for it. With that said, I also don't know if I can live like this anymore.

## **MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

I woke up and my husband was nowhere to be found, I thought maybe he went out for a run but that thought went out the window when the clock hit 1pm and he was still not home. I know he is mad at me and all but he can't always leave our home when things don't go his way, it's getting tiring to tell you the truth. I tried his phone but like the past few days he lets it ring to voicemail.

I am not going to stay in this house waiting for him to come back, for all I know he's going to disappear for a few days again. I'd rather go chill with my sister Hlobisile and our mother, I haven't seen my parents since my dad's birthday party. That's the day problems started between me and my husband, had he not mentioned children then we wouldn't be here.

I get to my parents house and it's quiet, my mom and dad normally make the loudest noise when having a conversation. I honestly don't know how they do it, I mean they've been married for more

than thirty years but they still have this fire burning. What is this marriage secret that old couples aren't telling us?

"Hey, I didn't know you'll be stopping by," Hlobisile says, descending the stairs.

"Hey sis, I just had to get out of my house. Mhmabi left again and I don't know when he will be back this time," I say and she heaves out a sigh before grabbing my hand and leading me to the lounge.

"When I left yesterday you said you were going to try and make things okay Khosi, what happened now?" She asks after we settle down on the couch and I just break down. I don't know how I am going to dig myself out of this mess I created. "Talk to me sis, what's wrong?" She takes me in her arms and starts rubbing my back in circles. Atleast I can talk to Hlobisile about this, she is the only one who knows what I did three three years ago.

"He's tired of hearing my excuses now Hlobi, if I don't give him the life we both agreed on then he's

going to leave me," I say and she takes a deep breath. "How do I fix this whole thing Hlobisile?" I ask and she pushes me off her gently and looks at me straight in the eyes, I can see pity in them and I'm sure she is dying to remind me of how hard she tried to talk me out of doing what I did.

"Sis, I know this is not what you want to hear but you need to tell Mhambi the truth. That man loves you and he has sacrificed and compromised so much for you. He will take it hard at first but when you tell him that not all hope is lost he will be relieved," I shake my head.

"I know my husband, he is going to see this as a huge betrayal. I don't see us coming back from this," my sister wipes my tears but she's wasting her time because they just keep on coming.

"But at the rate he is pushing he will find out the truth and trust me it will be worse if he hears it from someone else, tell him yourself so you can be able to control how he receives it," Hlobisile is asking me to end my marriage and I cannot do that.

I am snuggled against my sister on the couch when a high pitched laugh startles us, oh my mom is one loud woman Jesus! I don't shift my position because I am so comfortable like this, our parents walk in holding hands. Hlobisile said they went out on a date, you see what I mean about their love always burning?

"Oh, daddy's girls," my father says with the widest smile. I know that in life no man will ever love my sisters and I the way Jiyane does. I remember when all his brothers were bragging and saying he only has girls that will go on and marry and he didn't take that to heart, rather he said, "my girls can and will do anything your boys can do, if not better." And from that day I knew I had to make him proud always, that's why I have a double barrel surname. I wanted my father's name to continue shining.

"Hi baba," Hlobisile and I say in unison. He settles down while mama comes to kiss our foreheads hello, I don't mean to brag but my sisters and I have the best parents ever!

"Khosi, where did you leave my son in-law?" Baba asks and I heave a deep sigh.

"He went to see Mzamo," I lie, I don't know where Mhambi is but I can't tell that to my parents because they will worry and when they worry they get involved.

"That brother of his is way too different to Mhambi and their late father. I hope non of your children take after him," I close my eyes and Hlobisile squeezes my hand, only she knows what the topic of children does to me.

"Speaking of children, Makhosazana when are you planning on taking time off work to start trying for a child? I mean you're not getting any younger and as much as Mhambi is understanding and in support of your life goals, he will eventually get tired and find someone who will give him what he wants without having to wait. I mean he is a fine young man and it would be such a shame to loose him," my mother

says casually, not aware of the internal battle I am fighting inside.

"Mom!" Hlobisile cautions her.

"I am not saying this to stress her Hlobi, it's the truth she needs to know." My mother counters, "I know she loves her job and everything but 20 years from now she won't be able to do it and she will only have the joy that's brought by her husband, their children and grandchildren," her words are like daggers, aiming straight for my heart.

**CHAPTER 06**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

I am busy ironing the laundry I washed earlier today, had it just been me I would have folded it and threw it in the wardrobe. But my mother is against that, she wants everything neat and organized. Things between us have been rocky since Thursday night when she decided to take Tebogo's side on the whole issue of missing his event because I had to work. Speaking of Tebogo, he will be coming through to the house after his shift to pick me up. I am sleeping over at his place, his mother called my mother in the morning asking if it was alright and of course Manana agreed.

"I heard you talking to Asavela yesterday saying you're almost out of data," she says and I look up at her with narrowed eyes, why is she bringing that up? "Take this R100 and go buy yourself that data and maybe some chips, it has been a while since we had that Tibi," I want to laugh because this is the typical African parent apology.



"I managed to buy data with my bank app mama but thank you," I say and she pulls out the kitchen stool and sits down.

"Hai ngwanaka, I don't like those app things. I heard on ntate Thuso's show that these criminals take your money from those apps," she says and I titter.

"Actually apps are safer mama," I say and she claps once.

"Okay Tibi but I have never heard any wrong information from Lesedi FM, especially when it's ntate Thuso," I nod my head just so we can terminate this conversation because it will end with her telling me everything she has ever heard from that radio station.

"Before I forget Tebatso, please ngwanaka when you get paid don't forget your tithe," I mentally roll my eyes, how can one forget tithe when the pastor reminds us every Sunday?

"I have already included it in my budget ma don't worry," I say and she relaxes a little.

"God will bless you," I smile.

There's a knock on our kitchen door, my mother looks at me and I stand up to go check who it is. After such a long day of cleaning, washing, ironing and cooking I am the one who has to go check the door. I open and it's Tebogo, he smiles at me and I return one to him. Things between us have been rocky for obvious reasons and I hope me sleeping over at his house will help us squash this whole thing and move on with our lives.

"My love," he says, with one hand behind him.

"Hey Tebo, how are you?" I ask, stepping to the side so he can walk through.

"I am tired from my shift but besides that I thank the Lord for yet another day on this earth, it can only be his mercy," he says and I nod my head. Don't get me wrong, I love Tebogo for being a God fearing man

but sometimes I wish he could just be my boyfriend you know?

"Come through this side," I say and he takes my hand and follows me to the lounge where I was sitting with my mother watching her favorite movie, The Shack.

"Ahh it's my anointed future son in-law," my mother says excitedly. Her relationship with Tebogo is that of mother and son, she loves and holds him high. If you ask my mother, Tebogo is the best thing after Jesus Christ.

"Matsale waka," that translates to my mother in law. They shake hands with one hand still behind him, I can't see what he has there.

"Tebatso please fix him a plate of food, he had a long day," my mother quickly instructs and I am about to turn to the kitchen when Tebogo stops me.

"Please wait, I got something for you," he says and I narrow my eyes. I hardly ever get gifts from this guy, only biblical messages every morning and night. He hands me a small gift box with the widest smile on his face, okay this definitely shows that he wants us to fix things between us. I quickly open my box and as soon as I see what it is my heart drops into my stomach.

"Oh! It's another rosary," I say, trying to hide my disappointment. How many of these is he going to get me? I have five already.

"I thought I should get you another one so you can be able to match with outfits of this color," he says and deep down I just want to throw this back in his face.

"That is so precious, no gold or diamond can come close to that rosary," my mother says, annoying me, "put it on her Tebogo," Can the ground open and swallow me up!

Tebogo takes the rosary from me and puts it around my neck.

"I think purple is your color," he says and I want to cry, real tears.

"Thank you so much. Let me go dish up for you," I say and turn to walk away.

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We are sitting with Tebogo's mother and sister in the dining room enjoying the lasagna mama Lilly prepared. The woman has amazing culinary skills, she's the type you don't say no to when she invites you over for a meal. We are watching an action movie, at least she allows those in her house, my mother would have been complaining of the noise and the wrong message it sends. When I tell her it's just a movie then I am starting a fight.

"I am really tired, after this meal I'm heading straight to bed," Pheletso says, yawning.

"You must do the dishes first," Tebogo says and his sister mumbles something under her breath. They

have a good sibling relationship, I often wonder how I would have been if I had a sibling myself. My father died shortly after I was born and my mother never looked at another man, because of that I am the only child.

Pheletso retired for the night over an hour ago, the movie just finished and their mother is yawning. She slowly gets up and tells us that she's also going to bed, we say our good nights and she reminds us to pray before sleeping. This is probably the first time they are leaving Tebogo and I alone without supervision.

"Do you want to choose the next movie?" He asks and I shake my head, he chooses better movies.

"Before I find something to watch I just want to say thank you for coming. These past few days we have become something we are not, I don't want to say it's your new job but Tebatso please remain firm in prayer. You don't know how the devil will test you," he says and I just nod because I want us to put this whole thing behind us. He smiles at me and flips

through the channels to find us something to watch. He lands on a romantic comedy and I sit up straight ready to enjoy the film.

This movie is so cheesy but I love it, there's a lot of display of affection and one would think my boyfriend would at least come to sit next to me but nothing. He is glued on the couch and not even looking my way. I know we are told never to give into temptation but he still can't come sit near me and at least cuddle me? Is this how the rest of our lives look like?

"This is a great movie but I think I should go to bed, I don't want to wake up tired for church tomorrow," I say and his shoulders sag, why is he being sad? It's not like he gave me any attention.

"Okay my love, sleep peacefully and remember the lord loves you," I offer him a weak smile and head to Pheletso's room, yes that's where I sleep when I'm here. She has twin beds in her bedroom so I crash on the other one. I am twenty seven years and I only started sleeping over when I was twenty five and in

those two years Tebogo has never tried taking me to his room not to have sex but to atleast stay up all night and talk.

Pheletso's room is on the other side of the house, when we stay up late talking we don't worry about disturbing anyone. I turn the knob and push the door open, the light is still on and Pheletso is up with headsets in her ears, looking at her phone screen. She looks at me and smiles before removing the headsets.

"Oh hey there," she says and I blow her a kiss. "Is everyone asleep?" She asks and I shake my head no.

"Mama Lilly went to bed and your brother is still up," I say and she narrows her eyes, I frown at her facial expression and she removes the covers and gets out of bed.

"And you both didn't use the opportunity to make out?" She asks and I gasp in shock. She knows we aren't allowed to do anything inappropriate before we are husband and wife.



"Pheletso no!" I say, even though I left the lounge because I was pissed at Tebogo for not even trying anything.

"Tibi, we are just three years apart and I have to wonder if this is the life you want for yourself," she says, sounding concerned .

"What do you mean?" I sit on the bed and remove my shoes.

"Don't get me wrong ne, I love my brother he is an amazing person in general but I can tell that he's a shitty boyfriend. What kind of man dates a woman for 7 whole years and tries nothing, absolutely nothing. He knows he's going to marry you, why not try to get inside your pants and ask for forgiveness later." To say I am shocked would be an understatement. Pheletso is the sweetest person I know and I didn't expect this from her.

"Can I ask you a question?" She nods, "are you still a virgin? Are you waiting like your brother and I?" I ask and she laughs, shaking her head.

"No, I lost my virginity when I got to varsity Tebatso. I am not about this holly life, I won't even try. I am just pretending to be this good girl until the company I'm doing my internship at gives me a permanent contract. When I get that I'm leaving here and only visiting. Being a Christian doesn't mean you have to be a prisoner, we are human and we are bound to make mistakes, why chase perfection when God gave his only son to die for us? It's obvious the dude knew we would fuck up at some point. The life my mom and yours are forcing down your throats is sad," she says and her words hit home for sure.

"You still have time to stop all of this and choose yourself, yes they will be disappointed but they won't stay mad forever," she adds and I heave a sigh.

"It's not that simple, plus your brother is a good guy, I don't have to wonder when it comes to him," I say and she rolls her eyes then throws her head back.

"That's boring, why settle for that when you can have exciting, butterflies in the stomach and goosebumps. You are young Tebatso," she says, reaches under her pillow and coming back with a bottle of wine. This girl! "Don't be shocked and don't tell your boring husband to be,"

"My lips are sealed," I say and she winks at me.

"You are honestly missing out on a lot of things, I just wish you weren't holding yourself hostage. The people you are trying to please will one day die and you'll be the one left living a life full of regrets," she takes a sip of her wine straight from the bottle and I know I'm left with something to really think about.

## **MHAMBI MABIZELA**

My marriage went from bad to worse in a short space of time and I honestly don't know what to do. Makhosazana and I are basically housemates now, she buries herself in work at her office and I do the same, we bump into each other at the gate when we drive in. I don't want to touch matters of our bedroom, she looks the other way and I do the same and when my body touches hers she moves away so quick some days I think I disgust my wife.

I don't know why me asking my wife for all the things we had agreed on before getting married got us to this point. It's like I am asking her for things she has always told me she didn't want when in actual fact we discussed them together and even had day dreams of what our life would look like.

I don't want us to continue this way because I honestly love that woman and I believe that we can make this work. I am not one to take my problems to anyone but I felt like I needed to talk to her sister Hlobisile and maybe she will give me an idea of where her sisters head is at. I am waiting for her at

some restaurant in Sandton, we both had meetings around here so we decided to make it our meeting point.

"Excuse me sir, can I get you another drink?" The waitress asks and I shake my head.

"No, let's..." I see Hlobisile making her way to me, "ahh the person I was waiting for just arrived, let's wait for her to sit so you can take both our orders," I say and she smiles politely and stands to the side with both hands in the front.

"I am sorry I'm late sbari, my meeting dragged longer," I shake my head, standing up to hug her.

"You're not late, I got here early," she heaves a sigh of relief and settles down on the chair across mine. I ask for another gin and tonic, even though it's not as good as the one I make. Hlobisile orders a cosmopolitan.

"How's everything at work? Mzamo?" She asks.

"Work is going great thanks. Mzamo, yoh where does one even begin. He's just being Mzamo, living his life unapologetically," I say and she chuckles.

"Somedays I envy how he doesn't care, how he only does what makes him happy," she says and I nod in agreement. I get that too sometimes.

"Mhambi, you sounded serious over the phone. Is everything okay?" She asks with concern.

"Me and your sister aren't doing great, we are at a cross road and I don't think we are looking to take the same direction," I say and for some reason my words don't seem to catch her off guard. It can only mean that Khosi has spoken to her about our problems, they are so close so I'm not surprised.

"I am aware of the issues you guys are having at the moment. I know you want to have kids now and Khosi wants more time, like I've told her I think you two should sit down and talk," she says and I lean in, placing my elbows on the table.

"We've tried talking and she keeps on asking for more time to work on the company. How much more time does she want? I mean the company is already big Hlobisile, which heights does Khosi want to take it to?" I ask and her shoulders sag, I know I'm putting her in a tight spot here.

"Thing is I don't want you both to resent one another, you will resent her for not giving you kids when you wanted them and she will resent you for pushing her into giving you children when she wasn't ready," she says and that would make sense if my wife and I hadn't had a talk before marriage.

"I hear you, clearly so. But before I even paid lobola we sat down and discussed what we both wanted, everything was aligning as we both wanted the same things. To run successful businesses, start a family shortly after we got married and to travel the world. Out of all those things the only thing we have is successful businesses and that's not because of me," I explain and she closes her eyes defeated, "I am not forcing Khosi into doing things we didn't discuss Hlobisile. I love and respect her so much to do that,

but I won't compromise this one thing. I want children and she has always known this,"

"All I know is that my sister loves you and she wants to make this marriage work. If it's a couple I know can make it through this it's you and my sister," she is trying to get me to not give up on her sister but it's difficult because Makhosazana isn't even trying here.

"Can you imagine how painful it is to live with your wife like you're living with a roommate? How gut wrenching it is to go to bed facing different directions when all you want is to hold her?" She scratches her forehead, shaking her head. "I know she's a career woman and I will never ask her to stay at home and be a housewife who takes care of the kids. All I ask is that she tones down on work, start our family and go back. We have nannies now, they will look after our children while we are at work and when we are home we will give our children all the attention they need and love them unconditionally."

"Would you be open to seeing a marriage counselor?" She asks and I exhale deeply.



"I'm pretty sure the counselor will preach compromising and all that and we all know I've been the only one doing that in my this marriage," the waitress places our drinks in front of us, we thank her and she walks away.

"Do you think I'm asking for too much here Hlobisile?" I ask and she shakes her head quickly.

"Of course not!" My wife doesn't seem to think so.

**CHAPTER 07**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

Tebogo and I went to the mall to have a meal, a date I basically forced him to take me on. He wanted us to go to a youth conference at some church his friend from work attends and I flat out refused. We always attends church functions, always. I just wanted to spend some quality time with my boyfriend, to talk about us and our hopes for the future. For once I didn't want to hear anything concerning the church or the bible. My talk with Pheletso last week gave me so much to think about, especially about my relationship. He is an amazing guy and I truly want to have a future with him but a lot has to change. I want Tebogo to give me passion and excitement, I want him to be my man and not the man both our mothers prefer him to be.

We get to his house and park outside the gate, we both climb out and I take out the food we brought for his mother and sister.

He tries to open the kitchen door but it's locked, where could his mother be? She didn't mention

going anywhere today. Tebogo takes out his house key and opens the door, I walk in first and place the food on the kitchen counter before heading to the lounge.

He calls his mom on the phone and she tells him that she went out to see a friend who is not feeling well and Pheletso is with her. He settles on the single couch instead of sitting next to me, what's wrong with this guy? An idea hits me and I quickly get on my feet and head to the kitchen to lock the door, today is the day Tebogo shows me that he is a man. I am tired of wondering if he finds me attractive or not, he might be a committed christian but he is still a man and he has feelings he cannot control no matter how much he tries.

I walk back in the lounge and he's now watching something on TV. I move the coffee table and he looks at me, wondering what I am about to do. I also don't know but I need to try and get some passion out of this man. It has been seven years and he has never even tried pushing his tongue in my mouth when we are kissing, sometimes it feels like I am

dating my brother because who dates someone for so long and not even crave to see her nakedness?

"Tebatso what's going on?" He asks, his eyes widened.

I don't say anything but start stripping for him while dancing, I know I am not a pro nor do I have experience but I've watched TV and I've seen how they do it. I am left in my jeans and bra and he is horrified, this is not the look I was hoping to get. I am seducing him, he should be salivating and ready to spread my legs apart and make love to me. Maybe I should make him touch my skin so he can feel fire. I make my way to him and when I'm about to get on top of him he pushes me off, I fall on the floor hard. To say I am shocked would be an understatement.

"I command the spirit of Jezebel to leave this body. It has no business here because this woman is God fearing and she lives through the word," he says vehemently and I am just looking at him in utter disbelief.

"We need to pray right this minute, what has gotten into you?" He asks and I slowly get on my feet, not paying attention to the pain I am feeling from the fall. I take my shirt and put it on, I want to leave this house immediately because I don't trust myself enough to remain calm.

I grab my handbag on the arm rest of the couch I was sitting on and exit the lounge, he's on my heels, asking me stupid questions.

"Where are you going? We need to pray. What you just did is alarming Tebatso and only prayer can get you back on track," he is only making me more angry. I unlock the kitchen door and walk out. He stops talking when I am outside, Tebogo doesn't like public attention especially if it's for something negative. He lets me leave and I am grateful because I would have caused a scene to get him to leave me alone.

I am not in the mood to go home, my mother will want to know why I am back because I was supposed to sleep over at Tebogo's house. I get to Asavela's place, hoping she is here. I just need to vent to a

friend and ask for advice, maybe a perspective from someone my age will make me see things in a different light.

I knock and wait for a response, the door opens and it's my friend, thank God.

"Hey babe," she says and I just break down and cry. It only just hit me now that Tebogo rejected me.

"Tebatso, what's wrong friend?" She says, pulling me inside.

How do I even tell my friend? This is so embarrassing. She helps me down on the couch and sits next to me, rubbing my back in circles.

"He really pushed me off him Asavela," I say, wiping my tears with the back of my hand.

"Who pushed you?" She asks and I start telling her the dynamics of my relationship with Tebogo and what happened a couple of minutes ago. She is appalled.

"What the actual fuck! Are you sure that man is straight? Which straight man rejects a woman he is

going to marry? Tebatso your relationship is just a joke, there's nothing there babe," she says and I close my eyes.

"What do I do Asavela?" I ask and she heaves a deep sigh.

"I honestly cannot tell you that my friend but all I have to say to you is start living and not just existing," her words mirror those that came out of Pheletso's mouth.

"Thank you for listening," I say and she envelopes me in a hug.

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I left Asavela's house when her mother got in from work, I feel so much better now and I honestly heard her advise. I am 27 years old and I need to live my life, I need to explore all that is out there in the world. I have never disappointed my mother, not even for one day but it's time I started doing things for myself and no one else. If my mom truly wants to

see me happy then she will understand and support me.

I turn on my street and roll my eyes when I see Tebogo's car parked on the curb side. What is he doing here? I didn't answer his million calls and that should have told him that I don't want to talk to him or see him. I'm sure he has already told my mother what happened and they are planning on praying for me so the spirit of Jezebel leaves me alone.

I heave a heavy sigh and open the door, Tebogo quickly gets on his feet thanking the heavens for my safety. I look at my mother and her eyes are full of disappointment and rage, this guy told my mother everything, what a whimp. Will Tebogo ever keep anything between us? This is really tiring. You would swear he is in a relationship with and my mother.

"Where have you been?" My mother asks calmly but I know she's not feeling that way.

"I went to see Asavela," I answer, looking at Tebogo. He has to see that I'm pissed at him.



"What has gotten into you Tebatso?" -Mama.

I take a deep breath, "what do you mean?"  
She laughs and gets on her feet.

"What is the meaning of what you did to Tebogo?  
Did I teach you all that filth Tebatso? Why would you  
embarrass me like that?" She says and emotions just  
take over me.

"This wasn't about you mama, it was about me and  
the man I am expected to marry. I don't understand  
why Tebogo has to run to you with every issue we  
are facing," I shout and she bangs on the table.

"You do not raise your voice in my house!" She says,  
wagging a finger at me. I nod my head imperceptibly  
and stride to my bedroom.

"Hei wena Tebatso! I am still talking to you," she  
shouts after me but I continue walking. My mom has  
to stop this, she needs to butt out of my relationship  
and stop treating me like a damn child.

## **MHAMBI MABIZELA**

The family I married into is very supportive and I truly appreciate them for always showing up on this day to pay respect to my late father. Every year on the day we buried him we visit his grave then make our way back to my house for some lunch. My mother in-law and her girls prepare the food and we spend the day together. It's always hard on Mzamo but he soldiers on because our father deserves to be remembered and celebrated.

We got to my house from the graveyard minutes ago and my father in-law is still so mad. I don't even know how to feel but I guess it's because I am so used to Makhosazana disappointing me this way. Can you believe that she didn't show up at all? I reminded her yesterday and she said she could never forget this important day but she's not here. Everyone here tried her phone and it took them straight to voicemail. I know she's going to show up

here with an excuse and trust me it has something to do with her work, it always does.

"So things have gotten to this point?" Mzamo asks, stepping out on the patio where I am sitting listening to the birds chirping a melody.

"I honestly cannot believe that she didn't show up for this, Khosi knows how important this is for me," I say with a hoarse voice. My father had already died when I met her but I made it known that each year I visit his grave and have a little lunch in his honor, so for her to miss this shows how little she cares.

"I am really disappointed in your wife," he says and I chuckle, I am beyond disappointed. I would never not show up for something that's important to her.

"Boys," we turn and find my father in law approaching.

"Bab'Jiyane," Mzamo and I say in unison. He heaves a sigh and settles down on the chair, crossing his legs.

"I know it doesn't get any easy, but I need you both to know that I am available for you as a father. Mabizela is definitely proud of the men you both have become and for taking care of his beautiful wife," he says and I close my eyes at the mention of my mother. Every year I always wish she could join us but her doctors advised against it long ago.

Mama couldn't deal with my father's sudden death, she just didn't know how to move on from the pain. She experienced a stroke and her health deteriorated from there, she was in and out of hospitals. The kind of care she needed was one my brother and I couldn't give to her ourselves so we got her a place at the best care center. She has the best doctors and caregivers who do their best to make sure she is comfortable. We do not bring her with us to the graveyard because the first year we did this my mother suffered a panic attack and her doctors asked us to never take her there. When we visit we never mention my father because that is a big trigger.

"Mhmabi," my father in-law calls out, bringing me back from my train of thoughts.

"I appreciate your love and support sir, it truly means a lot to my brother and I," I say and he nods.

Hlobisile comes out and tells us that lunch is ready and we can come eat. We make our way inside and the food looks amazing, I do not have an appetite but I don't want to offend my mother in-law who went all out to prepare everything. Everyone takes their seats and I look to the vacant chair where my wife was supposed to be sitting. This just shows that things between Makhosazana and I aren't about to get any better, my wife has absolutely no regard for my feelings and what is important to me.

There's casual conversation around the table, the family is sharing jokes and laughing. Sounds of clicking heels approach and takes all the attention, the table goes silent and their eyes glued at the entrance. Makhosazana walks in but stops in her tracks when she finds all eyes on her, she's looking at everyone and I can see how embarrassed she is.

Her eyes find mine and she's already pleading, I look away because I honestly have nothing to say to her and I don't even want to know why she didn't come to the cemetery.

"Out of all the days Makhosazana," Her mother says with a shaking voice.

"I am so sorry mama but I honestly didn't do this on purpose. I had to attend a meeting with some CEO I have been trying to talk to for months, he had an opening at around the time I was supposed to come to the cemetery. I am truly sorry," she says and I chuckle, shaking my head.

"Khosi, are you listening to yourself?" Her sister, Hlengi asks.

"I don't think she is listening to the nonsense that is coming out of her mouth right now." Their father says, "Everyone took a day off work to be here for your husband but you chose work over this important day. What is wrong with you?" They are wasting their time, she will not see anyone's point. I

push my plate away and get on my feet, I need to be away from this woman.

"Mhambi, I know how important this day is for you but baby your father was a businessman and I know he would understand..."

I quickly interject, "don't you dare!" I sneer and she swallows hard. How dare she use my father to justify her actions?

"Can I please talk to you alone, please," I shake my head.

"I have nothing to say to you Makhosazana," I say.

**CHAPTER 08**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

My parents asked to see me and I know it's to discuss what happened on Wednesday. They are all judging me for missing my late father in-laws memorial, yes it's important to Mhambi and I understand why he is hurt and mad at me for missing it. But this happens every year and I can still make it up to him by going when I'm free. I just wish they could all understand how desperate I was to have that meeting with the CEO of one of the biggest construction companies in the SADC region.

Mhambi doesn't want to give me a chance to apologize, he cuts me off immediately when I try to say anything close to an apology. I honestly don't know how I am going to fix this mess, this whole thing had to happen while my husband and I are in a bad place and make matters even worse.

I get home and sit in my car a while, I am not ready to hear my parents tell me how disappointed they are in me. I know my mother will tell me how a



married woman should behave and support her husband, especially if that husband is as amazing as Mhambi. I just want to put this whole thing behind me and work on getting my marriage back on track.

I climb out the car and wave at the two guys who are working in the garden before making my way to the house. My youngest sister Zandile is sitting in the front porch, eyes fixed on her cellphone. I wonder what made her come home on a Friday, sis definitely thinks she's too cool for home. She'd rather stay at the apartment my parents bought her. Yes, she's living alone at age 19 because she wasn't going to attend university while staying at home. My parents always show up there unannounced to keep her behaving but I'm sure she still lives it up.

"Baby girl," I greet her, then settle down on the vacant chair next to her. She looks at me and heaves a heavy sigh. Please don't tell me she's also mad at me, Zandile is still too young to understand marriage and it's dynamics.

"Sis'Khosi," she's not her usual loud self with me. The Zandile I know would be trying to get money out of me right now.

"Are you okay?" I ask and she shrugs her shoulders. Should I bribe myself out of this one? I can't have everyone against me.

"No I am not. Daddy is in a bad mood because of you and he's refusing to pay for my Cape Town trip," I close my eyes.

Now I get why she's pissed at me, she's been making noise about visiting Cape Town with a group of her friends. "If you didn't miss Bhut'Mhambi's important day I'd be shopping for my trip as we speak," she adds and I realize that I am in deep waters. No one likes an angry Jiyane.

"I'm sorry Zandile, I will definitely make it up to you," I say and she mumbles something under her breath and powers her screen on. That act alone tells me that this conversation is over and she wants me gone before her eyes. Last borns are the bosses of us.

I slowly get up and make my way inside the house, I need a bottle of water before I face my angry parents. I find my mother in the kitchen peeling potatoes while the house helper is busy washing the dishes. I greet them both and only the helper responds, that has my heart thumping against my chest. I honestly don't remember the last time my mother was angry with me like this. I walk around the island and peep inside the pots on the stove, she made steamed bread.

"Jesus when was the last time I had this," I say, trying to make conversation.

"If you cooked for your husband then it wouldn't have taken you long to eat steamed bread Makhosazana," she says dryly and I am totally embarrassed, did she have to say that in front of our helper?

"Mama you know I work. I come home too tired to stand over the stove, it's not like the food I order for us isn't good," she laughs, like really laughs at me.

"Yes Makhosazana you work, the whole world knows that you are the only married woman to work so hard. You're a career woman and being a wife comes second to you," that is honestly unnecessarily rude, even for mom.

"Why is it such a bad thing? I don't see anyone telling Mhambi to tone it down with work," she drops the potato and looks at me angrily.

"Do you see Mhambi missing important things? Do you see him putting his life on hold for his company? Do you see him hurting you because he can't draw the line?" She asks and I swallow passed the dry lump that is clogged in my throat.

I clear my throat, "Ma, I love my job. It is a part of who I am and you asking me to stop working is like asking me not to be Makhosazana," I say and her eye balls are about to fall off.

"Why did you allow that boy to come marry you if you knew you don't want to do things a wife is

supposed to do?" She asks. I didn't know that I didn't want to, I was just lost in the burning love at the time.

"I am asking myself the same question," my father says, walking in and I close my eyes because it's about to get heated.

"Daddy, you guys are my parents. You have to try and understand where I am coming from even when you don't agree with it," I say and my father folds his arms across his chest.

"Makhosazana, it's either you want to be married or you don't, you can't stay married and live like a single woman. That boy can only take so much of your nonsense, he might love you but he's human. He will reach his breaking point and when that happens please don't come crying to us because we have tried showing you the way," daddy says and tears blur my vision, I can't believe he's the one saying all of this.

"Jiyane, I think the only thing that will make Makhosazana act right is taking the company from her," my mother says and I gasp for air, how could she even say that? That company is my life, they can't do that to me.

"Daddy please don't do that please," I beg him and he's looking at me with a stoic expression.

"Talking to your daughter about this is futile, she will never open her eyes until it's too late," my mom says.

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I get to my house with a heavy heart, the things both my parents were saying to me really hurt me. But one that twisted my insides was when my mother said baba should take the company from me, how can she even think of that? She knows how hard I've worked to get that company to where it is. I burst my ass to make them proud, to fly the Jiyane name high so his brothers can see that girl children aren't a

curse and they have the ability to do everything boy children do and even better.

I open the door and there's music playing, Mhambi hardly ever makes noise. I just hope he doesn't have visitors, I am in no mood for people. All I want to do is take a shower and sit him down for a conversation. I find him in the kitchen singing along and even dancing, why is he so happy?

"Hey," I greet with narrowed eyes and he nods at me. "What are you doing?" I ask and he snaps an eyebrow.

"I am cooking Khosi," he answers and takes the wooden spoon to stir the pap. He's really cooking, I guess there's no need for me to get the restaurant to drop off our dinner.

"Can we please have a conversation after I take a shower," he quickly shakes his head no.

"I don't have anything to say to you Makhosazana," he says and walk in further into the kitchen.

"Then can you please listen because I have so much to say my love," he heaves a sigh and looks at me. The love I have always seen twinkling in his eyes when he looks at me is gone and that has me freezing.

"I tried talking to you when I had so much to say and you didn't want to listen so why should I do something you never do?" He asks and I don't have an answer for that.

"Mhambi, baby please. I am tired of this, don't you want us to go back to how things were before the day of my father's party?" He chuckles, shaking his head.

"Things have always been like this sisi, before that evening I just chose to say nothing and hoped you'd change and give our marriage attention," his statement takes me by surprise.

"What? I thought we were happy babe," I say with tears streaming down my face.



"You've been happy Khosi, I haven't been for the longest time because you drink from my cup and fail to fill me up," his words are like daggers thrown at my heart.

"Now that I am empty you want to play stupid? Like you don't know the reason I ran dry," Oh Makhosazana you've bitten more than you can chew here.

## **TEBATSO MORAKE**

"Do you want to go watch a movie tomorrow?" I ask Asavela as we sit down to have our lunch. I have decided to have a life outside of Tebogo. I want to start going out to malls, theme parks and exploring things that are within my reach.

"I will be sleeping the entire afternoon because my mom thinks I am working night shift," she says and I chuckle.

She doesn't scare me anymore with her tricks.

"Where are you off to this time?" I ask and she pouts before giving me an answer.

"Some guy I met when my friends from Eastern Cape were in town asked me to go to the club with him," she says and I nod, chewing my chicken.

"Okay, I just wanted to do something tomorrow. I don't want to spend my time with Tebogo or be around my mother. Things between us are still awkward," I say.

"You can come with me Tebatso. You need to go to the club at least once before you get married to your stuck up priest," she says and I roll my eyes at the last part. Did she really have to remind me of that.

"I am honestly not a club person Asavela," I say and she hits me playfully.

"You've never been to a club so how would you know?" She asks with a raised eyebrow. She's right, I have never set foot inside one or even enter a bottle store. "When you get home today tell your mom that you have to work tomorrow and sleep the whole day tomorrow to make her buy your story. I will request a cab for you and you'll say it was sent by the hotel, you'll direct the driver to my house to pick me as well then we will head to a friend's flat in town," she says and I clap once!  
She really has everything planned to the T.

"I honestly don't know friend, I've never done anything like this. What if my mom finds out? She will freak," I say and she takes my hand.

"Do you have anything to wear to a night club?" I frown, they have specific clothes for a club?

"What do they wear at a night club?" I ask and she groans in total frustration.

"You know what, never mind. I'll sort you out, you're lucky we are the same size,"

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The staff taxi drops me off at the gate and I climb out after bidding everyone left goodbye. I am glad Tebogo isn't here, I'm honestly not in the mood to see or talk to him. I am still mad over what happened on Saturday, I don't appreciate how he always runs to my mother and tells her everything that happens in our relationship. This is supposed to be a two people situation but there's my mom, his mom and the whole church. I haven't seen or spoken to him since that day but he has been blowing up my phone with calls and texts.

I walk inside the house and find my mother in the lounge with the TV on but it's mute and a cup of tea on the table. Her bible is open and I know she has been reading through it and probably looking for verses she wants to preach to me. I greet her and attempt to walk to my bedroom but she stops me.

"Tebatso, please sit down," she says and I close my eyes. I don't want to get into it with my mother, atleast not today.

"Mama, can I please just take off these clothes first," I ask and she shakes her head, pointing to the couch. I heave a sigh and go sit down across from her so we are eye to eye. Mama and I have never found ourselves in such a situation but I honestly can take so much from her and her need to treat me like a child.

"I can barely recognize my own daughter," she says and I am not sure what she's talking about.

"What have I done mama?" I ask.

"You ask what you have done Tebatso? What do you call trying to seduce Tebogo? Why would you want to give yourself to him before marriage? How do you expect him to see you now?" She asks and I exhale sharply.

"With all due respect mama, this matter is between Tebogo and I," I say in the most calmest tone ever.

"Who is this girl and what has she done to my sweet Tebatso?" She asks, looking at me like I am some sort of imposter.

"It's still me mama, I haven't changed," she starts crying like she lost the most precious thing in her life and I am tempted to roll my eyes. I wouldn't have to deal with this if Tebogo was a man who knew how to keep our relationship issues between us.

"Mama is this how things are going to go even after I marry him?" I ask and she narrows her eyes.

"I don't understand your question,"

"What I want to know is will you and his mother still interfere in our issues even after we are married? Will you always take his side on everything without hearing my side of the story?" I might as well ask these questions now because I don't know if I will get another opportunity like this.

"Lilly and I are elders and we've been married before, we just want to see our children's relationship succeed. Is that such a bad thing?" She says and I shake my head. "Exactly!" She adds quickly.

Trying to make my mother see my point is only draining my energy, she has everything figured out in her head and nothing will make her change course.

"Tebogo says that this new job is changing you and I am afraid that he might be right. You went the whole of this week without praying and your recent behavior is alarming," oh wow! They do really discuss a lot. "I don't want to ask you to stop working there, so please start acting like the daughter I raised," I don't have anything more to

say. I won't even try to defend myself to anything she is saying, I know my truth and that's enough.

"I am working nightshift tomorrow mama, I need to sleep so I can wake up early and do my chores then rest for my shift," The lie comes out smoothly from my mouth and I am left shocked at how easy that was.

"Just let the poor boy know in time," I nod and get up from the couch.

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I am busy doing the laundry outside, the sun is too hot so I placed the big basin under the tree to escape the heat. My waist is complaining from all the bending but I am almost done, I just need to soldier on for a few more minutes. After this I am cooking and tidying around the house, at least my mother said she will iron the laundry later on the day.

Asavela and I spoke an hour ago, she said she will request a cab around 5pm. I still cannot believe that



I lied to my mom about going to work when I know I am going clubbing. I don't know how to feel about this whole thing, a part of me wants to give an excuse and stay home but another part of me wants to go out there and see a little of the world. I just hope this whole thing doesn't blow up in my face.

"Tebatso," Tebogo's voice startles me. I turn with my heart drumming against my chest, threatening to jump right out.

"Morning," It comes out in an almost whisper, what's he doing here?

"My love, what's going on? You won't pick up my calls or text me back," is he being serious right now? Is he suffering from amnesia?

"That's because I'm not ready to talk to you," I say and his shoulders sag as a sign of defeat.

"At least tell me what I did wrong because I don't understand this cold shoulder you're giving me," he

says. I shake my head and go to rinse the last load, he follows me to the tap.

"You rejected me and started treating me like I was possessed. As if that wasn't enough humiliation you came running to my mother to discuss our business," I say with an attitude.

"Tebatso I am sorry," I roll my eyes, "what you did just caught me off guard, I honestly didn't expect you to try that because I thought we were on the same page. You know, waiting until we are husband and wife," he says.

"So you have to be cold and less affectionate because we are waiting? Tebogo you never even hold my hand like a man who is in love, in the seven years we have been together you have never even laid on the bed with me and cuddled me. How do you think that makes me feel?" He blinks rapidly and tries to take my hand but I quickly move back.

"I haven't been doing all of that because I don't want to be tempted," urgh! That's just a stupid excuse, "I

don't want us to do anything that is against the Lord's word and teachings. The only way I can fully give you what you wanted last Saturday is to hurry the process of getting married," he says and my heart almost stops. Marriage? Am I ready to tie myself down to this man forever? They always say what doesn't change before marriage will never change after, in fact it will only get worse.

**CHAPTER 09**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

Mzamo knows I've been going through a lot in the recent weeks and he invited me to come to his club to get my mind off things. I wasn't planning on going because I love my space when things are not going well, I just don't want to be sour around people who aren't the cause of my trouble's. Makhosazana is the reason why I have decided to leave the house and go get drunk with my brother. She has been nagging me the whole afternoon, asking that we sit down and talk and I told her that I am over everything. The only thing that can get me to sit down and have a grown up conversation is changed behavior, I cannot be talking about one thing all the time.

"Where are you going?" She asks as soon as I step in the lounge.

"I am going to Mzamo's club," she looks at me from head to toe and I can see how uncomfortable she is with this.

"I was hoping that we could spend some time together, watch a movie and have some drinks," she says with a soft voice and gets off the couch.

"Khosi, I really need to go," I say and tears well up in her eyes. I don't like seeing her hurting but she's hurt me one too many times and never cared. She cannot always expect me to drop things for her when she never does the same for me.

"When will you be back?" She asks and I shrug my shoulders.

"I don't know," I say, grabbing my car keys from on top of the side table that has our wedding pictures. My heart aches when I see how happy and excited we were to start our life together. If anyone told me on that day that my wife and I will be facing such problems I wouldn't have believed a word. I turn and find her folding her arms across her chest with a sad expression, a part of me wants to stay home and cuddle my wife but I cannot always give.

"I'll see you," I say heading towards the door.

Tonight is about me unwinding and having a great time with Mzamo and his friends, I know they are a ball of fire and great company. I get to the club and leave my car with the security guard at the parking lot, he will go park it at my reserved spot and bring my key up to Mvelo's office. I walk into the club and it's already banging, the doors only opened an hour ago, were these people lining up outside waiting?

I move around the crowd of people until I find myself at the staircase that leads upstairs to Mzamo's office. He's in the when I walk in, for the first time in my life I can say I like Mzamo's outfit. He is looking really good, representing me well as his big brother.

"I thought you chickened out," he says, bending down to tighten his shoe laces.

"I almost did," he huffs and I smile, "but I am here now and that's what's important right?" I ask and he nods, standing up right. He makes his way to the decanter and pours the last of his cognac into two

glasses, he walks towards me and hands me one glass. I take a sip and lick off the droplet on my lower lip.

"Are you ready to have mad fun? To forget the drama in your marriage even if it's only for a night?" He asks, with a wide smile plastered across his face. He's just so happy to have me behaving like him.

"Fuck it, let's have some fun bro," we click our glasses before gulping the contents down at the same time. We roar out loud as the drink burns our throats, one can never get used to this.

We get downstairs and the girls go mad seeing Mzamo, everyone wants to have a word with him. I have honestly never seen anything like this, I know my brother is a popular ladies man but this is something else. Which makes me wonder how many women Mzamo has actually slept with.

We head to the VIP section and his friends are already around the table with bottles of expensive alcohol in ice buckets. It wouldn't be Mzamo and his

crew if there wasn't any ladies around them, they get high off oestrogen. The girls are dancing on the couches with champagne flutes in their hands.

"Mhambi, do you want entertainment for the night?" He asks and I frown. I came here to have fun with the boys not to cheat on Makhosazana.

"No! I'm cool," I don't know how many times I have to tell my brother this. I am not the kind that cheats, it is just not me.

"You need to get laid dawg, you've been telling me that Khosi won't even give it up," I shoot him a warning look and he holds out his hands in surrender, "I'm just saying," we shouldn't be discussing this, good thing his friends are in deep conversations to hear him talking about my business this way.



