



BAD GIRLS' CLUB

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PROLOGUE

“Is it bad that I never made love?
No, I never did it
But is sure know how to fuck
I’ll be your bad girl, I’ll prove it to ya
I can’t promise that I’ll be good to ya
‘Cause I have some issues
I won’t commit, no, not havin’ it
But at least I can admit
That I’ll be bad, no, to you
Yeah I’ll be good in bed
But I’ll be bad to you”

The song is playing in the background as she slowly moves her waist around in circles. She has on a thong and nothing on top which makes for beautiful viewing pleasure for all the men in the room who have gathered for a show.

Wind and dip.

Wind and dip.

She slowly works her body.

There’s so much smoke in here making it almost impossible for her to see him – ALMOST. Rich men and their bloody cigars. Her firm breasts are standing tall and her firm behind doing the most. All those hours she puts in the gym are working well for her.

She works her magic on the pole and she hears gasps here and there which only fuel her up even further. The men all have their eyes glued on her with smiles and smirks plastered across their faces but his is a minutely different. She gets down and slowly strides towards him. He has his intense gaze fixed on her while he puffs on his cigar. The smoke adds a little bit of suspense in this world only they’re in. She gets to him and stands with her legs slightly

opened. Her heart beats out of her chest as he runs his finger up and down my thigh causing her to shiver.

He motions for her to turn around and she does so seductively. He can feel himself getting hotter by the second. His hand is slowly moving up and down her butt, savouring the moment. He's gentle, too gentle for her liking. She is not used to men taking their time to caress her like he is doing in this moment.

He stands up and his mighty presence shrinks her, making her feel like a non-existent particle. His bulge against her back is awakening things in her. If she could she would pounce on him right there and then but unfortunately the situation does not allow her to. He gently runs his hand up from her stomach all the way to her breast giving it a gentle squeeze before moving it to her neck. He chokes her gently whilst giving her earlobe a light bite. An involuntary moan escapes her mouth. In this moment she feels like the universe is against her.

"You like that?" He asks softly against her ear.

"Yeah." She says breathlessly. Her body is shaking slightly with desire. Her knees feel as if though they're going to give in any second now.

"Thank you for the dance." He says then lets her go. She nods lightly. He adjusts his pants to accommodate his bulge before settling back in his seat. She walk away slowly giving him one last look at her behind. He continues coolly puffing on his cigar as he watches her disappear from his sight.

She grabs her gown and fastens it around her body.

"Friend." She turns around and finds Molemo looking at her with a smile on her face. She walks to her and gives her a tight squeeze. She has a special spot for Molemo in her heart. They met at work when Molemo started working at the bar and the connection was instant.

"Hey love." She kisses her cheek then lets go of her.

"I hear those men can't stop complimenting your ass." Betty chuckles while shaking her head. In her head she cooks up some cocky response but decides against it.

"Yeah well." She shrugs her shoulders. She looks unaffected by what Molemo just said.

"Come see me when you're done for the day ne. I have to go serve those grumpy men their drinks." Molemo says.

“Leave before you get in trouble.”

“Later.” She spans her ass and walks out just as Madame walks in.

“Betty you’re on glory hole duty.” Betty gives her a blank look. Madame shrugs and walks out. Betty gulps down the remainder of her wine then makes her way to the room. She hopes that this time is better than last.

“You look thoroughly ate.” Mandy says as Betty walk in causing her to roll her eyes. “Roll them all you want oksalayo.” Mandy says with a slight chuckle.

“Waphapha weitsi.”

“Just like you. So was the dick good?” Betty shrugs nonchalantly. “Haai tell me phela.” She says taking a sip of her champagne. She really knows how to guzzle it down.

“It was average.” Betty says as she drops her gown. Mandy gazes at her with lust in her eyes but quickly dismisses it.

“Just average?” Mandy asks.

“Yep.” Betty answers as she wiggles into her jeans. She has that typical black girl struggle with jeans.

“Why I never get glory hole duty I don’t know. Like the thrill of having him pound the shit out of you without touching you yeses. Ngithi your ass stuck on that wall and just taking the dick.” She squeezes her extra juicy D sized breasts and moans causing Betty to groan. She looks at Betty with a smirk and steps closer. She has seen how Betty looks at her sometimes and she has concluded that she has some sort of effect on her.

“Mandy stoop.” She stops and shrugs then goes back to her original spot.

“The day I eat you out friend hmmm.” Mandy says as she downs her drink.

“You’re such a hoe.”

“I was made for this life man. Anyway I have a date tomorrow night with that yummy coloured guy.” Mandy says. It’s silent for a few seconds before Betty clears her throat to speak.

“Mr Dippenaar?” She asks with shock written all over her face. Betty can’t believe what Mandy has just told her.

“Yes that one.” Mandy responds nonchalantly.