## **TEBATSO MORAKE**

Asavela transformed me into some girl I don't know, I have never put make up on my face, okay maybe I did two times in my life. On my matric dance and graduation day but it was nothing like this, my own mother would walk pass me in the streets. The dress I have on would give her a heart attack instantly, my thighs are exposed and my breasts are about to fall out too. I tried telling Asavela that I'll be comfortable in jeans but I was told this is how they dress to the club and boy wasn't she right? I wonder where Asavela keeps all these skimpy clothing because it cannot be in her mother's house.

"Are you sure you don't want to have a glass of champagne?" She asks, sitting on the lap of the guy we came here with and I forgot his name already. I shake my head and raise the glass of my non alcoholic cocktail. I have never had a drop of alcohol in my life and I'm not about to get drunk and risk doing things that are out of character. People these days are caught on camera doing crazy things and if

it happens to be me and my mother sees it then I am as good as dead.

"At least tell me you're having a good time," she says and I give her a huge fake smile. I am definitely not enjoying myself, I honestly don't find anything special here. It's only loud music, many people and expensive alcohol most women cannot afford to buy themselves,"

"It's not as bad as I thought it would be," I say and she winks at me and gives her 'boyfriend' attention. He is so touchy, I wonder if Asavela is comfortable with all of that. She did say they only met once before tonight.

We came here with her friend, the one whose flat we went to, to get ready. Her name is Pearl and ever since we got here I haven't seen her, she said she was going to greet a group of her other friends and that was it. Oh speak of the devil, she comes sashaying to our table, taking the attention of the guys nearby. She takes a clean champagne flute and pours herself a drink.

"Let's go dance babe," she says and I quickly shake my head. I don't know anything about dancing, I would make a complete fool out of myself. The only dancing I do is running up and down and stomping during praise and worship at church.

"I am good here," she rolls her eyes.

"Yoh! You want to sit here and watch those two smooching each other?" She asks, pointing at Asavela and her man.

"Pearl, I am good thank you," she turns and leaves me sitting on the low couch. I shouldn't have come here, I feel so out of place. I might look like most of the girls but this is definitely not my scene.

"Here you go," a waitress says, placing a non alcoholic strawberry daiquiri on the table. I look at Asavela and she is lost in her guy.

"I'm sorry but I didn't order this," I say to the girl and she offers me a polite smile.

"I know, it's from the boss' brother," she explains and I start looking around like I know the boss's brother.

"I don't want it, please take it back," I say briskly and she frowns like this is the first time a customer asked her to return a free drink. I don't want problems, the guy will start feeling like I owe him something because of one drink so no. She takes the cocktail and leaves with it.

I look at my watch and it's only thirty minutes after midnight. We haven't been here long but I want to leave already. I tap Asavela on the shoulder and ask her what time we are leaving and her answer is that the night is still young. You can imagine my shock, I am normally sleeping sound at this witchful hour. What time do they even close? Maybe I should ask her to request a cab to take me to Pearl's apartment and she will find me there when she's done.

"I'm sorry, the boss' brother says he will only take back the drink if you bring it yourself," she says with the cocktail in her hand.

I heave a sigh, "tell him I didn't ask for this drink. I don't have to return it," I say annoyed, what nonsense.

"Ousi please, I have tables to attend to. He will go on and on and I'm missing out on tips," she says, giving me pleading eyes. I get up from this low couch and follow behind her. Asavela is not even aware that I've moved from the couch. The girl leads me to the staircase and I stop walking, she looks back with a frown on her face,"

"Where are we going?" I ask and she looks at the stairs.

"To the boss' brother," she says.

"Up there?" I swear she wants to roll her eyes. Should I know who this boss' brother is?

**CHAPTER 10**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

The office door opens and the waitress walks in first with the cocktail still in her hands. She looks back and signals Tebatso to come on in, she must be wondering who called her up here. She peeps in with her head first and when she sees me standing in the middle of the room she frowns and comes fully in. Her eyes are narrowed, full of questions. I nod at the waitress and she walks out, closing the door behind her.

"Mr. Mabizela," she says and I drop my head, she makes me sound old.

"Just Mhambi, please," I say going to sit down on the couch. She is watching me intensely this whole time, I'm sure she wants to know why I called her up here.

I was sitting with my brother and his friends when I spotted her sitting there like she was lost. At first I didn't recognize her because of the make up she has on, she still looks beautiful but I honestly feel like

her bare face takes the winning cup. I watched her for a couple of minutes, hoping that she will loosen up and start having fun but nothing. I decided to send a drink over to her table because her glass was almost empty but she refused it, I came up here and asked the waitress to bring her so she can have a minute away from the chaos. I saw how suffocated she was down there, I wonder who she came here with. Her table only had her and a couple that's displaying affection.

"You look cold, come sit down. I'll find something for you to cover with," I pat the space next to me and she seems uncomfortable with that. I heave a sigh and offer the whole couch, I'll just take Mzamo's chair. I open the door to the small bedroom that's connected to the office and come back with a flee blanket. She's on the couch now, sitting on the edge like she's ready to bolt out of here at the first sign of trouble.

"Here, cover up with this," she takes it but doesn't cover herself.

"Mr Mabizela, I am with my friend. She will worry when she doesn't see me," she says and I round the table and pull the chair to the other side before settling down.

"You seemed alone and bored down there hence I called you up here to entertain you," I joke but she doesn't laugh. Am I doing too much right now?

"Okay maybe I called you up here to keep me company because my brother and his friends have filled our table with girls and they were making me uncomfortable," I say and her body relaxes.

"Is this your brothers nightclub?" She asks and I nod.

"Yes, Mzamo owns this joint," I get up from my chair, I need something to drink and the decanter is empty. I open the fridge and there's a bottle of champagne, a few beers and ciders and bottled water. I was having cognac and I don't want to mix drinks so I'll call downstairs to get a bottle and maybe the virgin cocktail she's been drinking. That's if she doesn't reject it this time.



"Would you like me to order you another strawberry daiquiri?" I ask and she shakes her head no. She's a tough cookie to crack but she must be shocked at how friendly I am with her. I am also confused by my actions, I don't know how to explain what I'm doing right now.

"I just want to go back to my friend, she'll be worried," she says and I should let her go but I don't think I want to see her back down there because she didn't seem comfortable at all.

"The girl who is busy with her boyfriend is your friend?" I ask and she nods. Why would she want to go back to being a candle holder?

"I will have the waitress tell her that you're safe up here with me," I say and she huffs out a humourless laugh. "I'll be right back, I'm going to get us some drinks, are you hungry?" I asks but she doesn't answer nor look at me. I'll take that as a yes.

I walk out of the office to go get drinks and ask them to bring us their meaty platter. My brother is ascending the stairs when I'm about to go down, he rolls his eyes when he sees me.

"Really? You came up here to hide?" He asks, sounding bored, "You said you wanted to have fun Mhambi and this isn't it bro," he adds, taking a sip of his drink.

"You guys just brought more girls to the table and I couldn't even breath," I say and he laughs. Of course he will find this funny.

"I need to pee, I'll be right down," he says, trying to walk pass me to the office, I pull him back by his arm.

"Can't you use the bathroom downstairs?" He narrows his eyes in a questioning manner and when it clicks a smile forms on his face.

"I'd be damned, you have someone in there don't you?" He asks and I roll my eyes. My brother is a

confused person, one minute he wants me to have side pieces so bad and the next he wants me to be a better man than him. Where does he stand?

"It's just Tebatso, she was down there looking bored so I had the waitress bring her up. We are just going to have a few drinks away from the chaos that's happening down there," I say and he looks confused. He has already forgotten about Tebatso, how can I expect him to remember her when he has a million girls to remember in that tiny tiny brain of his.

"Tebatso? Do I know her?" He asks.

"The clumsy cat," he roars with laughter.

"And you still want to tell me that it's nothing with this girl? Stop lying to yourself bro," with that said he goes back down, leaving me with a million questions. I follow behind him and luckily bump into the waitress I had sent to Tebatso, I tell her to bring one strawberry daiquiri, a bottle of cognac with mixers and lastly a platter of meat. Before she leaves I tell

her to go to the table Tebatso was sitting and tell the friend that she's safe with me upstairs.

I get to the office and she is covered up, sitting comfortably and talking on the phone. I sit down on the chair and pick up that she's talking to the friend because she mentions being upstairs with a friend of hers. She ends the call and looks everywhere but me, she never looks at me. Am I seriously that intimidating?

"So we are friends?" I try to break the ice.

"I'm sorry, if I had mentioned that I'm with you she would've asked a million questions which I have no answers to. I mean I also don't know why you brought me up here," she says and I nod. If we are being truthful, I also don't know why I called her up here or why I am trying to get her to stay when she wants to go back to her friend.

"You're the only person I know here besides my brother and his friends. Their table was crowded and you looked bored sitting at yours. So I thought we

could sit together and maybe talk, I don't know," I say and hope that it makes some sense.

A knock on the door disturbs us and I go to open and take the drinks from the waitress, she tells me that the platter will come shortly.

"Here you go," I hand Tebatso the glass and she looks at it with doubt, "It's virgin," she relaxes and takes a sip. I mix my own drink and settle back down on my chair a distance from her.

"You don't drink alcohol period or it's only for tonight?" I ask, praying that she atleast talks to me and not be so awkward.

"I don't drink alcohol period," I wonder how she survives. Adulthood needs a shot of something strong daily because we go through a lot in our lives, "but maybe I'll find myself drinking in the near future, I mean there's a first time for everything. Look at me in a club for the first time in my life," she says and I laugh but her serious face makes me stop, she's not joking.

"Are you serious? This is your first time at a club?" She heaves a sigh then nods. "Is there a particular reason why you have never been and why you don't drink alcohol?" I ask and she drinks her cocktail and cross her legs.

"It's a long story Mr. Mabizela but if I was to summarize it in two words, it would be my mother," she says and now I have more questions to ask but I don't want to come across as nosey.

"I take it she is a strict woman," she laughs nervously.

"I think that is an understatement," looking at how beautiful her daughter is, I can say I understand why she decided to parent with an iron fist.

The door opens and we both move our eyes to see who it is. A girl in a short jumpsuit and high heels walks in, she freezes on the spot when she sees me sitting here, her eyes dart between Tebatso and

myself. How rude to just walk in the room without knocking, it must be one of Mzamo's girls.

"Asavela, what's wrong babe," Tebatso asks, getting on her feet. This must be the friend, I didn't get to see her face earlier on.

"Uhm, I can't find Pearl and Shane wants us to leave," she whispers, just not low enough because I can still hear them.

"What are we going to do? Our things are at her flat." Tebatso asks panicking and I narrow my eyes.

"I don't know babe, you were supposed to go sleep at her place because I'm leaving with Shane. Now that I can't find her and her phone is off I don't know what we are going to do," the friend says and I can see how scared Tebatso is.

"Oh my God, where am I going to sleep? I can't go home dressed like this. My mother would kill me," she says already crying, her tears are never far.

"I am really sorry babe, you can leave with us and sleep in the car. Then around six Shane will drive us to Pearls apartment so we can change and head home," I cannot believe my ears. This is the first time Tebatso is out clubbing and her friend wants her to sleep in the car while she sleeps comfortably inside with her boyfriend.

"Don't worry I will take her home now," I say and they both look my way.

"That's sweet of you but she can't go home looking like this, her mother would freak out. We need her to change back into the clothes she left home in," this can only mean that her mother doesn't know exactly where she is. Tebatso sits down and buries her head in her hands.

"You came here with the girl who has Tebatso's clothes?" I ask and the friend nods. "Come with me, Tebatso we will be right back," I say.

If she is still here then the cameras will definitely spot her and she will be able to go to her apartment



and open up for Tebatso so she can take her clothes and go home. Hopefully this will be a lesson learned for her. We step into the CCTV room and two guys are sitting in front of the many monitors, I greet them and explain that I need their help finding someone who is here. They both know that I'm Mzamo's brother so they don't give me a hard time. The other goes back to the time Tebatso's friend says they got here and the table they were sitting. She points to their other friend and the operator follows her movements from the recorded tape until the live feed, she is in the VIP section, on Mzamo's table. Why am I even surprised?

The friend and I go back to Mzamo's office to get Tebatso before heading down to the VIP section. We find the girl twerking in one of Mzamo's friends faces, she notices Tebatso and the other girl and gets excited. She has had one too many drinks. They tell her that it's time to leave but she refuses, saying she's leaving the club with her "man", who I assume is the one getting the ass dance. Poor Tebatso, both friends are going with their guys and leaving her in the dark. She better learn from this or

she will find herself in much more sticky situations. I offer to take her to that apartment so that she can get her things and head home. That seems to get her relaxed, the friend we just found gives us her key and tells us to leave it in the pot plants by the door.

**CHAPTER 11**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

I open my eyes and quickly shut them close again, it felt like someone was sticking needles in them. On the other hand my head is pounding and heavy, I need advils and lots of water to get rid of this headache. Last night I went too far with the the tequila, I just needed to numb everything I was feeling. Things between my husband and I are going down south and quickly, I don't even know how to fix us. I love Mhambi and of course I want to have forever with him but I'm not willing to let go of myself to be able to have that. I love working and it has become a part of who I am, he needs to love me with what he considers my flaws. I alone should be enough because he is enough for me.

I open my eyes fully this time and immediately realize that I am not in my house. I quickly sit up straight, looking around and wondering where I am and how I got here. I see my bra on the bed and look under the covers to find myself completely naked, oh my God what happened last night? What have I

done? The door opens and my heart drops into my stomach, my whole body goes cold. Out of everything I've ever done to hurt my husband this one probably takes the cup, if there was hope for my husband and I then this will make sure that it doesn't happen.

"Don't look so disappointed babe," he says and my skin crawls immediately, I am disgusted with myself.

"Did we...please tell me we didn't," I say with my closed eyes and I feel him sit on the bed, he tries to touch me and I freeze instantly unable to even move away.

"We did babe and I won't lie, it was the best I've ever had. You know I've always been about you," he says, sounding proud and I know it's because he finally got what he wanted. He doesn't care about me, he just wanted to have what belongs to Mhambi. How could I be so stupid and sleep with my husband's biggest enemy?

"Langa, I was drunk. How did you even get me here?" I say and his eyes widen with shock.

"Hey, I didn't force you here. You literally begged me to bring you home with me because you wanted to feel something other than the pain that your husband of yours is causing you," he says and I look away, embarrassed that this happened because I asked for it. I dig deep into my memory, trying to remember last night and how it went down.

I left my house shortly after Mhambi, I just couldn't stay there wondering when he will come back home. I took a shower and dressed up, I called all my sister's hoping they were available to hangout with me but they all had plans with their husbands and kids. Zandile didn't even answer my call, she's still mad at me. I drove around and ended up at some nice chilled place, I sat down and ordered my bottle of tequila and a couple of ginger ales. A couple of guys came to my table, trying to hit on me but I obviously told them off.

I remember Langa walking in with a couple of guys and some girls, they occupied the table behind me and a couple of minutes later he came to my table. At first I tried to tell him to leave me alone but he didn't listen, I was already drunk and when he kept asking why I looked so sad I lost it. Emotions got the better of me and I started telling him my marital problems. Langa said all the right things, things I wished to hear from my husband. I now also vividly remember climbing in his car and coming back here with him, I initiated everything that happened. I am to fuckin' blame for this whole messed up situation.

"You don't have to beat yourself up Khosi. You know I've always liked you and seeing you that sad hurt me. I know you're worried that I'll tell Mhambi but I won't, I'm not the monster he has made me out to be," he says and I am shocked. I thought he was ready to go tell my husband that he slept with me.

"I need to leave, my husband must be worried about me right now," I say, pushing off the covers. I don't know how I will look at my husband or how I will share a bed with him knowing I am a fuckin'

adulterous bitch. If my family finds out they would be so disappointed, especially after the whole memorial service. How do I keep digging myself deeper into this whole?

"Hey, calm down. You can have something to eat then take a shower. I will drive you to go get your car where we left it," he says and I laugh. What does he think this is?

"This is not some perfect morning after situation Langa, I cheated on my husband," I shout at him and he holds out both his hands.

"Okay, I'll just drive you to get your car then," I shake my head no, while pulling up my pants. He is not listening to me at all.

"I cannot risk being seen with you," I explain to him slowly and he scoffs.

"Right, I'll be downstairs," He leaves the room angrily. What did he think this was? Langa better not have thought that I was going to leave my husband

for him. This was a big mistake, one I will definitely take to my grave. Mhambi would die if he knew what I did with someone who hates him so much.

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I climb out of the Uber after paying the chatty driver, the shopping center is already parked with people going about their business. The place I was at last night is at a shopping center and I'm glad that my car is still here and in the right conditions. I unlock the door and hop in, if I could I would avoid going to my house because guilt is consuming me. I cannot believe that I laid on another man's bed and allowed him to have me. What kills me more is the fact that I enjoyed every single minute of it. What kind of wife, a woman does that make me? Mhambi deserves so much better than this.

I get to my house and Mhambi's car is parked in the driveway. He was home the entire time I was in another man's bed, the thought of my betrayal stirs up so many emotions within me. I cannot help but break down in this car. I place my head on the



steering wheel and silently cry, my heart is aching. I've never loathed myself like this, I wish I knew how to move past this. After a few minutes I wipe my tears and climb out of the car, I shamefully walk into my matrimonial home hoping and praying that Mhambi doesn't smell Langa on me.

I make it to our bedroom undetected and I quickly take off my clothes and rush to the shower. I take the sponge and smear it with my shower gel, I wash every inch of my body to get rid of Langa's smell. But no matter how hard I scrub my skin I still feel dirty and I doubt that will ever change. I will have to deal with the fact that I slept with another man when my own husband has to beg me to sleep with him.

I walk out of the adjoining bathroom with a towel wrapped around my body and find Mhambi in the bedroom changing the side lamps bulb, I swallow hard and hope I don't have "cheater" written across my forehead.

"Hey," I greet him and he looks my way then back at what he is doing. I deserve that, I'm not worthy to be looked at.

"Khosi, hello," he says with no emotion, non whatsoever. My marriage is holding on by a thread and all I can do is watch.

"I'm sorry for not coming back, I had one two many to drink and I couldn't drive in that state," I say.

"It's cool," he says, picking the empty bulb box and heading out of the bedroom. I settle down on the edge of the bed, feeling defeated. It's over for me, my family is disappointed in me, my husband won't even look at me and he doesn't even care that I slept out. My phone chimes in my bag on the floor and I reach for it and take it out.

UNSAVED NUMBER: MAKHOSAZANA I HAD AN AMAZING NIGHT WITH YOU. I KNOW YOU REGRET IT BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT IT WAS THE BEST EVER FOR ME. I HATED SEEING YOU SAD LAST NIGHT AND TRUST ME WHEN I SAY A MAN WHO LOVES YOU WOULD NOT ASK YOU TO GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS. YOU WOULD BE ENOUGH FOR HIM WHETHER YOU GIVE HIM KIDS OR NOT.

I delete the text immediately after reading and block his number. I cannot keep contact with this guy, he needs to play far from me. Our encounter was a mistake, a secret that we will keep until our dying days.

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## **TEBATSO MORAKE**

I am woken up by a loud knock on the door, who the fuck could it possibly be? I mean I only got home at around 5 in the morning from the club. I want to sleep so I can be fresh when my mom gets home from church, yes she allowed me to skip church today which is shocking. I am not complaining though because I don't know how I would have felt singing and praising the Lord when I was in the skimpiest dress at a club last night.

I open up and it's Asavela at my door step, seeing her safe and sound is a huge relief. I was worried when she left the club with a man she was only seeing for the second time in her life. I hope they used protection, I might be a virgin and all but I am not entirely naive to how the world works.

"Oh thank God that guy brought you home, I was worried the entire time I was with Shane," she says, pushing her way in. She's talking so freely because she knows for a fact my mother is at church, that one goes even when she's sick.

"That guy is Mr. Mabizela, co-owner of the hotel you work at," she turns in the speed on light.

"I thought I knew him from somewhere. Tebatso, how did you become friendly with the big boss? We aren't as innocent after all," she says and I roll my eyes then start telling her how I spilled coffee on the guy. She insists that Mr Mabizela has the hots for me but that's absolute trash, I mean have you seen that man? He is way out of my league.

"So he dropped you off alright? No drama with you mom?" She asks, pulling the kitchen chair then settling down. I nod and she heaves a sigh of relief.

"I thought you'd be mad at me for what happened last night. I mean I went with you to the club and didn't even give you attention. That was wrong of me babe, I'm sorry," she says and smile sweetly at her.

It kind of sucked that she didn't give me the time of day but atleast the whole club experience showed me that it's not my kind of vibe. I am sure the are

more ways of having fun and I will surely find them and start living out of the bubble I am currently in.

"It's okay, I just hate that Mr Mabizela stepped in to help. I don't like being seen at my lowest," I say and she nods, understanding.

Both Pearl and Asavela wanted to leave with their men so I didn't have a choice but to come back home. Mr Mabizela drove me to Pearls apartment after Asavela gave him the directions, when we got there I left him in the car and went up to shower and change into my clothes. He drove me home without judging or asking questions and I am grateful for that. I didn't understand why he called me upstairs to sit with him but I am grateful it played out that way because he helped me a great deal. It was already sun rise when we drove into my neighborhood, I asked him to drop me off at the gate because if I got off elsewhere and someone spotted me then it would've caused gossips.

"I just came to check on you before I go home, I want my mom to find me at home when she gets back from church," she says and I gasp for air.

"Bathong! Asavela you should have been home long ago. What kind of nightshift ends at around what? 10 am?" I ask and she laughs, like my question is not valid.

"I called my mom when we got to Shane's house and told her my supervisor is asking me to stay longer to help her count the remaining stock in the kitchen," hai shame she is a pro at this.

After Asavela left I decided not to go back to sleep so I made my bed and took a bath. I am still tired but I will have an early night so I can be well rested for work tomorrow. My mom only cooked rice and vegetables so I decided to do the meat. My phone vibrates on the kitchen table as I stir the beef stew, I close the pot and wipe my hands with the wet dish cloth before checking who it is.

UNSAVED NUMBER: HI TEBATSO, ITS MHAMBI HERE. I WAS JUST CHECKING IN, I HOPE YOU'RE NOT IN ANY TROUBLE AT HOME.

That's Mr Mabizela, I forgot that he asked for my number so he could be able to check in on me. He is such a good person for this, the mess that happened last night had nothing to do with him but he still stepped in. I fire him a response immediately.

ME: HI SIR, EVERYTHING IS OKAY. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR HELPING ME YESTERDAY.

I bite my lower lip and wait to see if he will respond. Last night in the office I was so nervous, I didn't know how to act or how to talk to him. I mean we've established how intimidating I find him, his presence is heavy and I feel pinned down when in the same room as him. I don't even want to touch on the issue of the flutter than happens in my stomach, whatever that lives in there goes crazy as soon as I set my eyes on him.



CAN WE USE MR MABIZELA AT THE HOTEL ONLY.  
LAST NIGHT YOU SAID I AM YOUR FRIEND TO THE  
PERSON YOU WERE TALKING TO ON THE PHONE, MY  
FRIENDS GET TO CALL ME MHAMBI.

I laugh at his response, I only said he was a friend to Asavela because I didn't want to stay on the phone explaining why I am in an office upstairs with Mr Mabizela our boss. I don't know if I am comfortable calling such a man by name, I mean he has this unrelenting power surrounding him.

**CHAPTER 12**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

The anaconda ride gave me serious adrenaline rush, I have never felt this way in my life. I honestly feel like I can summit mount everest right this minute. I'm glad I decided to take myself out on this solo date, I said I wanted to start living my life and I had to start doing it instead of preaching it always. Believe it or not this is my first time at Gold Reef City and I've always wanted to come, that's why I made it my first outing. I had so much fun but it's late now and I have to go home, my mother was uncomfortable with me coming here alone without Tebogo but I stood my ground and told her I just wanted to be alone. She let it go because it hasn't been long since we fixed things between us, we are back to praying together every morning and having endless conversations.

I buy myself some ice cream and make my way to the parking lot to wait for my requested taxi. My driver is so sweet, he offers me a snack and asks which music I would prefer him to play. He is

definitely getting all the stars when I rate him at the end of this ride. My phone vibrates in my cross body bag and I use my free hand to take it out. It must be Mhambi, we have been texting back and forth for two weeks now. It's nothing hectic though. One night he texted me and I was busy reading on some book app, he asked me what I was doing and I told him. That's where we realized that we both enjoy reading. I love fiction and he prefers non-fiction, he made us exchange our favorite titles and we've been having conversations based on that. I love how he unpacks my favorite books, he wants to rationalize everything and that's not how fiction works most times and he gets frustrated. I, on the other hand have always hated those business and motivational books but since reading the ones Mhambi suggested to me I've felt pretty good. I even started applying more for jobs I studied for, I have this hope that something will surely come up.

**MHAMBI: TELL ME YOU'RE DOING NOTHING THIS COMING WEDNESDAY EVENING.**

What can I possibly have? After work I go home and that's the end of my day.

ME: I HAVE NOTHING AFTER WORK, WHY?

I text back and wait for his response.

MHAMBI: WELL I CAME ACROSS THIS AMAZING EVENT THAT'S TAKING PLACE WEDNESDAY EVENING. IT WILL BE HELD AT SOME ART STUDIO IN SANDTON. THE THEME IS, PAINT YOUR FAVORITE BOOK SCENE. DOESN'T THAT GET YOU EXCITED?

I immediately know which book scene I would paint. I love that book so much and that particular scene is imprinted in my head. Whoever came up with this theme is genius.

ME: THAT SOUNDS REALLY AMAZING. WILL YOU BE ATTENDING?

MHAMBI: DEFINITELY, I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING LIKE THIS IN A WHILE. I WAS HOPING YOU COULD COME WITH ME.

The last part has me pressing my lips in a thin line. I haven't seen this guy since the day he drove me home, I don't know how I feel about being in the same space as him. Texting is different because I'm not in the same space as him, but this one?

"Oh you know you want to go, just say yes," my subconscious says, standing in front of a blank canvas with a paint palette in her hand. This one can be forward at times but she's never wrong.

ME: I WOULD LOVE TO.

I get home and Tebogo's car is parked outside, I just hope and pray that I will not be asked to go sleep over at his house. What is the point of that really because I just sleep in his sisters room, sleeping there adds no value to this relationship. I walk inside and panic immediately when my eyes land on the crying mama Lilly.

"What's wrong?" I ask, looking at Tebogo for answers.

He heaves a sigh, "It's Pheletso, she just broke my mother's heart," what does that mean?

"What did she do? Did something happen to her?" I ask and he shakes his head as I settle down next to him.

"No, Pheletso signed a permanent contract a week ago and we were all happy for her," he says and I know that already. I need him to get to the part that got their mother crying this way. "This afternoon she asked my mother and I to sit down and she told us that she is moving out and will be staying at a flat in town," why would she cry over that? I mean Pheletso is trying to be independent, she should be a proud mom.

"Mama told her that she cannot leave because temptations will come from all directions. But Pheletso told us that she wants to live her life how she wants to, that she will not be trapped at home living like a prisoner all in the name of being a good Christian girl," It's sad to see mama Lilly crying this

way but I am damn proud of this girl. She is not allowing her mother and brother to bully her all in the name of living through the word. I wish I had her balls.

"My own daughter broke my heart Tebatso, I hoped and prayed that she turns out like you, that she finds a fine young man like her brother," I nod, pretending to agree but I am team Pheletso all the way.

"I am really sorry," what more can I say?

"I'm just so angry that we have to put our engagement on hold because we need to fix this before my sister finds herself in the company of the devil," he says, holding my hand. I thank Pheletso for doing this because she just bought me time to also think of what I want in life.

"All will be well my sister, we have to kneel down and pray. God will bring her back home," That's my mother offering words of encouragement. I know Pheletso, she has been planning this for a long time

and she will not come back. Her mother and Tebogo will be forced to accept her life choices.

"Manana, thank you for kneeling down with me and praying for my child. I truly appreciate it," mama Lilly says, wiping her tears with a pocket tissue.

"I know how hard this is mama so I will definitely try to keep Pheletso in the right direction. I will communicate with her frequently and try to always see her to make sure she hasn't lost her way," I say and I'm sorry to God because I am only saying this because it will benefit me somehow.

"Thank you so much love, you're truly a gift from the heavens," Tebogo says.

"She truly is, I will feel much better knowing that you are in her ear, trying to make her choose the right path," Mama Lilly adds.



## **MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

This is the first time in weeks I will be going out in public with my husband, I know it's just for show but I am looking forward to seeing him smile and talking to me. I don't care if that flies out the window when we get back home but I would have at least held his hand, smiled and laughed with him. Who knows, maybe after this night we will be able to sit down and find a way to move forward.

A mutual friend of ours is launching her own wine brand today and she invited us as a couple. We decided to use one car and to be civil for the night because we both don't want to show the world the cracks in our marriage.

"Are you ready to go?" He asks, walking in the bathroom where I'm applying lipstick.

"Yes, we can leave. You look really handsome," that tuxedo looks amazing on him, my husband is a very good looking man who makes every piece of clothing stunning.

"Thank you," he says, fixing his cufflinks then exiting. He didn't even tell me that I look beautiful, what a sad stage my marriage has reached.

I find Mhambi waiting for me outside, he locks the door as soon as I'm out and we both head to the waiting car. He doesn't go to open my door like he has always done when we use the same car, we agreed to act normal today so what is this? I let it slide because I want this evening to go smoothly. He starts the engine of the G-wagon and drives out, headed to the hotel.

I cannot stand the silence in this car so I turn on the radio and our favorite song is playing, I look at him with a smile on my face but he doesn't even look my way. His eyes are fixed on the road and that just breaks my heart, this song was supposed to bring back fond memories of us but he's acting like it's just another track.

We get to the hotel and leave the car with the valet, we walk inside hand in hand but his touch is so cold.

I just pray it doesn't look as forced as it feels to our friends and business associates who will be in attendance. My stomach freezes when I see Langa approaching with a fine tall woman, I should have known that he will be here. I mean he co-owns this hotel with Mhambi. I am crossing fingers that he doesn't try to use the mistake that happened between us to gain leverage in this one sided fight he has with my husband.

"Mr. Mabizela, can we please have a photo of you and Mr Nsele," a photographer says and my husband nods before kissing me on the cheek. Langa is giving me an uncomfortable look but I'm trying my best to avoid his eyes. I don't need to be acting weird tonight.

Mhambi comes back and we make our way to the conference room, that's where the event is happening. It is well decorated and the guests are dressed impressively good, nothing makes me happy like guests who understand and honor the dress code. The waitress stops in front of us and offers us the wine that's being launched, I love how she is

making her product the star of the show by offering nothing else. Mhambi and I ask for their chardonnay.

"Hey bro," we turn and it's Mzamo.

He shakes hands with his brother and gives me a dirty look, my brother in-law has been so cold towards me ever since I missed their fathers memorial.

"Khosi," he says through gritted teeth.

"Hey, Mzamo." It comes out in a whisper.

They have a full conversation in front of me and I want to walk away right this minute. I hate it when people, especially men act like I am invisible. I had to deal with this growing up with my male cousins, my uncle's would have conversations with them and pretend like I am not in the room. I worked hard to achieve more than them but I still found myself dealing with men like them in boardrooms.

I gulp down my glass of wine and start looking around to find one of these waiters to give me

another one. My eyes land on Langa, he is standing with his girlfriend and a group of people I don't know. Can he stop looking at me like that, can he stop looking at me at all. I decide to just dart my eyes between my husband and his brother even though they are acting like I'm not standing with them.

My phone chimes in my clutch bag and I unhook my arm from Mhambi's and reach for it.

UNKNOWN NUMBER: YOU LOOK BREATHTAKING, I WISH YOU WERE WITH ME. I WOULD DEFINITELY KEEP MY EYES ON YOU AND GIVE YOU ATTENTION. BUT YOU CHOSE TO BE WITH HIM AND YOU'RE MISERABLE BECAUSE OF IT. PLEASE DON'T DRINK TOO MUCH WINE.

Son of a bitch! He thinks he knows all about my life and my marriage now. Out of all the men I could have slipped up with it just had to be Langa. I look to where he is standing and he's laughing like he just didn't send me an inappropriate message while I'm standing next to my husband and him next to his girlfriend.

"Excuse me babe," I say to Mhambi and hurry out of the conference room, I need to breath. I can't have this man looking at me and sending me texts, I am trying to forget the moment of weakness I had with him two weeks ago. I thought he was doing the same because that first text he sent to me that day was his last, until today at least.

I am walking in the corridor, trying to catch my breath and to get my head straight. I cannot allow Langa to get to me this way, I shouldn't give him the power over me. I came here to support a friend and try to have a good time with my husband with the hopes of getting to a better place.

Someone grabs my arm from behind me and pulls me into a room, I know for a fact that it's Langa. He's making my evening hell, I didn't come here for this. He pins me to the wall and I try to push him off me but he's strong. He is kissing my neck while his hands explore my thighs through the long slit of my dress. I am hitting him with my little fists but he's not budging. He stops kissing my neck and takes both my

hands and holds them above my head. His eyes are bloodshot red, he looks like a hungry wild animal that is seeing a vulnerable prey.

"I know you want me Makhosazana, you want to feel me and enjoy me like you did that night," he says and my damn clitoris pulsates. I don't want this but the lust I see in his eyes turn me on. No man has ever looked at me this way, not even Mhambi.

"I pour my energy and passion into you because you're a strong woman. Your power and independence doesn't scare me baby, it makes me want you so bad. You deserve a man like me, not a weakling that wants to force you into being a housewife," he says, rubbing my clitoris vigorously. I am going to cum if he continues like this, he pushes my underwear to the side and slides a finger inside of me, I moan, placing my hands flat on his chest.

"When was the last time he made you feel this good? When was the last time Khosi?" He asks, thrusting faster. I hate myself for what I am about to do but my body needs this, I need to release or I'll be

edgy the whole night. I unbuckle his belt and drop his pants along with his briefs and his erection is freed. He picks me up, opening my legs wide then directs his hard rod deep inside of my sleek opening. It feels so good I cannot help but moan in pleasure. He is pumping into me hard and fast, his groans go deeper and his fingers are digging into my ass.

"Ahhhhh shit!" he says and stops moving. "That was fuckin' good," he's telling me? I am panting, trying to catch my breath.

"You'll call me if you want me to make you cum," he whispers in my ear before putting me down and fixing himself. He kisses my lips before walking out. I take out wipes from my clutch bag and start cleaning his cum running down my thighs. I stop in the middle of fixing myself and close my eyes. Do I still call it a mistake? I am such a whore, cheating on my husband when he's in the same building as me.

I walk out of the office after fixing myself and taking a deep breath. This cannot happen again, damn Makhosazana you are better than this. The function has already started when I get in the conference



room, the MC is on the stage and making people laugh. I sit down next to Mhambi and he reaches for my hand, oh I wish he didn't. I mean he is holding a hand that was all over his enemy a few minutes ago. How do I bring my filth to my husband?

The launch goes on smoothly but I just want to go home, I cannot even enjoy the wine. My eyes keep on finding Langa in this room and I feel fire by just thinking of what he did to me a couple of hours ago. I don't even want to talk of the jealousy that consumes me each time I see him being affectionate with his girlfriend. I mentally slap myself, what on earth is wrong with me?

"You don't seem to be enjoying yourself," Mhambi whispers in my ear, slurring his words. He is drunk right now and that's shocking because he never wants the cameras to catch him in a bad state.

"One of us has to drive babe," I say and he laughs.

"Right! Mzamo just left so we can also leave," oh thank God, I quickly get on my feet, grabbing my

clutch bag and we go say goodbye to our friend who thanks us for showing up to support her.

Mhambi is sleeping in the passenger seat, he must have been drinking something other than wine. I'm pretty sure Mzamo was ordering from the hotel bar, I mean wine gets a person drunk but this drunk? I park in the garage and climb out first to go open his door and wake him up.

"Babe, wake up," I shake him gently, "we are home, come sleep on the bed," he opens his eyes and looks around his surroundings. He climbs out, taking off his bow tie. I unlock the door in the garage that connects to our kitchen, I walk in first and my intestines knot as my husband pulls me back to him by my waist. I can feel his erection poking my ass. He nibbles my ear and I allow my tears to fall because I ruined this moment for our marriage, if I didn't sleep with Langa then I wouldn't be hesitating to open my legs for Mhambi and allowing him to make love to me. I messed up big time! This is probably the opening we needed to make things right again.

"I want you," he whispers seductively in my ear and I press my lips into a thin line to muffle my sobs.

"Oh Mhambi, not tonight," my heart is in shambles. He chuckles in my ear then let's go of me, he comes to my front and looks at me in the eyes.

"Ahh, I forgot to book an appointment. My bad," with that said he walks away, taking off his jacket.

**CHAPTER 13**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

It's finally Wednesday and I am so excited to be going to this event with Tebatso, we came to learn that we enjoy reading books but different types. She is more of a fiction girl and I love my business and motivational books. We exchanged our favorite titles and I have been reading her romantic novels and from that I can tell she is a hearts and flowers type of girl. They are so cheesy and half of the time over exaggerated but hey what can we say, we love love.

I left the office early so I could prepare and leave quickly because I didn't want to bump into Khosi, things between us have gotten worse. We have become more of strangers than a married couple since Sunday morning after the wine launch of our friend. The Saturday night when we got home I tried to make love to her but she blew me off like always. That alone showed me that I have to stop trying because Khosi will never change. This is how she wants this marriage to continue and I need to accept

that and possibly be ready to move on with my life. As much as that hurts.

I am going to pass time at Mzamo's house, for a change he is not at the club. When I called he said he is at his house because he hasn't been feeling good these past few days. We thank the sickness for keeping him at home because that guy never rests, he is always chasing after the paper. I know we all do but some of us still take care of ourselves because we want to live long so we can be able to enjoy the money we make.

He lives in an estate and luckily the security guards at the gate know me and they don't have to be calling him and asking if he's expecting me. After a little chat I drive in and head to Mzamo's house, I park under the carport and climb out. His neighbors have little children and they are so cute, I watch as the guy runs after his kids and the two little girls are giggling, enjoying play time with daddy. I want this, I want to be able to have little humans who depend on me for everything. I would give up every other

thing to make my marriage work but not kids, that's where I draw the line.

I push the kitchen door open and walk towards the lounge, Mzamo is laying on the couch covered in a blanket. There's medication on the coffee table and a couple of empty bottles of beer. This guy is mixing two things that he shouldn't, even if I try to reprimand him he will still do it. Mzamo is as stubborn as a mule.

"What's up with you?" I ask, sitting on the ottoman.

"It's just flu," he says, "please mix me a glass of gin," I roll my eyes. He should be drinking soups and tea not asking for alcohol while on medication. I get up and go to the kitchen, it's an open plan so I still see him laying there.

"Entlek where did you say you're going?" He asks.

"Tebatso and I are going to an art studio, they have an event there. We will be painting our favorite book scenes," I say and he is thrown into a fit of laughter,

I didn't crack a joke so what is it that he finds funny.

"Mhambi, I am going to ask you a question and I need you to answer me honestly," oh what is it now. He always has 21 questions for me and I hardly ever ask him shit.

"Shoot!" I say, slicing the lemon.

"Do you like clumsy cat? I know you don't cheat but do you like the girl?" He asks and I heave a deep sigh. I take the glass and walk back to the lounge and sit down after handing him the gin and tonic. "We don't have the whole day Mhambi," he coaxes me into giving him an answer.

"I do like Tebatso, especially in the last two weeks. We have been texting back and forth even if it's only about the books we read. The simple conversations with her are refreshing, she has this different perspective on life and that has me wanting to know more about her," I explain, ashamed to look at my brother because of what I have just confessed to.

"I'm not going to judge, Lord knows I don't qualify to question people's life choices." Mzamo says and I smile.

"You are my elder brother and we have always been close Mhambi. I know you are a gentleman of complete integrity and it must be hard on you to be looking at another woman while you're married," he has no idea. I honestly wanted to put Tebatso at arms length but my marriage is so cold that I've found comfort in this girl by just texting.

"On Saturday I tried touching Khosi and she stopped me and these few days after that things are just worse, I don't see us moving past this," I decide to be honest with my brother and most importantly with myself.

"I don't want you to become something you're not, I don't want you caught between two women. It's not a good place to be trust me," he says and takes a sip of his drink.



"Enjoy this art what what with your clumsy cat tonight and before you try anything with this poor girl try and find out where your marriage is standing. Sit down with Makhosazana and her family so she can tell you if she will be able to give you everything you both agreed on or not," he advises and I nod my head vigorously. He's right, Tebatso seems innocent and she doesn't deserve being a third wheel.

"I will do exactly that bro, thank you," I say and he nods imperceptibly. I appreciate him taking this seriously and giving me sound advice I can actually see working.

## **TEBATSO MORAKE**

"Yes mama, I just got here." I say, settling on the couch next to Pheletso. I'm talking to my mother on the phone and she's on speaker.

"I'm glad you're safe. Tebatso please try your best to show Pheletso the right way, my baby you are the perfect example of what a good Christian girl is," my eyes widen and I look at Pheletso who is silently laughing. I roll my eyes at her, I didn't ask to be given that tittle.

"I will try my best ma I promise." I say and Pheletso gets up from the couch and grabs the bottle of wine on the table.

"Okay, you girls should pray before you sleep. I love you okay?" she says.

"I love you too ma," I answer then we say our goodbyes and I end the call.

Today I am attending the painting event with Mhambi and because it's happening at night I decided to convince my mother to allow me to come sleep over at Pheletso's place. She agreed because she thinks I am here to convince Pheletso to come back home and that's not the case. This girl is trying to be independent, her family should be proud of that not trying to hold her back. I am envious of her, I wish I had the courage to do what she did so why would I want to tell her to go back home? To a life that is depressing me too.

"The perfect example of a good Christian girl, really?" She asks, placing her hands on her waist.

"You know how my mother is," I say, getting on my feet. I need to shower because I am meeting Mhmabi in about an hour.

I came straight here after my shift at the hotel. It's not too far, the hotel is in Fourways and Pheletso stays in Sunninghill. Her apartment is cute, a bachelor with an open plan kitchen and lounge, a bedroom and bathroom. She said she chose it

because it's affordable and closer to the office where she works. This place has almost everything, she explained that she was buying stuff while she was still doing her internship.

"How long are you staying?" She asks, following me to the bathroom.

"Just the night," I answer and she laughs. I told her I'm only coming because a couple of friends from work and I are going to a painting event tonight. I didn't tell her the truth because I'm still dating her brother and I don't want her to start hating on me.

"That's not enough time to convince me to go back to living according to the word," she says and laughs, Pheletso doesn't care shame.

"They want you back home babe so they will allow me to come here as often as I can to convince you," I say, stripping off my clothes to get into the shower.

"That's good for you love, you'll be able to escape them and do what you want, you also deserve to live a little. I'm proud of you for even going out tonight," she says and I laugh because then she would buy me the whole universe if she knew I went clubbing a couple of weeks ago.

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The cab drops me off at the art studio and I climb out, I didn't want Mhambi picking me up and have Pheletso see him. I cross the road and find Mhambi standing on the sidewalk with his hands buried deep in his pockets, seeing him standing there and looking handsome just gave me butterflies in the stomach but it's nothing new. I take a deep breath and a few more strides before stopping in front of him.

"Hey, you're here. I thought you were no longer coming," he says, relief evident in his black eyes. Will he ever stop intimidating me? I mean I've been texting with him for over two weeks now, I should be comfortable around him.

"How could I not come when you hyped me up with this event?" He chuckles and I just smile looking away from him. He makes me too nervous and I am also afraid of looking at him because I'm scared I'll be lost in his hypnosis.

"Come let's go in," he leads us to the door and shows the guy at the entrance two tickets and we are shown where to sit. The place looks amazing, it's colorfully decorated and well lit. There are tables and chairs lined up in this spacious room. There's an apron hanging on each chair and a medium canvas on a stand that's on top of the table with paints and brushes as well. There's also a glass of wine on each table and a gift bag. God this is so exciting. Mhambi pulls out a chair for me and I sit down, he settles next to me and steals a glance which I avoid.

"Hello everyone, can I please have your attention," a lady with dreadlocks says on the stage and the room goes quiet.

"Welcome to our monthly painting sessions, if it's your first time here I would like to welcome you and

I hope you have as much fun as possible. It's not about painting the perfect picture but expressing yourself in a way that makes sense to you through paint," she says and I am ready to just unwind and have a good evening.

"So today's theme is: Paint your favorite book scene. For this event we are in partnership with a book club, it felt like the perfect collaboration because painting and books are an art that many people relate to," she says and we give a round of applause.

"So when you were purchasing tickets on our website we had three questions. Firstly you were asked which wine you like and if it should be alcoholic or non alcoholic, and lastly we wanted to know if you would appreciate a sweet or savory platter. You answered and that is what you will be served to enjoy as you paint," oh my God this is perfect, but what did Mhambi order for me? I quickly look his way and find him smiling.

"Non alcoholic sweet red wine. I decided on the sweet red because you were drinking strawberry

daiquiri, I hope I got that right. And I did both platters so we can share," that's very thoughtful of him.

"That's perfect, thank you for bringing me here," he nods.

"So ladies and gentlemen, you have two hours to finish your paintings. Take your time and most importantly have fun!" She says and gets off the stage. We all stand and put on our aprons so the paint doesn't ruin our clothes. Afro jazz music starts playing and this just feels like a scene from a movie. I will never forget this experience.

"So who is Tebatso?" Mhambi asks unexpectedly and I heave a sigh.

"I am not really good at this but what do you want to know?" I say and he clears his throat.

"Let's see? How old are you? What are your hopes and dreams? Do you have any siblings? Just tell me the basics," he says and I nod.



"Well I am 27 years old. I am the only child of my parents, my dad died and it's just me and my mother now. I didn't do much growing up, I just went to school and church. My mother shielded me from the world, she still does. She didn't even allow me to attend the university I wanted, I had no other option but to settle for UNISA because it didn't require me to leave the house to attend classes," I say then chuckle. Mama really did go out of her way to hide me from the world, I don't have a life and that's actually sad.

"Wow sounds like you're a prisoner, no offense," I shrug my shoulders as I pour paint on the paint pallet.

"I was used to it until recently. I just want to live my life but she doesn't understand any of that. She wants me to have a simple life with a God fearing man. But that's not what I want, I want to go out there and start working in the field that I love, that is education. I want to have my own place and a car so I can be able to go anywhere I want and explore my

surroundings. I want to be able to travel and see the world and what's out there you know?" I say sounding sad because my reality right now is far from everything I've dreamed of.

"So you don't want to get married and have children?" He asks and I shake my head. We already had the children conversation in the bathroom when I was cleaning the champagne stain out of his jacket. But I guess he forgot about that.

"That's not what I'm saying, I do want a husband and children. I just don't want to be expected to forget my dreams in order to have that. I mean a woman can have a family and still work and explore the world, she doesn't have to trade one for the other," I say. "Yes, it won't be a walk in the park but nothing worth having is ever easy,"

"I wish some women understood this," he says and I look at him, he is lost in his thoughts. A change of song brings him back to the now and I move my eyes from him.

"So you studied teaching? What did you major in?"  
He asks.

"I majored in Life Sciences and Geography," I  
answer.

"And you've been struggling with finding a job?  
That's why you are working at the hotel?"

"Yes, it has been a nightmare. The last time I entered  
a classroom was when I was busy with my practicals,  
I was 22 years old and that's five years ago," I  
thought I would be so far in life by now, you know  
owning a car and house and being in a loving  
relationship with a man who adores me and makes  
me feel things on a daily basis.

"Don't stop sending those applications Tebatso,  
something will definitely come up for you. The bible  
says, "when the time is right I the lord will make it  
happen." so please don't loose hope," he says and I  
quickly look to him with my jaw on the ground.

"You know the bible?" I ask and he laughs.

"Yes, my mother's father was a pastor. I grew up in the church," oh wow! I wouldn't have thought.

**CHAPTER 14**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

Hlobisile and I get to her house from a day at the spa, she knows I have been going through a lot these past couple of weeks and she wanted to cheer me up. What my sister doesn't know is my recent cheating with Langa, a man my husband loathes like nothing on this earth. Guilt has been consuming me with each passing day and what kills me even more is the fact that I want more of Langa. I know I shouldn't even be thinking about him but I can't seem to stop myself. Trust me I would go back to the first night I slept with him and undo it if it was possible. I don't want to be this woman that cheats on her husband and still want to do more of it.

"Hey, are you okay?" My sister asks, tapping my shoulder.

I sniff back my tears, "Hlobisile you are the only one who doesn't judge me sis wam, no matter what I do you always stand by me and for that I want to thank you," I say, she smiles and pulls me in for a hug.

"I know you would do the same thing for me Khosi,"  
She is right, I would jump in front of the gun for my  
little sister.

"I need to tell you something and hopefully you will  
not judge me still but help me deal with this because  
I don't want to be this woman. I don't even know  
how I got here Hlobi," I say and she gently pushes  
me off her and we are eye to eye. She has a worried  
expression on her face, she's probably trying to  
figure out what I'm saying right now.

"You know you can talk to me Makhosazana,  
whatever it is we will find a solution for it," oh I love  
this girl so much.

"You are going to have to sit down for this one sis  
wam, you might faint," I say and she narrows her  
eyes.

"You are scaring me now," I am scaring myself at this  
point because I am taking a path that will destroy my  
life completely.

I take her hand and lead her to the lounge, thank heavens it's just the two of us in the house. Her husband is at work and their kids are still at school.

"You know things with Mhambi haven't been good right?" She nods, "my husband has changed and I don't blame him honestly. I promised him a certain life before we got married because I thought that was what I wanted too but after marriage I realized that it's not," I say nervously.

"I know all of this Khosi, what did you do?" She wants me to get straight into it but I need her to see what made me do it.

"A while ago he went out to his brothers club after I asked him to stay home with me. I tried linking up with you guys that night but you all had plans with your families so I went out and I wish I didn't because I wouldn't have done this," I say crying and she uses her hand to wipe my tears.

"Hlobisile I don't know what came over me but I slept with someone else," she gasps in shock, covering her mouth with both hands.

"That's not even the worst part of it," I say with a hoarse voice and she's shaking her head with tears glistening in her eyes.

"I cheated on my husband with someone he hates so much, I cheated with Langa and not once but twice and the fucked up part is that I cannot stop thinking about him," saying this out loud to another person makes me feel more filthy, I thought it would take the load off my shoulders but the look my sister is giving me is adding to my guilt.

"Makhosazana no! Please tell me you didn't sis wami please," she puts both her hands on top of her head.

"I only want her to tell me where she got the time to cheat on that boy because she doesn't have time for anything else," my sister and I turn to the entrance and my whole world comes crumbling down. My mother is furious, her lower lip is even quivering.



Hlobisile and I get up from the couch and mama strides towards us, she stops in front of me and I am shaking like a leaf. She is looking at me straight in the eyes, ready to pounce on me right this minute.

"You found time to go out there and open your legs for another man Makhosazana. But you've failed to find the time for your marriage, you've failed to give your husband children. Why are you wasting his time when you won't give him yours?" My mother asks in a calm tone but I know for a fact that she is boiling with anger inside.

"It was a mistake mama," I say and she slaps me across the face, I scream in pain. Hlobisile pulls me away and stands between our mother and me.

"You told your sister that you slept with that man twice, how do you call that a mistake?" She sneers and I close my eyes, rubbing the sting on my face.

"I didn't raise a cheat, I didn't raise a child who goes out of her way to hurt the person who loves her.

Makhosazana what has gotten into you?" She asks, this time I can feel the pain and disappointment in her voice.

"Mama please, right now I need you to support me. I honestly don't need to be told that I fucked up because I know I did, literally!" I half shout and Hlobisile shoots me a reprimanding look.

"You want me to support you cheating on your husband?" She asks then huffs out a humourless laugh.

"No mama, I want you to tell me that it's okay to not want kids. To tell me that it's not a bad thing for me to work as much as I do," she narrows her eyes and looks at my sister.

"You don't want kids? Then why did you agree to having them with your husband? Why did you get married in the first place?" She asks, throwing her hands in the air.

"Growing up I wanted to make my father proud, I wanted to amount to more than my male cousins because of how their fathers would tell baba that he doesn't have boys to his name. I wanted to be that boy for my father, to give him bragging rights for his brothers and their sons. Having children will only stand in my way mama, like it did for you," I say and they exchange looks with my sister. This is the first time I am saying this out loud.

"What? Who said your father wanted you to act like a boy or to help him prove anything to his brothers? Makhosazana my husband loves you kids more than anything, he didn't need you stepping in to fight whatever war you thought was going on. You are here living your life to prove things to people who are out there enjoying their marriages and children? Does that make any sense to you?" I blink rapidly, she doesn't understand how hard it was growing up with boys only and always having to be sidelined because I was just a girl.

"Having you and your sisters didn't stand in my way of doing anything, I don't regret having the four of

you. You are my pride and joy and nothing in this world will ever bring me the happiness you girls bring. I stopped working because I wanted to, because I felt more fulfilled as a mother than I did as a career woman," she explains and I swallow.

"I get you but my ultimate happiness comes from working mama. I thrive in that department and that doesn't make me a bad person or wife," I say and she nods in agreement.

"Yes, it doesn't make you a bad person but it makes you a bad wife when you promise your husband a certain life only to go back on your word. It makes you a bad wife when you step out of your marriage," she says wagging a finger at me.

"What you are doing is selfish and I won't even try to sugar coat it because you're my daughter. Mhambi has been a supportive and loving husband and he definitely doesn't deserve a wife like you," she says and turns to leave.

"Mama, please don't go. Let's sit and talk about this," Hlobisile begs but she keeps on walking.

"This is bad Makhosazana, really bad. I don't know how we are going to fix this one," if Hlobisile is this shaken up then I might as well throw myself in my grave.

It's over for me.

**CHAPTER 15**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

I just finished housekeeping for the morning and now I'm on my way to the basement workers kitchen to have some coffee and the cookies I bought from some lady at the robots in the township. She makes the most amazing cookies I think I am addicted now. No one is in the kitchen when I walk in, I guess they are still busy with housekeeping. I boil water with the kettle and take out my stash of coffee, powder milk and sugar from my locker. When I'm done making my rich creamy cup of coffee I sit down and there's an old news paper on the table. Mhambi and Mr Nsele are on the front page, smiling and shaking hands and now that I know the truth I can see just how phony those smiles are.

Last week at the event we went to he started asking personal questions and I answered him honestly and thank God he didn't ask about boyfriends because I didn't want to talk about Tebogo. I was shy in asking him things but I sure as hell asked about the tension between him and Mr. Nsele and even though I felt

like it was hard for him to talk about it he still told me where their beef started.

Apparently growing up they were the best of friends and so were their fathers. The two seniors were in different businesses together, owning half of each until Mr. Nsele senior got greedy and wanted everything for himself. Mhambi says he somehow managed to trick his father into signing some documents without going through them and unknowingly he was signing all his shares over to Nsele senior. Mhambi said when his father realized what had happened he couldn't believe it, that he dropped down and died that very minute. Mhambi was only 23 years at that time, recently graduated from university and ready to get in business with his father. He said his mom suffered a stroke because of her husband's sudden death and she has been at a wellness center since then. The reason why he has a stake in the hotel is because when Nsele senior was robbing their father the hotel deal had not yet gone through so he couldn't steal the hotel from them. After all the drama it was expected that there would be no relationship between the two families but The

Nsele's still came after the Mabizela's. Mhambi says Langa is always after everything that is his, from business deals to trying so hard to getting into his circle of friends. But all their efforts to destroy the Mabizela brothers are futile.

"Haibo! You're now starring at his pictures? You must be in love with the yummy boss," I push the paper away and look up at the smiling Asavela.

"I am not in love with him, I have a boyfriend remember?" I say and she laughs out loud and claps once.

"You mean your boring priest? The one that feels more of a brother than your boyfriend? One that has never had an erection for you?" I narrow my eyes at her. Why is she being brutal?

"Mxm, I'm not in love with Mhambi," I say and she snaps an eyebrow.



"Oh Mhambi, I forget that you're on first name basis, texting and going on dates," I gasp and look around to check if no one heard her.

"Relax it's just us in here," she pulls a chair and sits down before taking one of my cookies.

"I want to talk to you about something, I need your advise," I say and she nods.

I don't know what to do, I feel like I am caught between a rock and a hard place.

"So these past few days Mhambi has been telling me that he likes me and I've been dodging the conversation because I have a boyfriend. Last night he texted me some flyer for a hiking trip, he invited me to go with him and I don't know what to do," she is smiling from ear to ear.

"First of all you like this guy, it's obvious. Everytime you talk about him your eyes twinkle a little, Tebatso you said you want to start living your life and guy is making that happen. You had fun at the painting nton nton and I know you will have more fun at this

hiking thing. Stop trying to sabotage yourself and the things that might bring you happiness, I'm not saying marry the guy but just have fun with him you know?" She says and I bite my lower lip.

I like Mhambi too, way more than I should, especially after that painting event. I have never had that much fun in my life, he made me feel things without even trying to do so. He affected me greatly, both physically and emotionally. After that event our chats were never the same again, he sends me a good morning and goodnight text each day without fail, he checks on me during the day as well and talking to him has become my favorite thing to do.

Last Friday I had left my lunchbox at home, he texted me around lunchtime and we started talking. I shared that I forgot my lunchbox at home and he immediately sent me an ewallet to get myself some lunch at the hotel restaurant. Mhambi is so thoughtful and he has showed this a couple of times now. He is everything I have been dreaming of, he gives me butterflies, when he texts me my heart skips a bit. He loves exploring and doing different

things and most importantly he has a relationship with God. I cannot predict anything with Mhambi, each day would come as an exciting surprise and that's how I want to live my life.

"The truth is I like him too Asavela but I am scared because it's all foreign and I have Tebogo. My mother will never allow me to leave the perfect boy who will ensure that I live a Godly life. She has planned my life to the T and I'm afraid that she will disown me if I go against everything she has ever taught me," I say and she takes my hand.

"Do not allow fear to hold you back Tebatso," she says, brushing my knuckles with her thumb

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After church mama Lilly invited my mother and I to her house for Sunday lunch. Like always she prepared a delicious seven colors, I washed the dishes after we had our meal and dished up for Tebogo. He had to stay behind at church for the leaders meeting, he wanted me to wait for him but I

told him I'd rather leave with our mothers so I can be able to dish for them and clear up afterwards. That was just an excuse, I can no longer pretend when I'm around him. Everything about Tebogo irritates me now, his voice, his smell and just... everything!

"How is Pheletso doing?" Mama Lilly asks when I get back in the lounge from the bathroom.

"She is doing okay ma, she says she enjoys work more now," I say smiling.

Pheletso avoids their calls because all they do when she picks up is tell her that she's making the biggest mistake of her life.

"I wish I could just go to that place and talk some sense into her," she says and I quickly shake my head. Pheletso asked me not to share her address with them.

"Mama I know this is hard for you, I mean she's your only daughter. But remember that she threatened to move to a new place if you showed up at her apartment and she will not give me the address of

the new place. We don't want her disappearing without any of us knowing where she is, it might be taking me longer to convince her to come home but at least I know where she is," I say and she heaves a sigh.

"Lilly ngwaneso, Tebatso is right. Its going to take time to convince Pheletso into coming back home but I trust my daughter to win this battle and bring your girl back," my mother backs me up.

"If it's okay with my mother, I want to go be with her for the entire weekend so I can be able to take her to church on Sunday. I know she will refuse coming to our church but I will find another one around where she lives, after all the holly spirit is in every house of the Lord," I mutter and they both say amen. I have plans with Mhambi next Saturday, we are going hiking. His excitement was everything when I told him I would love to go. I have already told Pheletso that I will be there the whole weekend and she is excited to have me.

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I am sluggishly making my way to the waiting polo vivo, he just had to insist on picking me up from work. I had a long day and being in the same space as him will only make me worse really. I need to find a way to sit my mother down and explain to her that this is not what I want. Tebogo is a great guy, I agree, but he is not the guy for me. Me and him don't gel at all and if we force this marriage to happen then we will only be marrying to divorce at a later stage. It's only right that we stop it now before it goes any further, a break up is better than a divorce and that's a fact. I'm sure I can even find a Bible verse that will attest to this.

I open the front passenger door and climb in, he's already smiling widely at me. He tries to lean in for a kiss but I start coughing violently and thank God he moves back.

"I'm sorry, I think I'm coming down with the flu," I say.

"It's okay my love, remind me tomorrow to bring you some medication from the hospital," I nod, faking a smile.

"You won't believe the drama that happened at the hospital," he says then chuckles.

"So this woman had a scheduled abortion, while waiting for her turn the father of the baby shows up and starts trying to physically force her to leave the hospital and not go ahead with the abortion. They get into an argument and start insulting each other, apparently the girl is terminating her pregnancy because she just got a job after a long time. She is afraid that they will cancel her contract because she's pregnant. Can you believe that?" He says and I am pretending to be shocked, but I have no interest in this conversation. I just want him to take me home.

"That's hectic," I respond.

"All I said was, thank God Tebatso understands that she will be at home with our kids, because I will

provide for their every need. I wish every woman was like you, understanding her role in a relationship and not going out of her way to wear the pants. I am blessed to have a woman who understands and lives by the teachings of the word," did I hear him right? Did Tebogo just lower me to a nothing like that? I cannot believe this, I cannot believe that my mother wants me to get into a marriage that expects me to just exist for the husband. His phone rings and he takes it out of his pocket and answers.

"Hello," he answers but I don't even care to listen in on the conversation. It's not like it's another woman he's seeing on the side, he doesn't have the balls to touch me, a woman he is set to marry so where will he take the courage to look at another woman? The words he said before the call are ringing in my head, my heart is broken. I feel so disrespected by Tebogo. I am startled when he starts banging the steering wheel and screaming like a mad man. I have never seen Tebogo acting this way, he has never lost his cool at least not in front of me. I don't know whether to climb out of this car and run or sit right on this chair.



"They cannot take me off Sunday school, they can't!"  
He screams, scaring me even further.

"Tebogo, what's going on?" I ask with a shaking voice.

"I made that Sunday school a success and now they are moving me to be a youth leader. My calling is with the children Tebatso, they can't do this to me!"  
He is worked up because of this? I thought it was something more serious, something life threatening maybe.

**CHAPTER 16**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

I know Mzamo advised that I don't do anything further with Tebatso until I know for sure where my marriage stands, but it hasn't been clearer like now that Makhosazana and I are at different ends of this marriage and we don't want the same things in life. It's only fair that we sit down in front of our family and admit that to them and to each other. We are obviously miserable here, we should love each other enough to let go and pray that we both find what we are looking for out there.

I told Tebatso that I like her and she has been avoiding that conversation, but I am going to bring it up again this Saturday after our hike. I also want to come clean about my situation with Makhosazana, she deserves to know the truth and make the best decision for herself. I hope she will understand and wait for me to deal with everything before we can start something officially.

After our painting event and the conversations we had that night I realized that Tebatso and I have so much in common. She wants almost the same things as me in life, that's compatibility and it makes for a long lasting relationship. Something that I want with all my heart and with someone I don't feel like I am forcing.

I'm busy looking for some documents that my mother's care center asked me to scan and email to them as soon as possible because they are needed urgently. I checked the safe in our bedroom and they weren't there and I tried the safe and cabinets in the home office but still nothing. Makhosazana normally takes care of such things but I don't want to call her.

I head back to our bedroom because I just remembered that she has a storage box she keeps in her closet. I find it in one of the drawers but it's locked, shit I don't even know where she keeps the key. It's a small lock that I can break with a bolt cutter. I exit the room and head to the garage where I keep my tools, I find it on top of the shelf and make my way back to the closet and break the lock. This

storage box is full of files with documents, I start taking everything out and in the process my eyes land on a hospital file with Makhosazana's name. Ever since I've been with Khosi, she has never been to a hospital and this file is from three years ago, we were already married then. I open the file and go through the pages, my heart almost stops when I see what procedure my wife did.

My knees are too weak to carry me for this one so I slowly sink down to the floor. Disappointment, hurt and anger can never describe what I am feeling right now.

Makhosazana has known for years that she wasn't going to give me the one thing I want in my life, she knew but she has been making a fool out of me by saying I should give her a couple of years. What kind of woman did I marry? How did I not see this? How did I even miss the scars?

"Mhambi!" My brother shouts from somewhere in the house, I cannot even respond because I have this huge, dry lump clogged in my throat. I am numb, it feels like my heart has been ripped out of my chest.

"Ey yo bro, where are you?" his voice is closer now, he walks in the closet and finds me sitting flat on the floor.

"Mhambi, what's wrong?" He asks, kneeling down in front of me. I close my eyes and my tears fall, it hurts so bad. This is a woman I have loved and supported ever since we started our relationship and this is how she does me? How heartless is Makhosazana.

"She always knew that she won't give me children Mzamo. She made sure it doesn't even happen by mistake, how evil can Makhosazana be?" I ask, opening my eyes and finding my brother looking at me in confusion and panic.

"Talk to me, what's wrong? Is she on birth control?" I huff and wipe the tears off my face.

"I was looking for documents that I need to send to ma's care center and I came across a hospital file. A

file that took me out of the darkness Khosi was keeping me in,"

"Mhambi, I don't understand what you're saying. What did Makhosazana do?" He asks and I let out a chuckle of disbelief. I must be dreaming because no, who does this to another human being?

"According to that file, my wife had a hysterectomy done three years ago and it was not medically justified," I say and it leaves a bitter taste in my mouth.

"A what?"

"Hysterectomy, she had her womb removed behind my back. Makhosazana will never be able to give me children," I say and he gasps in shock.

"What the fuck! What kind of monster is your wife? She has been pushing this whole thing back because she knew it was never going to happen. Why didn't she just tell you straight up, even before you married her," I'm asking myself the same thing. A woman

doesn't just have a hysterectomy, she has one because she has thought long and hard and decided that kids aren't something she wants. She shouldn't have been selfish and got married thinking I'll love her enough to not want kids after I told her that I want them badly. It's only Mzamo and I, if I don't have kids of my own then my father's name is dead.

My brother and I moved to the lounge to wait for Khosi and her parents, I don't think this meeting needs to happen because I have all the answers I need right now. My wife betrayed me in the worst way possible, there is absolutely no way we are going to work past this. She took a life changing decision without thinking of how it will affect me, she didn't consider me at all when she did this. This whole fucked up situation shows that Makhosazana doesn't love me nor regard me as her husband.

"Good afternoon boys," my father-in-law's voice says and I don't raise my head to look at him. My brother greets both elders.

"Hao, Mhambi is everything okay?" My mother in-law asks.

"I think you should ask your daughter that ma," my brother says angrily and as much as I understand his frustrations he shouldn't take them out on her parents. They have nothing to do with Khosi's decisions.

"What's going on? Makhosazana what has happened now?" Bab'Jiyane asks and I finally look up and find him looking at Khosi, who is staring at her mother like she betrayed her.

"Tell them," I say, standing up from the couch. She looks at me with widened eyes, swallowing her saliva.

"T-tell them what baby?" I roll my eyes.

She sure knows how to play stupid just as good as she makes people look stupid.

I take a deep breath and pick up the hospital file from the arm rest and show it to her and her parents. Makhosazana gasps in shock, her hands



moving up to cover her mouth. Tears are already streaming down her face and if it was any other day my heart would be breaking from seeing her this way but I know what a snake she is now.

"What is in that file?" My mother in law asks, darting between myself and her lying daughter.

"Just tell them Mhambi before I do," my brother says and I sniff my tears back and wipe those that had already escaped my eyes. This is heart wrenching, out of everything Makhosazana has ever done to me in this marriage this one takes the cup.

"You are scaring me now, Mhambi what's going on,"  
-Mrs Jiyane.

I look at Makhosazana who is crying hysterically next to her father.

"Your daughter went to remove her womb three years ago without telling me. She didn't need one but she decided to remove it because she didn't want to give me children," I say and her mother jumps in shock.

"Makhosazana Jiyane! What did you do?" Her father bellows, stepping away from her.

"Baba, I am sorry, but I swear I have my reasons," my wife says.

"Oh you always have reasons Makhosazana. Where did I go wrong with you? Jiyane what did I do to the universe for it to hurt me through this child like this?" Her mother cries and her husband takes her in his arms.

"Mhambi, baby I know how this looks but trust me I have an explanation that will make sense," she says, trying to come close to me. I hold my hand out to block her from coming near me.

"I have taken so much of your bullshit and still stayed with the hopes of making it work because I loved you more than anything. I saw a future with you and no one else but Khosi all you do is hurt and disappoint me. You have never taken me or this marriage seriously. I should have seen this when you

decided that you are going to keep your surname, when you told me you will not be wearing a wedding ring," I say and she's shaking her head like all that I'm saying is a lie.

"Ma no baba, I loved your daughter. You saw how I tried supporting her and being the husband she deserved but I cannot do this anymore. This marriage has only drained me, I cannot continue to live like this. Khosi and I ended way before we even started because this was based on a lie. She always knew that she didn't want everything we planned but she still went through with it, and I believe it's because she thought she would manage to convince me to leave my dream of having children like I've dropped my other passions for her."

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I've been living with my brother since I left my house last Monday, I couldn't be in the same space as Makhosazana. I didn't want to have to listen to her trying to justify her actions to me, to try and convince me to stay with her because we can make

things work. Nothing will change between us, she betrayed me and made a fool out of me. I gave her nothing but love and she threw all that in my face.

I haven't been going to the office, my brother pops in everyday to see if they have anything urgent for me to deal with. My phone has been off because I didn't want to talk to anyone, I didn't want Makhosazana to blow up my phone with endless calls. But that didn't stop her, a few days ago she showed up here and the security called Mzamo, I told him to tell them not to open for her. She tried causing a scene hoping I will come out but I didn't play into her mind game.

The only person I am worried about is Tebatso, she must be so angry at me for going off grid, I mean we had plans and I didn't say anything. I know for a fact that she's also confused by this whole thing because who disappears after telling a woman that they like them? I said that so many times through text and then I went cold, not only is that confusing and hurtful it's plain disrespectful too. Tebatso doesn't deserve any of this but I had so many things on my

mind. I needed time to wrap my head around this whole situation but now I'm ready to make contact and apologize for doing what I did. I hope she will agree on meeting up so I can be able to explain everything. I switch on my phone and a million texts come flooding in, I will check everything later, right now I need to talk to Tebatso.

"So you're not dead?" she answers and I close my eyes. I don't blame her for the attitude, she is not aware of the shit I've been going through.

"No, but emotionally I might as well be," I say and she smacks her lips.

"What do you want Mhambi?" She asks, sounding bored.

"I want a chance to sit down with you and explain why I disappeared like that. I promise it will make sense and you'll see that I didn't just go AWOL for the sake of it. I am going through a lot here Tebatso and I need to talk to someone, and I want it to be

you," I say, hoping she opens up her heart and gives me the opportunity.

"You had your chance Mhambi but you messed it up," she says then hangs up.

**CHAPTER 17**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

"This is not going to help you Makhosazana, alcohol won't solve anything," my mother says before going to draw the curtains open. What is she doing here? I pull up the covers, I don't need her coming here to judge me. I'm already doing a good job beating myself up. She removes the covers and I groan in frustration.

"This pity party is not going to save your marriage. You need to pull yourself together and go fight for that man because you will never find another like him," she roars and I sit up straight.

"Mama do you honestly think I haven't tried to talk to my husband? I try his phone everyday, all day. I went to Mzamo's house but they told the guards to never open up for me. What more should I do? He clearly doesn't want to talk to me or even see me," I say and she laughs and claps once.

"So that's you doing everything in your power to get him back?" She asks and I close my eyes. If she has a solution to my problems she can tell me rather than making all this unnecessary noise.

"Do you love your husband? Do you want to make things work between the two of you?" She asks and I nod vigorously. Of course I want my husband, it took me this whole drama to realize what a good husband Mhambi is and how blessed I am. My parents made me realize that my decisions were stupid because they were all based on proving points that I had no business proving.

"Mama, I love that man with all my heart. I messed up but I want to make things right. I want a second chance to be the wife I promised him to be," I say and she folds her arms across her chest.

"What about you and that Nsele boy?" Mama asks and I swallow and look away.

I'm still embarrassed by the whole thing, but I am grateful that my mother agreed to keep it between the three of us for as long as I cut all ties with him.



"I haven't seen or spoken to Langa since the night of the wine launch," That's the honestly truth, I have been avoiding calls from numbers I don't know because each time I block one he comes back with another one.

"Makhosazana I am keeping things from my husband for you, I am willing to help you fight for you marriage but I need to know that this is what you want too," she says and I nod my head.

"Mama, you and daddy made me realize that I decided to invest all my time in work because I wanted to make him proud. To not make him feel bad for not having a son. I know he always says we are enough for him but I somehow always believed that he was just saying it so we don't feel like he sees us as anything less than important. My not wanting children came from that, I didn't want anything disturbing me in reaching heights that non of my male cousins reached." I explain and she nods, understanding.

"I want to make my marriage work. I want my husband and I to sit down with a therapist and lay down truths that got us to this point so we can be able to move forward," I add and she heaves a sigh of relief.

"You kept something as an insurance policy, that to me means you didn't cancel the idea of children entirely," she says and I start crying because she's right.

"I will arrange for you and Mhambi to meet so you can tell him that not all hope is lost," she says.

"I truly appreciate that ma," She sits down on the bed and opens her arms for a hug.  
I am grateful that she's finally understanding and supporting me.

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I'm driving to some restaurant in Melrose arch, my sister Hlobisile asked me to meet up with her for a meal. I haven't seen her since the day my mother

came over to her house and overheard me telling her that I cheated on Mhambi with Langa. I know my sister doesn't judge or look down on me but I was embarrassed, I still am because I'm her elder sister. I need to set the right example for them but I'm the one who has the most problems that I caused myself.

I am still beating myself up for all that I've done to hurt my husband and our marriage. The Monday afternoon that the whole hysterectomy thing came out I was shattered, I didn't want Mhambi finding out that way. The hate I saw in his eyes hurt me to my soul and I couldn't do anything but stand the and watch all the pain I've caused him. When he left with his brother I broke down, wishing that it was all just a bad dream.

My parents sat me down and asked me why I had done such a selfish thing, I had to explain to them because I couldn't have them looking at me like I was the biggest disappointment. My father set me straight immediately and helped me to understand that I don't have to prove anything to anyone,

especially his elder brothers because they are just a bunch of bullies who wish they had half the things he does. That was amongst the wake up calls I got that day.

I get to the restaurant and a waitress shows me to a table, I order a tequila and ginger ale while I wait for Hlobisile to arrive. She is always late, that's one thing I hate about my little sister. The waitress brings my drink and I tell her to come back when she sees someone here with me. She's such a friendly girl with a beautiful smile, she's definitely getting a fat tip.

"So you have been avoiding me?" Langa says, sliding on the chair across me. I close my eyes, can't he just disappear right this minute?

"But it looks like you're not getting it," I say, taking a sip of my drink. I need him gone before Hlobisile gets here, that one is a dynamite and she would definitely change on him. I don't want the drama, we are in a public place.

"What's wrong Khosi? I thought we were enjoying each other," he says and I roll my eyes.

"It was a mistake, both times. Please forget about it, I'm trying to," I say and he narrows his eyes and nodding his head at the same time.

"So you're going to stay with a man that wants you to change everything about yourself so you can be worthy of his love? If you don't offer your womb then you're useless to him," He says disgusted and I shake my head.

"Langa, you don't know anything about my marriage, stop acting like you do. You were a moment if weakness and I'm over it. Please leave me alone, I'm begging you," I say and he closes his eyes before getting up.

"You'll regret this Khosi," he says and I blink rapidly. He can't do this to me, if Mhambi finds out then I can kiss any possibility of getting back together and fixing things marriage goodbye.

"Don't worry I won't say a word, you'll just be regretting choosing him over me," he walks away and I sigh in relief.

## **TEBATSO MORAKE**

"Oh come on Tebatso, answer the poor guys call," Asavela says and I roll my eyes.

Why must I answer him when he disappeared on me for days without saying a word? We had plans to go hiking and he just stood me up, I was left confused as hell because here is a guy who has been texting me so much and telling me that he likes me then out of the blue he just goes mute.

"Asavela you out of everyone should know how worried I was, how I was questioning myself over his sudden disappearance," she nods in agreement. I was going crazy for those couple of days, I thought something might have happened to him but if that was the case then we would have been told because he's the co-owner on this place. I stopped myself a times from going to his brothers club to ask if everything was okay with Mhambi.

"I would be mad too friend if someone ghosted me, but the guy told you that he's going through something and he wants to meet and explain

everything to you, give him a minute babe. I want this grumpy Tebatso gone, you were so bubbly when the two of you were exchanging love texts," she says and I giggle.

I won't lie, I also miss our chats and how I felt before her decided to disappear on me. I am super relieved that he's okay and safe but I couldn't welcome him back just like that, he has to know that I want to be treated right.

"I will call him later," I say and she grabs my phone on the table and dials his number, this one is a bully. She puts the phone on speaker and it's ringing.

"Tebatso," his baritone voice answers and Asavela goes crazy.

"Hey, how are you?" I ask, balancing my head with my hand.

He blows out a deep sigh, "it's tough but I'm taking it a day at a time. How are you?" He says and I can really feel the sadness laced in his voice. I wonder what is happening with him.



"I am good I guess. When would you like to meet?" I ask and Asavela holds out two thumbs up. Mhambi doesn't answer but I can hear him breathing on the other end of this call.

"I don't know if you can but please go away with me for the weekend," he says and I'm taken aback, but my friend is on her feet jumping around like I just got proposed to.

Asavela is so dramatic.

"Go away to where?" I ask, signaling Asavela to calm down.

"Camps bay, I have a house there. I really need some time away to calm down and to be able to tell you everything, also because I want to get to know you better. I was serious when I said I like you Tebatso," my heart is racing, I use my hand to fan my face because my temperature just went up. I have never been outside of Gauteng and this man is asking me to go to the most beautiful place in south Africa. I

look at Asavela and she's nodding her head, if I dare turn Mhambi down she will kill me.

"It's Wednesday today, when do you want us to leave?" I ask and the clown I call a friend is twerking like we are taking her along with us.

"Uhm, let's leave Friday morning. Don't go to work, I'll organize you a doctor's letter for missing work."

"Okay," I say.

"Thank you Tebatso. I will call you later," he sounds much better than when he answered the call.

"Girl, after work tomorrow we are going to the mall. I hope you have at least a thousand rand to spare, we need to get you outfits." I roll my eyes. I don't have to waste my money for a trip I wasn't even planning, my clothes will have to suffice.

"You see your guy? Ai shame he is everything, taking you to Camps bay just to explain why he disappeared. Shane only takes me to his house, if he

wasn't giving me money I would have long being gone," she says and I laugh.

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I just wanted to have an early night, my day was hectic. The hotel is fully booked and that means the number of rooms I clean a day have increased. I got home, sat with my mother a little and after eating I came to bed. Now I have to get up and go outside, Mr. Lebona decided to come here because he has something to share with me. If only he was coming to share the news of our break-up.

"Hao, where are you going? I thought you were sleeping," my mom asks as I walk out of my bedroom.

"Tebogo called, he says he's outside," I say and she smiles. The way my mother adores this guy, I would give him to her if it was possible. They would have such a beautiful life together.

"I haven't seen him in a while, greet him for me," I nod and walk out. I was hoping that he would stay away longer, the whole church drama was helping me in avoiding this guy. I mean I was going through my own thing with Mhambi disappearing and we all know Tebogo is just depressing.

He is leaning on his car, smiling like a cheshire cat. What has him happy? He has been grumpy for a whole week, hardly coming around or calling me and now he's here. I open the gate and walk towards him, hopefully he's not staying long.

"Hello, future Mme Lebona," he says and my skin crawls.

"Hao, you look happy. What's happening?" I ask and he rubs his hands together. Was he given a church to run?

"You know after attending meeting after meeting and praying like never before the church council reinstated me as leader of the Sunday school," he says and I want to punch him in the face for waking

me up to tell me this. Why is he obsessing over this Sunday school anyway?

"Oh that's great news, congratulations," I say forcing a smile. I'm so pissed that I'm loosing sleep over this.

"Thank you my love, you don't know how happy I am. That Sunday school is my calling, teaching the kids about God is something I am very passionate about," he says. I'm glad to hear that he has passion for something. He failed having that for me.

"So, tomorrow after work I want to take you and our mothers out for dinner. I know you've been asking me to be spontaneous," haibo! Dinner with both our mothers present is his definition of spontaneous? Wonders shall never end. Good thing I'll be in Camps Bay with Mhambi.

"I would have loved to be there but I have already promised Pheletso to come be with her for the whole weekend," I say and his smile fades away.

"You were with Pheletso the whole of last weekend," he argues, reminding me that Mhambi stood me up. I went to Sunninghill because we had a hiking date.

"I know that but I am going there to help your mother get her daughter back, me being there is helping her to stay away from trouble. I remind her of the peace one has when living by the word," I say but he's not having it, I can see it in his sullen eyes.

"You can go on Saturday, tomorrow I want to do something with my girlfriend." I heave a sigh, he's not about to mess up my plans with Mhambi.

"Tebogo, don't do this. Your sister needs me right now," he chuckles, folding his arms across his chest.

"Tebatso are you my girlfriend or my sister's girlfriend?" He asks and I place my hands on my waist, is he kidding me right now?

"Hao! Aren't you the one who always preaches about being there for family in times of great need?"

Who needs me between the two of you?" I ask and he swallows his anger, causing his Adams apple to bob.

"For someone who is a Christian you are surely selfish right now," I turn and leave him standing there.

"Tebatso, we are still talking here," I don't bother looking back at him.

**CHAPTER 18**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

I am both excited and nervous about my weekend getaway with Tebatso. Worried because I don't know how she will take the truth, yes I am telling her that I'm married but soon to be divorced. I don't want to keep this from her and have her reciprocating my feelings only to find out later that I kept something important from her. I know how it feels to have the truth hidden from you, to go through life making plans only to find out the next person isn't honest with you.

I'm hoping and praying that she waits for me to deal with everything and give this thing between us a go. I don't know for sure if it will work out but from what I've seen I believe it's worth giving a chance. This weekend will help get my head in the right space because I love Camps Bay hence I bought a holiday home there. Makhosazana can keep everything we acquired as a married couple but I want the Camps Bay house, it's not like she has any use for it because she's always working. Can you



believe that she has only been there three times and I bought it as a first wedding anniversary gift to her.

"Are you sure this is the right thing to do?" Mzamo asks, walking into the room I'm using. I'm still living with him and I'm not sure when I'll be moving out, right now I need to be around company.

"I'm doing this Mzamo, my marriage died long ago, I just didn't want to admit it," I say and he nods.

"I agree but you still haven't mourned it, don't jump into another relationship before you deal with this bro," he murmurs and I shake my head. You mourn something that you'll miss, I doubt I'll miss being lied to, disappointed and constantly hurt.

"I am living my life now. Makhosazana wasted the best years of my life, I can't get those back but I can start a new journey that will make me happy. Right now Tebatso is the only person that gets me excited and I want to see where that can go," I say and he holds out his hands in surrender.

"I hear you Mhambi, I'm just trying to look out for you. I'm scared that you'll snap out of this excitement and the clumsy cat will be head over heels in love with you. I mean you're a great man, women love a great guy easily. You will hate yourself for breaking her heart," he speaks so much sense but I cannot put my life on hold any longer.

"Let's get rid of the negativity Mzamo. Tebatso and I will take things a day at a time," I say, zipping my luggage bag.

"Don't be rough with the girl, show her that Mabizela men are gentle and can definitely lay the pipe," he says and I laugh.  
It wouldn't be Mzamo if this conversation didn't take this turn.

"I'm taking Tebatso to Camps Bay to tell her that I'm married to be divorced and to get to know her better. I'm not taking her there to sleep with her," it's not that I don't find her attractive because I do, I just respect her too much to try that before fixing my issues.

"Divorce huh? Now it just downed on me that this is really happening to you Mhambi. I'm sorry that you're going through this," I shrug my shoulders.

"It's life I guess,"

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I told Tebatso not to go to work today, I have already organized a doctor's note for her to give her supervisor on Monday. I don't want this trip to get her in trouble at work, she mentioned how helpful the salary has been for her and her mom. I can only imagine how difficult things have been for her, I mean going to school for four years only to graduate and stay at home.

I have had my struggles in life but non of them have ever been financial, even after Nsele senior stole my father's shares we still had funds to fall back on. I love money and power and I'd like to believe that everyone does, hence I never look down on people who are struggling to make ends meet because I

believe they go in hard to try and make it, no one wants to be poor. I have so much respect for Tebatso, taking a cleaning job when she holds a degree must have been very hard on her.

Mzamo stops outside the address Tebatso sent me, its a block of apartments in Sunninghill. She said a friend of hers stays here so she came to be closer for me to pick her up and I found that very thoughtful because her neighborhood is at a distance. I am so happy to be going away with her I didn't even ask what she told her mom, hopefully this doesn't get her into trouble at home. I text her that I'm outside and a few minutes later she appears wheeling her suitcase. I open the door and climb out to help her, she looks so beautiful in that mini floral dress.

"Hey," I greet her and she smiles nervously at me. I thought she would still be pissed at me, I mean she gave it to me over the phone. I kinda liked the pissed off Tebatso because I always get the intimidated version of her.

"Hello," I don't know whether to hug her or not, I don't want to make her uncomfortable in front of Mzamo because I know he will have something to say. I put her suitcase in the boot and open the door for her, she gets in and I close the door before sliding in the front passenger seat.

"Ahhh, clumsy..." I quickly clear my throat. He can't be calling Tebatso clumsy cat in her face. I wish I had asked someone else drive us.

"Do you remember me Tebatso? I'm Mzamo, this one's brother. I'm going to give you my number, call me if he doesn't treat you right," he says and Tebatso laughs, I smile because I didn't expect the lady in the back to find humor in anything Mzamo has to say.

"I remember you," she says and my brother takes over the conversation until we get to the airport. I am a little jealous at how Tebatso was laughing and talking to Mzamo freely because she's always so calm and reserved around me. Am I that insanely

intimidating for her? We need to have a conversation about this.

## **TEBATSO MORAKE**

My first flying experience was amazing, I've heard people say the first time is the worst thing ever but I disagree. I wanted to show my excitement but I didn't want unnecessary attention from other business class passengers. Yes, Mhambi made this experience something I will remember for the rest of my life. I cannot wait to tell Asavela all about it, she also gave me an assignment to take pictures of everything. The house, the food, where we go and everything I find beautiful.

We are in the car that we found waiting for us at the airport, he is driving us to his house and I've been gasping for air every other second. This place is magical, I have never seen anything like this. Now I understand why most South Africans travel within the country, we have almost everything here at home. Places that can definitely compete with those abroad. The neighborhood we just drove into is affluent, I cannot believe my eyes right now. Someone has to pinch me because I cannot believe

that I am here in the flesh. If I had money I would move to this city within a blink of an eye.

"Mhambi, this is beautiful," I say, turning to face him and he has this panty dropping smile on his face, God you showed off with this man.

"I went crazy the first day I saw it and I knew I had to buy it," he says and I shake my head, this is an architectural masterpiece. He climbs out and rounds to open my door, I thank him and walk out. He takes out our bags from the boot and leads us to the glass door.

"Do you have anyone living here for safety purposes?" I ask as I wait for him to unlock the door.

"I have a caretaker yes, and a state of the art security system," he says and I nod, looking around. I don't think I will ever get used to how breathtaking this house is. We walk in and suddenly the fear I had earlier on the plane comes back rushing. Jesus Christ, what if he wants to have sex? When he asked me to come on this getaway I didn't think this far



and now I won't know how to handle the situation if it happens. Will I even be able to reject Mhambi?

"Welcome to my humble abode," he says and I chuckle, giving him a look.

"This is anything but humble Mhambi," I say. He can call it anything but not humble, just look at the chandelier hanging in this foyer and the art pieces around this place, they scream expensive.

"It's honestly nothing," he shouldn't downplay his achievements, he obviously works hard to make the money that he uses to buy all these beautiful things. But I will admit that him not boasting and bragging makes me find him more attractive.

"Oh come on, don't be modest,"

"Come let me show you around the house," he says, leading the way. This house is so beautiful, each room is uniquely decorated and I give kudos to whoever worked on it.

He asks me which room I prefer using and I decide on the one downstairs. It has a beautiful view, facing the blue beach with white sand. I am just so relieved that we won't be sharing a bed, I mean I've never slept next to any man in my life.

"Uhm, I will bring your bag and give you time to take a shower and maybe change into something comfortable to sit by the pool," he says and I nod. I'm glad Asavela forced me to buy a few things for this getaway. I have two swimsuits and cover ups because I am not comfortable walking around practically naked in front of Mhambi. He comes back with my suitcase and leaves again to give me some privacy. I take out my toiletry bag and strip naked before stepping into the adjoining bathroom. I should give Asavela a ring when I'm done taking a shower.

I find Mhambi in the kitchen, taking out the food from takeaway containers to plates. It smells and looks great, but where did he find the time to order and have them deliver? I ask and he explains that there are a variety of restaurants around this place

and he just made a call and they delivered shortly after. I help him carry the food and drinks outside to the poolside, we place everything on the table and settle on the semi round outdoor couch with a lot of space between us. I truly appreciate him for not trying to make me feel u comfortable.

"This is delicious," I say after taking a bite.

"I never leave Cape Town without going to this restaurant to have this meal, I'm glad you like it," He pins open his bottle of beer and pours juice in my glass.

"You said you've been going through things and wanted to talk to me about them, we have time now," I say and his shoulders sag. Whatever it is must be big because his whole facial expression changed.

"Yeah, there is a lot I want to talk to you about Tebatso. But it's our first day here, I want us to have a good day, we can discuss this on Sunday morning before we take a flight back to Johannesburg," he

says and I nod my head. I've never been one to push, when he is ready he will talk to me.

"What would you like to do while we are here?" He asks and a lot of things comes to mind, there are a lot of places I would love to see in the mother city.

"I would love to soak up the atmosphere at the beach but this pool side will do for now. I would definitely love to see the V and A waterfront and lastly you still owe me a hike and I heard that Camps Bay has a trail called the Pipe track, we can go take a stroll on it if it's possible," I say and he's smiling widely at me, probably wondering where I know all these places from. The internet is my friend.

"Everything is possible, I will make arrangements. Tell you what, let's go to the V and A tomorrow morning because I have plans for later on. Then Sunday morning we can go on that trail for a stroll and I will tell you what I've been dealing with," he says and that sounds perfect.

"What time is our flight on Sunday?" I ask.

"6pm," he says and I know that there's no way I'm going back home to my mom. I'll call her on Sunday in the afternoon and give an excuse on why I'll only come home on Monday after work. Good thing I have my uniform with me.

"God, do you know how beautiful you are Tebatso?" He asks and my pulse leaps. I don't know where to look, I wasn't expecting that compliment at all, my blushing is uncontrollable. I am melting into hot liquid right now.

I clear my throat, "Thank you,"

"Wanna try the pool?" He asks and even though I can't swim I will still go in the water and stay in a corner.

**CHAPTER 19**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

I had the most amazing morning yet, the V and A is huge and has almost everything. Mhambi took me to some restaurant for breakfast and then we visited the aquarium and my excitement was that of a little child, I couldn't contain it. Mhambi kept saying it's good to see me so carefree and not intimidated by him. He doesn't understand the kind of effect he has on me, I have never felt the things he makes me feel by just being himself.

After the aquarium we decided to go sit down and have a drink before heading to the Cape wheel, that has to be the highlight of my morning. The 360 degree panoramic view of Cape Town is spectacular, we saw Table mountain, Robben Island, Cape Town skyline, Paarl mountains and the Cape Town stadium from up there. It was like a 15 minutes summarized tour of the mother city.

After the birds eye view experience Mhambi asked if I brought an evening or cocktail dress with me, when

I said no he dragged me to the shops to buy a dress and shoes. Those dresses were so expensive I wanted to run out of the store because my bank account had nothing close to that amount. Mhambi told me how silly I am and told me to pick one that I like so he can pay and we can leave to go get ready for his plans.

When we got back home I was a little tired so I asked to take a nap before we start preparing to go out, he agreed and told me he will find something to keep busy with. I've been awake for a couple of minutes now and I'm on the bed trying Asavela's number and it takes me straight to voicemail. It has been off since yesterday, I don't know how she expects me to share Cape Town content when her phone is off, I just hope everything is okay with her. A knock on the door startles me, it's obviously Mhambi. I pull the sheets up to cover my thighs then give him permission to enter. He walks in wearing shorts with no top and shoes, is he trying to lead me into temptation? How can one person look this good?

"Had a good nap?" He asks and I nod smiling, trying to keep my eyes on him this time. Earlier he said I hardly ever look at him and that kind of makes him sad because he cannot keep his eyes off me. Did I not blush like a school girl?

"It was a great nap. Thank you again for an amazing day, I had the time of my life," I say and he nods, pointing to the bed.

"Yes, take a sit," he settles down facing me.

"Thank you for coming with me here Tebatso, I've been going through a lot but today I had so much fun with you. I even forgot about my problems for those couple of hours and while you were asleep I realized that there's honestly no point in holding on to pain when you can look forward to making other happy memories." He says and I nod my understanding. At least tomorrow I will know what he is talking about.



"This is my favorite city and I'm glad I was the first person to ever show it to you," he says and I lick my lower lip to hide my smile.

"I'm glad you're the one who showed it to me too," I say and he scratches his forehead with his thumb while those beautiful black eyes twinkle at me.

"We are leaving at 7 pm, you have an hour and thirty minutes to finish getting ready," Mhambi says, getting on his feet and adjusting his shorts.

"I'll be out when I'm done," I say and he walks out of the bedroom. I climb off the bed and make it before taking the plastic of my new and expensive pair of shoes and dress and laying them on the bed. This dress is beautiful and it came in my favorite color, Red. My phone rings as I'm about to enter the bathroom, I look at it on the pedestal and it's Tebogo. I'm not answering him, he will only sour my mood. I leave it ringing there and enter the adjoining bathroom. Come to think of it I haven't checked my phone for texts and other missed calls today. The

only time I used my phone was to take pictures and videos.

I am looking at myself on the full length mirror, I look really good in this dress and these high heels are comfortable. I take a picture of myself for the memories and of course to show to Asavela on Monday during our lunch break. I grab my handbag on the bed and walk out of the bedroom to go find Mhambi. He is looking outside the window, his back towards me. He is wearing black pants, a white shirt and black formal shoes, I wonder where we are going. I clear my throat and he turns to face me, my heart skips a beat because this pull between us just intensified.

"You look... absolutely gorgeous Tebatso," he says, looking at me from head to toe.

I can tell he means it because of the spark that's in his eyes right now, I have never seen a man more handsome in my life.

"Thanks, you look good too," I say and he winks at me. Damn Mhambi Mabizela you make me weak at the knees.

"Shall we?" He asks, gesturing towards the door with his hands. I nod and lead the way.

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He brought me to this beautiful five star restaurant, I've never set foot in such a place before. The lighting in here is the first thing that sets the mood, the tables are not close to each other so it gives everyone the privacy they need. Mhambi reserved a table that's outside facing the beach, the breeze is giving everything it's supposed to. He ordered himself a glass of cognac and a mixer and asked if I would like red or white nonalcoholic wine and I chose white because I want to have a lobster. I asked them to make the wine alcoholic and the man sitting across me almost fell down from his chair. During our training at the hotel we were taught that white wine pairs well with chicken, lobster and fish. I hope that I enjoy the lobster because this will be the first

time I'm eating it. I always wished to try it but it's hella expensive so I only watched videos of it being prepared and enjoyed.

"Are you sure you want alcohol Tebatso?" he asks concerned and I shake my head no.

"I'm not sure but I want to try something new tonight, maybe I will drink that one glass and a lot of water afterwards," I say and he takes a sip of his drink.

"Its okay to try new things babe," he says and I get goosebumps immediately, I want to jump at him and ask him to call me like that forever.

"And even if I get drunk and lose my step, you're here to carry me to the car," I joke and he gets it because he laughs.

"That's very true, I got you," he says.

"I don't mean to be forward but can I please take a picture of you? You look so gorgeous I want to have

a reminder on my phone," he asks and I look away shy.

"Uhm, okay," I say and he takes his phone from the table as I tuck the loose strand of hair behind my ear. I am grateful that Asavela borrowed me two of her weaves, she wanted me to look beautiful on this trip and I appreciate her being a good friend to me.

"One day I will enlarged this picture and keep it in our house," Mhambi should just tell me that he wants me red on the face this entire night because he keeps saying things to me. Things that makes a girl fall in love, fast and hard.

"Can I see the picture?" I ask and he shows it to me. That's really cute, I will ask him to send it to me.

"It's really beautiful," I say and he laughs.

"You're beautiful babe," I titter and thank God our starters arrive because I was about to turn into liquid for the hundredth time today.

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I enjoyed our food and the conversations back at the restaurant but I'm glad that we are home now because the weather just changed on us and it started raining cats and dogs. Mhambi says it's Cape Town weather, the most unpredictable ever. Apparently they can experience all four seasons in just a day and that's why it is important to pack different clothing.

"You can go take a shower to get warm and I'll light the fire place before going to take a shower myself," Mhambi says.

"Okay, I'll see you in a bit," I say and hurry to the bathroom in my room. At least this house is not as cold as it is outside. I take off the wig on my head before my dress and shoes. As soon as the hot shower water cascades on my body I feel human again, I just take the soap and sponge and wash my body. When I'm done I step back in the bedroom and apply some lotion before putting on my night shirt.

I walk back to lounge and the fire place is now lit but Mhambi isn't in the room, I'm sure he's still in the shower. I sit down in front of the fire and the flames bring the much needed heat.

"Do you need me to bring you a flee blanket?" He asks from behind me and I look back shaking my head.

"No thanks, this fire is keeping me warm," I say and he nods.

"Okay then, do you want me to mix you a drink?" He asks and narrows my eyes. I'm not sure if I should because I had two glasses of wine at the restaurant and they got to me but I feel much better now.

"Uhm, yes please," I did say I'm starting to live my life so why would I not share a drink in front of the fire with a man that makes me feel things in this beautiful house?

"Okay then, I'll be right back with our nightcap." He says and disappears to the kitchen. My phone vibrates on the rug next to me and I look at it, it's Tebogo. He has been calling non stop since this afternoon, hence I had to put it on vibration before Mhambi asked anything. I am planning on sitting down with my mom soon and telling her that I don't want to be married to Tebogo and that I want to live a life different to what she planned for me. I am a 27 year old woman and I deserve to make my own life choices.

"Here you go," Mhambi hands me a glass of a clear drink with a piece of lemon, mint and lots of ice in it.

"This is my famous gin and tonic mix, no one makes it better than me. I hope you enjoy it," he adds and I smile sweetly at him.

I've never drank so much alcohol in my life, I had two glasses of wine at dinner and now it's gin and tonic. This is my last glass of anything that has alcohol in it for the night, I don't want to get too drunk and embarrass myself in front of this man.



"Did you enjoy dinner?" He asks, settling next to me on the rug.

"I did, thank you," I have never been wined and dined in my life. Everything I've ever done with Mhambi until this point is new and it all leaves me feeling excited and ready for our next thing together. Nothing in my life has ever felt so right, Mhambi feels right.

"I'm glad to hear that," he takes a sip of his drink then continues, "I brought you to Camps Bay because I needed to get away, to get my head straight and also because you are the only person that excites me right now. The only person who genuinely makes me happy, like I have been telling you over the phone Tebatso I really like you," He says, running his index finger up and down my exposed thigh.

My heart is thumping in my chest, I've never sat so close to a man not even Tebogo. When he's visiting me at home my mother is always watching us to see

if we are behaving, and when we are at his house his mother takes over the monitoring role.

"You don't have to say anything right now. Tomorrow I have something to share with you and I hope you'll understand and still want to get to know me better when we are back in Johannesburg," he adds.

I nod my head looking everywhere but his eyes because I know he will just hypnotize me. Him telling me he likes me face to face feels so different, I can feel the intensity in his voice and from those piercing eyes. He shifts closer to me and circles his arm around my waist, I can literally feel his breath fanning the side of my face. Oh Lord this cannot happen, my mother lives to see me get married with my virginity still intact. This moment right here might just take away that opportunity from her.

"Babe look at me," he whispers and I quickly turn to look at him like I'm under some sort of spell. He squeezes my waist and my pulse leaps, his touch is electrifying.

"I want to kiss you, Tebatso," his face is just an inch away from mine, his nose is almost brushing the tip of mine. He smells so good, not of cologne but shower gel. I'm intoxicated by his fresh scent, by everything that makes him...him.

"Can I kiss you?" He asks and I nod Imperceptibly. His lips capture mine and they are soft and tasting of the mint and lemon that's in the drink he mixed for the both of us. His tongue invades my mouth and his hand moves from my waist to the nape of my neck, pulling me to him and deepening the kiss. I have never been kissed so passionately, I'm hungry for more and I don't even have an idea of what more is. He pulls out of the kiss when I am still enjoying it and I'm left panting, desperate to catch my breath.

This kiss is the first thing he has ever tried since we arrived here yesterday afternoon. On our flight and when we got here I thought he would try to get me to bed but he didn't, instead he took me on a tour of the house. I have never in my life felt so respected

and wanted at the same time, I don't know if that makes any sense.

"Shit! Shit!" I quickly snap out of my thoughts and turn to find Mhambi peeping through the window. When did he get up from here?

"What's wrong?" I ask getting on my feet. He is literally running towards me, he takes my drink and gulps it down. Mhambi starts looking around the room and his eyes land on my cellphone on the rug, he bends down and takes it before putting it in his pocket. This man is dragging me towards the bedroom I've been using and I'm wondering what the hell is going on.

"Mhambi, what's going on?" You're hurting my arm," he's not the charming man I've been with this entire day. He looks like he's about to shit himself.

"I'm begging you to not make a sound, don't even breath," what? So now I should die for something I don't know? He shoves the empty glass in my hand, I am utterly stunned by his behavior right now.

"Mhambi? Baby?" A woman shouts from the lounge and my heart drops into my stomach.

"Fuck! This is not happening," he let's go of my arm and goes to open the wodrobe then he pushes my suitcase inside. He takes my arm again and shoves me in there as well. The minute he closes this door it's going to be dark, how long is he expecting to hide me in here?

"Please don't make a sound. You'll come out when I open for you, please." He says slowly as if talking to an errant child then closes the door, tears stream down my face. I shouldn't have come here, I shouldn't have lied to my mother, telling her I'm going to check on Pheletso. I came to another province, kilometers away from home to be with a man that has a girlfriend or worse a wife. Damn it Tebatso, this isn't how you were raised!

**CHAPTER 20**  
**MHAMBHI MABIZELA**

I take a deep breath and walk out of the bedroom Tebatso has been using. I hate myself for shoving her in the closet like that but what choice did I have? If Makhosazana saw her then all hell would have broke loose and I don't need the drama.

"Oh there you are," Khosi says as I walk in the lounge. I am so pissed at her right now, she has no business here. She just ruined the perfect day I had with Tebatso and possibly a relationship I was hoping to start with her.

"What are you doing here? How did you know where to find me?" I ask and she heaves a sigh before placing her handbag down on the couch.

"Babe, I know you hate me right now but I honestly need to explain myself Mhambi and to tell you how much I love you," she says and I chuckle, burying my hands deep in the pockets of my sweatpants.

"Love me? Do you even know the meaning of love" I ask and she comes towards me but I shift my position. I don't want Khosi touching me.

"What I did was selfish and I see that now. Baby I have hurt and disappointed you so much in our marriage and I don't want to do it anymore. You are the best thing to have ever happen to me, our marriage means the world to me and I hate that I'm only realizing now that I cannot lose you," she says with a shaking voice.

"You betrayed me Khosi, you betrayed my trust for you. I didn't wake up one morning and asked you for things we didn't both agree on. All I have ever asked from you is what we sat down before we got married and agreed on. You had a hysterectomy done and that shows that you've never wanted kids to begin with," I say and she nods in agreement.

"Yes, I did a hysterectomy Mhambi but months and months before that I had many eggs retrieved from my ovaries and had them frozen. I kept them as an insurance policy, that's because a part of me wanted

to give you everything I said I would. Not all hope is lost baby, we can still be able to have kids through a surrogate," she says and I swallow hard, this is news. I don't know how to feel about this whole thing.

"What are you saying Makhosazana?" I ask because she's not making sense. She had her womb removed because she doesn't want to have children at all but on the other hand she froze her eggs as insurance.

"The Khosi I was before you and my parents found out about my hysterectomy is not the Khosi I am now. Baby before I didn't want children because I wanted to make my dad proud, his elder brothers would always tease him for not having sons and that would really get to me. I thought it hurt my dad that he didn't have sons so I wanted to be that for him, to achieve much more than my male cousins so that my father can do all the bragging." She explains and I am shocked because this is the first time I'm hearing of this, It makes sense why she works so much. But those cousins she's talking about are in their homes with their wives and raising their children happily



and running businesses that do very well at the same time.

"My parents showed me how stupid that was, how I have been living to prove things to people who do not matter at all. I know now that my father is proud of his girls and doesn't care about sons and everything his brothers used to say. It's a shame that I broke my marriage over nothing," she adds and I need a drink immediately. My glass is still on the rug where I left it, I go and pick it up then gulp the whole thing down. It's not strong enough, I need to drink something neat. I walk to the kitchen and Makhosazana is hot on my heels.

"I know it's going to take time for you to look at me the way you used to babe, but I promise that if you give us another chance things will definitely change for us. We can start therapy and when we feel like there's progress in mending our marriage we can start looking at surrogates and getting the process of having our first baby. I promise to work less and give you and our marriage the attention you both need,"

she says and that's what I've always wanted to hear but is it not too late?

"I'm not doing this solely to get you back, I'm doing this because I want to and because I have a future with no one else but you," I close my eyes and place the bottle of gin down on the kitchen counter.

"Makhosazana I..." I pause and take a deep breath. "A lot has happened between us, I don't know if we can ever go back to who we used to be as a couple," I say and a few seconds later she envelopes her arms around me from behind, I cringe at her touch.

"We have love for each other and that's enough to get us fighting for our marriage. We don't give up Mhambi but we hold hands and go to war with our issues until we win," she says.

"This is a lot Khosi, I need to digest everything you just told me," she lets go of me.

"I understand, we can talk in the morning." She says and I turn to find her wiping tears from her face.

"Please help me carry my bag upstairs," she says and I nod, heading back to the lounge to get her bag. I carry it up the stairs with her following behind me. I open the master bedroom, she will sleep in here because I've been using the guestroom up here.

"Goodnight," she says as I walk out the door.

"Night Khosi," I close the door behind me and head downstairs. I need to let Tebatso out of the closet and take her to the nearest hotel, I can't have both woman sleeping in the same house. I wish it was her staying here with me but this is still Khosi's house too and I can't ask her to leave without making her suspicious.

I sit in the lounge to make a call to the nearest hotel, I want to book her a room and have her stay there until we leave. I will definitely drive to her in the morning so I can explain myself, she won't want to hear anything from me tonight so I'll let her cool down and talk tomorrow. Luckily the hotel has a room for me so I tell them that I will be there shortly

to check in. I make my way to the bedroom and open the wardrobe, my heart breaks as I find Tebatso crying silently. She is sitting flat on her bums with her knees brought up to her chest. This sight of her will haunt me everyday for the rest of my life.

"Babe, I am really sorry. Believe me I was going to explain everything to you tomorrow," I say, trying to touch her but the look she gives me has me retracting my hands. She gets up and I move to the side to allow her to step out of the small space. She takes out her suitcase and I watch as she places it on the bed then makes her way to the bathroom. She comes back with her toiletry bag and opens the suitcase to put it inside, she takes out a pair of jeans and a T-shirt. The way she's so mad she doesn't even care that I'm in here, she strips off her nightshirt and her breasts are exposed because she only had a panty under the night shirt. I would be admiring the twins if it were any other day but right now I feel like the devil for hurting this girl.

"Please call me a cab and ask them to take me to a cheap guest house," she whispers and I want to

punch myself for the pain I see in those beautiful eyes. Eyes that were glistening with happiness from this morning up until Makhosazana showed up here.

"I found you a hotel, I'll pay and drive you there." I say and she attempts to take her suitcase but I reach for it first. She takes her handbag and I open the door with my heart thudding against my chest. I pray Khosi didn't come back down. I thank God when we make it outside without being seen, it's no longer raining cats and dogs but it's drizzling now. Tebatso opens her own door and climbs in, I put her bag in the back and get in the front then start the engine and drive out.

"Tebatso please don't hate me, I promise to tell you everything tomorrow. I'll come to the hotel early," I say and she looks out the window. This is not how this weekend was suppose to go, I mean we had a trail to stroll tomorrow morning and she was looking forward to that.

We get to the hotel and I take out her bag from the back and we make our way inside. I head straight to

the reception and ask for a room for one person, the woman tells me how much it will cost for the night and the time for checking out. I ask her to give Tebatso the room until 3pm. Our flight is at 6 pm, I don't know how we will leave together now that Khosi is here. I will sleep on it and definitely come up with something. After paying for the room we are given the key and I take Tebatso up to her room.

I unlock and walk in first then place her suitcase down, she walks in and stands in the middle of the room with her arms folded across her chest. She won't even look at me but can I blame her after bringing her all this way only for a woman to come calling me baby. She must regret ever allowing me close to her.

"Here is your phone," I hold it out to her but she doesn't take it so I place it on the pedestal.

"I am really sorry for all of this Tebatso but I promise it will make sense tomorrow," I say but get nothing from her. I heave a sigh, I should just leave and give

her some space but I'll surely be back here in the morning.

"I'll see you in the morning," I say and leave the room with a heavy heart, I don't want to leave her here alone.

**CHAPTER 21**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

I have been standing in the middle of this room ever since Mhambi left, I think thirty minutes have passed now. I cannot believe that he brought me to Cape Town while he knew he was in a relationship, but I guess that serves me right because I lied to my mother and boyfriend and came so far with a man I hardly even know. How stupid could I have been? I should have known that there is no way a man like Mhambi could be single. He was too good to be true and that should have been the first red flag, now I'm in a hotel alone while he's happy with his woman in that big beautiful house. They are probably cuddling right now, with him whispering sweet nothings in her ear.

Standing here and judging myself won't help me at all, at least I got to see the kind of person he is before I invested all my emotions into him. I just want to go back home and be the Tebatso I have always been. God is showing me that my attempt to live a life that goes against his word and my mother's wishes will



only bring me pain. If I don't see this now and walk away then I will only be asking for things to get worse.

I make my way to the pedestal where he placed my phone and pick it up, I have so many missed calls. Most are from Tebogo and there are a couple from my mother, I will call them after I find a flight out of here first thing in the morning. I don't even want to wait for him to come and explain anything, he will only lie to me. If there wasn't anything to hide then he wouldn't have shoved me in the wardrobe and I'd still be in that house and that woman told to come to the hotel.

I sit down on the bed and google morning flights from Cape Town to Johannesburg and thank God because there's a cheap one that leaves at 8 am. Mhambi will come to an empty hotel room tomorrow morning, I don't want to hear his explanation or to ever see him again. I put in my bank card details so they can draw the money for the ticket, relief floods through me after I've secured a seat on the morning flight. I decide to call my mom

first, I know it's late but her recent missed call is from 20 minutes ago, I wonder why she is still up at 11pm.

"Oh Tebatso, why didn't you answer your phone," that's the first thing she says, at least I got back to her.

"Is everything okay mama?" I ask in a low voice, my mood is down south because of a man.

"Everything is not okay Tebatso, when was the last time you spoke to Asavela?" She asks and my stomach gets knots.

I have been trying her phone from Friday but it has been on voicemail, I just hope she didn't go to the club without giving her mother the usual work excuse.

"Friday on our way to work, what's going on?" That's honestly the last time I spoke to her. I took the staff taxi as usual but I got off at the mall and requested a taxi to Pheletso's place.

"She never came back home on Friday, her mother tried her phone but it was on voicemail. She thought she will show up in the morning but nothing, we asked Tebogo to help us go to the hotel. The person we found said she did come to work but didn't leave with the staff taxi. They said she mentioned a boyfriend coming to fetch her, her mother knows nothing about this boyfriend," my mom says and I swallow the lump clogged in my throat. The only boyfriend Asavela has is Shane and she didn't mention anything about going to see him this weekend.

"Mama, let me try to call our colleagues and ask exactly what happened," I say with panic because this is unlike Asavela, she never sleeps out without giving her mom an excuse that will keep her calm until she's back.

"Please ngwanaka and get back to me soon so I can call her mother too,"

"I will ma," I hang up and try Asavela's phone again and it's still on voicemail. Damn it where are you?

I decide to go on WhatsApp to check her last seen, she last logged in yesterday shortly after knocking off. I have a couple of text messages so I check to see if she left me something but there's nothing, it's only messages from Tebogo telling me he loves me and to call him back as soon as possible. The other is from my network provider telling me I have a new voice message in my inbox. I dial the number that enables me to listen to it and it's Asavela, she sounds distraught.

"Tebatso please call the police, I don't know what has come over Shane friend. He has turned into a monster and locked me in a dark room. My phone is about to die hence I called you to help me reach the police. I am so scared Tebatso please help me, his address is..." I quickly get on my feet and head to the table that has a book and a pen next to the phone and write down the address.

Her voice message sent chills down my spine, I'm wondering how long ago she left me this voicemail. I look at the service provider message and it shows

that she called me earlier on and around that time I was already at the V and A with Mhambi. I didn't check my phone the whole day and she really needed me to come through for her. If anything happens to Asavela then I will never forgive myself for it.

I quickly call 10111 and explain everything to the operator, I'm grateful to God when she doesn't ask me stupid questions but tells me she will forward this information to the nearest police station so they can send a unit to go and check the house. The lady tells me they will get back to me when they have something. I don't know how I'm going to explain all of this to my mom, she will ask me questions I do not have answers to but I need to tell her. I dial her number again and explain everything to her, mama is crying and I'm trying to calm her down by reassuring her that the police are on their way there and they will find her and bring her back home. She asks me to come home first thing in the morning and I agree to that. She says she will tell Asavela's mother about this new development even though it will leave her more stressed.

It has been three hours since I called the police, they should have been there by now and telling me that they found her and Shane. I turned on the air conditioner for heat but I'm still cold, I have never been so stressed in my life I just want to know if my friend is okay or not. On the other hand my heart is aching from how dirty Mhambi played me. My phone rings, startling me out of my thoughts, it's a landline number so I quickly pick it up.

"Hello,"

"Hello, is this Tebatso Morake?" A man asks.

"Yes this is she," I answer, hoping it's the police with some good news.

"This is detective Maharaj from Sandton police station, ma'am you called to tell us about a voicemail you got from a lady named Asavela who needed help," I nod my head vigorously as if he can see me.

"Yes I did," I quickly say.

"How are you related to her?" He asks.

"I'm her friend,"

"Can you please give me her parents number," he says and I sweat immediately, fear crippling me. I called them, can't he tell me what's happening?

"I don't have her mother's number sir," tears are already blurring my vision.

"Okay, can we have her address then?" Why do they need to go to their house? Where is Asavela? I give the detective Asavela's address and he thanks me and hangs up. I allow my tears to fall because I have a feeling in my belly that something is seriously wrong. Can it be morning so I can get out of this place?

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I switched off my phone when I was about to board my flight and I'm not planning on switching it on and

have Mhambi blow it up when he realizes that I checked out of the hotel. If he thought I was going to wait for him then he is plain stupid, I'm not going to give him a chance to trick and lie to me again. Whatever feelings I developed for him I will shove them in a deep dark pit and never revisit them again. Mhambi can go to the nearest hell for all I care.

The taxi drops me at my house and I pay the fare before climbing out. The door is shut close and I wonder if my mother is home, I try the handle but it's locked. I look around to check if anyone from the neighbors is outside looking at me and when I see that the coast is clear I take the key from under the brick that's near the tap. I unlock the door and get inside the house, I drop my suitcase in my room then go to my mother's room. Her bible is on top of the pedestal and it's open, she didn't go to church, she must be with Asavela's mother. I should head there right now, maybe the cops came around and told them what happened to Asavela. I hope they found her unharmed and in one piece.



I am rushing to Asavela's house, I'm even forgetting to greet some elders in the street as I pass them. They must be wondering what happened to the sweet Tebatso they all know. There's a car I don't recognize at their gate, hopefully it brought my friend home. I hurry inside the house and the mood is somber, my mother is sitting next to Asavela's mother, rubbing her back in circles as she cries painfully.

There are two ladies in the room with them and I've never seen them before, I don't know if they are relatives or they come from the police station.

"What's happening?" I ask, fiddling with my dress. I have a feeling that something really bad happened to Asavela.

"Oh Tebatso ngwanaka," my mother says and I shake my head with tears already streaming down my face.

"The police found her but it was too late my baby," mama says and I gasp for air, clutching at my chest. It cannot be, Asavela cannot be dead.

"No, there must be some sort of mistake. It cannot be her, she's not dead mama," I say with my lower lip quivering.

"It's her, we just came back from identifying her body," I close my eyes as the pain shoots straight for my heart.

**CHAPTER 22**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

I have been back from Cape Town for a couple of days now and I still haven't seen or heard from Tebatso. Her phone takes me straight to voicemail and I suspect it's because she blocked my number, I am so worried about her. I don't know how she left Cape Town, the Sunday morning I got to the hotel I was told she checked out at around 6am. I know I hurt her badly but I was going to come clean about everything. I just wish she stayed at the hotel and gave me a chance to tell her my truth. I went to my hotel looking for her and the supervisor told me that she gave Tebatso a couple of days off because she lost her friend and wasn't coping well at work. I want to be there for her but this is a painful time in her life, seeing me will bring back the betrayal from me and have her dealing with everything all at once. She deserves to mourn without disturbances and because of that I'll stay away from her.

"So you are really going back to Makhosazana?" I turn back and find Mzamo leaning by the door.

"I wouldn't be me if I didn't try to make my marriage work bro," I say and he shakes his head. I know he is not for my decision and I don't blame him because Khosi has done a lot to hurt me. But she is still my wife and I still have some love for her.

"I just hope that you don't regret going back," he says. I have been having sleepless nights because I'm scared I'll regret going back when she doesn't stay true to her word.

"She promised to work less, to give me attention and start marriage counseling. As soon as we see progress we will start with the surrogacy process and have our baby. This is everything I wanted Mzamo and she is willing to give it to me now. This is a marriage and I can't walk away from it without trying," I say and he nods.

"You are my brother, I love you and I wish you nothing but happiness. I hope things between you and Makhosazana work out for the better this time around," I appreciate the support.

"Thank you Mzamo. I know it's going to be hard but I'm going to need you to be civil towards my wife," he shrugs his shoulders.

"That won't be a problem," I blow out a sigh of relief. Mzamo is my only family besides Khosi and if they don't get along I'll be caught in between a rock and a hard place.

"I just have one question," he says and I nod for him to go on, "what about the clumsy cat? You caught feelings for her so where does this leave her?" He asks and I stop packing my clothes and sit down on the edge of the bed.

"I genuinely like Tebatso and I didn't mean to hurt her but I'm going to have to let her go Mzamo. She deserves so much better than what I was going to offer her anyway," I say and he raises an eyebrow like he doesn't believe a word I'm saying.

"I hear you bro," His tone of voice says something different and I cannot blame him. I mean last Friday I

was ready to start a new relationship with Tebatso and now I'm going back to Khosi.

"All I have to say is, stay away from the clumsy cat. Stop trying her phone and going to the hotel hoping to see her," he says and I don't think that's fair.

"Mzamo that's inhumane, she deserves answers and I want to give them to her," he shakes his head in disagreement.

"No, going to her to explain is inhumane bro. The girl fell for you, those feeling won't just go away. You showing up will only hurt her because she's the one who got nothing out of this whole situation. Leave her alone and allow her to forget about you," he says vehemently and my eyes widen. I didn't realize that he was fond of Tebatso, I mean they haven't even spend a lot of time around each other.

"I know what that girl is going through because I have been through something similar myself. I wish she never explained anything to me because I wouldn't be questioning myself the way I do, I

wouldn't be wondering what he has that I don't. It would have been better if she just disappeared," he says and I see sadness in his eyes. What is he talking about? Did Mzamo go through a tough break up? How come I don't know about it?

"Bro, what are you talking about now?" I ask and he shakes his head.

"I have to go to the club, we will talk on the phone," he says then turns to leave. I have to make time to sit down with him and make him tell me what happened to him. That heart break might be the reason why he doesn't want a committed relationship.

## **TEBATSO MORAKE**

It feels like my heart has been ripped out of my chest, Asavela's death really hit me hard because I didn't see it coming at all. I hope the police catch Shane and lock him up then throw the key away. How could he be so heartless? Killing Asavela like she was some sort of animal. The police suspect that it was a ritual killing because she was mutilated, her breasts and private part were cut off. They found her body in the middle of black candles and some substances that they believe to be dark muti.

We laid her to rest earlier this morning and I know for a fact that everyone who was close to Asavela will not heal from this. She was such a bubbly soul, her smile brightened the darkest of rooms. I feel for her mother, she must be wondering why God didn't save her daughter from all of this. My mother told me that she wants to move back to Eastern Cape because this place now harbors so much pain for her.



I haven't been sleeping for a couple of days now, I just want to go home and rest before I drop down from exhaustion. At least Asavela's mother has her family around and also the church ladies are still here. I leave Tebogo in the tent and make my way inside the house to find my mother so she can give me our house key. Mama is with Asavela's mother on the mattress, it's only the two of them in the bedroom. I sit down at their feet and take a deep breath.

"I am really sorry for what you're going through mama. Maybe if I had listened to her voicemail earlier she would still be alive," I say with tears welling up in my eyes. Asavela's mom holds out her hand to me and I take it.

"You are not to be blamed for this Tebatso. My daughter made the wrong choices in life, she decided to live a life I knew nothing about and now we find ourselves here," she says softly and I squeeze her hand.

"Promise me that you will never change Tebatso. Listen to your mother and live a life that doesn't go against the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. I know it might seem tough and boring but trust me nothing will bring you more peace," she says and I nod my head. After what happened to my friend and my experience with Mhambi I now see why it is important for me to stop chasing the thrills of the world.

"I promise I will ma," I say and she offers me a weak smile.

"You look so tired Tebatso ngwanaka," my mother says and I nod slightly.

"I am mama, I haven't been sleeping. I came in here to ask for the key so Tebogo can drive me home," I say and my mother reaches for her bag and searches for the key then hands it to me.

"I will see you later on," mama says and I nod.

Tebogo is driving me home and he keeps stealing glances at me, I know we have a lot to talk about and we definitely will but I am tired right now. My heart is aching from losing a friend and being played by a man I was really falling for. But this week has showed me why my mother loves Tebogo for me, he has been by my side trying his level best to keep me afloat from the pain. He even helped with the preparations of Asavela's funeral, driving the family to where they needed to go and being hands on with almost everything. This week showed me that he doesn't deserve what I've been doing to him and I promise that will change.

"Can I come see you tomorrow?" He asks, killing the engine outside my house.

"Please pick me up for church in the morning then we can spend the afternoon together," I say and he smiles sweetly at me.

"I will be here at 6:45 my love," he says and I clasp his hand.

"Thank you for all you did this week, it honestly means a lot," I say and he brings my hand up to his mouth and kisses the back of it.

"I would do anything for you, never doubt that please," I nod my head with tears hanging on my eyelashes.

"I truly appreciate it," I will learn to love him, he's a good man so it will not be tough at all. I just need to get Mhambi out of my mind.

**CHAPTER 23**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

The front door opens and I frown wondering who it could be, I mean none of my siblings called to say they will be coming through to see me. I take the knife I've been using to chop onions as a weapon I'll use to defend myself in case I have an intruder in my home. I am tiptoeing to the lounge, scared out of my mind. But if there's a mother fucker in my house he better know that I'm not going to go down without a fight.

"Whoa! Khosi, it's just me," Mhambi says and I close my eyes in relief. I almost jumped at my husband with a knife and hurt him.

"I'm sorry, I thought someone was breaking in," I say and notice that he has his big suitcase next to him. My heart jumps for joy and I'm crossing fingers that it is what I'm thinking.

"I'm sorry too, I should have rang the door bell," he mutters and I smile, looking at the suitcase. We have been back from Cape Town for a week now and I

was starting to lose hope of him coming home. I mean he hasn't been answering my calls and texts and that was very hard to swallow, but seeing him standing in the same room as me makes me happy.

"Are you back home?" I ask nervously and he blows out a heavy sigh.

"I am Makhosazana but that doesn't mean we are going to have a smooth sailing," he says and I nod my head in agreement.

"I know babe, I know. Hence I suggested therapy, it will help us in healing all the hurt and disappointments. I will also put in the effort to make things work, I won't be the perfect wife but I will be the wife who wakes up every morning and tries to be better," I say and he smiles, genuinely smiles and that gives me butterflies.

"That's all I'm asking for because it's all I can give too," I am so grateful to my mother for showing me what matters and encouraging me to fight for it. She's the one who tracked down Mhambi in Cape

Town, don't ask me how she knew he'd be there because she also won't tell me. Mom asked for the caretakers number and asked him if my husband was coming down there. The guy told my mom that Mhambi called asking to find the house ready and that was my chance. I couldn't find a flight so I got into my car and drove for more than 12 hours, I didn't want to wait any minute.

"I was busy cooking in the kitchen, you can go take a shower and come down to eat," I say and he laughs.

"You? Cooking?" I roll my eyes, smiling.

"Yes Mhambi, I am cooking."

"Let me go unpack and take a shower while you do your thing in the kitchen," he murmurs.

"I'll unpack for you babe, just shower and come back here to eat," he just stands there and says nothing for half a minute and that has me feeling awkward.

"Okay let me go uhm refresh then," he says and walks away wheeling his suitcase.

I need a moment to wrap my head around the fact that my husband is home and we are giving our marriage another shot. I will never take Mhambi for granted ever again, I will never put anything or anyone above him. Lord knows I will go beyond and above to make him happy.

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"My parents are going to be so happy," I say and Mhambi chuckles.

We are driving to my parent's house, my mom invited me over for lunch just to cheer me up. I have been down these past few days because Mhambi didn't get back to me after we got back from Cape Town. But now that my husband is back I am the happiest woman on earth, I am going to this lunch thing to surprise my parents. They will be so happy to see Mhambi and over the moon to know that we are giving our marriage another go.



"Is it just your parents or your siblings and their husbands will be there too?" He asks.

I know he doesn't really gel well with my brothers in law because they aren't really into the same things. For that reason he always brings Mzamo to our gatherings.

"My mom didn't say hey, but I promise not to leave you with Hlengi and Hlobisile's husbands," I say and he glances at me with a weak smile.

We get home and my siblings cars are parked in the driveway, Zandile is here too. They really wanted to cheer me up, I appreciate them. Mhambi climbs out first and rounds the car to come and open my door, he holds out his hand and I take it and step out of the car.

My family is sitting around the lounge with drinks in their hands, except for the last born. When she's home she doesn't touch alcohol but back at her apartment there's stash of all kinds of alcohol. They all cheer when they see me walking in with my

husband hand in hand. The only smile that makes my heart relax is the one on my father's face, he has been so disappointed in me ever since he found out that I did a hysterectomy behind my husband's back.

"Are my eyes deceiving me?" My father asks, standing up from the couch. Old man really needs to hit the gym and get rid of that potbelly.

"No Bab'Jiyane, it's really me," Mhambi answers and I watch as they share a hug.

Now I see why my father isn't bothered by not having sons of his own, he knew he would get them through us when we got married. He loves our husbands and I wish for him to live longer so he can see Zandile get married as well.

"Are you kids okay?" My mother asks, with tears glistening in her eyes. I have her to thank for all of this.

"We have a lot to work through but yes we are okay," I answer my mom and she opens her arms to hug both Mhambi and I.

My husband greets my siblings and they make small talk, everyone looks happy to see him. They all saw the blessing I had and I was just so blinded by a lot of things but now I see what has been in front of me all this while.

"You must be so happy that he's giving you another chance," Hlobisile says as we set the table for lunch.

"I am thrilled sis, I have another chance to make it work with the love of my life," I answer and she smiles lovingly at me.

"So when are you guys starting therapy?" I inhale sharply.

"We need to find one first. I am desperate to start, maybe after a few sessions he will feel like my husband again," I say and she frowns.

"What do you mean?"

"I know he has only been back for one day but he is so cold, distant and doesn't feel like my husband. It's

like he is here with me but he wants to be somewhere else, am I making sense?" I say and Hlobisile shakes her head.

"I think that's all in your head sis wam. Things won't go back to normal overnight, like you said to mom, you guys have a lot to work through. You hurt Mhambi so much Khosi and you can't expect him to snap out of it quickly. Move at his pace in trying to fix this marriage," she says and I know she's right. Sometimes I overthink things and mess up my mood for nothing. Mhambi is back together with me because he loves me and wants to make this work.

"Yeah, I should be patient." She nods with a smile.

"That man loves you so much and with time you guys will be all over each other, waiting for your baby and genuinely happy," from her mouth to Gods ears.

**CHAPTER 24**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

I just got home from the police station, I wanted to find out if they have any leads on Shane, the piece of shit that killed my friend brutally. The detective handling the case said he vanished into thin air, but he assured me that he will eventually resurface and they will catch him. I wanted to shout at the detective and tell him to get up from that chair and go out there to hunt him down. He can't be living his life freely after he took Asavela's life like it was nothing.

My mother walks back in, she was escorting some woman from church to her house. They said they will be praying for Asavela's mother this whole week, the woman is having it hard I cannot begin to imagine how she's feeling. Parents should never have to bury their children, that's not how God intended for it to happen.

"Are you ready to go back to work?" My mother asks, switching on the kettle. I wonder how she hasn't turned into rooibos.

"Yes ma,"

I'm grateful to my supervisor Muna for giving me the whole week off because I wasn't concentrating at work. She told me to come back tomorrow, that's Tuesday. Atleast I am well rested and I have come to accept Asavela's passing even though the pain is still there and raw. It will take me time to heal but right now life has to go on, no matter how hard it is.

"Tomorrow I will go to the shopping center to get baking ingredients, I want to make cookies for your supervisor. She is such a good woman," I smile.

"That's sweet of you mama, thank you," A knock on the door disturbs us, I get up from the kitchen stool and go open. It's Pheletso, God I haven't seen this one in a while.

"Are you going to let me in?" She asks and we both laugh, I step aside and she walks in.

"Oh Pheletso, is that you baby?" My mother asks.

"It's me mama, how are you?" She asks, pulling a chair and settling down.

"I'm okay, how are you? How is work? Are you attending church?" My mother with the twenty one questions, Pheletso hasn't even been here for five minutes.

"I am fine ma, work is very hectic but I'm coping. I do attend church, Tebatso always reminds me to," she says and I want to laugh. She hasn't been to church since she moved to Sunninghill, but mom doesn't need to know that.

"I am glad to hear that baby," thank God that my mother doesn't try to talk her into coming back to live with her mother. She takes her cup of tea and tells us that she will be in the bedroom reading her bible.

I take out juice from the fridge and pour some for Pheletso.

"How are you feeling babe?" She asks and I heave a sigh.

"I still can't believe she's gone, I mean Asavela had a lot to live for and her life was cut off just like that," I say and she's nodding her head.

"What happened to earning money the orthodox way? Why kill woman for their private parts just to get rich quickly, does that even work?" I shrug my shoulders.

I also have a million questions but no one can answer them.

"How did your mom take the news of you knowing about Asavela's secret life? You guys going to the club and all?" She is whispering, we don't want Manana Morake to hear this.



"They don't know love, the person who gave more information on Shane is Pearl, Asavela's friend," I say and she heaves a sigh of relief.

"Thank goodness, if they knew you'd probably be locked up and prayed for every hour of the day," she says and I giggle.

"I am not staying long babe, I just came to check up on you. My new bae is waiting for me," she says and I raise an eyebrow.

"When did you meet this bae?" She smiles.

"The Friday you left for your solocation, and the guy is already going crazy over me. I know I'm good in bed but I didn't think I was so good that I could be borrowed a car and promised a new bigger place to stay," she says, reminding me of Mhambi. I've been trying to forget about him and I will admit that it's hard. A part of me misses him so much and the other hates his guts. He hasn't tried calling me lately and that hurts so much, yes I won't answer but still.

"Babe, just be careful with the guy. After what happened to Asavela..."

She quickly interjects, "I promise I will Tibi,"

We are leaning by the car Pheletso's new boyfriend borrowed her, it's a machine. That guy must be loaded to just give his expensive car to a girl he just met. What sexual styles did Pheletso do on this man for him to trust her this much? A car stops behind this one and we both turn to look, it's Tebogo's car. I dart back to Pheletso and she's rolling her eyes.

"Tibi, let me go. I don't want any drama," she says briskly and I nod. She unlocks the car after giving me a hug goodbye.

"Pheletso, please wait ngwanaka," Mama Lilly says, climbing out of Tebogo's Polo.

Pheletso closes her eyes and shuts the door.

"Oh ngwanaka I miss you so much. Please come back home Pheletso," I hate seeing mama Lilly hurt like this because she has been so good to me.

"Mama please, I am happy where I am," my boyfriend laughs.

"Whose car is this?" Tebogo asks and his sister looks at him with an annoyed expression.

"Don't give me a dirty look, you just started working and you can't possibly afford this expensive car Pheletso. You are busy with rich older man akere?" He says vehemently, his eyes full of anger and disappointment. "That's why you left home, you wanted to live a life of chasing after rich men and parties," he adds and Pheletso smacks her lips.

"So what if I am?" She sneers back.

"Pheletso, that's not the life I want for you ngwanaka and I know that's not the life God created you to live," their mother cries.

"Mama, you chose this life for yourself. You chose to live a righteous life and I respect that. But please stop trying to force this religious life down my

throat, I know there is a God and I believe in him but that doesn't mean I shouldn't live my life how I want." She says and Tebogo mops his face with the palm of his hand in total frustration.

"We just buried Asavela because she was chasing after the glitters of the world. She fell for the devil's tricks and met a man that wasn't Godly, a man that used her body parts for God knows what! Do you want to end up dead too?" Bathong!

I know Tebogo wants to convince his sister to come back home but using my friends death to do so is just so insensitive.

"She lived a lie because her mother was forcing religion down her throat too. If her mother allowed her to make her own life choices and supported her then maybe she wouldn't have been killed," Pheletso says crying.

"Asavela lived a double life because she wanted to please both herself and her mother, that worked against her because she did what she wanted in the dark so her mother can remain proud of the good

girl she thought she was. Had she lived freely maybe her fate would have been different, think about that ntate moruti Tebogo," she opens the car door and climbs in then speeds off, leaving us eating the dust.

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My boyfriend is picking me up today so we can go and celebrate my new position at work. I told him about it when we spoke on the phone during my lunch break and he said he is taking me out for a meal. Muna decided to give me Asavela's job in the restaurant, I am thrilled because I am tired of cleaning after some rich people who don't have the decency to even flush the toilet after they do their business. The restaurant job is much better because it has more money and the customers give big tips, I'll be starting tomorrow.

I am in the locker room changing my uniform, Tebogo texted saying he is already outside in the parking lot. I wonder where he is taking me, I know he's not much of a romantic and I wish that could

change. There's no verse in the bible that says it's a sin to be romantic and unpredictable in your relationship with a woman you intend to spend the rest of your life with.

A male colleague of mine decides to walk me out so he can tell me how he has been looking at me since I started working here. He asks for my phone number and I refuse, saying I have a boyfriend and pointing to Tebogo's car. He turns back and leaves me alone after mumbling his apology. I open the door and climb in.

"Who was that?" He asks and I frown.

"Who was who?" I ask back, looking at him with narrowed eyes.

"The guy you were talking to," why is his face that hard? Don't tell me he is jealous.

Should I quote a verse that says love isn't jealous?

"Oh, my colleague," I say and he nods then leans in to peck my lips. Every time Tebogo kisses me I

remember that passionate kiss Mhambi gave me in Cape Town, I remember how hot and bothered it made me feel. I know I shouldn't be comparing my very loyal boyfriend to that lying devil but I can't help it. I wish Tebogo made me feel the way Mhambi did, even if it is half of what I felt.

"I got you these," he turns to the back and comes back with roses, they are made from plastic. I know where he bought these, the guy selling them stands at the traffic lights at some intersection around here.

"Oh, thank you," I am disappointed to say the least, couldn't he buy me real flowers?  
I know it's the thought that counts but who still buys plastic roses in this day and age?

"My love, before we go to get something to eat, I wanted to tell you that I had a sit down with both our mothers," he says.  
When did that happen?

"Okay?"

"I told the both of them that I am not putting my life and yours on hold because of Pheletso anymore. Me and you have been together for so long and it's time I did the right thing," he says and my intestines freeze.

I'm still not sure about marrying Tebogo but I know it's the right thing to do. He is a good man, my mother loves him and he would never hurt or disappoint me. My future with him is certain, he won't wake up one morning and change on me. And he certainly won't have another woman showing up and calling him baby when we are on a getaway.

"Your mother gave me her blessings and the go ahead to propose at church. We are finally doing this my love, we will be able to do everything now and not hold back," he says excitedly and I give him a big fake smile.

"I'm sure my mother was thrilled when you told her this," I say and he chuckles.



"She even cried Tebatso, you have made your mother so proud by being a good Christian girl," he says and I want to cry immediately. My mother lives for this, she did everything in her power to keep me in the straight and narrow so she can see me getting married to a good man of God. I will marry Tebogo to make her happy and to guard my heart from all heartbreak, the kind that you get from following man like Mhambi Mabizela.

"So when will it happen?" I ask and he smiles.

"Well, my mother has spoken to the pastor. He will bless our engagement in the church that following week because this Sunday I'm taking my Jehovah's Angels to visit a sister church," he says and I swallow hard, that's so soon. I thought he would say in a month or two maybe.

"Then a week later I will be paying for your lobola and immediately it's premarital counseling then a small wedding with just our closest relatives," This train is moving so fast.

"During the time you seemed cold and closed off I started fasting and praying. God showed me that you felt like I was changing my mind about you and he gave me the go ahead hence everything is happening this quickly. The Lord has approved, this is his timing and it's perfect," he adds and I just nod my head.

I was cold and closed off because I was falling in love with another man not the reason he just told me.

"So where are we going to eat?" I ask as he starts the engine.

"You choose my love, today is all for you,"

**CHAPTER 25**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

I was walking to my car after a meeting with a client at some restaurant in Fourways when I saw a woman who looks so much like Tebatso. I don't know what came over me but I rushed to that woman and pulled her by arm thinking it was Tebatso. She was so pissed and told me where to get off, even though I tried explaining that it was an honest mistake.

I sat in my car battling with myself on whether to call her or not.

I know Mzamo said I should leave her alone and it's probably the right thing to do. Lord knows that I cannot get that girl out of my mind and it's wrong on so many levels, because I decided to stay with my wife and try to fix things but thoughts of Tebatso cannot leave my mind. I am yearning to see her, to touch and kiss her softly. I miss her shyness around me and how she would get excited over the little things.

I won over the urge I had of calling her and I'm glad because I would have set her back from the progress she must have made in getting over me. Now I find myself looking at a picture of her on my phone, a picture I took in that beautiful restaurant in Camps Bay. She is flawless, in my eyes she is the most perfect woman to ever exist. I can still remember how soft those lips were against my own and how her skin was smooth under my touch. I wish I had met her in a different time because in this life time we can never be. I made vows to Khosi and I want to honor them, I want to try and fix our marriage. With time I will snap out of my feelings for Tebatso and love my wife completely again.

"What are you looking at so intensely," Khosi asks and I drop my phone without intending to do so.

"Oh babe, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to startle you," she says as I bend down to pick up my phone.

"It's okay, I was lost in thought. My meeting with the client didn't go well so I was starrng at the phone

waiting for an email from him," I lie and she kisses my lips.

"Don't overthink things my love, you will get good news," she tries to reassure me so I smile sweetly at her.

"Speaking of emails, I got a response from Dr Logan, the marriage counselor. She agreed to start seeing us from this Monday," she says and I nod.

"Oh that's good news,"

"Yeah, we can really start working on us now," I take her hand and kiss the back of it.

"Let me go check on my pots, your brother is due any minute now. I don't want him waiting too long for food," she has been cooking everyday since I got back and I appreciate her efforts. I see that she wants this marriage to work and that's why I need to forget about Tebatso.

Mzamo arrived 15 minutes ago and we have been sitting in the garden, sharing a drink as we wait for Makhosazana to finish cooking. My wife is the one who invited him over, she is trying to win him back by showing him that things are changing in our marriage. My brother is not easily swayed, it will take a lot for him to believe that Khosi has changed and will treat me right this time around.

"Give me the number of that real estate agent friend of yours," he says and I frown.

"Why? Are you buying a house?" I ask and he shakes his head and nods at the same time.

"Yes, but I won't be staying there," property investment that's smart.

"Yeah, put most of your money in property. You will never go wrong," he chuckles.

"I know but I'm getting this one so my current girl can stay in it. She stays in a tiny bachelor apartment, I haven't been but the way she describes it I can tell

it's tiny. You know I love space and I want to be able to move about when I visit," Mzamo has lost his mind.

"Wait, are you in love with this girl or something?" I ask and he is thrown into a fit of laughter.

"I've been there, done that and I'm over it. I don't love her, she just rocks in the sheets so I'm planning on keeping her longer," he has got to be kidding me.

"Mzamo, you can just take the girl to your place, you don't have to buy a fuck house. What happens when you break up?"

"Are you insane? You want her to start showing up unannounced at my place? That's my personal space dude, no women allowed. When we break up she moves out for the next one simple," wow, just wow.

"Who is this girl that broke your heart?" I ask and he clicks his tongue and I know the conversation is terminated.

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Makhosazana asked me to take her out on a date to a place I like, so I looked up at my favorite spots and realized that the art studio has an event. They normally sell their tickets on the web but they still had some space so they decided to sell tickets at the door too. Tonight's theme is paint your mood, these painting events are so fun and a huge stress reliever I hope she enjoys it. I park outside the place and there's a queue, I hope we find tickets.

"Babe, what is this place," she asks, this date night is a surprise. I didn't want her backing out of it because I seriously wanted to come.

"This is an art studio, we are here to paint. The monthly sessions have a theme, tonight's theme is: paint your mood," I say and she gives me a weak smile and I immediately know that she won't like it.

"Oh love, you should have talked me out of wearing this top, it's new and if I get paint all over it then it's



done. I won't find it anywhere because it was a limited edition," she say and I heave a sigh.

"Khosi they have aprons to protect clothing plus the paint can be washed out," I say but she's not sold.

"Okay, let's go in," I open my door and round the car to open for her too.

We are about to stand on the queue when I realize that I left my wallet in the car, I tell Khosi to wait here while I go get it. I rush and make it back to find her talking to some couple, the lady has her back to me.

"Oh here is my husband, but you can jump us because I was standing on the side," Makhosazana says to the guy and the lady turns to face my wife with a beautiful smile on her face and my heart drops into my stomach. Her smile disappears when her eyes land on me.

"Tebatso," it comes out in an almost whisper.

"Mr Mabizela," she says and it aches that we are back there.

"Oh love, you know them?" My wife asks and I nod my head with a nervous smile. God it's so good to see her again, she's so beautiful.

"I know Tebatso," I answer.

"Where did you guys meet?" The guy next to her asks, taking her hand to mark his territory and I narrow my eyes at Tebatso. How could she move on so quickly? I am having a difficult time getting her out of my mind but she is busy with another man. She even has the nerve to bring him to our place, how could she?

"Oh, Mr Mabizela owns the hotel I work at," she answers quietly.

"Oh okay, it's nice to meet you. I am Tebogo, Tebatso's fiance," say what? She's fuckin' engaged but she got mad at me when Khosi showed up? This must be a joke because no please.

"Forgive my husband, he tends to zone out a lot these days. My name is Khosi and he's Mhambi Mabizela. It's nice to meet you too,"

"Congratulations on your engagement Tebatso, I wasn't aware that you were seeing someone," I say and she swallows hard, dodging my eyes.

"We have been together for seven years actually," the tall and skinny jackass answers for her and I'm left feeling like someone is twisting my insides. That long? She was seeing this guy when we were away and she acted as if I'm the biggest scam. We both hid things from each other here, Tebatso owes me fuckin' answers.

"Enjoy the session," she says, running away because I have just caught her in a lie and I'm so hurt and pissed at her.

**CHAPTER 26**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

He has a wife, she's beautiful, tall and absolutely perfect, did I mention how sweet she was to me and Tebogo? We found her standing on the queue alone and she told us we can skip because she's waiting for her husband. She had on the most beautiful smile ever as she spoke to us, why would Mhambi want to cheat on such a woman? Man really don't know what they want and it's really sad that I almost got myself used by an unfaithful bastard.

I regretted taking Tebogo to the art studio as soon as my eyes landed on his handsome face. I didn't think I'd bump into him there, I just wanted to have an easy and nice evening with Tebogo. I've complained that he doesn't like doing anything fun so this time I decided to take matters into my own hands and I forced him to the art studio. If I'm going to live the rest of my life with this man then I have to find ways to survive it, ways to enjoy it. He will force all Godly things on me and I will force him to do fun things too. I cannot sacrifice my desire to have a love that

brings me fire and ice, hearts and flowers. And also sacrifice all other things that can make me happy for him and my mother.

I didn't enjoy the event at all because each time I raised my eyes I'd find Mhambi looking at me with so much anger, like I did something to betray him. He is probably angry that I didn't tell him about Tebogo but I was ready to leave a stable man that my only surviving parent adores for him. He ruined what was suppose to be a great Friday night.

As much as I hate Mhambi my heart skipped a bit when I saw him, I remembered the savior he was to me when things went south that time at his brothers club. I yearned for the gentleman he was to me while we were in Cape Town, before his wife showed up. I can't believe a part of me hated that poor woman for coming to her house, a house her husband obviously uses to cheat on her. I praise God for saving me from that adulterer.

"My love," Tebogo shakes me gently, bringing me back from my train of thoughts.

"Oh, I'm sorry. You were saying?" I ask.

"Are you ready to go?" I nod vigorously.

"Yes, we can go," I say, getting up from the couch. I didn't sleep a wink last night because Mhambi invaded my thoughts, and he kept blowing my phone but I couldn't bring myself to answering his call. He is married and I don't have anything to do with a married man.

"Let's go get your mom so I can drop you ladies off at church," Tebogo says.

We are attending a woman's night of prayer, Gender based violence is a big issue in our country so we are holding this prayer session to ask God to intervene.

"How I wish Pheletso was here, going to church with us," mama Lilly says.

Her daughter is living her best life, looking for bigger apartments with her new boyfriend.

Tebogo drops us off at church after picking up my mother who brought a big three ply blanket. My mother doesn't like to get cold, she'd rather carry the whole wardrobe and blankets. We get inside the church and the praise and worship team is already singing on the stage. This place is packed with women and many are still coming in, my mother and mama Lilly take the front seats and there's no extra chair for me. I tell them both that I will be sitting with the girls from the youth league at the back.

I am already yawning because I didn't sleep last night, I kept tossing and turning. Good thing I was sleeping alone in Pheletso's room, I thought I'd be forced to sleep with their mom now that she's gone. The girl sitting next to me tells me that my phone is flashing in the bag and I quickly reach for it, it's Mhambi. Can he just leave me alone? A second later a text comes through from him.

**MHAMBI: I AM AT THE CORNER OF YOUR STREET, IF YOU DON'T COME OUT RIGHT NOW I'LL COME KNOCKING.**

To say I am shocked would be an understatement, who does he think he is? He can't threaten me this way, he has a wife. He should be home with her, not bothering me. How did he remember his way to my house anyway.

ME: I AM AT CHURCH MHAMBI, GO AWAY.

MHAMBI: I NEED TO TALK TO YOU. SEND ME THE LOCATION OF YOUR CHURCH TEBATSO. IF YOU DON'T I WILL ASK AROUND AND I WILL CAUSE A SCENE WHEN I GET THERE.

Is he psycho or something? I can't leave this service to go and talk to him but the last thing I need is him showing up here and pulling me out. I send him my location and hold my phone close. A few minutes later he texts me saying he's parked behind the church tent. Right on time the praise and worship team starts a song and everyone gets on their feet to sing and dance, I use this opportunity to step out.

It's dark outside and there aren't any people in the street, I don't know if it's appropriate for me to



thank God for this one. His car is parked in the open veld behind the church where children play soccer. I quickly get in the front seat and shoot him a fulminating gaze.

"What are you doing here?" I roar and he raises an eyebrow, shocked by my outburst.

"O batla eng Mhambi?" I repeat my question and this time he turns to fully face me.

"Do you think I want to be here Tebatso? You don't think I don't want to be at home with my wife watching a Saturday night movie while we cuddle on the couch?" He shouts back.

"Then go to her, go to your wife," what's all this? I didn't call him here.

"I cannot give her attention because all I can think about is you, you and that ugly ass guy you were with last night. You are fuckin' engaged and you didn't tell me?" He says and I'm blinking rapidly.

"You didn't tell me that you are married Mhambi," I say softly and he shakes his head.

"I was going to tell you on Sunday when we went on our stroll. I didn't know Khosi would show up..." He starts telling me the problems he had in his marriage, he is rushing it so I can understand and not see him as a liar.

"So you're staying with her because she froze her eggs and you guys can be able to have kids?" I ask and that leaves a bitter taste in my mouth. I would have given him children.

"No, because she is willing to go back to being the Makhosazana I met all those years ago. This is a marriage Tebatso and I need to try and make it work," he says meekly and I let my tears fall. What about me? He made me fall in love with him by being everything I have ever dreamed of.

"I cannot love you Tebatso, I cannot be that guy but it's fuckin' hard. I don't know how to get you out of my system, you invaded me in such a short space of

time and damn you for that." He says and rests his forehead against the steering wheel.

"I was going to leave Tebogo for you, because you felt right, felt real. We aren't engaged, it's only happening next Sunday in church," he looks at me and his eyes are bloodshot.

"I wish this was a different time, I'd choose you without thinking about it but I'm not that guy, I can't hurt Makhosazana like that," he says and I allow more of my tears to fall, he wipes them and caresses my cheek and I lean into his warmth. His touch is electrifying, I'm on fire.

"So this is goodbye?" I ask with a shaking voice and he nods, closing his eyes as if pained.

"This is goodbye," he confirms and it hurts to my soul. I heave a sigh then after a minute of silence I pull my dress up, exposing my thighs and underwear. He looks at them and swallows before looking up me with total lust.

"Babe, what are you..."

I don't allow him to finish, "say goodbye properly then," his eyes darken with desire.

Without warning my chair reclines back and he is undoing his belt and pushing down his jeans and boxers at the same time. My breathing is uneven and something between my legs is throbbing, asking for this man to take care of the itch. He comes between my legs and pulls down my underwear, his eyes haven't left mine. I raise my head so my lips can find his and we kiss lustfully and sloppy. He is touching me where this space allows him to and all I want is him inside of me, moving and making me feel good.

"Mhambi please," I cry and he groans in my ear as his lips move to my neck. A second later I feel something tearing me apart, I cry in pain and attempt to close my legs but he keeps them in place. It's a little uncomfortable but it doesn't hurt as I expected it to.

"Relax your body baby and you will feel the pleasure," he whispers in my ear and I listen to him and let myself go. He is stroking me slowly and equally and it starts to feel delicious, I'm feeling filled up and warm. He grabs my hips and starts moving a little faster, while groaning deeply and he suddenly stops moving and licks my neck, sending delicious tingles down my spine.

"I love you," he says and I hug him tighter.

"I love you too," I cry and he smashes his soft lips on mine. After a long, passionate kiss he gets off me and I start fixing myself. Only then do I realize that I just had sex in the car, behind my church. Do I regret it? No. I just hope and pray that nobody saw me.

"I have to go," I say and attempt to open the door but he holds my arm.

"I'm so sorry babe," I inhale sharply and climb out of his car and run back to church. Hopefully my mom didn't realize that I went missing because that was long.

My heart is aching, the thought of never seeing Mhambi again kills me. The first man to ever make me feel this way belongs to someone else and there's nothing I can do about it. I just have to get over him and focus on my relationship because that is what God gave to me.

"Tebatso, where are you coming from?" My mother asks as we bump into each other at the entrance.

"I had to use the bathroom mama," I answer, hoping that she can't see that I just lost my virginity in the car.

"Oh okay, let's go back in." I take a deep breath and follow behind her.

**CHAPTER 27**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

My husband has been sad since he came back from God knows where Saturday night. I tried asking him what the matter is but he keeps saying he is alright but I can see sorrow in his eyes, he looks like someone who lost something precious to him. I don't know how to cheer him up because I don't know what he is going through. We started marriage counseling on Monday and I thought maybe he will talk about what is eating through him but nothing. He was physically there but his mind was miles away, I am scared that Mhambi is regretting his decision of coming back to me.

I decided to come home early to prepare a feast for us, I even have a romantic set up in our bedroom. We haven't had sex since he came back home, he hasn't tried to touch me and that's really sad. Tonight I'm hoping to have some quality time with him, maybe that will get us somewhere in our marriage.

I hear a car pull up outside and I check my wrist watch and it's ten to six, he's right on time. I take a deep breath and fix my wrap dress. I chose this one because I want him to peel it off me easily and find his lacey surprise underneath. He has always loved seeing me in a sexy lingerie, hopefully he appreciates it because we haven't been intimate in such a long long time. And that is my fault, I denied him sex because I didn't want him questioning why I wasn't falling pregnant. But now that he knows the truth we can have all the sex in the world without me worrying.

Mhambi walks in the lounge with his blazer draped over his arm and the tie loosened around his neck, It looks like he had a day from hell. I walk towards him and peck his lips before taking the blazer from him.

"Hectic day love?" I ask and he closes his eyes.

"You have no idea Khosi, I had to spend my whole day at the truck depo," I know how exhausting it is to go down to the field. Each time I go on site to check how far they are with projects I come back



home dog tired. Mhambi own a Logistics company, he has trucks and my family company leases from him. He also has warehouses, companies outsource their storage and transportation needs to him.

"Tell you what? I'll go run you a bath and add oils and salts then when you're done you can come back in here for dinner," I suggest and he nods his head in agreement.

"That sounds perfect, thank you," I smile excitedly at him and take his hand leading him to the guest bathroom. He can't see the romantic set up in our bedroom just yet.

"Why are we using this bathroom?" He asks and I giggle.

"We hardly use it babe, it deserves some love," I say and he shrugs his shoulders and starts stripping off his clothes, my husband has an amazing body. I swallow my desire to keep it for later and turn to open the tap and pour oils and salts in the tub.

"Let me go get you something comfortable to wear," I say, picking up his clothes from the floor. I need to take our laundry to the dry cleaners, that's another job and a half. Maybe I should just ask the lady who helps us keep this place clean to start doing our laundry. I will talk to Mhambi first and hear what he has to say about it.

I walk out of the bathroom and head to our bedroom to find him sweatpants and a t-shirt. He loves walking around the house barefoot so there's no need for shoes. I decide to pack our dirty laundry in the laundry bags, I will drop them off tomorrow morning on my way to the office. My husband is still relaxing in the bathtub when I walk back in, I just place his clothes on top of the closed toilet seat and excuse myself.

I am pouring myself a glass of champagne and cognac for Mhambi when he walks in looking much better physically. There is still sadness lingering in his eyes, it unsettles me because I wonder if it has anything to do with us. I hand him a glass and he says thank you and settles down on the bar stool.

We prefer eating in the kitchen, we only use the dining table when we have guests. I dish for the both of us and we dig in, I have been enjoying cooking for my husband, It takes a lot of time yes but I love doing it. I won't say that I've found the right balance between being a wife and a career woman but I'm trying my best and my husband said that's all he wants from my part.

"So baby," I say and he looks up at me.

"Mhhhh?"

"Uhm, I was thinking that with time we could have a ceremony to renew our vows and exchange rings," I say and he raises an eyebrow, he is shocked by my suggestion. I understand because I am the one who didn't want to wear a ring in the first place. I didn't want something that will mark me because I did not want men in the industry seeing me as nothing but a wife, a mans property. But my perspective has totally changed and I want the world to know that I am a married woman.

"Are you sure?" He asks and I nod my head vigorously. This time my marriage will be a total bliss, I promised myself and him this.

"I am all for it then," he says and I blow out a sigh of relief. Atleast I know he still wants to make this work, whatever sadness I see in his eyes has nothing to do with me and our marriage.

We finish eating and I clear up, Mhambi insists on doing the dishes and I'm reminded of why I love him. He is such a good man, always helping and not looking at me to do everything. I'm truly blessed to have married such a man, when I remember how I almost lost him my stomach freezes. But that's all in the past now.

"All done," he says wiping his hands with the dry dish cloth. I get off the stool and hold out my hand, he takes it with narrowed eyes. I smile and lead him to our bedroom, he had a relaxing bath, a great meal and now I am about to rock his world in the sheets. I push the door open and we walk in.

"Haibo! What's all this?" He asks and I roll my eyes. I know he is Zulu but Mhambi grew up in Johannesburg. He knows these things, I mean I used to do all these romantic things when we were still dating.

"I just want to have a romantic evening with my husband," I say, snaking my hands under his T-shirt.

"I miss you so much," I whisper in a seductive manner and he closes his eyes.

"Baby, I had a long day today," he says and I'm a little disappointed but I won't give up.

"I know and I will do all the work," he can't say no, he knows I have mean ridding skills.

"Not tonight Makhosazana," He says and takes out my hands from under his T-shirt. Rejection is heart wrenching, I cannot believe that he just refused me sex. But I guess it's payback time for all the times I refused him. I turn and look at him and he is removing the rose petals from his side then removes

the decorative pillows. I want the ground to open and swallow me, I have never been rejected before and I don't know how to react. I shamefully make my way to our adjoining bathroom, I want to take off the lingerie underneath and go watch TV. I'll come to bed when he's asleep.

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"Are you stupid?" I roar at my PA and she is blinking rapidly like a lost puppy.

"I said jalapeno source and you decided to come here with barbeque sauce, do you have a hearing problem?"

"I am so s-sorry ma'am, I can rush back to the restaurant to get you the right sauce," she says with a shaking voice and I roll my eyes.

"You can be incompetent at times Jesus Christ,"

"You can go back to work dear," Hlobisile says, walking into my office and my PA scurries off.

"She didn't deserve that Makhosazana, it must have been an honest mistake," she sets me straight immediately and I close my eyes. She's right, I shouldn't have lashed out on the poor girl over some stupid sauce.

"I'm sorry, it's just that my head is all over the place," she sits down across me shaking her head.

"What's wrong with you? Is it work?" She asks, pulling my food towards her.

"No, work is great. It's my husband Hlobisile," I say and she narrows her eyes at me before leaning in.

"What happened now? I thought you guys were coming along alright. Or did something happen at therapy?"

"Yesterday I got home and cooked for us like I've been doing. I put on a new sexy lingerie under my dress and decorated our bedroom with rose petals and candles. I set the mood because I wanted to be

intimate with my husband but he rejected me Hlobi, I have never been that ashamed in my life. I didn't even know how to look at him this morning," I say and her expression softens.

"Oh sis, I can only imagine. I'm sorry," she says, reaching for my hand and clasping it.

"A part of me feels like Mhambi is forcing himself to make this marriage work," she quickly holds out her free hand to stop me from saying anything more.

"Khosi no, don't think like this. Your marriage has been rocky for a while now and it's going to take a lot of work to get it well oiled again. Be patient and pray, things will fall into place." Can't we skip to the part where everything is in place? I don't want to live like this, I just want to be completely happy with Mhambi.

"I guess you're right sis wam," she sticks out her tongue. Hlobisile should've been the eldest child because wow.



"I was in the neighborhood so I thought I'd pop by to see how you're doing," she says, getting on her feet.

"Listen, I asked Mhambi if he would like to renew our vows and exchange rings once we see progress in our marriage and he said yes. I'd like for you to be the one to plan everything," I say and she smiles excitedly.

"You don't even have to ask Khosi," my sister owns an events planning company, she is good at what she does so much so that people want no one else's services. They are always booked and busy in Gauteng, she's even working on expanding to Cape Town and Bloemfontein.

"Let's do something this Saturday," she says and I nod.

"We can do a sister thing with Hlengi and Zandile,"

"I will call them," She says and takes her handbag from on top of the mahogany table.

"Thanks boo," I say, reaching for my food. She didn't touch anything.

"Let me leave you to make us and our children some money," she says and I laugh.

**CHAPTER 28**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

Tomorrow she'll be accepting his ring and agreeing to being with him forever. It hurts like a mother fucker but I made my choice, a choice to stay with Makhosazana. My heart has been aching ever since she climbed out of my car Saturday night after giving herself and her purity to me. I figured she was still a virgin from all the stories she told me about her life, that night it got confirmed when I pushed through her hymen and from the blood I saw on my boxers when I got home. That was the best goodbye gift, atleast I have something of hers that stupid boy will never have. I'd say two things, her virginity and her heart but I know that she'll grow to love him with time. Hopefully we get to meet in another life time and fall in love as easily as we did in this one.

"Okay, fuck you!" Mzamo says, punching my shoulder.

"What the fuck dude?" I ask with widened eyes. Why would he hit me so hard?

"Listen, you asked me to chill and watch this game but now you're zoning out on me. What's up with you? Therapy not working with Makhosazana?" I am the King of zoning out these days, I need to get it together.

"It's not Khosi, it's Tebatso," I say and he groans before gulping down his drink. I know he's not going to be happy about what I did.

"Mhambi, leave that girl alone bro. You chose to try again with Khosi, don't drag that innocent soul in this and hurt her more," he says annoyed and I heave a sigh.

"We bumped into her and some guy last Friday at a painting session. She took that guy to our place and that hurt me so much, that was supposed to be a place that reminds her of me and she took another man," I cough out and he huffs out a humourless laugh.

"You took Khosi there too so I guess you guys are even," I smack my lips. He isn't helping at all, I'm trying to vent here. Mzamo has to take my side.

"Seeing her with another man drove me insane, I couldn't sleep that night. I tried her phone but she never answered so Saturday night I went to her neighborhood and she was at church, she didn't want to see me so I threatened to find her and cause a scene. She came out but she was so mad at me, we had an exchange and in the middle of it I told her about Khosi and she started crying. It hurt me to see her like that. She then told me who the guy is and that she was going to leave him for me, but life decided to happen this way. Tomorrow she is getting engaged, the guy will go on one knee in the church and ask her to marry him. The thought of that leaves a bitter taste in my mouth, it hurts to my soul," I say and he's looking at me with widened eyes.

"Mhambi, are you in love with clumsy cat?" He asks carefully.

"I don't even know how it happened, one minute she was my hotel worker who poured coffee on me and the next minute I'm feeling hot and fuzzy when I'm around her. Cape Town just escalated everything I was already feeling for her, these feelings just happened so quickly. I don't know how to explain it to someone else," he folds his arms across his chest.

"She gave me her virginity," I say in a confidential voice and he gasps in shock.

"Yoh! Yoh! Yoh! Mhambi, this is a mess. I don't know how people can possibly fall in love so quickly. How do you plan on staying with Khosi when your heart is with Tebatso?" He gets up from the couch and goes to mix another drink.

"Tebatso and I said our goodbyes. I am staying with Makhosazana and she will start a life with that guy. It fuckin sucks but that's just life, we can't always have what we want," I say and he claps once. I know, it's a sad situation.

"You went from zero to a hundred real quick. You're aware that you committed a sin now by sleeping with another woman while married? Our granddad must be turning in his grave, he raised you better than this. I mean he taught you the bible and everything," this clown just had to bring mkhulu into this.

"I don't regret sleeping with Tebatso, I know it's wrong but I needed to have something that will remind me of her forever," I say my truth and that shocks him because he knows that I am not the type to cheat. I have always done the right things in my life.

"Let's leave this discussion, it hurts to even talk about it," I say and he nods.

"I'm taking this new girl apartment shopping next week, I'm ready to play house. To have sex everywhere and be served home cooked meals whenever I want," he says and I laugh, Mzamo is something else. I wonder how he gets these girls to even look at him because he's such a douchebag.

"Does she know she's about to be turned into a chef?" I ask and he crosses his legs, leaning back on the couch.

"We are using each other, she's getting a bigger apartment and won't even pay rent. I'm going to be buying groceries and giving her money. Did I mention that I give her intense orgasms? So me wanting a meal when I want doesn't count for shit," wee Mzamo!

"Why unje? Why can't you find a girl and settle down?" I ask and he shoots me a look.

"I know you're fishing. I won't tell you about the girl that fucked me over Mhambi, get over it bro," I am always telling this man my problems and he won't tell me who the woman that broke his heart is. My phone rings on the coffee table before I can answer him, I reach for it and it's my wife.

"Hey," I answer.



"Hey babe,"

"You good?" I ask.

"Yeah, I'm still with my sisters. What would you like me to get you for dinner?" She asks. I've been enjoying the home cooked meals she has been preparing for me but I guess one day of takeaways won't hurt.

"Anything you can find," I say.

"Okay, I love you," she mutters.

"I love you too," I say and my brother chokes on his drink and starts coughing violently. I end the call with my wife and wait for this fool to catch his breath.

"You just told me you love Tebatso and now you're I love you tooing to Khosi," he says with a raised eyebrow.

"I love Khosi Mzamo, I'm just not in love with her.  
But I hope with time I will again,"

"Sgaxa se ndaba!"

## **TEBATSO MORAKE**

"You still have time to make a run for it Tebatso, come to my place and leave behind that sham," Pheletso says, trying to talk me out of going through with the engagement today.

"Babe, I told you I'm doing this. I don't have your balls, I can't hurt my mother like that. She is so excited, her dream is finally coming true," I say and she clicks her tongue.

"I hope you don't regret this," me and her both. This past week has been so hard, I cannot get Mhambi out of my mind. How could I after I gave him my innocence? Don't get me wrong I don't regret it, infact I'm glad that it's him that took my virginity. He is the only man that makes me feel alive and excited. That night he made me a woman and I will never forget the experience, wherever life takes us Mhambi Mabizela will always be a big highlight in my story. He gave me a glimpse of the kind of love I

wanted to experience, he showed me bits and pieces of the hearts and flowers I have always imagined.

"Good thing you'll be there when I want to vent and scream," I say and she laughs.

"Video call me after church, I want to see the ring," she says and I've been thinking about the ring myself, hopefully Tebogo got me something really nice. I don't care about the pricetag but it has to be a cute something on my finger.

"I will babe, let me finish preparing," we say our goodbyes and I start putting on my dress. I decided to wear the shoes and dress Mhambi bought me, it might seem wrong but it's a beautiful dress and I want to look pretty when I get engaged. My bedroom door opens and mama walks in wearing the most beautiful smile, she is so proud of me and has been stressing that fact this whole entire week.

"Oh my princess, you look beautiful Tibi. That dress is perfect, the color red shows that today we are celebrating love in Christ. Thank you for listening to

me and the word of God, for keeping yourself pure for your husband. Your age mates have already slept with people who aren't their husbands but you listened and waited. I love you so much Tebatso, you're my pride and joy," her words would mean everything if I was still sealed but I slept with a man I love so much, a married man for that matter.

"Thanks mama," we share a hug and she pecks my lips.

"No, thank you ngwanaka," Seeing how happy and excited my mother is with this engagement, I can tell that she would have dropped dead if I had left Tebogo for Mhambi.

"I wish your father was still alive to see this day, he is surely smiling from heaven," I only know that man from pictures, I have moments where I wish he was still alive with the hopes of him being different from my mom. Maybe he would have allowed me to live my life the way I wanted from the on set, but I guess we will never know.

"Me too mama,"

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I am nervous right now, I swear I just felt a drop of sweat travel down the valley between my breasts. The pastor is announcing that there's an engagement in the church today and the congregation goes buck wild, they are applauding and cheering. Everyone is happy and all I want to do right now is to run out of this church, but my mother's huge grin has me sitting right on this chair with Tebogo's hand in mine. We are called to the front and as weak as my knees are, I still manage to make it to the pulpit. The praise and worship team is singing a nice song that has the congregation dancing and moving around the church while the pastor prays for Tebogo and I.

The congregation sits down and the pastor reads a verse from the bible, one that has to do with marriage and after that he gives us words of encouragement and tells us we will understand more things with regards to marriage when we start

with our premarital counseling. Our mothers are called to the front and asked if they give us their blessings and they both give a happy and firm yes. The pastor then tells Tebogo to proceed, he takes a deep breath and produces a ring box from his pocket and when he is about to go down on one knee the police storm the church. The congregation starts mumbling amongst themselves and we all wait for the cops to reach the pulpit and explain why they walked in here like it's a crime scene or something.

"That's the one detective," a lady we attend church with says, pointing at Tebogo. I look at this man who was about to put a ring on my finger and panic is conspicuously seen on his face. What did he do? Fear starts bubbling in my stomach.

"Can we help you?" The pastor asks with narrowed eyes.

"Heee ntate, are you Tebogo Lebona?" The detective asks and Tebogo nods with fear written all over his face, his hand is trembling and sweating in mine.

"What's wrong?" The pastor asks again.

"Your trusted Sunday school leader is a pedophile pastor. He takes our kids away to retreats only to have them do nasty things to him, then threatens to harm us if they say anything," the woman says and I gasp in shock. The church roars, persecuting the woman for saying such an evil thing against Tebogo who has done nothing but help children get closer to God. The police read Tebogo his rights before cuffing him and taking him away.

I am left frozen on the spot, I cannot believe that he is being accused of such a disgusting thing. A part of me believes it's true because of how he lost it when they removed him from Sunday school, I wondered who puts up that much fight over a church position and this just explained it.

My mother grabs my arm and pulls me away from the stage, she is crying and I am numb. If this is true then I almost gave my life to a pedophile, what would have happened to our children in the future? Would he have abused them as well?



Mama Lilly is besides herself as she drives to her house with my mother and I sitting in the back. The police are following behind us because they have a warrant, they say they want Tebogo's laptop because it has evidence. We get to the house and I go open for the police because mama Lilly is crying hysterically in the car. The police ask me to show them Tebogo's bedroom and I do, they find his laptop on the bed. And start going through his drawers and the rest of his room and find nothing. They leave and I lock and go back to the car, my mother is sitting in the front now, comforting mama Lilly. I should call Pheletso and ask her to come, this is big and her mom needs her right now. The issues they have can take a backseat.

**CHAPTER 29**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

It has been a few days since Tebogo was arrested and charged with raping minors and also for distribution of child pornography. The court denied him bail and it's not looking good for him. The police found many videos of him doing unspeakable things to his Sunday school children on his laptop. They also realized that he was a member of an international dark website that shares videos of children being raped and forced into doing disgusting things to older men and women.

I didn't see any of the videos but thinking about it makes my skin crawl, I cannot believe that he acted all holly holly while he was the devil himself to those little kids. I thank God that one mother noticed a change in her child and grilled the little girl until she got answers. The police went on to approach the parents of the other kids that were raped and molested by this monster and they agreed to open cases against Tebogo. I pray that they give him the

harshest sentence and lock him in solitary confinement, he deserves to rot in hell.

I have been crying since it all happened because I almost tied myself to that monster, a wolf in sheep skin. But God stepped in right on time, he saved me from making the biggest mistake of my life. I cannot begin to imagine the kind of marriage we would have had, what he was going to do to our little children when we had them.

My mother and I came to see mama Lilly who isn't doing well at all, this whole thing hit her pretty hard. Tebogo is her golden son, her trophy that she brags about to everyone wherever she goes. She's failing to wrap her head around the fact that he is being accused of such a vile thing. She has been so sick these past few days, Pheletso had to take her to the doctor. The doctor said it's stress and gave her medication and asked her to rest as much as she can and try not to dwell on her stressors.

Atleast today she's sitting on the couch and trying to eat, before going to the doctor she was always in

bed and refusing food. It's going to take a while for her to accept that her child is nothing but a worthless piece of shit and that he deserves all the punishment in the world.

"A former colleague of mine who now works at a private hospital told me about this good lawyer who can help Tebogo," she says and I look at Pheletso who is shocked out of her mind.

"She says his name is Molemo Motaung and he has never lost a case in his life,"  
I cannot believe my ears right now. I understand that Tebogo is her son and she loves him but we are talking about a rapist here.

"Pheletso my baby, please drive me to his office tomorrow," she says and Pheletso chuckles in disbelief.

"I'm not going to do that mama, I'm not going to help you get a rapist out of prison," Pheletso says, getting on her feet.

"Bathong! Pheletso we are talking about your only brother here, my son," Mama Lilly whimpers. I feel for her, I really do but I'm with Pheletso on this one.

"No mama, your son is a bloody pedophile. He rapes little children and uploads videos of him doing those disgusting things to them so his fellow sickos can enjoy," Pheletso thunders, she's so mad right now she's even shaking.

"Let us all calm down and take a deep breath," my mother begs and I'm just glued to this couch. I had a long day at work and this drama is just making my head spin.

"Mme wa Tebatso, I respect you so much but I'm not going to calm down. My mother is being a hypocrite right now, she wants to protect her evil son. She doesn't want him to face the consequences of his actions. What about justice for those little children? What about their parents? Does she think they don't love their children the same way she loves her rapist?"

"Pheletso the devil targets the most closest to the Lord, he came to destroy your brother. The same way he came and made you leave your home and go chasing after worldly things." I can't believe this, how does she make excuses for a rapist? Does she know the permanent scars her son left on those innocent souls?

"I cannot believe this, God must be ashamed of you. You are a rape apologist Lillian Lebona," Pheletso is disgusted and so am I.

"What do you want me to do?" Her mother asks, crying.

"I want you to stand back and let Tebogo face the music of what he did," I agree.  
God forbid, but if it was Pheletso that was raped then she would want the perpetrator to be locked up. Why must it be different with her son? I'm thankful that I dodged the bullet.

"I can't Pheletso, he is my son," her daughter nods her head. I'm left wondering if she thinks those little

kids don't have parents that love them and want justice for what happened.

"So much for living by the word of God," Her anger and disappointment are warranted.

"I will not be a part of anything that has to do with getting Tebogo out of this and I will not stay here and watch you do it. I thank God that I moved out when I did,"

"Pheletso please baby, you can't leave your mother alone," my mom says.

"I'm packing my things and leaving. If she goes and succeeds in getting Tebogo out of jail with that good Lawyer she's talking about, then she will never see me again," I hold my breath, she means every word. Pheletso is known for doing what she says. Let's hope mama Lilly doesn't lose her daughter over a rapist who has destroyed so many young lives.

"Pheletso you don't mean that," mama Lilly says with a hoarse voice.

"Oh I mean it mama, you can bet your precious prince on that,"

My mother says she will stay with mama Lilly for the night and suggests that I take Pheletso home with me. She is too angry and we can't allow her to drive all the way to Sunninghill in that state, if she still feels like leaving in the morning then that's okay. I personally understand where she's coming from, this whole thing is hurtful and it's disappointing that a woman and a mother wants to set a rapist free. Mama Lilly is not thinking about those poor little boys and girls and their parents. If she was indeed a woman of God then she would have sympathy for them, and allow her son to face the consequences in order for those families to start their healing process. I thank God that my mother didn't allow her love for Tebogo to cloud her judgement, I was so relieved when she told me that she's happy that God showed us Tebogo's true colors before we tied the knot.



I help Pheletso to take her bags to the car and ask her to sleep over at my place. She agrees and I rush back inside to say goodbye to my mom, who is comforting her friend. Pheletso asks to start at a nearby bottle store because she needs something to numb her, I also need a drink. I haven't touched alcohol since Cape Town and today I honestly need something just to clear my head, preferably that gin and tonic Mhambi made me.

"You must thank your stars for getting you out of this one, imagine if you had married that rapist. You'd be stuck with him and his mother who refuses to find any fault in him. Right now the police have tangible evidence of his crimes and she wants to blame the devil," that's why I have been crying every night, I am thankful to God for saving me from this.

"I am free Pheletso, you don't know how relieved I am," I express my feelings.

"Now it's time for you to start living your life how you want. Look at the skeletons those who were forming holly had in their closets. See where living

your life in the corners landed Asavela, I'm not trying to hurt you Tebatso but girl please," she's right, straight out.

"I'm not saying chase after blessers and go to different clubs, that's not you. All I'm saying is be the Tebatso you want to be, not one that your mother wants you to be. She will die someday and you'll be left with all sorts of regrets. You don't need to be locked up so the world can see that you are a good Christian girl, your heart is the only thing God looks at in my opinion."

"I hear you babe,"

**CHAPTER 30**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

My husband is with Mzamo and two of their friends at the house, they are having a little braai to celebrate their team for going through to the finals of the UEFA champions league. They are die hard fans of Liverpool and if it had lost the game that played on Wednesday then I was going to have to deal with a grumpy husband. I prepared salads and boiled sweetcorn for them then marinated the meat, they will braai it themselves. I don't have plans of my own so I decided to come to the nearest shopping complex to do some grocery shopping and maybe sit down to have lunch and a drink before heading back home.

I am still inside Woolworths food picking out things that I don't have in my pantry. I don't remember the last time I came to buy so much groceries, I mean before I used to come buy junk and microwave pop ins because I didn't cook. I didn't have the time, I always buried myself in my work and I'll admit that it feels nice having a balanced life.

I am pushing the trolley to my car and the sun is scorching hot, it's the perfect day for lazing around the pool with cold champagne and great company. But we know that my poolside is filled with soccer crazy man who will get drunk and break a couple of my glasses, but that's nothing because I love seeing my husband happy and carefree. The more he is like that the easier it will be to navigate through our issues and get to a better place and maybe have sex again.

I am craving lamb knuckles with a creamy mushroom risotto, I don't know a restaurant that has that on their menu. I mean the two on one plate, they normally serve each with a different thing. I will prepare it tomorrow, it's a perfect Sunday meal. I close my boot at the same time a car takes the parking space next to me in reverse. I open my door and someone calls my name, I turn and my mood is ruined immediately. I never wanted to bump into Langa and remember how I once again betrayed my husband.

"I've been meaning to give you a call," he says and I roll my eyes.

"Please don't, and loose my number," he gives me an arrogant smirk and I'm repulsed. How did I sleep with this guy and worse enjoy it?

"Come here Khosi," he says, as if talking to one of his staff members.

"Fuck you," I click my tongue and attempt to climb in.

"I'm not asking you baby girl, me and you have to discuss something important. I've been meaning to pop by your office but I'm such a busy man," What could we possibly have to discuss? We had sex and I regret it. I told him I don't want to have any relationship with him and he accepted and promised never to tell my husband about our two encounters.

"I don't have the whole day," he says, looking at the Rolex cuffed around his wrist. I heave a sigh and close my door, then get in the back seat of his car. I

don't want to be next to him and give him the opportunity to touch me.

"What do you want Langa?" I ask annoyed and he laughs. Son of a bitch!

"I just want what is mine, that's all."

"Unfortunately I don't have anything that belongs to you sir," I sneer, avoiding his eyes on the rearview mirror.

"But your husband does," what? Mhambi wants nothing that belongs to this man, he should stop dreaming.

"What could Mhambi have that belongs to you?" I ask.

"Fifty percent of the hotel," he says and I laugh out loud. He's out of his mind.

"You're insane, those shares belong to Mhambi. They aren't yours," I say vehemently.

"Oh but they will be and you'll get them for me baby girl," He is dreaming.

I will not help him steal my husband's shares.

"I will never help you steal what belongs to Mhambi the same way your father stole from his dad," I say and he turns to look at me with anger visible on his face. It's like I have just insulted him and I'm merely stating facts.

"You shut up little bitch! You don't know what you're talking about. My father and I lost way more," he is fuming with anger.

What does he mean about him and his father losing more?

"You will not use me to hurt my husband," I say and he smiles like he wasn't angry just a few seconds ago. Is Langa okay in the head.

"Oh but I already have, I fucked you raw twice and if he found out he'd die of a heart attack like his

father," my body goes cold in this heat. This man is a monster.

"You promised not to tell him Langa, please," I say with tears welling up in my eyes.

"And I won't, for as long as you get me those shares," this is not happening, Mhambi and I are trying to fix our marriage and Langa has the power to ruin things.

"Please don't do this to me," I beg and he rolls his eyes.

"I prefer the badass Makhosazana, not this weak ass bitch. Get me those shares and we will forget about us and the little entanglement," he says casually and I am in shambles.

"How do you expect me to get you those shares?" I ask, hating that I even want to know.

"I'll send you documents, all you have to do is make him sign on the dotted lines. I know it won't be easy



so I'll give you a month to see it through," I close my eyes.

I cannot do this to my husband but if I don't then Langa will destroy my marriage and this time Mhambi will leave me and never come back.

"Langa why are you doing this?" I ask with a shaking voice but he doesn't answer me, rather he opens his door to climb out and I don't have a choice but to do the same.

## **TEBATSO MORAKE**

"I'm sorry that life turned out this way for you," my mother says, hugging Asavela's mother tightly.

"Promise to keep in touch, I'll also do the same," I feel for this poor woman. I pray that God heals her pain.

"I will my dear," this is a sad moment. Asavela's mother is going back to Eastern Cape today, her relatives came to pick her up. She took her clothes only because she sold all the furniture. It hasn't been that long since they moved here and now she's going back without her daughter. They moved to Gauteng because of the family she worked for, she is a domestic worker and has been with that family for more than twenty years. She decided to move with them because she's attached and also because she wanted Asavela to come to Johannesburg for better opportunities.

"Safe journey," I say as my mother opens the door of the Hilux for her friend to get in, the engine starts

and we wave goodbye. She is leaving this province without her daughters murderer apprehended. I can't even imagine how she feels about leaving Asavela buried here and not back home, that's what she wanted to happen but the costs were too much.

My mother and I are sitting in the lounge, she's having her cup of tea and I'm drinking wine in a mug. Pheletso left some the night she slept here, I stashed it in my bedroom and after bidding Asavela's mom goodbye I needed something to make me a little dizzy.

"After this cup I want to go check up on Lilly," my mom informs me.

She has been going through it since the lawyer she was hoping to represent Tebogo turned her down because of the charges against him. I'm glad that some lawyers have morals and don't go around representing just anyone. Tebogo is a pedophile and he has to be locked up and kept far away from children.

"Yes do that ma, we don't want her thinking that we are abandoning her in her darkest hour," I say and mama nods in agreement.

Pheletso left and said she will not come back for as long as her mother is still trying to find Tebogo a lawyer. My mom had no choice but to call mama Lilly's sister to come take care of her.

"I can't wait for everything to die down so we can be able to go back to church," she says. The church management decided to close it's doors until they can clean it's name from the mess.

"I don't think I want to go back there," I say and she raises an eyebrow.

"Haibo! How can you not? We have been members of that church ever since it opened it's doors Tebatso and that's twenty five years ago. It's our second home," it's time I addressed some issues with my mom.

"Please don't take this in a bad way ma.

After everything that has happened in my life and around me I have realized how short life is, and the importance of being true to yourself in order to be happy," I start off and she's looking at me with curiosity, wondering where all of this is going.

"What I'm trying to say is, I appreciate you so much. Thank you for raising me and making sure that I had everything I needed, but I am 27 years old and I believe I am capable of making my own life choices. You raised me to be a responsible young woman who dwells in the Lord and it's time that you trust your work and let me come out of your nest," I say and she has tears in her eyes. My mother wasn't expecting this for sure.

"I will choose a church I want to attend, one where my spirit will feel at home. I will choose the clothes I wear and hairstyles I do on my head without you making me feel bad about it. Mama, you will not have a say or choice in the man I am to marry. I am the one who will live with that man so it's only fair that we let my heart and God lead me to him. I beg you to stop trying to make me live a life that is

perfect because I am only human. Jesus Christ doesn't want a perfect human being but he wants a Christian with a good heart and I have that." I say and she blinks, allowing her tears to finally fall.

"And lastly, please allow me to have a relationship with your siblings and their children," my mother cut off her own siblings because they don't live how she expects them to. She judges them for drinking alcohol, having children out of wedlock, performing ancestral rituals and ceremonies. She judges them for everything she doesn't believe in and that makes her a hypocrite because the bible says in Luke 6:37, Do not judge others and you will not be judged.

"Tebatso, I just want what is best for you. All I've ever done was to protect you," she whispers.

"I understand because you're my mother but trust that I can choose best for myself. I don't want to end up like Asavela because I'm trying to live a life that I want in the dark while acting the one you have planned out for me. I don't want to use the Lord's name and teachings to hide my evil ways like

Tebogo, so let me live my life please," it feels so good to cough out my feelings, to tell my mother how I really feel. I thank this wine for the little courage it gave me.

**CHAPTER 31**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**  
**SIX WEEKS LATER**

We are having such an amazing time at my sister Hlengi's baby shower, my other siblings are here, our cousins from both mom and dad's side. Her family in love and lastly her closest friends. This isn't her first child but it must feel like it is because everyone is showering her with all the love, I am happy for her and a little envious too. I will never experience such moments because I removed my womb, I removed the most precious part of a woman and I did that because of stupid reasons. Lord knows how much I regret it but it's too late now.

"Why are you sitting here all alone my baby," my mom asks, bringing me back from my thoughts.

"I am just looking at how happy and loved Hlengiwe is. I love seeing my sisters happy," I say smiling, with tears burning my eyes.



"It brings me ultimate peace when you kids are happy. It fulfils me as a mom," she has been nothing but an amazing mother. From the beginning of it all, I mean the woman left her career as a social worker to take care of my sisters and I. To be able to attend every netball and hockey games, to come to school plays and functions. She traded off her career so she could be available for us 24/7.

"I will never know the joys of carrying my own baby and it hurts so much," I say with a shaking voice and my mom quickly clasps my hand.

"Oh Makhosazana baby, I am so sorry. But you have eggs, you and Mhambi will be able to have a soccer team. You might not be the one to carry them but my love that will not make you any less their mommy," she says, wiping my tears.

"Hush little baby, your time is almost here," she reassures me with a warm motherly smile. She has always been able to make me feel better, to chase away all doubt and pain.

"Do you want mom to get you another glass of champagne?" She asks and I giggle.

"Yes please," I say and she pecks my lips.

"I'll be right back."

I take out my compact mirror and a beauty blender from my bag and fix my face. I can't be getting emotional on my sister's day, I will cry and regret my decisions later.

My phone chimes on the table, I put back my mirror and sponge in the bag and take it. It's a WhatsApp message from an unsaved number, the person sent me a video, a long ass video at that.

It finally finishes downloading and I play it, my whole world comes crumbling down. That son of a bitch recorded our first time together at his house, how could he do this! Damnit Langa. I stop the video before anyone can hear my loud moans and screams then get on my feet, running inside the house with my wobbly knees. I take the stairs because I need to

find a bedroom and lock myself in, so I can talk to this psycho without anyone eavesdropping.

I know the month he gave me to get Mhambi to sign the documents of handing his shares over has passed, but I sent him a text asking for more time. I have planned many times in this past month to make him sign but each time my heart would talk me out of it. My husband doesn't deserve all of this, I have betrayed him so much in my life. The problem is if I don't do this our marriage will be done and he will hate me forever, I can't have that. I call the number that sent me the video.

"I take it you've seen our short movie, we made magic didn't we?" he says, cocky as hell.

"You had no right to film me Langa, I can have you arrested," I cry and he literally laughs out loud. This is not funny. He's toying with my emotions and my marriage.

"And risk Mhambi knowing what you got up to with me?" One night of stupidity and I'm facing hell.

"I asked you for more time Langa please,"

"I am giving you one more week Khosi, the video was to give you a push," He says, calmly. Like he isn't being the devil himself.

"Fine, I'll get it done," he hangs up the phone and I close my eyes, rage bubbling in my stomach. If I had it in me I would kill Langa with my own bare hands.

I can't go out there emotional and all, they will start asking questions I cannot answer. I didn't tell anyone about Langa threatening me, not even Hlobisile and I tell that one everything. The good, the bad and the ugly. I just need to see this through and give that bastard what he wants so he can leave my husband and I alone.

## **MHAMBI MABIZELA**

Today is my mother's birthday and Mzamo and I are on our way to see her. When my father was still alive we always had a big dinner to celebrate her and have over family and friends. Mom was loud, bubbly and loving but our fathers death turned her into a woman I cannot recognize at all. Shortly after his death she suffered a serious stroke that caused permanent disability. She is on a wheelchair because of loss of muscle movement, she also has difficulties with language and speech amongst other things. Over the years she developed depression, it has been hard seeing her this way and I cannot imagine what she's going through. I know my fathers heart is bleeding in heaven, that woman was his everything.

We came with a cake, food and goodies for other patients, the care center knows and allows us to do this each year for her birthday. It's nice seeing others happy on her birthday because she just sits on her wheelchair with no emotions at all. At times I want to shake her roughly until she snaps out of it because I miss my mom, but I know that won't

happen. She might still be alive physically but emotionally my mother died with her husband all those years ago.

"Are you ready?" I ask, looking at Mzamo in the drivers seat and he nods opening his door. My brother is an emotional person, don't let the exterior fool you. I know he wouldn't come to see mama or visit our father's grave if I wasn't here to do it with him. I've tried getting him to talk to me about how it all makes him feel, because he said he's never going to see a shrink but he won't talk to me either. He dismisses it and I can't force him when he's not ready.

We walk in and the nurses help us with the plastics then they go set up for everyone else. The doctor on duty tells us that mama woke up very emotional and has been crying, I wish I could take away her pain. Mzamo and I make our way to her room and find her on the wheelchair, looking outside the window. They have a beautiful garden with flowers and many birds and butterflies, at least she's looking at something breathtaking. There are roses on her desk, who

could have sent those? I have all the gifts from my wife and her parents. I go and check if there's a card and luckily there's one, it reads.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MaNTULI, MAWAMI.

I look at Mzamo who is sitting on the couch with one hand covering his mouth, he is looking at mama intensely and I know he's fighting his emotions right now. I always tell him that it's okay to cry because it's painful and sad to see our once happy mother in this state. I walk out of the room to find a nurse who will explain where the roses came from, the one who is minding the reception desk tells me that the florist delivered them.

Mzamo drops me at my house and drives off, it has been a long emotional day, I will check up on him tomorrow. I walk inside the house and find Khosi waiting for me at the entrance of the lounge, she opens her arms and I gladly go in for a hug. She knows how hard it is for me to see my mom, I never go there and come back the same way I left.

"I love you," she whispers.

"I love you too," I sniff back my tears.

I walk out of the bathroom and quickly moisturize my skin and put on something comfortable to wear and head out to the kitchen. I don't have an appetite but my wife cooked after a long day at work, it's only fair that I eat even if I don't finish everything. She's mixing me a drink and thank heavens because I need it, I pull out the barstool and settle down. She slides the glass across the island and I grab it and take a sip.

"Baby, I need your signature on the domestic workers contract. She's starting tomorrow morning and I want to hand it to her before she knocks off, I just need her signature and her witnesses signature," Khosi says and I nod.

"Let me do that quickly, where are the papers?" I ask and she places the pot lid down and wipes her hands before turning to grab the brown envelope behind her. She rounds the island and hands me a pen, she



takes the contract out of the envelope and shows me where to sign until the last page.

"Thank you babe," she says.

**CHAPTER 32**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

Pheletso's new place is beautiful, it's big and has classy and expensive furniture. She says the boyfriend told her to buy quality things because he won't be coughing out money for things that didn't last, and so she went in hard. I wonder what the guy does for a living, I don't want to ask Pheletso information she isn't offering. I am not that type of person, I wait to be told or given the opportunity to ask questions.

Her apartment in Sunninghill is still there, she couldn't just move out because she signed a one year lease. What she did was to find a tenant to occupy it until her contract expires, that was a smart move because she won't be coughing out money for a place she's not living in. She's even making R1000 extra because the person is using her furniture.

I like that she's smart, Pheletso says she can tell that this thing between her and her guy is not going anywhere. That it's only sexual and will probably last

for a few years then end with them on good terms, because they will understand that it has run its course. She's okay with that because right now the only important thing for her is her career, saving as much money as possible and having the time of her life.

"Tibi, I just got off the phone with my aunt," Pheletso says, walking out of her bedroom.

"Everything okay?" I ask, she nods and throws herself on the couch.

"Tebogo was sentenced earlier today," she says and my pulse leaps. I haven't been following his case, I knew it was still in court but I just didn't want to know how it was going. My mom would try and tell me about it each time she got home from visiting mama Lilly but I wouldn't pay her any attention. I want nothing to do with that pedophile.

"How many years did he get?" I ask and she smiles, pointing to the heavens.

"God made sure that he pays for his crimes. He got thirty five years for raping minors and thirty years for the production, possession and distribution of child pornography. He is going away for life," Pheletso says and relief floods through me, one less monster in the world. I'm sure the families are happy that justice was served, they will be able to start their healing process.

"Such good news on a Thursday evening," I say and she gets up from the couch. She's wearing a bum short with a crop top and they look amazing on her, Pheletso has a beautiful petite body with curves in all the right places.

"Let's go out for dinner and drinks, my treat," she says and I frown.

I just want to sleep, I had a day from hell. These days I'm forever tired and sleepy.

"Let's go out tomorrow night," I say and she rolls her eyes.

"Tomorrow you're going home remember?" Oh yes, her boyfriend sleeps over on weekends and I can't be here coz apparently they have sex everywhere and he loves walking around naked.

I came yesterday after work and tomorrow morning I leave with my things. My mom wasn't happy about me visiting Pheletso on a weekday, but I reminded her of the talk we had a couple of weeks ago. She has been trying to accept that I am grown and I want out of her nest but every now and again she still treats me like a child.

"Get your fat ass off that couch and go throw something cute on so we can bounce," I give her a warning look.

She has been telling me how much I've gained weight and it's crazy because I don't see it.

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We are at some restaurant in Sandton, it's not far from Pheletso's new place. She ordered a bottle of champagne and four tequila shots, I had one and she

downed all three herself. I'm still a weak ass when it comes to alcohol but not as much as before, all thanks to this girl in front of me. Each time I visit her she opens a bottle of champagne, that's what she drinks now all thanks to the new boyfriend's fat wallet.

"To justice," she raises her glass and I pick mine up and click it with hers.

"To justice," she takes a sip and I follow suit.

"I am just worried about your mom, I can't help but wonder how she's taking all of this," I say and she heaves a sigh before gulping down her glass and refilling it.

"Tebatso, don't get me wrong. I love my mom but her defending my brother like he didn't destroy lives doesn't sit well with me, she is his mother and I wouldn't ask her not to love her child. But I expected her to draw the line and allow him to face the music, to know that he was wrong and pay for it. Not stand behind him and blame the devil for his actions, that

was like a spit in the face to those children's parents. It had me thinking, what if it was me who was raped? Would she believe me and stand besides me or would she say my rapist was used by the devil?" She says and I hear and understand where she's coming from. I thought the same thing as her.

"I would understand if she refused to believe that Tebogo did this if there wasn't any proof. I would have found it hard to swallow too because my brother is the bible, we know him to fear the lord and know how he hates everything that isn't Godly. But this case had evidence, there were videos that he made on his laptop, that should have removed all doubt from her like it did the rest of us,"

"That's very true and you know what let's leave this topic. Your mom will realize the mistake she made and come to you humbly to apologize," I say and she laughs.

"Lillian Lebona apologizes to no child Tebatso. I will still be the one to wear my shoes and go to her but right now I refuse to do it. I lived with her toxicity

wrapped up in bible verses for years and I'm taking a break, I need to live my life and find my strengths before going back to try and sit down with her," I'm just happy she's not completely cutting her mom out of her life.

"Excuse me ladies," we both look up and it's some white guy with a nice hair cut, he is so cute.

"Hello, can we help you with something?" Pheletso answers him.

"I don't mean to disturb your dinner, but I had to come and drop my card and ask this beautiful lady to call me because I think she's my wife," oh my God, that's so cheesy.

Pheletso looks at me with an amused smile, "friend buwa le lekgowa lahao," Oh now he's my white guy?

"Does that pick up line work for you?" I ask blushing. This is the first time a guy is coming to hit on me like this. I mean Tebogo and I happened because our mothers subtly pushed for it. Mhambi is a totally



different story, I don't know how to explain how we even fell in love with each other that quickly.

"I've never used it before, but I hope it does," he says and I giggle.

"Are you aware of what you're doing right now? Are you maybe high on something?" I ask and he throws his head back and comes back smiling, his dimples are flexing for me.

"Aware that I'm hitting on a black woman? Yes I am. My name is Nathan by the way. My mom is South African and my father is from Switzerland, I have Swiss roots and you must know how crazy we are with our chocolate," he says and Pheletso is thrown into a fit of laughter. Jesus Christ, I am awestruck by this man's confidence.

"You are funny Nathan," he nods.

"Imagine how happy you'd be as my girlfriend, let's date," Is God testing me right now?

"She would love to, hand me your phone so I can give you her number," bathong!

Pheletso is playing me dirty.

Nathan is cute and funny but I'm not looking to date anyone, I mean I said the most painful Goodbye to my first love and the man I was supposed to get married to is in jail because he's a pedophile.

"You'll definitely be the maid of honor and best man at our wedding, thanks," he says to Pheletso who is happy about this whole thing. She saves my number on his phone and he's smiling like a cheshire cat.

"My love, I'll call you before you sleep tonight," he blows me a kiss and walks away.

"Did that really happen?" I ask and Pheletso nods vigorously.

"Don't tell me that you didn't find his approach charming," she says with a raised eyebrow. Oh of course I did, he made me feel giddy.

**CHAPTER 33**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

I am late for my meeting with my mother in-law, I called her yesterday asking to meet up because I have a few things I want to discuss with her. Things that concern my wife and our marriage, I know how close Makhosazana is with her mom and I'm hoping to get some honest answers from her. She couldn't do any restaurant meeting because she's waiting for a deliver so I said I'll come to her at their house.

I get there and press the intercom at the gate, their helper answers and I tell her that it's me and the gate slides open. My wife has given me the gate code a million times but I always forget it. I should have it saved on my phone once and for all. I leave my car in the drive way behind the Range Rover Mrs Jiyane drives.

I greet the guy who does their garden as I pass him eating under the tree and he politely greets back without making small talk, he's normally chatty but I guess he's a foodie and he wants no disturbances. I

open the door and walk in, I decide to check the kitchen first because mama loves cooking and baking and she spends most of her time doing those two things but not today. I find her in the lounge, flipping through TV channels.

"Good afternoon mama," I say and she quickly looks back at me and gets on her feet.

"Oh hi son," I make my way to her and we share a hug. She's such a warm and loving person.

"Are you okay?" I ask and she nods vigorously, pointing me to the couch.

"I'm okay baby, what about you?"

"I'm really good, I just hope I leave here feeling great," she smiles nervously at me.

"I cooked, would you like me to dish up for you?" I shake my head, I don't have time to eat and talk. I only have an hour then I have to go to the hotel because Langa emailed me this morning, asking that

I come through after lunch time because we have something important to discuss.

"No thank you mamJiyane,"

"Okay then, so what do you need from mom?" She asks, crossing her legs.

I lean in and place both my elbows on my knees.

I clear my throat, "Things between Khosi and I have been going really well, she's the Makhosazana I met all those years. The one I knew I wanted to spend the rest of my life with," I say and she's smiling from ear to ear.

"I am really happy to hear that Mhambi," I pray everyday that you and her go back to how you were before it all. Hearing this makes me so emotional, in a good way," mama says, wiping a tear that just fell from her eye.

"Thank you for the prayers, for the support you and baba have shown us through the difficult times,"  
They never take sides when it comes to

Makhosazana and I, right is right and wrong is wrong. Case closed.

"What brings me here today is to find out if Makhosazana is one hundred percent sure that she wants to start a family with me. That she didn't just say that so I could come back and try again, the last thing I want is to force her into having kids then she ends up resenting them," I say and she seems to understand my reservations.

Yes, I know Khosi said she's ready to me and to the marriage counselor and a part of me believes her, but the other part needs reassurance from her mom. She can pretend for me and in front of the counselor but she'll always tell her mother her true feelings.

"I appreciate you coming to talk to me about this, to hear it from me her mother because no one knows her better than me.

So about two weeks ago at Hlengi's baby shower I found her sitting alone in the corner looking sad. I asked what's wrong and she told me how much she regrets removing her womb, how she will never

know the joys of carrying a life inside of her. Mhambi my daughter now craves for her own cubs, she wants to be a mother." Mama says and my heart aches for my wife, after that baby shower she has been sad and a little withdrawn now I understand why. I wish she just talked to me about it.

"It's a relieve to hear that mama, I didn't want to have this conversation with her before I found out from someone she trusts where her head is at. I want us to go to the fertility clinic and ask about our options of having a baby," I say and she laughs while clapping excitedly.

"Oh Mhambi, she will be so happy. Khosi is ready for this step, she's ready to have it all with you son," she says, opening her arms for me and I get up to go give her a hug.

"Can this conversation stay between us?" I ask and she nods.

"Of course. Oh I am so happy,"

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I make it to Langa's office without seeing Tebatso, I'm glad that I didn't bump into her because that would have set the both of us back. My feelings for her are still there and I'm sure it's the same for her too, we might have said our goodbyes but the heart needs some time. I'm with Khosi and we are about to start having baby conversations and Tebatso is also with that guy and they're engaged to be married.

"Ahh you're here," Langa says as I walk into his office. He has this smug on his face, I pray he doesn't try anything that will sour my mood.

"You said we have something important to discuss," I say, unbuttoning my blazer then pulling out the chair to sit down.

"Please be comfortable, I will order something to drink and ask them not to send the waitress that once spilled coffee all over you," he says and I roll my eyes.



"I don't want anything Langa, can you tell me why you asked me to come here," I say and he chuckles confidently and starts rolling the sleeves of his shirt up.

"Well Mhambi, I wanted to thank you for selling me your shares of the hotel. I'm glad that you finally realized that it belongs to the Nsele's," I frown, what nonsense is he spewing now?

"What the fuck are you talking about?" I ask, leaning back.

"I am talking about you selling me your shares and me paying you so much money for them," he says, taking papers from on top of his table and handing them to me. I look at the document and it shows that I transferred all my shares to him last week, on my mother's birthday even. This is pure bullshit, there's even my lawyers signature on here.

"This document is not legit, try again," I say calmly, but my heart is already thumping with panic.

"Is that not your signature? Didn't your lawyer sign as your witness? What about the money in one of your accounts?" he asks and I admit that this is my signature but I didn't sign this damn document.

"Come on check your accounts Mfethu," he says derisively.

"I'm not your brother," I sneer and he laughs out loud. I am shaking right now but I won't show it to this son of a bitch. I check my personal account and the money in it is what I know, I check two more accounts and it's still the same. He's clowning, he just wanted to get a reaction out of me.

"Check in your business account," he says and fuck I forget about that one. I quickly open the banking app and my heart drops into my stomach, I sweat immediately when I see a huge sum of money that cleared a few days after my mom's birthday.

"See?" I quickly get on my feet, anger bubbling in my stomach. This is not happening, history cannot

repeat itself. Nsele senior did this to my father and now Langa is doing it to me.

"You son of a bitch! What did you do?" I snarl at him and he places a hand on his chest in surprise.

"I did nothing, I just bought shares you were selling." He's playing stupid.

"Langa you know this is all a lie, you forged my signature."

"You can take that to hand writing experts, I promise they will tell you that you signed on the dotted lines," he says, I'm shaking my head because this isn't making sense. After what happened to my father I don't sign documents before going through them, I didn't sign anything on my mom's birthday. Except for the contract Makhosazana asked me to sign... No, my wife could never...No Mhambi that's just wrong.

"You just figured it out didn't you?" He asks, laughing like this whole thing is a joke.

"Your precious wife is the one who helped me take back what is mine. Whatever she said you were signing was just a front, you were signing over your shares to me," She would never do this to me. Langa is lying.

"You have snakes around you bafo, your wife, your lawyer. No one is loyal anymore," I'm shaking my head, clutching at my chest because it suddenly feels like it is closing in on me.

"Take a deep breath Mhambi, in and out. I have something to show you, something to get you off your high horse. You and your father took everything from my dad and I," what? We have never taken anything from them, but we loved them like family and they turned around to bite us.

"I want you to watch something and know that I will come for everything that you have because you took away something big from me," he says, turning red. Langa has issues only he knows about. He turns his laptop and presses play.

My whole world comes crumbling down on me when I see my wife moaning and screaming on top of Langa. How can Khosi do this to me? She has done so many things to hurt me but this one takes the cup. She knows how much I hate this guy, and how this guy hates me. Why would she give herself to him? He used her to hurt me and God knows that it's working because my heart is bleeding in my chest. Makhosazana hurt me to my soul, out of all the guys she chose Langa Nsele, Lord why?

"It didn't happen once, it happened the second time and you were in this very hotel with us. You were talking to your brother during the wine launch and I was busy fuckin your wife senselessly and she was enjoying it," there's tightness in my throat, causing a shortness of breath. My heart rate is pounding and I'm shaking like a leaf. I clutch at my chest, hoping to relieve myself off the pain.

"W-what have I...I ever done to you?" I manage to get the words out of my mouth.

The room is spinning and it feels like I am about to die.

"Your father, you and your little brother took away everything from me and my father, you stole our happiness. I grew up without a mother because she was busy raising and loving you, my father lost the love of his life because she was forced to choose your father," what is he talking about? Where does this nonsense come from.

"You think shares and sleeping with your wife will ever make us even? I am going to keep coming after you until I take something big, something you cannot replace," he says belligerently.

"Langa...P-Please call an ambulance," I'm sweating profusely and the fact that I can still hear Khosi moaning on that video makes my heart rate increase even more.

I use my one hand to push the laptop off the table and seconds after it falls hard on the floor I drop down struggling to breathe.

**CHAPTER 34**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

I am pacing up and down in the waiting room of Siphephelo memorial hospital, praying that my husband makes it. I was called while at work and told that he was rushed to the hospital from his hotel, they said he fell during a meeting with Langa. I know exactly what caused my husband to fall, I am the reason why he is in this hospital fighting for his life. I helped his enemy to steal the last thing their father left for them and I hate myself for it. I honestly don't know how I am going to look at him from now, I've done so much to hurt this man when all he has ever done is love me.

"Makhosazana, what happened?" Mzamo asks, rushing into the waiting room with my parents on his heels. His eyes are bloodshot red, he is scared for his brother.

"I don't know, the hotel called and told me they were rushing him here. I haven't spoken to the doctor, the nurse told me to come wait in here for

the doctor to come and give me an update and that was an hour ago," He rubs his bald head and cusses under his breath.

"If Langa did something to my brother then I'm going to kill him," His rage sends chills down my spine.

I helped Langa do this to my husband. I tried his phone to ask him what happened but he didn't pick up, that's just like him. The damage is done and now he doesn't care about anything, atleast I know he will never tell Mhambi about us. I made him sign a non discloser agreement because I couldn't trust him. He promised to forget about us once then he turned and used it to threaten me into getting him Mhambi's shares.

"Oh my princess," my father envelopes me in his arms and I just cry painfully. I cannot believe my actions have landed my husband in this life threatening situation. I owe Mhambi everything, whatever he wants in this life I will give him without even thinking about it.



"He is an ox of a man, whatever it is trust that he will get through it," mama tries to assure me but it's hard right now.

People die everyday from simple things and right now we don't even know what happened to him.

"Langa Nsele better not have anything to do with this or so help me God," Mzamo says, I can feel the anger in his voice.

"Son, let's wait to hear from Mhambi before we conclude anything." Jiyane tries to calm him down.

Another hour passes and my family and I are sitting in the waiting room in complete silence. Mzamo walked out to get us some water and came back to pace like I was doing before they got here. He must be so scared, Mhambi is literally his only family. They aren't really close to their relatives back in KwaZulu-Natal.

"Mhambi Mabizela?" I look up and there's a doctor in blue scrubs standing at the door with a file in her hand. I quickly get on my feet and hurry towards her.

"I'm his wife, how is he? What happened?" I ask. My father rubs my back in circles, trying to calm me down.

"Well ma'am your husband suffered from a short term heart condition called Takotsubo cardiomyopathy, which is also known as the broken heart syndrome. It can be triggered by an intense emotional or physical stress. We are trying..." The doctor continues to explain to everyone and I'm a crying mess in my father's arms.

Mhambi's heart is literally broken because of what Langa and I did, I mean his father suffered the same fate in Nsele seniors hands now its him. I'm going to hell for this one and it will be a miracle if satan accepts me, I'm pretty sure I'm more evil than him at this point.

"I will send a nurse to come get you when we are done with him," the doctor says and walks away.

"Broken heart syndrome? That son of a bitch did something to my brother, I know he did." -Mzamo.

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We are finally being let up to see my husband, I am nervous out of my mind because I'm about to see the damage I caused. All of this is my fault and I have to live with that for the rest of my life. Both my parents are holding my hands as I'm sandwiched between them, I'm grateful for the support because I'm weak at the knees. The elevator doors open and we step into the hallway of the cardio wing. There are beeping sounds from machines and the smell of death is lingering around here, I hate hospitals.

I gasp in shock when we enter his room and he is connected to machines and IV drips, he looks so weak and drained. My tears fall and I quickly walk further in, I try to hold his hand but he manages to push me away as weak as he is. I stumble back and step on my father who holds me so I don't fall.

"Mr Mabizela, please calm down sir," the nurse says but Mhambi looks livid.

"Bro listen to the nurse and calm the hell down, look at how fast your heart is beating and it's literally broken right now," Mzamo steps in and my husband tries to calm down as his sinus rhythm shows on the monitor.

"There you go, just like that Mr Mabizela," the nurse says. My parents are looking at me, probably wondering why my presence angered my husband like that. What if Langa told him what I did? My part in helping him steal his shares, but he signed a NDA.

"Mzamo," he calls for his brother who is next to him.

"Mfowethu,"

"Please get that treacherous bitch out of here," he says and I gasp in shock.

He knows, my husband knows that I made him sign transfer papers. Oh my God!

"Haibo! Mhambi watch your language," my father stands up for me.

"I'm sorry Bab'Jiyane but you don't get to defend her. Your daughter is the reason I am here, Makhosazana is a snake. She slept with my biggest enemy and helped him to steal my hotel shares," My father pushes me away from him and I am ashamed to even look at him.

"Langa?" Mzamo shouts.

"You bitch! You've been crying like you care kante you know very well that you're behind all of this?" He says, charging towards me angrily and I go hide behind my father.

"Hey! Will you all get out of my patients room. This man doesn't need his blood pressure going up," the nurse shouts and everyone goes silent.

**CHAPTER 35**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

I am on my lunch break and before I could even open my food and eat, a colleague of mine walks in the basement staff kitchen and tells me that someone is looking for me in the restaurant. I am cracking my skull wondering who it could be, I mean I don't know a lot of people and those that I do know won't come looking for me at my work place. The elevator doors ping open on the ground floor and we both walk out, headed to the restaurant. She doesn't lead me inside but rather to the tables in the garden.

"That's the dude," she points to where the person is and I heave a sigh.

What the hell is he doing here? I make my way to him with a frown on my face and when he sees me he smiles widely.

"Nathan what are you doing here?" I ask, folding my arms across my chest.

"If the mountain will not come to Muhammad, then Muhammad must go to the mountain," he says and I press my lips into a thin line so the corners don't curl up to form a smile.

"I'm working here," I say and he looks at his wrist watch, shaking his head.

"Nope, you told me your lunch hour and I'm here to buy you lunch," oh my God, he doesn't give up. Nathan has been trying to get me to meet up with him and I've given him every excuse I know. He clearly doesn't back down easily hence he came here, I shouldn't have told him where I work.

"Please sit," he pulls out a chair for me and I sit down. He is here now so I might as well give him this date he has been hounding me for. He politely calls a waiter and we place our order, my colleagues are giving me side eyes, probably wondering what I'm doing with a white guy.

"Why are you running away from me T?" He asks, with a raised eyebrow.

"I'm not running away, I am just busy you know," he chuckles and reaches for my hand. He's brushing my knuckles with his eyes looking straight into mine. What's happening in South African?

"I know this is probably the first time a white guy is asking you out and you're wondering if I have motives and I understand that. But T I just want to hang out and get to know you, nothing hectic," he says, shrugging his shoulders as he says the last part.

"Just give yourself the chance to get to know me, I promise you'll like me," oh wow, I smile and he chuckles.

"See, you're already falling for me," oh he should get over himself.

I've never met anyone who makes me feel so light. With Tebogo I was feeling suffocated. Mhambi it was all these intense feelings that made my head spin, feelings that I want to feel once again but I guess



right now I need something light, casual and easy going.

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I'm walking home, talking to Pheletso on the phone. I decided to get off the staff taxi at the stop sign in the main road so I can have time to tell her about my unexpected lunch date with Nathan. She is excited about this, the drama Queen says she likes the white boy because he takes charge and goes after what he wants.

"Babe, the power is in your hands now. You have to do it for black people," haibo! What are we talking about now? Do what for black people?

"Which tune are you playing now?" I ask and I know she's rolling her eyes at me for asking this question. Pheletso tends to forget that I'm three years older than her and I spent all my life closed in, so she has to understand when I don't grasp things quickly.

"The power to get the land back Tibi man," she answers annoyed and I'm thrown into a fit of laughter. This bloody fool, I cannot believe she just said that to me.

"You're a clown," she giggles.

"Oh shit, Tibi let me call you back later. My babe is calling me," she says and the lines goes dead immediately. What a friend I have, she's ditching me for a man. I can't blame her though because a man is paying all of her bills and making sure she lives softly.

I put my phone in my backpack and continue walking, there are two elder women standing at the corner. They are watching me intensely as I walk towards them, I have gotten used to this. People give me funny looks and say nasty things about me because I was Tebogo's girlfriend. Pheletso told me to block all negative, even though it's a hard thing to do. I greet them both and they answer through gritted teeth but I don't take offence, they can continue gossiping about me I don't care. I knew

nothing about Tebogo raping those little kids and I refuse to be held hostage for it.

I walk in and find my mom in the lounge, looking straight ahead like her mind is just miles away. She didn't even hear me walk in just now, I stand in front of her waving and she doesn't even blink. What could possibly be wrong? I shake her gently and only then does she snap out of it. Bathong! Robbers could have gotten in and taken everything while she was just sitting there.

"Is everything okay mama?" I ask and she scoffs.

"You tell me Tebatso," is mama giving me attitude right now? What did I do? We were okay when I left for work this morning.

"I don't understand," I really don't.

She heaves a sigh, "I thought I was just being silly because I know you're better than that. I mean I raised you so you should be better than that Tebatso. But imagine my shock when I get home

from the mall and unpack your toiletries only to find that you still have a sealed packet," she says and I narrow my eyes. What is she talking about? can she be clear.

"Mama what is going on?" Her facial expression is worrying me, it's like I did something to kill her soul.

"Strip naked Tebatso," she says and I'm taken aback by her command.

"Mama wha-..."

"Tsola Tebatso man!" She roars and my eyes widen in shock. I start taking off my clothes until I am left in my birthday suit.

"Tjo tjo tjo! You have killed me," she places both hands on top of her head and starts to cry. I won't lie and say I understand, I'm trying to look at myself but I don't see anything out of the ordinary.

"What did I do?" I ask, with fear laced in my voice this time. My mom wouldn't cry over nothing.

"Did you give Tebogo your virginity Tebatso Mary Morake?" She asks and my whole body gets goosebumps. I am blinking rapidly, fear numbing my whole body. How did she see that I am not a virgin anymore?

"Ma-Mama no! I have never given myself to Tebogo!" I stutter but that's the honest truth. I only ever tried seducing him and he didn't take the bait and now I'm grateful that he rejected me.

"Don't lie to me girly," she gets up from the couch and picks up the whip at her feet, I didn't see that before. Mama can't possibly hit me with that thing over this.

"Mama please, I'm telling you the truth," I say with a shaking voice.

"If that's the truth then tell me who got you pregnant," I gasp in shock.

Oh God this cannot be happening to me, I only had sex with Mhambi once, I can't be pregnant.

**CHAPTER 36**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

"Makhosazana, open this bloody door or I'll break it down," my father is banging on my front door. Him and my mom have been coming here everyday for five days and I refuse to open for them. I can't open and have them look at me with disappointed eyes, I don't need anyone else telling me how evil I am. I already know that and I will definitely chasten myself for my sins.

I have also been locked up in my house because I'm afraid to bump into Mzamo who promised to deal with me mercilessly for what I did to his brother. I know he wasn't making an idle threat, he will definitely come for me and Langa. My brother in law is a hot head and until he feels like he has avenged his brother he won't stop for nothing.

I call the hospital every morning even though I know they won't tell me anything about Mhambi, the nurses say he ordered them not to. The day we walked into his room and he pushed me away from

him before telling everyone what I did, he asked the nurse to call security to throw me out. I tried to beg him but he didn't want to hear anything that came out of my mouth. My mother told me to leave the room and wait for them in the parking lot but I just couldn't. I got into my car as emotional as I was and drove myself here, along the way I was praying to God for a fatal car accident to happen. I want to die so badly but I'm too much of a coward to do it myself.

A loud bang startles me from the couch, causing me to drop my bottle of champagne. Yes, I've been drinking myself stupid everyday. I just don't want to feel anything, alcohol helps me with that. My parents walk in first with all my siblings behind them, baba really broke down my door. I just want to be alone, why don't they get that?

"Oh Makhosazana," my mom cries and I roll my eyes. I don't need her sympathy, I did this to myself. I deserve to suffer this way.

"So you think locking yourself in this house and drinking alcohol will make things right?" My father asks, looking at me with disgust. It stings to have this man look at me like the dirtiest thing his eyes have ever seen.

"Nothing will make things right baba, Mhambi will never forgive me for sleeping with Langa and helping him steal from him," I say, slurring my words and that seems to anger my father. He unbuckles his belt and I pray that he hits me hard, I want to feel something other than emotional pain.

"Jiyane, sthandwa sami qha. We don't use violence to fix things, hitting her is not a solution please," my mom says, jumping in front of him. My sister's are standing on the side, watching me with pitiful eyes, Zandile is even crying. I am such a bad example for my youngest sister.

"We didn't raise this girl to be like this Thoko. We have never stepped out of our marriage, no matter how tough things got we remained faithful. How could she break that boy like this? Sleeping with his



biggest enemy, as if that wasn't enough she helps Langa do what his father did to Mabizela senior," this is the first time I'm seeing my father cry and it breaks the little that I have left in me. He has always been so proud and forever cheering for me but today he's crying because I disappointed and hurt him so much.

"Mhambi has forgiven Khosi for so much and she still betrayed him. You told me before she called that day to say he was admitted that he had just left our house because he wanted to tell you that he was ready to start looking at their options to have children. He saw everything in her and my daughter just saw a fool," my father says and I look at my mom, who is nodding and brushing my father's arm to calm him down.

I sit back down and bury my head in my hands, I'm crying silently as I let what my father just said sink in. Who will I blame for my problems? Who will I blame for my stupidity? The most loving, caring and thoughtful man was ready to have a child with me and I was busy helping his enemy to take what

belonged to him. I am such a fool, I will never again find a man who will love and be patient with me the way Mhambi was. I have lost the biggest blessing God bestowed upon me.

"There's no use crying Makhosazana, you made your bed and now it's time to lie in it," baba says and I cry in agony as he storms out of the room.

"Hush my baby," my mom says, settling next to me and brushing my back in circles.

"My life is over mommy, Mhambi will not forgive me for this one. I just want to die," I cry on my mother's lap.

"Everything is going to be alright my baby, I know it doesn't seem that way right now but I promise it will," that's what a mother is supposed to say but things will never be alright, not without my husband.

"Khosi, mom is right. Troubles don't last dade," Hlobisile says and I sit up straight to face my sister's behind the couch.

"Don't end up like me, never put anything before your marriages and your husbands. Love, respect and stay faithful to your kings. Zandile, It's nice to be independent but don't be lonely chasing it nana, there's more to life than success and money." I say.

"Makhosazana, sis wami. You can't stop in this storm, keep moving and you'll surely find the sun." Hlengiwe says and I offer her a weak smile. I don't have the strength to keep moving, my life crumbled down in front of my eyes and there is nothing I can do to save it.

"Zandile, please go run your sister a bath and come back to help me prepare something for her to eat. Hlobisile tidy around here and open the windows. Preggy make her a strong cup of coffee so she can sober up," mama orders and my sisters scurry off to do as instructed. I appreciate that they are here and they aren't judging me but I honestly want to be alone.

## **MHAMBI MABIZELA**

"Sir, are you sure this is what you want to do?" The divorce lawyer asks and I nod my head vigorously. Why would I stay with her after this?

"Seriously Mhambi, you're giving that bitch all of it, after everything she has done to you?" Mzamo adds. I'm only giving her everything we acquired together as a married couple.

"I don't want anything to do with Makhosazana, and that means I don't want anything that will remind me of her. I will start afresh for as long as I have my company I'll be okay," I say but my brother is clearly not understanding.

"If you don't have the strength to fuck over the people that betrayed you then let me step up for you. You're becoming father Christmas and I'm not having that, we are not weaklings Mhambi. You told me to leave Langa and that snake you called a lawyer, now you're giving that cheating whore everything?" He's screaming at me right now.

"In life you have to choose your battles wisely, they are all not worth my life and my peace. I almost died Mzamo, I don't want to trigger my emotions and suffer another episode because next time I might not be so lucky," I say, his shoulders sag and I know he understands me and where I'm coming from. I look at the lady lawyer.

"Ma'am please draft the papers and serve her, move as quickly as possible," I say and she gathers the documents she asked from me and puts them in her leather briefcase then gets on her feet.

"I'll keep in touch," she says and Mzamo sees her out.

I should have never went back to Makhosazana, I gave her another chance to fuck me over. Had I stuck to my decision to move on from my marriage the first time then this wouldn't have happened, but then again I wouldn't have come to know the information I know now. Information that completes the puzzle, now I know why Nsele senior did what he

did to my father and why Langa is always after everything that belongs to me. I just need to confirm everything from the people who were around my parents back then.

"You should go to bed now, the doctor said you need to rest as much as possible," he says and I roll my eyes. I don't need him treating me like an invalid, I was in bed for six days and I'm glad to be out of that hospital.

"Come on Mzamo, I'll go in a couple of minutes," He smacks his lips and takes my medication from on top of the table and reads the stickers to see how he has to administer them. He will be my personal nurse till I'm good to go.

"Did you manage to get a hold of aunt'Dumisile?" I ask and he places the meds down and looks at me. I haven't told him what Langa said to me in his office while I was on the brink of death

"Yeah I did and she said she will be here on Saturday," thank goodness. I need her to valid Langa's claims or dismiss them.

"Mhambi what's up? Why would you call mama's sister here? I mean we have never needed them for anything, we aren't beefing yes but we normally do things together. What aren't you telling me?" He asks and I take a deep breath.

"Promise you won't explode coz if you do you'll startle me and my heart will just..."

He quickly interjects, "I promise I won't,"

"There's a possibility that Langa Nsele is our half brother, our mothers first son," I say slowly, careful with my delivery. He leans in with a snapped eyebrow before he chortles.

"That's funny. Can we be serious now?" I close my eyes because I wish it was a joke too.

"Mzamo I am serious. Langa told me to my face as I was struggling to breathe, after he showed me how he stole the hotel from me and fucked my wife," he huffs and gets on his feet.

"Are you serious?" He is bewildered to say the least. I couldn't even be shocked because I was close to death when I found out.

"I think his dad took away everything from baba as pay back for taking his woman and now Langa is continuing where his father left off. He wants us to pay for having the life he never had, a life with a mother in it," He whistles, completely and utterly stunned by this information.

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Physically I am much better, I even took a walk around the estate. I am confident that the cardiologist will be happy with my progress when I go see her on Tuesday.

I wish I could say the same about my emotional state, I am a mess and I don't know if I will ever be



okay. Khosi didn't just betray me, she betrayed the memory of my father. That was the last thing we had that he worked so hard for, the last of his blood sweat and tears. I don't even want to touch on the matter of her cheating on me because that killed me completely. Out of all the man in the world she decided to go for one who she knows hates my guts, and would do anything to hurt me. How could she allow herself to be used like that?

Makhosazana slept with Langa before we got back together and it makes me so angry because she still started this second chance with a lie. The same way we started a marriage, everything with her has never been genuine. She has wasted so much of my life and what hurts the most is the fact that she disrupted something that could have been beautiful only to break me down once again. Tebatso and I would have been far by now, happy and and more in love. I regret ever choosing Khosi over her, I regret choosing to be the good guy over being happy and at peace.

I shot my self in the foot and now she's gone, getting married to another man.

The door opens and Mzamo walks in carrying a medium brown bag, our aunt follows behind him. He went to get her from the taxi rank, we offered to fly her but she said she prefers a taxi. She's old school like that but hopefully we will be able to convince her to take the convenient mode of transport when she goes back to KZN.

"Oh Mhambi, you have grown so much boy," she says, pulling me into a hug.

I think we last saw her when we went to her youngest daughters wedding, we aren't close with them but we try to attend their events when they have them.

"Aunt'Dumisile, how are you? How did you travel?" I ask and she let's go of me then looks at me from head to toe.

Okay!

"You boys are so skinny man, I understand Mzamo is single but wena you have a wife. Doesn't that Jiyane

girl cook for you?" She asks and I just titter. I don't want to tell her that I'm divorcing, the whole KZN would know even before Makhosazana.

"I have to cook for my sister's boys, where is the maize meal. I hope you have meat I can cook in the fridge," oh Jesu!

"And you'll cook aunty, we just need to talk to you first," Mzamo says, pulling her away from the fridge and leading her to the lounge. I place the glass of water I had in my hand down in the sink and follow behind them.

"Is everything okay?" She asks, settling on the single couch. I hope she has answers to our questions.

"No aunty, do you know if our mom had anything to do with Zitha Nsele?" Mzamo jumps into it without preparing the poor woman. He should have let me deal with this.

Aunt'Dumisile clears her throat, "W-what do you mean?" Her voice breaks, failing the composure she was trying to keep.

She has already confirmed everything without saying a word.

"Your reaction says yes so I will ask this, is Langa Nsele our mothers first son?" I ask this time and she nods, looking away in shame.

"She didn't have a choice, she had to give him to Zitha's family. Our father was a pastor and indona in our area, everyone respected and looked up to him. Your mother, Zamafuze was betrothed to his closest friends son, Bheki Mabizela. Your parents grew up together, they were close friends so when they were told that they were going to get married one day it didn't scare them but rather made them very happy," she's smiling at the memory.

"I don't think I know two people who were in love like those two, it was beautiful to watch. Every girl in the village was envious of Zamafuze and wished to find a suitor like Bheki. Your parents and Zitha

became an inseparable trio because the couple was always together and Zitha was your father's best friend. When your father was sent to Johannesburg for school my sister was miserable, but at least Zitha was around to keep her company. It wasn't frowned upon because they were friends even when Bheki was around," her facial expression changes and I know she's about to get to the deep part of things.

"A mistake happened and my sister was sent to our grandmothers village to carry her pregnancy there and give birth. She came back alone and was told never to have anything to do with Zitha. An agreement was made between the Ngcobo's and the Nsele's for this to be a secret they will take to the grave. Langa was brought to the Nsele home as Zithas father's love child. It was that easy because everyone respected and somewhat feared my father." Yoh!

That psycho is really my brother.

"A year later my sister got married and fell pregnant with you Mhambi. She moved to the Mabizela homestead as her husband was finishing his studies

in Johannesburg. Zitha disappeared for a couple of years and then came back to take Langa. The next time we would hear of him was when my sister came home saying he is in Johannesburg, doing business with Bheki. He was trying to convince her to leave your father for him, Zitha was in love with Zamafuze and he thought she was only with Bheki because our father forced her. But your mom made a mistake with him, her heart has always belonged to Bheki Mabizela." I have a headache now.

"I need a fuckin' drink," Mzamo says, getting up from the couch. If I wasn't on medication I would drink straight from the decanter.

**CHAPTER 37**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

"I will be back in a couple of hours, I'm going to church," Manana says, standing at the entrance of my bedroom. I don't say anything to her, I haven't been able to look at this woman and see my mom.

She closes the door and I reach for the painkillers and water on the pedestal. My whole body is still aching from the beating my mother gave me after she told me that I am pregnant, it's not as bad as it was the first few days though. That woman hit me with that whip without showing me any mercy, and worse part she kept telling me not to cry because I'm making her more angry. Can you imagine keeping quiet as a whip eats through your flesh?

After beating me brutally she told me that I will not be going to work anymore because that's where I met the man that got me pregnant, she just assumed because I refused telling her about Mhambi. Manana made me send Muna a message telling her I won't be coming back and after she

confiscated my phone. I have never seen my mother that angry, I couldn't recognize the person that was inflicting that much pain on me. I wondered if she had God in her as she hurt me that way.

She told me to my face that I will not be keeping this child, for a second I thought she meant that I am to have an abortion. But what she meant was after giving birth I'm giving the baby up for adoption, she said she will not be laughed at for having a daughter who is pregnant out of wedlock while she's dealing with people gossiping behind her back about the Tebogo saga.

I know my life has no room for a baby right now but I don't want to give my child away.

It will be hard but I'll find a way to get through, my mother cannot force me to give this life up. She has ordered me around and it's enough now, I am taking charge of my life and breaking free from her chains. I get out of bed and it stings to be on my feet taking steps but I cannot stay here and be held hostage any longer.



The house is quiet, she's gone. I make my way to her bedroom to search for my phone, I need to talk to Pheletso. I find it in the drawer of her pedestal, she didn't even try to hide it. It has been days since she took it, the battery surely died, I hurry to the lounge to charge it. I am in pain but I need to move quickly, I want her to find me gone when she gets back from church.

"Oh thank God Tebatso," she answers and I break down immediately. Knowing that she has been worried just set me off, someone cares for me.

"Babe, what's wrong?" She asks and I take a deep breath. I can't loose it now or my mom will find me here and I won't be able to get an opportunity like this one again.

"Pheletso you have to help me, my mother is locking me inside the house. She made me quit my job and it's just...please help me," I say in a hurry.

"Where is she right now?" She asks, panicking on the other end of this call.

"She left a few minutes ago, she went to church," this is the first Sunday back since they closed because of the whole rape situation.

"Good, grab everything that's important and request a cab to my place. You'll find me waiting, hurry Tebatso," she says.

"Okay, I'll see you soon," I hang up my phone and get up from the couch, practically running to my bedroom. I take my suitcase and throw in a few clothes and shoes, I change out of these pyjamas and into a comfortable tracksuit and sneakers.

I open the drawer that has a file containing all important documents and throw them in the suitcase, whatever I didn't take can be replaced. I go back to the lounge with the suitcase and my handbag, I request a cab on the app, thank God it's only five minutes away. I search for the key in the mean time but I cannot find it anywhere and the taxi will be here any minute now. What am I going to do? The kitchen window, yes! It doesn't have bugler

bars. I grab my suitcase and handbag and throw them out the window before following suit, luckily the neighbors aren't outside but even if they were I wouldn't care. The taxi stops at the gate as I appear from the corner of the house, I rush to it crossing fingers that my mother is not anywhere near home. The street is clear, relief floods through me. I put my bag in the boot and take the back seat, I cry out in agony as soon as the driver starts the engine and drives away.

The security guards at the gate opened up for me without asking questions, Pheletso must have called them and told them that she's expecting me. I am wheeling my suitcase towards her apartment, tears streaming down my face. I cannot believe that I managed to make it out, who would have even thought that one day I'd have to flee from my own mother. I press the doorbell and a few seconds later the door opens and Pheletso is in front of me, her facial expression is warm and welcoming. I get so emotional that my lower lip quivers out of control.

"Oh friend," she pulls me in for a hug and I yelp, she lets go of me immediately.

"I'm sorry, did I hurt you?" She asks, with widened eyes and I shake my head.

"She hit me with a whip, Pheletso. My mother brutally lashed me like I was some slave," I say and she places one hand over her mouth, not believing her ears. She then gently takes my hand and leads me inside,  
I leave my bags behind the door.

"I came to your house a couple of days ago because your phone took me straight to voicemail, your mom said you got mugged and they took your phone. I asked to wait for you to get home from work but she told me you'll be at a church function. She was acting so weird, I should have seen then that something was wrong. I am sorry Tibi," she says with tears welling up in her eyes.

"I have never seen her that angry, I couldn't even recognize her," she holds out her hand and I take it.

"What happened? What made her loose it?" She asks and I look down embarrassed. I never told her about Mhambi because I was still seeing her brother, how will she take me now? Pheletso is the only person I have now, if she hates me then I'm out in the cold all alone.

"Tibi, you know you can talk to me," she gently coaxes me.

"I am...uhm I am pregnant Pheletso," I say and she gasps in shock. That's expected because she thought I was still a virgin.

"Tebogo?" She asks and I shake my head no.

"Oh thank God," I look up at her and I can see she wants to ask who is responsible for this pregnancy. I let go of her hand and go sit down on the couch, she comes and settles down next to me.

"His name is Mhambi, I fell in love with him and found out later that he's married. I stopped all

communication with him but one evening Tebogo and I bumped into him with his wife at the painting session. The next day he came looking for me to find answers and to give me answers then after that we had sex in his car. It was only one time and now I'm pregnant. What am I going to do Pheletso?" I ask.

"We don't have to figure that out today babe. I'm going to run you a bath with salts and oils so it can sooth your body, then rush out to the stores to get you ointments for your skin and painkillers safe for the baby. I'll come with some breakfast too," she says, lovingly.

"Thank you so much, I promise to be out of here soon," I say and she shakes her head.

"No, you are staying with me until we figure things out. I will find a way to get Babe on board," Thank God for this girl.

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I have been staying with Pheletso for a few days now and she's very supportive and positive. I am truly grateful for a friend like her, not once did I feel like she's judging me. She hasn't even tried to find out more about Mhambi and our relationship, the only thing she asked me was if I am keeping the baby and I told her I am.

My phone has been off since I got here, I don't want my mother calling me or sending me messages. No, in fact I don't want anything to do with that woman for as long as I live.

Today I went to the hotel to ask Muna for my job back but she told me that they have already found a replacement for me. She promised to call me first when they have an opening and I appreciate that but for now I need to start sending my CV's to restaurants because I need a job. I can't be living off Pheletso, yes she told me not to worry but I don't want to take advantage of her kindness. I also need to save money for when the baby is born, I'm going to be a single mother and I know it won't be a walk in the park.

The door opens and Pheletso walks in and immediately steps out of her high heels, she must have had a long day at work. She leaves her handbag and car keys on the table a few feet from the door then comes to the lounge. She does this everyday, strip naked in the lounge and throw herself on the couch.

"Hey friend," she finally greets me.

"Hectic day?" She groans in frustration.

"Hectic as fuck! The office was chaotic and after work I had to drive to babe because he wanted some action. The guy wore me out," explains why she's home late today.

"I told him that you'll be staying with me for sometime and he said it's okay because he's helping his brother deal with something's at the moment and he won't be around much," oh that's a huge relief.

I wasn't going to be comfortable if he wasn't on board with me being here.



"Thank you again Pheletso,"

"I got you Tibz, now what do you want to eat for dinner?" She asks.

"I cooked," she gets up from the couch with a huge grin plastered across her face.

"You are such a darling," she's already making her way to the kitchen. She disappears for a couple of seconds and comes back with a drumstick.

"How did it go at the hotel," I shake my head.

"Askies babe,"

"It's okay I'll keep trying,"  
I'm going through a lot right now but I have a life growing inside of me and that has to be motivation for me not to give up.

"You need to start antenatal Tibz," I was thinking about that this afternoon. I haven't even confirmed

that I'm pregnant for sure, I'm running with my mother's spiritual eye test.

"Yeah, I need to find the nearest Public hospital." I say and she raises an eyebrow.

"Public hospital? I don't trust those places babe. Let's find private antenatal centers around here,"

"Pheletso, I am unemployed. I can't afford private services right now," I say and she rolls her eyes at me.

"I said I'm willing to help you till you find your feet Tibi, can you please allow me to do that?" She says and I blow out some air. I just don't want to be a burden.

"I owe you so much Pheletso, thank you from the bottom of my heart." She kisses my cheek and goes to get her phone from her handbag so we can Google places.

**CHAPTER 38**  
**MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE-MABIZELA**

I burst into Langa's office and he's sitting like the King of the universe behind his big brown mahogany desk. He moves his eyes from the laptop and soon as they land on me he smiles arrogantly, son of a bitch. This is the first time I'm confronting him, I didn't have the strength to do it before but my husband served me with divorce papers yesterday. This is all Langa's fault, if he didn't mention my part in getting the shares and our affair then Mhambi and I would still be together.

"I was wondering when you were going to show up," he says, leaning back on his chair.

"You are the devil Langa Nsele, I hate you with all my heart," I say, tears streaming down my face. I want him to see the damage he has caused.

"I told you I don't like seeing this weak ass Makhosazana, it's not attractive please," I grab the

stapler on his desk and throw it at him, he ducks it and quickly gets on his feet angrily.

"You little bitch, what are you trying to do!" He sneers but he doesn't scare me, if he wants to fight then I'll hold my own.

"You messed up my life Langa, my husband almost died and you caused me my marriage. Mhambi is divorcing me, and it's all your fault. You weren't supposed to say anything, you signed a non disclosure agreement," he chuckles.

"Your husband didn't die, I called the ambulance because dying would have been easy. I am not done with him yet, this game is far from over," What did Mhambi ever do to this one for him to hate him this much?

"And I'm glad to hear about the divorce, I live to hear such good news. Maybe now you can be my full time side piece," What did I think I'd get from coming here? Langa doesn't have a heart, he is out to destroy Mhambi and I was a means to an end.

"You will never destroy Mhambi, he might bend but he will not break. Langa you will live your life trying to bring him down but like a Phoenix he rises from the ashes," he starts clapping.

"What a beautiful speech, I'm sure his ego would have been puffed up from hearing such heart warming words," I wipe my tears with the back of my hand.

"Every dog has it's day, remember that," He laughs in my face but I don't care. Karma will deal with this bastard and he will be forced to kneel down in front of Mhambi and ask for forgiveness.

"You look horrible Makhosazana, go home and take a long hot shower. Go do your hair, shape your brows and look like a lady. And oh, please lay off the bottle a little. You smell like a damn brewery," he says and I am embarrassed out of my mind.

I haven't been doing okay obviously, I lock myself in the house and look at my wedding pictures with a

bottle of champagne in my hand. My mother comes around to help me clean and bring me food, she asked me to move home until I find myself again but I just can't. My father isn't happy with me and I can't be in the same space as him and see how disappointed he is everyday.

"You're plotting one more time I see," I turn and it's Mzamo at the door with an older woman behind him.

"It's not what you think it is, I came to...uhm I just..." I stutter.

What is he doing here? Oh he's going to tell Mhambi that he saw me here and my husband will hate me even more.

"I can explain wh..."

"Just shut the fuck up Khosi," Mzamo cuts me off.

"Khosi? Mhambi's wife? I was wondering where I knew that face from," I recognize her from somewhere too.

"Yes aunt'Dumisile, this is Mhambi's cheating soon to be ex wife," Mzamo answers and I wish the ground could open and swallow me.

"Haibo! Did you just say cheating?" Their mothers sister asks, I remember her from my wedding.

"Yep, she slept with big head over there," he points to Langa who is now quiet as a mouse.

"Maibabo! Langa, you slept with your brothers wife?" The lady says and I narrow my eyes, confused as hell. Langa is not my husband's brother, they used to be best friends growing up but that's it.

"Yes Khosi, the douche happens to be my mother's first son. He used you to hurt my brother because for some reason he blames us for everything. He has mommy issues," Mzamo says provocatively.

"Get the fuck out of my office," Langa roars, he is turning red. This whole revelation just made me feel

dizzy, I didn't just sleep with anyone. I slept with Mhambi's elder brother.

"With pleasure! aunt'Dumisile you'll find me in the car when you're done having a conversation with this uhm... whatever," he says and walks out.

"Wena majiyane I have to come back to Johannesburg to have a talk with your parents. What kind of girl did they raise?" This is what I didn't want to happen, my parents cannot be blamed for my stupidity.

I also told my mom not to tell my father that she knew about my affair because that would cause fights between them, I don't want to be the reason why they don't get along. I will carry my cross alone.



## **MHAMBI MABIZELA**

"Her lawyer says she will sign under one condition," my divorce attorney says.

Khosi has the nerve, after everything she has ever done to me she still wants to call the shots.

"I'm not giving her anything more, she doesn't deserve more," I say angrily and she nods in agreement.

"She wants to have a sit down with you and then she will sign the papers. I advise that you hear what she wants to say before she contests this divorce just to get your attention," she says and I exhale sharply. That woman doesn't have God, if she truly loved me she would let me go without playing all these games. She has hurt me enough, I deserve to be free from her.

"Fuck! Okay. Set it up at your office," I say and she nods.

"I'll call you with the date and time, I'll ensure that it happens sooner rather than later," I love how prompt she is. I'd replace the fool that accepted money from Langa to betray me with her but she's only a divorce attorney.

"Thank you," She takes her things and leaves the house.

I get up from the couch and make my way to the kitchen to get a bottle of water, it's time for my meds. I cannot wait to be done with this course and for the three weeks to pass so I can go back to the office. The doctor said I'll fully recover after a month and I've been on treatment for a week now so it's three more to go.

I miss running my ship and making decisions but I was told not to even try working, so all I do all day is watch movies and read novels. I got Mzamo to go and get me a few copies of the books Tebatso shared with me before things ended between us, I will admit that I see her personality in the main characters of some of these books. It makes sense

why she loves them, she can somewhat relate to their journeys.

My mind races back to Khosi wanting to meet with me, I wonder what she wants from me. I just want this divorce to be finalized so I can move forward with my life. Let's just hope she isn't sent by Langa, my brother told me she was at Langa's office when he took our aunt there a couple of days ago.

Aunt'Dumisile wanted to have a word with him, I didn't ask what she wanted to say because I really don't care. I want nothing to do with that guy, he decided to make us his enemies for something we knew nothing about. My father didn't even know about this, it's really not fair that it was him and me who had to take Nsele senior and Langa's anger. If anything my father was the victim of it all, they betrayed him not the other way around.

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I walk inside the boardroom of my attorneys office, Khosi is sitting on the other side of the big table with her lawyer next to her. I take the chair across from

them and my legal representation settles next to me. I look at her straight in the eyes, she is uncomfortable under my stare. She has lost a little weight and it looks like she hasn't slept in a while, I would feel for her but this is the woman who betrayed me and almost led me to my demise. She deserves no sympathy from me, she has to suffer for everything that she has put me through.

"You asked for this meeting," my lawyer says to her.

Khosi clears her throat, "Can you both excuse my husband and I," I chuckle then lean back on my chair.

"Are you comfortable with that Mr. Mabizela?" My lawyer asks and I shrug my shoulders. I came all the way here so I might as well agree to whatever so I can hear what she wants.

"Okay, we will be in my office then," They stand up and leave the room, closing the door to give us privacy.

"Thank you for coming my love," she says and I grab a bottle of vitamin water on the table and read it's ingredients. The last I heard they said these things aren't really healthy.

"What do you want Khosi?" I don't have time to be beating around the bush.

"Firstly, I want to apologize for all the pain that I've caused you. Lord knows that you don't deserve any of this, you're an amazing man and I will regret losing you for the rest of my miserable life," that we can agree on.

"You could've sent me a text telling me that Makhosazana," I say, bored as hell.

"Mhambi you stuck by me through the toughest of times, you stayed when you could have walked away. I will never find a man who will love me like you did and I won't even bother trying to look for that because it only comes once in a lifetime,"

I gulp down this vitamin water and place the bottle down before moping my face with the palm of my hand.

"My parents mentioned that you were ready to start talking about having a child," she says and I clench my jaw, she shouldn't even mention that to me.

"It feels like I have nothing to live for Mhambi, I know this will be too much to ask but please. For the love you once had for me please give me this one thing and I promise I'll never ask anything from you for as long as I live," she says, fiddling with her fingers and tears gushing down her face.

"What do you want?" I ask briskly and she takes a deep breath.

"Please give me your sperm so I can have a baby," she says and my eyes threaten to fall off right this minute. She said what?

"I know it's a lot to ask for but I am begging you please," she's serious, but what in the hell makes her

think I would want to father her child after everything she has done to me?

"You want to have a baby?" I ask and she nods vigorously.

"I want nothing more, I want to feel like I have something to live for. A baby will help me forgive myself for everything that I've done to you," I thought I've heard it all.

"I'm not giving you my seed Makhosazana, I don't want to be tied to you. If you want a child desperately then I suggest that you go to a sperm bank," I push my chair back then get up and leave the room. What nonsense!

**CHAPTER 39**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

I am nervous as hell, today we are going to see the obstetrician, Pheletso decided that I should see a doctor who specializes in pregnancy and not a general practitioner who just happens to have a sonar in their practice. Specialists are expensive but I was told not to worry because her Babe is taking care of the bill, the poor guy has no idea that his card is playing daddy.

We get to the medical center, it houses different specialists. One thing that catches my attention is the fact that all these doctors share the same surname, a family full of doctors now that's a big achievement. Pheletso parks the car and we both climb out and make our way to the entrance, my armpits are sweating that's how nervous I am.

The obstetrician's office is all white, the furniture and the walls, the only other color in here is the pink on the scrubs the lady behind the reception desk is wearing. She has such a beautiful and warm smile,



they definitely chose the perfect face for the practice. We greet her and tell her that we have an appointment with the doctor, she asks for my name so she can confirm with her diary. After the confirmation she tells us to settle down on the couches and asks if we would like refreshments, Pheletso and I politely decline. I think she is just as nervous as me.

It's finally our turn to see the doctor, we walk in and a beautiful black woman is busy sanitizing her hands. I wasn't expecting a black doctor, I don't mean that in a bad way. The doctor's surname is Schneider so I was expecting a different skin color, but I guess maybe she's married to a white guy. She asks us to sit down while making small talk and when Pheletso and I are comfortable and laughing she gets into business. I explain that I think I'm pregnant and I wanted to confirm and if it's positive start on antenatal.

She asks me to go to the adjoining bathroom and take a cup on the sink and pee in it so we can see if I'm pregnant or not. I heave a sigh and head to the

bathroom to do my business, I wash my hands when I'm done and make it back. The doctor is putting on her latex gloves and explaining something to Pheletso.

She takes my urine and dips in two pregnancy tests before placing them flat on the their boxes. She's telling us some story and Pheletso is laughing and engaging but my heart is racing, it's taking a life time for fifteen minutes to pass.

"Oh congratulations mommy, you're definitely pregnant," Dr Schneider says and I close my eyes. I am pregnant, Mhambi really left me his seed. What am I going to do? I am all alone because he's married and living his life with his beautiful wife. My friend quickly clasps my hand as I silently cry, the doctor hands me a tissue and I wipe my tears.

"Don't cry my friend, we are going to do this together. I got you Tebatso," I know she does, I'm just so emotional, this is not how I imagined having my first child. Nothing of mine ever goes according to how I want, am I a cursed person?

"I think you're still very early in your pregnancy so we will do a transvaginal ultrasound to determine how far along you are," the OB explains then asks me to take off my underwear and lie on the bed. She puts a condom on the transducer before she lubricates it then inserts it in my vagina, it's a little uncomfortable, nothing like Mhambi's penis.

"Oh there's the present, you're ten weeks pregnant," she says, pointing to the screen. I look at Pheletso and she's smiling with tears glistening in her eyes.

"That is a strong heartbeat," my friend says and the doctor agrees. She tells us that the baby looks good and what to do and avoid during my entire pregnancy. Pheletso is listening attentively and I know I won't be able to dodge anything. After paying we walk out of her office together, she says she's going to lunch.

The receptionist is laughing with some guy in green scrubs, dude must be funny as hell because wow. Dr Schneider tells her to give me a date for my next

appointment and while the receptionist is busy on the computer the comedian in scrubs turns, I hold my breath for a second and he scoffs. What is he doing here?

"Hey, what are you doing here?" Nathan asks with furrowed brows.

"She's my patient, you two know each other?" My obstetrician asks and Nathan nods his head.

"Yes sis, this is T. The one I've been telling you guys about," he says and doctor Schneider gasps in shock, darting between me and Nathan.

"Oh my God, is my brother..." She points at my stomach and I quickly shake my head.

"Oh no, no no. Nathan is not the father. We are not even dating," I say.

"We obviously aren't, dating requires communication and your phone has been off and I was told you resigned at the hotel. Now you are in

my sister's practice because you're pregnant. Wow!"  
He says, sounding disappointed.

"Dr. Schneider," Someone shouts from the door.

"Yes?" my obstetrician and Nathan answer in unison.  
How are they siblings? Adoption maybe?

"Oh I'm sorry, I meant Dr Schneider the neurologist,"  
oh my God, Nathan is a doctor too?

"T, please call me tonight." Is this guy for real? I am  
pregnant and he still wants me to call him.

"Please," he says, giving me puppy eyes.

"Okay fine, I'll call you,"

## **MHAMBI MABIZELA**

"I wish we could go out and celebrate," my brother says, downing a shot of tequila.

I'd be getting fucked up drunk if I wasn't on medication, I swear it would be me pulling Mzamo to the club for a change.

Makhosazana signed the divorce papers, we are officially over. I am so happy to be free from that woman, a woman I did nothing but love and care for only for her to turn around and hurt me in the worst way possible. Our whole relationship had more downs than ups and it's only fair to say good riddance to bad rubbish. I get to start on a clean slate, to live my life for me. I will not put anyone above Mhambi and his needs this time around, when I feel like I'm giving more than what I'm getting then I'll walk away without thinking twice.

"You can take out your girl for a celebration," I say and he clicks his tongue.

Haibo! Trouble in paradise already?

"Don't mention that one, she has turned my house into a homeless shelter. Her pregnant friend will be living there for a while because she's having issues with her mother or something. She also hasn't told the father's child that she's pregnant because he's married. It's a mess and I didn't sign up for any of that dude. I bought that house so I can hit it comfortably and have meals whenever I want," he says and I roll my eyes.

"Your girl has a good heart, she's helping a friend in a time of need. You said the place has two bedrooms, you two can still do your shenanigans in her bedroom," I defend this girl I haven't even met, I don't even know her name.

"Yeah she's like me, we are taking in strays," he says dryly and I laugh.

How am I a stray in my own brother's house?  
Speaking of houses I need to find myself something nice for my new journey as a single man.

"Tell me," he says, spreading his legs open and leaning back on the couch.

"Wassup?"

"Now that you're single, are you going to go after your clumsy cat?" He asks and I furrow my forehead, I've been thinking about this myself and I'm conflicted.

"Mzamo a huge part of me wants to find that woman and beg her to give me another chance, but the other part says I should leave her alone. Tebatso deserves so much better, I can't treat her like a fallback option. I care about her enough to let her be happy with that guy," I say my honest truth.

"That's very mature of you Mhambi, hopefully one day you'll find another sweet girl who sets you on fire and is willing to do this life thing with you," he says.

"And I wish the same for you too bro," he laughs at me. One day love will hit him in the face and he won't remember how scared he was of it.



"I said fuck love a long time ago. The girls I get with give me what I need, good sex and food. You know what? I'm gonna tell the girl to cook a feast for us this Saturday so you can see why I bought an entire house and borrowed her my car," oh I get to meet the girl, mmhhh. I'll finally know her name and see how Mzamo acts around her.

"I cannot wait,"

**CHAPTER 40**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

I honestly don't know why I gave in and came to his house, I have no business entertaining Nathan while I'm pregnant with another man's child. Right now my life is complicated and I cannot add on top of that, my focus should be on this pregnancy and finding a job. I have been sending CV's everywhere, the job description doesn't matter at this point in time because my interest is in the payslip.

"I hope you can stomach eggs, my sister says most pregnant woman cannot stand the smell of eggs," he says, handing me a plate of breakfast.

"I am still good I guess," I say and he smiles then goes to sit on the single couch across me. Thank God for the space he's giving me.

"Thanks for the food," I say and start eating, he's watching me and it's uncomfortable because now I have to chew like a lady. When I'm finished he takes my plate and disappears to the kitchen.

"T, I appreciate you coming through," he says and I nod. He sits back down and places his ankle on top of his knee.

Can Nathan just tell me what I'm doing here.

"Where did you disappear to? After our lunch at the restaurant I couldn't get a hold of you," he asks, concerned.

How do I explain my situation without giving much away?

"Nathan you're aware that I'm pregnant right?" I decide to drive this conversation in a different direction so we can get to the destination quickly.

"Yes, so?" Did he just?

Is this guy serious?

"And you still want to date me?" I ask and he heaves a sigh and starts scratching the corner of his mouth with his eyes narrowed.

"I asked you here to talk so I can establish that,"  
Nothing will shock me in this world.

Who in their right mind would want to date a  
woman who is pregnant with another man's baby?  
What kind of pervert is Nathan? I need to get the  
hell out of here because it's clear that I'm dealing  
with something bigger than me.

"Are you still with the father of the baby?" He asks  
and I raise an eyebrow. What a question!

"Listen T, I know how this might come across but I  
promise that I'm not some psycho. It's just that I  
really like you, you caught my eye at that restaurant  
and I knew there and then that I wanted to get to  
know you better," he says calmly.

"I'd walk away but I can't because you're the first  
woman to get and hold my attention ever since my  
wife died three years ago," he adds and my heart  
bleeds for him, losing someone you wanted forever  
with cannot be easy.

"I'm sorry for your loss," he nods with a faint smile.

"I was with my brother the night at the restaurant, while I was busy talking to you and your friend he was telling on me in the family WhatsApp group. I haven't approached a woman since my wife passed, you're the first. My siblings have arranged dates for me but they never work out, they got excited to know that I liked someone without being pushed into it," he says and chuckles. They sound like a big, dramatic and loving family.

"I'm sure they'll advice you against dating a pregnant girl," I say and he frowns like I just insulted his mother.

"T my family is different, too different sometimes. They don't care about anything but happiness, if this pregnant girl can make me happy then they'll cheer," he says and I'm left confused. My own mother didn't want her first grandchild, why would he want to be an overnight stepfather? That's just crazy.

"So back to my question, are you and the father together?" I shake my head.

"No, we are not. He's married and I'm going to be a single mom," I blurt it out.

He must be judging me right now.

"I take it he doesn't know about the pregnancy?" I am currently at war with myself because of that, do I or do I not tell him.

"He's married Nathan, I don't think he wants a love child," Mhambi and I might have fell in love but I doubt he will be happy about this. He said he wants to make his marriage work, this will destroy that for him.

"You should tell him T. He deserves to know, if he rejects you then that's on him. At least you would have told him, your conscious will be clear," Pheletso said the same thing. I guess I have to find a way to get ahold of Mhambi and tell him that I'm carrying his child.

"You're right," I say.

"Now that I know I'm not stepping into someones territory, I want to ask for the opportunity to get to know you,"

This is really tricky, I don't know how to handle it.

I clear my throat, "My life is chaotic right now, I can only offer you a platonic relationship,"

"Friendship is always a great place to start," he says with a wide smile.

I thought he'd be disappointed.

## **MHAMBI MABIZELA**

This girl must be doing monkey and snake styles in bed because wow! This estate is one of the most expensive in the North. Mzamo's place is not even in the caliber of this one, and definitely not in such an affluent neighborhood. He parks under the carport, next to the BMW he borrowed her. See what I mean? Mzamo likes this girl, he just doesn't want to admit it. If she really meant nothing to him then he wouldn't have invited me to come here and eat with them.

"I should find out if they have anything for sale around here, it's a nice place," I say and my brother looks at me with a raised eyebrow. He didn't think I was going to stay with forever did he?

"Yeah, do that so you can keep an eye on this one. I don't want men coming here, it's my house," he says and I chortle.

Now he wants to keep tabs on the girl, why would he care about who comes and goes because this thing between them is just casual right?



We both climb out and he takes out the flowers and a small gift bag from the backseat then leads me to the apartment. He opens the door and walks in without knocking, like he is the man of the house. If it was only his girl here then I'd understand but the friend also lives here, Mzamo has to remember that. The interior is impressive, shows that it was done by a woman who has great taste just not in men.

"Babe," he shouts for his girl, one bedroom door opens and a tall, petite, gorgeous girl appears. Now I see why my brother is hooked.

"Hey," she says with a smile, coming to hug and kiss Mzamo. My brother spans her and I roll my eyes, did he forget about me already?

"Open that when you're alone," he hands her the flowers and the gift, she giggles and says thank you. I clear my throat because it feels like I am a candle holder now.

"Oh, sorry bro. This is Pheletso and babe this is my brother Mhambi," he introduces us and his girlfriend narrows her eyes.

She looks like she's searching her memory, trying to figure out where she knows me from.

"It's really nice to meet you," I say, holding my hand out. She takes it and we shake.

"It's nice to meet you too. I hope you guys are hungry because I cooked up a storm," she says and Mzamo looks at me with a wide smile.

"The oxtail is still in the oven but it will be out soon. In the mean time what can I offer you to drink?" She is such a gracious host.

"You know my favorite drink baby girl, Mhambi what would you like?" My brother is trying to prove that he can get a girl to do all the girlfriend things without having to commit. But he's stupid because he hasn't realized that he has fallen for the girl.

"I'm on medication so I'll just have juice," I say.

She heads to the kitchen to get our drinks and Mzamo and I take a seat on the leather couch. He's so comfortable you can tell that he knows every corner of this house. He changes the channel and thank goodness we didn't miss a lot of the first half. Pheletso comes back holding an ice bucket with a bottle of cognac and mixers and a can of juice, then two glasses in the other hand. Mzamo helps her place coaster on the table then mixes his drink and pours my juice in the glass.

"Where is your friend?" Mzamo asks.  
I was wondering too.

"She's in the bedroom, she got nauseous while I was cooking, you know how pregnant woman get." She answers.

"I guess she won't be eating with us then," I say, just to make a little conversation.

"Yes, Tebatso will skip this one," she says and my pulse leaps at the mention of that name.

My head runs like a well oiled machine, putting together the pieces. Having problems with her mom, pregnant and baby daddy is a married man. This is my Tebatso, it can't be a coincidence. I get on my feet with my heart already thumping against my chest. I can't be too emotional, I'm still recovering.

"Baby, did you say Tebatso?" Mzamo realizes why I suddenly changed gears.

"Yes, What's going on?" His girlfriend asks.

Pheletso walked out of that bedroom so it means Tebatso is in that other one, I push open the door and it's a bathroom. Cussing under my breath I try the next door and there she is, laying on the bed looking angelic with her eyes closed. She isn't hearing this commotion because of the headsets she has in her ears. I walk in the room and settle down on the edge of the bed, she doesn't open her eyes. Tebatso is sleeping sound, I caress her flawless skin and something inside of me is put back together.

"Tebatso, baby," I wake her gently and she groans, making me smile.

"Look at me please," I say and her eyes flick a couple of times before opening wide. She jolts up and moves to the other side of the bed,

"M-Mhambi?" She says with a soft voice.

"Hey, it's me," She lets her tears fall, those are never far with her. She is my big cry baby, I love her all mushy.

"What are you doing here?" She asks, looking at me then at Mzamo and Pheletso at the door.

"You're pregnant?"

**CHAPTER 41**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

"Yes, I'm almost three months," I answer his question and he closes his eyes, drinking in my confirmation.

"Me and you, almost three months ago, the baby is mine right?" He asks, with his eyes desperate for me to say yes.

"You're the only man who knows me that way, Mhambi. This child is yours," he exhales sharply then drops his head for a few minutes, I think he's crying. I look at the door where Pheletso is standing in front of Mzamo, she's been dating my baby's uncle this whole time. Did God maybe plan everything this way?

"Mhambi, please calm down. I know this is big but remember that your heart doesn't need any strain, you cannot afford to have another episode," Mzamo says, what does he mean? Is Mhambi sick or something?

"Mhambi, what's going on?" I ask panicking and he raises his head and his blood shot red eyes soften when they look at me.

"A little while ago I was admitted because I suffered an episode of Takotsubo cardiomyopathy," he takes a minute to breath then continues.

"My heart was literally broken, I almost died but it was clearly not my time. God saved me because he knew that you and our baby needed me," he says and I don't hold back, I rush over to him and throw my arms around his neck and cry. He shifts and the next thing I know I'm on his lap and he is cradling me like a baby.

"You almost died," saying it with my own mouth leaves a bitter taste in my mouth.

I don't want to imagine how broken I would've been if he didn't make it, just like me my baby wouldn't have had the opportunity to know her father.

"Shh baby, I'm still here. I'm going to be here for a very long time. Please don't cry," he kisses my cheek. The bedroom door closes, I'm sure my friend and his brother decided to give us privacy.

"What happened?" I ask.

Mhambi heaves a deep sigh then starts narrating to me how his wife cheated on him with Mr Nsele, then helped him to steal his shares of the hotel. He says the news hit him hard and he suffered something like a heart attack which was later diagnosed as Takotsubo cardiomyopathy. They are divorced now and he's looking forward to starting life on a clean slate.

"Can I ask you something?" He whispers in my ear and I nod, still holding on to him for dear life. It feels so great to be in his arms like this.

"You are keeping the baby right?" His voice is full of hope.



"I ran away from my mother because she wanted me to give the baby up for adoption once I gave birth. I couldn't stay for that, yes I don't have the means to raise this child but I trust that God will make a plan for us," I say and he gently removes me off him so we can be eye to eye.

"Hey, you won't do this alone. I am here and I'll try my best to make this journey easy for you. Tebatso you are carrying my baby, one thing I have been asking God for. You will never want for anything, as much as you'll never be alone through it all," he says and wipes my tears.

"Thank you," I say and he takes my left hand, inspects my ring finger then looks up at me.

"It never happened, it was about to though..." Now it's my turn to explain my situation with Tebogo and how him being arrested saved me from making the biggest mistake of my life.

"Thank God," he says, caressing my face and I lean into his touch. I have missed him so much, I tried

forgetting about him but it's clear that my heart was still beating for him.

"Can I?" He asks and I nod.

He places his hand on my stomach.

My lower abdomen is only starting to protrude a little, a person who doesn't know that I'm pregnant will not be able to tell the difference.

## **MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE**

I have been staying with my parents since I signed the divorce papers. My matrimonial home reminded me of Mhambi and our happiest moments and I couldn't stay in it anymore. My mom was happy when I came home because it meant she can keep an eye on me and make sure that I eat and stop drinking alcohol.

I haven't been to work ever since the whole drama started, I'm not in the right frame of mind to take on that much responsibility. I got an interim CEO to take over while I try to pick up the pieces of my life and rebuild myself. I cannot cry over this forever, life has to move on. I lost my husband and it's my fault, I've given myself grief over it but it's enough now. I pray to God that Mhambi forgives me one day and we can be civil towards one another. I wish him nothing but the best in life, I hope he meets a woman who will love and treat him how he deserves.

A knock comes through my bedroom door, I check the time on my phone and I know it's my mother

bringing me lunch. If it's anything I'm going to miss the most it's her cooking. I give the permission to get in, the door knob turns and my father walks in. I swallow hard, he hasn't spoken nor looked at me ever since I came home. He comes and sits on the edge of my bed and looks at me, I quickly look away because I'm still ashamed. I never in my life wanted to disappoint this man.

"You're my daughter, the one who introduced me to fatherhood. You made a mistake and as a father who wants the best for you I am disappointed but I realize that I've punished you enough now," he says and I allow my tears to fall, he takes my hand and squeezes.

"I know you're hurting and me being angry at you adds to that, you need your daddy right now and I'm sorry that I haven't been that to you in a while," I get out of bed and go kneel in front of him then place my head on his lap. I've been longing for my father's compassion and now I have it.

"I am so sorry baba, I really am," I say and he brushes my back in circles.

"I know you are majiyane, I know sisi," With the support of both my parents I know I will be able to move past this painful time in my life.

"I hope and pray that all of this serves as a lesson Makhosazana, you need to sit down and rethink your life and identify what you truly want out of it," baba says and I nod because this is what I've been doing this past week. I get up and sit next to him at the same time my door opens and mama walks in holding a plate of food. She's right on time, I wanted to have this discussion with the both of them.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," she says.

"Please come in ma, I want you to hear this too," my mom wrinkles her face, putting the plate down on the chest of drawers. She sits on the ottoman and licks her lips.

"Is everything okay?" She asks and I nod.

"I disappointed you both and I am sorry from the bottom of my heart. My mistakes have made people question you as my parents and for that I will never forgive myself because you have always been great parents to me and my siblings," I start off.

"I don't care about what people say Khosi and I raised you girls not to as well." That's true, mama always emphasized that we should never care about what people say or think about us. Because people will never stop talking whether you're doing bad or good. But for some reason I always forget that lesson.

"I have lived most of my life dedicating myself to everything and anything but just not myself and what will bring me happiness. I was an academic and played every other sport and because of that I didn't really have friends. I graduated university and immediately started working with baba because I was to take over someday. You both know how I buried myself in my work and neglected everything

else." I continue and they are both nodding in agreement.

"I've been looking at my sister's and how happy and fulfilled they are because of their children. I am craving that now, I want to have my own personal person," I say with a shaking voice.

"What do you mean Khosi?" My father asks.

"I realized that I'll always be the Khosi that loves working and will probably never have time to nurture romantic relationships and that's okay. However I don't want to be alone, I want to have someone to live for and to live with. I have decided to go to Cape Town for a while, to start looking for the perfect surrogate and sperm donor. I want to be there when the fertility clinic starts the whole process," I say and my mom gasps.

"Oh my God, Makhosazana this is big. Are you sure you're ready baby?" I offer her a smile.

"I am ready ma, the thought of having my own baby excites me. It takes my mind off everything and swells up my heart with all good emotions,"

"Our healing and growth comes differently, I understand this and if you are ready then I fully support you my baby," daddy says and my heart is alright.

"I have already been in contact with the the fertility clinic, they have a database of surrogates I can choose from and a list of anonymous sperm donors with all information," I explain to them.

"You're really doing this?" I definitely am.

"Please choose a Zulu donor Makhosazana," baba says and my mom and I laugh. I thank God for giving me such open minded parents, most African parents wouldn't understand why their daughter would want to have a child with a complete stranger.



"So I'll be leaving next week and I'll stay in Cape Town until my baby is born," I say and my mother's smile disappears.

"Haibo Makhosazana, this whole process might take a year," I know but they can always visit. I need this, and I need to do it in a different environment.

**CHAPTER 42**  
**MHAMBI MABIZELA**

I'm going to be a father, this is the most welcomed unexpected news ever. The last person I thought I'd find when visiting my brother's girlfriend for a meal was Tebatso.

Now I strongly believe in fate, what were the odds of my brother meeting Pheletso and buying a house that will later house a pregnant Tebatso when she needed a home? It can only be God, he was keeping Tebatso close so we can easily find our way back to each other. My marriage didn't work out and he made sure that the one she was supposed to get in didn't happen too.

In the middle of chaos the Lord decided to bring me one thing I have been praying for ever since I can remember. Nothing matters anymore, not Makhosazana's betrayal and certainly not Langa. No, that bastard does matter, he matters a lot. He threatened to always come after me and to take something I can never be able to replace. What

would kill me instantly if not something happening to Tebatso and my child?

"Mhambi!" my brother calls out and I snap out of it and realize that I just dropped a carton of milk.

"What are you thinking about?" He asks and I look up from the mess I made on the floor.

"Langa," he flares his nose.

"Why the fuck would you think about that asshole? You should be thinking about Tebatso and getting her back so you both can raise your baby," he says but he's not understanding, so I explain my fears to him and his face hardens when I'm done.

"That bastard! You are right, once he knows that Tebatso is pregnant with your child he will go after her,"

"I can't allow that to happen, Mzamo. I have to find a way to deal with that loose screw," I say and he shakes his head.

"No, I will take care of it. Your health is not good at the moment and I want you to focus on your girl and the baby. Enjoy having her back and this time give yourself fully," he's right.

This time around I'm not holding back in my relationship with Tebatso, I'm giving her everything she deserves.

"What do you plan on doing with Langa?" I ask.

"A man like Langa has too many skeletons in his closet. I just have to raid that closet and find one he doesn't want anyone finding out about. If there isn't one I'll create one and rest assured he will stay in his lane forever," he says and I trust Mzamo to handle it. Being a club owner has given my brother the opportunity to know different people with different skills. I know he will be sourcing help from his pool of associates in squashing this cockroach named Langa.

"Thank you Mzamo," we fist bump.

"I am happy that our fathers lineage is continuing, you did that Mfethu. Congratulations once again, you have proven that you don't shoot blanks," he says and I'm thrown into a fit of laughter.

I played one game in Tebatso's field and scored, I'm very proud of myself.

"You mentioned that she and her mom are having issues because she got pregnant out of wedlock," He says and I nod.

Tebatso told me what happened between them and it's really sad that a mother would hurt her child over this. I mean babies are a gift from God. he same God she is making noise about, but I guess she only pushes verses that align with her agenda.

"Yeah, it's a messed up situation,"

"Talk to Tebatso and advice her to go try and sit down with her mom and explain to her that you are here and you'll take responsibility for your child. Ask to pay for the damages, that will show her ukuthi you're a responsible man who will do right by her

daughter," he has a point, this might help salvage the situation between mother and daughter.

"You're right bro, I'll talk to her about it later on today when I go to her," I'm excited to see her again, I last saw her on Sunday, the Saturday I found her we stayed up all night talking. Neither of us wanted to sleep and I think it's because we feared that we will wake up and realize it was only just a dream.

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I take a deep breath and press the door bell, I'm so nervous it feels like this is the first time I'm seeing this girl. The door opens and she appears before me looking as beautiful as the first time I laid my eyes on her. That very day she pissed me off by pouring coffee on me, but that was only the beginning for us. She's wearing a summer dress, I can imagine how cute her baby bump will be in clothes.

"Hey," she says, stepping to the side so I can walk through.

"Hey, are you guys good?" I ask.

"I'm great, I'm sure Pheletso is pissed wherever she is. Work has been hectic for her," she responds and I laugh amused, I wasn't asking after her friend.

"I actually meant you and the baby," I say, she giggles and hits her forehead with the palm of her hand.

"My bad, it will take time getting used to being asked about myself and the baby at the same time," I nod understanding.

"You'll get the hang of things," she smiles at me then moves her eyes away. We are still there? Even now that we are expecting a baby?

"So I still intimidate you? You won't look at me and that makes me question myself," she steals a glance at me. I thought she grew out of her shell, I mean Saturday she was holding me, caressing my face and looking straight into my eyes. I guess she was just

making sure that it's me and I'm okay after hearing that I almost died.

"Please don't take it in a bad way Mhambi. You just make me feel many things all at once and I'm afraid that when I look at you you'll see everything that I'm feeling and thinking," she says and that feels like an admission of something. On Saturday we didn't have a conversation about us getting back together, I have been wondering if that is possible. If she would want it to happen because I know I do.

"I want to know what you're thinking and feeling, I know it makes you vulnerable but I won't hurt you. I know I did before but everything is different for us both Tebatso," I say and she looks at the gifts I came bearing.

"Are those mine?" She asks and it hurts that she's dodging the subject at hand but I guess I have to be patient with her.

"Yes, these are yours," I hand her the flowers and the wrapped box.



"Thank you, they are beautiful," she places the flowers on the coffee table and sits down to unwrap her gift. It's nothing fancy and I hope she likes it.

"Oh my God, Mhambi this is such a thoughtful gift. I have so many questions and these books will help answer those," I love how excited she gets, it's like she goes back to being a little girl. She was like this in Cape Town, before everything went down south.

"That's a pregnancy diary, you can make an entry everyday on how you're feeling and your experiences with the pregnancy on that day. It would make a beautiful 18th birthday gift for our baby," I suggest and she looks up at me with tears glistening in her eyes. At least those are happy tears.

"I love it, this is so beautiful. Thank you," she gets up, gets on her tippy toes and hugs me.

"You're welcome," I say, tightening my arms around her waist but not too tight to hurt the baby.

She tries to pull away but I keep her in place, I want to hold her a little bit longer, "have you visited the doctor?" She doesn't respond immediately.

"Uhm, yeah. Just to confirm that I'm pregnant,"

"Would you like to continue seeing that doctor or you'd like to change?" I ask.

"I want to change it, maybe we can choose a new one together," I smile, thankful that she's including me.

"I'd love that very much,"

**CHAPTER 43**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

Mhambi asked me to meet him for lunch but I gave him a silly excuse, I had already asked Nathan to meet up with me because we really need to talk. He wants more than friendship from me and he only agreed to be my friend with the hopes of it progressing in the future. It's only fair that I update him on the recent events of my life, and to be honest about my feelings for the father of my child.

He asked to meet at a restaurant near his practice because he has a patient immediately after lunch. I got here earlier because I wanted to calm my nerves, I hate hurting and disappointing people. It's extra hard in this case because Nathan told me that I'm the first woman he liked after his wife passed on, this is going to break down his spirit and he will probably close off again.

"I am sorry I'm late," he says from behind me and I'm startled, no one in the world is as jumpy as me.

Nathan pulls out a chair and settles down, he came wearing his scrubs.

"It's okay. How are you?" I ask and he heaves a heavy sigh.

"I'm okay, just having a hectic day at work. Wednesday is epilepsy day at my practice. I have a lot of people coming from near and far to see me," he says and I instantly feel bad because I'm about to drop a bomb on him.

"Life of a neurologist," I say and he holds out his hands.

"How are you? The baby?" He asks, looking around for the waiter. Maybe I should do this some other day, when he doesn't have to go back to work.

"We are both okay," I say and he narrows his eyes at me.

"T are you okay? You seem awkward," he says and I smile nervously at him.

I don't have the balls to do this but I can't string him along knowing fully well that I will never love another man for as long as Mhambi Mabizela lives.

"The baby's father showed up," I say, fiddling with the napkin.

"How did he take the news of the pregnancy?" He asks, leaning in and placing both elbows on the table.

"He's over the moon, he has always wanted a child,"

"That's good, at least he didn't deny being responsible. So when will he tell his wife about you and the baby?" He asks and I shake my head.

"They are divorced now," it comes out in an almost whisper and he raises an eyebrow.

"Oh, divorced okay,"

"Nathan, you're a really great guy and everything but I just..."

He quickly talks over me, "you're getting back together with him right?" He says and I look down embarrassed. We haven't really had that conversation, he tried but I shut it down because I feel like we have to do things differently this time. I love that man but things happened too quickly the first time, we need to tone it down a little.

"We haven't discussed anything of that nature but I love him and I don't think that will change. I don't want to string you along knowing fully well that I will not reciprocate your feelings," I really hope he understands.

"Well that's a bitter pill to swallow but I respect you for telling me this before I invested in you and the possibility of a relationship," Relief floods through me.

"What is going on here?" We both look up and it's Mzamo, he's giving Nathan the evil eye. Behind him is Mhambi who looks hurt to his soul, my heart bleeds immediately. I

turned his lunch request down only for him to find me with another man.

"It's not what you think it is," I quickly say.

"You people want to take everything that belongs to us, first it was our country now our women. When will it be enough baas?" Oh my God, Nathan doesn't deserve this.

"Mhambi, it's honestly nothing. Nathan is a friend, I can explain why I turned you down for lunch only to meet up with him. Please don't think too much about it, your heart..." I can't even finish what I want to say because I fear he might have another episode and this time it will be on me.

"T, I will call you," Nathan says, getting on his feet.

"Ehh baba, loose her number. That's my brother's woman, the mother of his child," Mzamo has caught fire, he wants to hurt Nathan but there's really no need.

"I'm so sorry," He shakes his head with a smile and walks away, but he stops next to Mhambi who is burying his hands deep in his pockets and staring at the floor.

"There are guys like me who would kill to have a chance with her so please treat her right," he tells Mhambi then walks away.

I wish the ground could open up and swallow me, I have never found myself in such a situation.

"Mzamo, please leave Tebatso and I," Mhambi says and his brother walks away without saying a word, I pray he doesn't go after Nathan. He didn't do anything wrong here. Mhambi settles down on the chair Nathan was on a couple of minutes ago.

"I turned you down for him because I had to tell him that you're back in the picture. He wanted us to date but I told him I can only offer him friendship, he agreed with the hopes of it being more so I had to set the record straight," I say and he holds out his hand and I quickly link mine with his.



"We walked in and I saw you with him, my heart almost jumped out of my chest," he says and I feel bad because this innocent meeting with Nathan could have caused Mhambi his life.

"I'm sorry,"

"I love you Tebatso," he says and I close my eyes. The first time he told me this was when he left his seed inside of me and there after said goodbye.

"You know I love you too Mhambi," I say my truth and his eyes twinkle. He is such a beautiful man, I hope the baby takes after him.

"I am the kind of man that sees things through, the kind that doesn't give up until there's no other option. Baby I am so sorry for choosing Makhosazana over you, I regret hurting you like that. I knew in my heart of hearts that it was over between us but the man I am had to try again and hurt you in the process," he says and I sniff back my tears, I can't cry in public.

"I understand because I also wanted to make things work with Tebogo because I thought I owed him something. And also for my mother because she loved him for me and I wanted to please her," he brushes my knuckles with his thumb.

"Also because you hurt me, I told myself that it's better to stay with him because I knew him well, unlike you because your wife showed up at our getaway," I decide to be completely honest with him.

"And both those relationships didn't work out because you and I had to find our way back to each other," I believe that too, with all my heart.

"I wish I can tell you exactly when I fell in love with you babe but I don't know. What I know is I woke up one day and my heart was beating for you," story of my life, he went from my boss who I spilled coffee on to a guy I looked forward to texting back and forth with. When I thought that was it, he invaded my heart and cemented himself.

"The reason why I cannot look at you is because I'm in love with you Mhambi and I'm scared that you'll see just how much in my eyes. I've never felt like this in my life, you drive me completely insane and I can't shake you off even if I wanted," his eyes are smiling back at me.

"Then let's give our love a chance, please. We deserve it, our baby deserves her parents together and happy," I want that so much but we can't do things the same way again.

"I want nothing more Mhambi but this time we have to do things differently, we have to walk before we can run. We both gravitated towards each other because we wanted the same things and our then partners couldn't give us. We were chasing hearts and flowers that's why we started something with the first person we felt will give us that. I'm not saying we are not in love, I'm saying we fell in love with the things we could offer each other before we fell in love with the souls. But our love will explode as quickly as it happened because we both have issues we haven't dealt with, hurt that needs to

heal," I say and his eyes are bloodshot from the tears he doesn't want to shed.

"We can help each other heal," he says and I squeeze his hand.

"Hurt people, hurt people. You cannot heal me and I cannot heal you, but we can be each other's motivation to get through our issues. Deal with what your ex and half brother did so that I can have a clean slate with you. I'll deal with my issues as well so I don't bring anything from my past into this," I don't know if I'm making sense to Mhambi right now but I hope I do.

"So we are not getting back together?" He asks and as hard as it is to do this it's very necessary if we want to have a healthy and long relationship.

"We are focusing on getting through this pregnancy, we are working on our issues as individuals. We jumped into things before, let's be friends and get to know each other a bit better," he kisses the back of my hand.

"It's going to be hard but I get where you're coming from. I just need you to promise that during this time of us building a friendship you won't be seeing other people," he says and it feels really good to know that he doesn't want anyone else taking me from him.

"I promise and I need you to promise too,"  
Yes, I don't want to pick up where we left off but that doesn't mean I want him with other women.

"Baby, I'll be dealing with my issues and everything that's a promise. But this friendship thing is your thing, I'm in a relationship with you. When you're ready to come home you'll find me counting down to our first anniversary," he says and I giggle. I'm being serious here and he is being a clown.

He clears his throat and his facial expression changes, "I don't want any other woman. I want you, the mother of my child. I get why you want us to start off as friends, it makes a good foundation. Everything happened quickly before and we fell for

parts of each other we craved the most, now it's time to explore each other and fall in love with everything. The good, the bad and the ugly," thank God he understands.

"I love you Mhambi," he winks at me and I'm turning red.

"I love you too," I look into his beautiful black eyes and get lost in him.

"During this friendship thing you won't be starving me right?" He asks and I frown, what is he talking about now?

"What do you mean?"

"Sex baby, we deserve a rematch and many more. I owe you mind blowing love making," he says with a smile and I look away blushing.

"But friends don't have sex Mhambi," I argue.

"Our situation is different though," I won't lie I have thought about how it would feel in a more comfortable space.

**CHAPTER 44**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**  
**THREE MONTHS LATER**

"You didn't have a good night?" I ask after she yawns for the millionth time.

"I had to listen to you and Mhambi moan and groan half of the night, so no Tebatso I didn't have a good night," oh my God.

"Friend I am so sorry," She clicks her tongue. We have been having sex so much it's insane, I don't understand why we are so insatiable.

"Why don't you just get back together officially and stop this friendship joke, you guys are crazy about each other and you basically do everything couples do," she says and I bite my lower lip.

She's right, the only thing we haven't done is move in together. We see each other almost everyday, we have sex like rabbits. When he's not with me we spent time talking on the phone or texting. We go on



a date night every Thursday, we even went on a getaway a week after we decided to start off things as friends this time around. He took me to Graskop in Mpumalanga and I had the most amazing time, even though he refused me doing some activities because I'm pregnant. Thankfully this time around no woman showed up.

"Anyway are you sure you're ready to do this?" She asks, stopping the car at the traffic lights.

"I have to do this Pheletso," I say and she nods.

"Yeah, hopefully she has calmed down. It has been weeks and weeks now, she must miss you," I pray so.

I'm going to see my mother, Mhambi advised me to show face and see if we cannot sit down and have a conversation. I was against the whole thing at first but he made me realize that it's not only me now but our baby too. He wants to pay the damages so the baby can be a Mabizela and he can't do that if things with my mom aren't good.

She drives into our neighborhood and my heart starts thudding against my chest, I haven't been here since I ran away. I promised myself never to set foot here or to come anywhere near my mom after she brutalized me, but I also promised myself that I will be a good mother and do everything necessary for the benefit of my baby. And right now the latter is a promise I prioritize over every other.

"You owe me a meal and drinks at the most expensive restaurant," she says as she takes the corner of my street. She's not looking forward to facing my mom because she might be blamed for giving me a place to stay when she was supposed to tell me to come back home.

"When we leave here you got it," Mhambi gave me a bank card a while ago, he loads it with money every now and again. It's pointless because he pays for everything still.

The car stops outside my mother's house and she is busy watering the lawn, did she really have to be outside. I already planned out this whole thing in my

head, I was gonna knock then walk in and find her in the kitchen drinking her tea with a Bible in front of her. But maybe it's fine this way, she won't be able to cause a scene.

Pheletso and I climb out of the car and nervously walk in the yard, my mother is looking at us with a stoic expression. Her eyes move to my stomach and I see anger taking over her calmness. Fuck, I shouldn't have put on something that shows my bump this much.

"Good morning mam.." even before I could finish greeting her she directs the hosepipe at us and sprays us with water.

Tebatso and I are screaming, running out of the yard as she screams after us.

"Don't ever show your face here with that bastard you are carrying Tebatso, you defied me so you're dead to me. Go live that Godless life away from here," she says ferociously. My heart is hurting and I won't even pretend otherwise. We get in the car and Pheletso starts the engine immediately, the way my

mother is so angry she might try to damage Mzamo's car.

"Tibi, I am so sorry my friend," I'm crying, I knew not to expect a warm welcome but this? My mother literally said I was dead to her, how could she be that cruel? This hurts more than when she lashed me with that whip.

"I know that hurt but you're not alone babe, you have me, your man and Mzamo. It's all going to work out, you'll see," she's right.

I have people who love me and want to see me happy, I shouldn't let my mother take away the happiness I have since I walked away from her. It hurts yes but life is much better without her in it.

"At least I can say I tried," I say to my soaking wet friend.

## **MHAMBI MABIZELA**

"Oh Mhambi, it's really nice to see you son," Mrs Jiyane says, hugging me.

"It's nice to see you too mama," I bumped into her at the mall. I came to pick a few things for Mzamo and I, that one doesn't remember to buy food but he will fill the fridge with alcohol.

"I know you and my daughter divorced but that doesn't mean you can't come around to the house," I beg to differ.

That's Khosi's home and that's her family. I cannot keep a relationship with them when I cut things off with her, I don't want to blur lines for any party.

"You and baba treated me like a son and I will forever hold you dear to my heart but I don't think it's okay for me to come around, because it will just cause confusion. But when you really need me please call and I'll show up," she brushes my arm, nodding her understanding.

"She's in Cape Town, she's trying to have a baby through IVF and surrogacy," oh so she went through with it. That's good, I hope this brings her joy.

"That's great news mama, you must be excited. I'm expecting a child myself," I say and she's taken aback by my revelation.

"Oh, are you also doing surrogacy?" She asks and I shake my head no.

"I have to run mama, Mzamo is waiting for me. It was really nice seeing you," I say, kissing her cheek then walking away.

I wasn't lying, Mzamo is waiting for me. He called me when I was paying for the groceries, he said I should get my ass to the club ASAP. I just hope he's not calling me there to sit down and drink with him, I need to go see Tebatso and find out how it went with her mother. I get to the club and park my car in my reserved parking space and head inside. His staff is busy preparing for tonight. There's a big event

happening, Pheletso will be in attendance. That means Tebatso and I have the house to ourselves.

I open the office door and walk in to find Langa pacing up and down, what the fuck is he doing here? I look at Mzamo and he's giving me the calm down look. He has become my anger check since my takotsubo episode, he doesn't want me triggering another one. I can safely say that my brother fears losing me and it's good to know how much he cares about me.

"Come in Mhambi, our big brother here has something important to say to you," Mzamo says, spinning with his chair. I close the door behind me and fold my arms across my chest.

"Bhut'Langa, here is your little brother talk to him," he says with a smile and Nsele looks like he wants to explode. What did Mzamo find on this clown?

"I don't have the whole day Mzamo, I have to be somewhere important," I say annoyed.

Langa clears his throat, "I shouldn't have blamed you guys, especially you Mhambi for the choices of our mother. You knew nothing about me and what happened in the past, I am sorry for everything I have ever done. I'm sorry that you lost your father because of what my old man did.

I will never come after you, from here on I will stay in my own lane," a humble Langa, that's a first. Whatever this secret is he wants it to be kept as such.

"And?" Mzamo coaxes him.

There's more? This is interesting.

"I will be transferring the shares back to you. Please don't pay me back the money, I want you to have it as compensation for all I've done," Well played Mzamo.

"Okay then," I say with a huge grin.

It's nice seeing Langa down from his high horse.

"I'll have my people contact your people,"



"Would you look at that? The brothers have made peace. Bhut'Langa, I know you're a busy man so I'll let you be on your way," Langa strides to the door angrily, he's pissed off but there's nothing he can do.

"What the fuck did you find on him?" I ask laughing.

"The fool is part of a human trafficking syndicate. He couldn't keep his pants on, he fucked the leaders young wife and then his 16 year old daughter. The wife meets secretly with Langa every Monday at the hotel so he can spend time with his son. Knight, the cartel leader believe the kid is his, but nope the little dude is our nephew.

I threatened to tell Knight his dirty little secret and he was shaking, asked what I wanted in exchange of keeping this to myself," Jesus Christ!

"Thank you so much for getting him off my back Mzamo," I say, holding my hand out and we shake.

"I want you to focus on Tebatso and the baby without worrying about the likes of Langa. You deserve to be happy bro,"

"I appreciate you mfanakithi,"

**CHAPTER 45**  
**TEBATSO MORAKE**

I am sitting on the kitchen counter naked, Mhambi and I have the house to ourselves. Pheletso will come back tomorrow, she's with Mzamo. Yesterday she went to his club because there was some big event and they slept at his house. She and Mhambi swapped places for the weekend.

"You're looking sexy over there," Mhambi says, standing over the stove making some eggs for breakfast. He's the sexy one with a cute ass, I'm yet to get used to his beautiful built body.

"Oh well thank you," I say, rubbing my belly. I had a hard time being naked in front of him when we started having sex, but he told me how beautiful my body is and that I shouldn't be ashamed of it. That gave me so much confidence, I'm now comfortable in my own skin.

"I forgot to tell you yesterday," he says and I narrow my eyes.

"What happened?" He chuckles, like he still can't believe what he's about to tell me himself.

"Yesterday Mzamo called me to the club and when I got there Langa was in his office. My brother found out some information he wants kept a secret so he agreed to leave us alone and give back my shares," he says and that's a huge relief.

A couple of weeks ago he told me to be vigilant and to avoid Langa at all costs because he is hellbent on hurting him. This is great news because we both don't have to look over our shoulders anymore, we can enjoy our lives and our pregnancy without fear.

"That's good news, the whole Langa situation was making me uneasy. I didn't even want to go out without you," he removes the pan from the stove and rounds the island to come kiss me.

"My brother and I will always protect you and this one in here," he says, bending down to kiss my belly.

He's going to be such an amazing dad, I cannot wait to see him taking over that role and killing it.

"I know and thank you,"

"No Tebatso, thank you very much. This pregnancy has brought me so much joy, it has removed all the doubt I had in my manhood. I thought I was the one with a problem when I was still married to Khosi and it honestly affected me, even though I tried to hide it," oh God, I'm happy that I'm doing this with Mhambi. Happy that I'm giving him this gift.

"Our baby is blessed to have a daddy like you, I am happy that she will have a better life than me," he smiles sweetly at me then takes my hands into his.

"I'm going to give you two the best life ever, you will not want for anything. You will never feel unloved and unsafe for as long as I live sthandwa sami. I know the situation with your mom hurts you and I promise that I'll find a way to make things okay between you and her," I love him for being thoughtful.

"Right now my mother is toxic Mhambi and I don't want that in my life, I want to focus on our baby and moving forward with life," he nods.

"I support everything you decide on," he says and pecks my lips before going back to finish making our breakfast.

"So when will he transfer the shares back?" I ask.

"I don't know but soon as it's done I'm selling them. I don't want to work with Langa anymore, I'm removing him from my life. I don't want the money he sent to me the first time and I don't want to keep the money I'll make from the legit sale of the shares," he says, cutting tomatoes.

This is big, he loves that Hotel. It's the last thing that belonged to their dad.

"I feel like I have to let go of everything that connects me to Langa Nsele and the history between us and our parents. I just don't know what to do with

that money, it's a lot," he says and an idea hits me instantly.

"They took all that your father worked hard for, his whole legacy. Rebuild that for him, bring back his name and help those in need," I say and he narrows his eyes at me.

"Go on baby I'm listening," he's giving me his undivided attention.

"Start a foundation that will take children to school, that will contribute to homes of those who suffered strokes and heart attacks like your parents. Something to honor his memory, The Bheki Mabizela foundation," he is smiling from ear to ear.

"That's genius baby, my father was big on helping those in need. I wish he could come back just for a day to meet you, my friend whom I love so much," he says and I laugh at the last part.

"I would have also loved to meet your dad tsala," he throws his head back and roars with laughter. I can't

believe we've come so far in such a short space of time, but I wouldn't change anything with our journey.

"I know you've been complaining about being at home doing nothing, so maybe you can start doing some research on how to start a foundation and manage the whole thing. With the help of people who know these things of course," I start clapping excitedly, I finally have something to keep me busy. I lose my mind when they are at work.

"I would love to Mhambi, come here," I say, opening my arms and he doesn't hesitate. He comes back around and we hug, I kiss him all over his face and he is laughing carefree.

"God, Tebatso you make me so happy. I love you so much," he says, looking at me straight in the eyes.

Each time he tells me how much he loves me I get so emotional. I finally found a love that has passionate and desire, fire and ice. He loves and treats me exactly how I want and how I love back. I know it will



not always be hearts and flowers, and that's okay because I want to experience all seasons with no one else but him.

I take his lips into mine and give him a passionate kiss.

"I love you too babe," his eyes twinkle.

"I am still your friend, your best friend but I want to be your girlfriend officially too," he punches the air in victory.

"Sthandwa sami, I've been waiting for you to take me out of the friend zone," oh wow, we both laugh.

"These last three months have been beautiful, honest and real. May we forever be truthful with our feelings, our concerns and our love. You make me genuinely happy, you look at me now and I definitely see what you're feeling and thinking," he says and I melt into hot liquid.

Being with Mhambi is more than love for me, it's freedom as well. If I didn't meet him then I wouldn't

have had a taste of my freedom, of how good it feels to live my life for me. I will always love my mother and appreciate her for raising me singlehandedly but she stole away so many things for me. She stole my childhood, my choices and opportunities.

Hopefully one day she will accept my child and I and support my life choices, but until that day I will keep her where she is because I'm not trading off my happiness and freedom to have anyone in my life.

"You are my happiness personified. I wish Asavela was still alive for me to thank her for giving my CV to the supervisor. If I didn't set foot at the hotel I wouldn't have met the love of my life," I say and watch him melt.

"I wouldn't have been pissed that much if I knew that the love of my life was the one spilling coffee all over me," he reminds me and I laugh. I don't want to remember how scared I was that day.

"And that was the genesis of Tebatso and Mhambi. Now they've multiplied," I say pointing to my belly

and he thrusts into air. I'm left screaming with laughter.

"I don't joke around ma'am, first round equals to first born," That's so true.

"You should be proud. Now finish making us breakfast, the baby is hungry," he practically runs back to the stove to finish cooking. He's gonna have to warm up everything because wow.

**EPILOGUE**  
**8 MONTHS LATER**

"I'm not forgetting anything right?" Tebatso asks, looking around the house. She's nervous about leaving her baby, this will be the first time she's away from him since she gave birth five months ago.

"Tibi, everything is here. I have your list of things to do and how to do them. I promise we will be fine," Pheletso says, trying to reassure the panicking Tebatso.

Where is Mhambi? He should be dragging her out of here before she changes her mind about going.

"Babe, we will be okay with boy right?" Pheletso asks and they both turn to find Mzamo flying little Mpendulo around the lounge, Tebatso gasps in shock. She is about to change her mind about leaving, if Mzamo can turn her son into a fly machine before they leave what's he going to do when they are not here? Play wrestling with him?

"Baby, that was the pastor on the phone," Mhambi says, walking out of their bedroom. Mzamo just got saved by his brother from mama bear's wrath.

"And?" Pheletso asks first.

"And he says Tebatso's mother left the church a while ago and she promised to call and set up a meeting with us," relief floods through everyone.

Mhambi named his first son Mpendulo because that's exactly what he is to him, an answer from God. He prayed for a child and a family of his own for so long and he got answered with Tebatso who gave him a son he adores very much. There is nothing he wouldn't do for his boy, he wanted him to use his surname but that wasn't possible because he's not married to Tebatso and he didn't pay the damages to her mom.

He had to think of ways to make things right with the woman who gave birth to the love of his life. He went to talk to the pastor of the church Tebatso's mother attends and explained everything, the man

of God was shocked by everything and he promised to try and help them get through to Manana Morake. Mhambi is not only doing this so Mpendulo can use his surname, he is trying to mend fences because he wants to propose to the mother of his son soon and he needs a place to send his letter. Mzamo and Pheletso know about his plans but Tebatso is in the dark about it, she thinks her boyfriend is going out of his way to get Mpendulo to call Mabizela.

"That's great news my love," Tebatso says, going to hug Mhambi because she knows how much this means to him.

She misses her mother but she was not willing to fix things with her if it meant she had to give up her son, that's what her mother wanted after all.

"Now this one here can be a Mabizela officially not this borrowed surname. We are going to have the biggest ceremony for you boy," Uncle Mzamo says.

He is obsessed with his little nephew. It's always a problem when other people want to take Mpendulo

from him. Pheletso has fallen in love with him because of this mushy side he shows when he's around the baby. Mzamo fell for Pheletso a long time ago, how could he not? The woman is beautiful, smart, a beast in bed, a chef in the kitchen and she can put him in his place easily. They both won't admit that they are in love, Pheletso is afraid that Mzamo just wants it casual and Mzamo is scared of being hurt again. Good thing Mpendulo's parents have a plan to get them to be truthful with each other.

"Guys you need to leave or you'll miss your flight," they are going to Cape Town, Mhambi wants a do over of the trip. This time there aren't any secrets, just a couple in love and hoping to have a great time.

"And please come back pregnant, I want more of these little humans," Mzamo says and his brother smiles widely. He is going to be on top of Tebatso this whole trip, things have been slow in the bedroom since Mpendulo's arrival. He misses his sex crazed girlfriend and he's hoping to welcome her back this weekend.

"You and Pheletso are next, why do you think I'm letting you babysit my son? You're practicing," Tebatso says and Mzamo freezes. He's not ready for one that will be solely his responsibility.

"My love let's go," Mhambi grabs her handbag, their luggage is already in the boot.

"Let me kiss my boy for the last time before we leave," Mzamo brings the baby to her and she plays with him a little. She never thought she could love anyone this much.

"Let me breastfeed him then we will leave," Mhambi quickly takes their son from her and gives him to his brother.

"Mpendulo hasn't been on breast milk for two weeks now babe, we started him on formula so we can leave for this trip," she knows, it's just so hard leaving him.



"Look at me," Tebatso looks at her boyfriend, tears already falling from her eyes.

"You're not a bad mom for leaving him for a weekend, you deserve a break too. We aren't leaving him with strangers, he is with his uncle and aunt. Both our numbers, the pediatrician, the hotel front desk are on speed dial on their phone. He's going to be okay," Mhambi says slowly and Tebatso is nodding vigorously.

"Okay, let's go," he kisses her lips and takes her hand.

"Bye guys," Tebatso says and they leave the house.

Mhambi opens the driver's door for her and she gets in before he closes and rounds to go get in the passenger seat. They are driving to the airport in her BMW X6, Mhambi got it for her as a push present. She didn't question why he suddenly wanted her to learn how to drive in the last three months of her pregnancy. It still didn't click in her head when he took her to the license department and she got a

license without even getting in the car. In South Africa you pay for cola cola and you get your driver's license, warning, the coke doesn't come cheap though.

"Mama ka boy," as she is now affectionately known as.

"Baby," she says, strapping her seatbelt.

"You've been an amazing mother to our son, I know it's hard to leave him but I want you to have a good time. You're still Tebatso before you're his mother, okay?" He says and she takes a deep breath.

"You're right, I love you,"

"I love you too," She starts the engine and reverses out of the parking space.

***THE END***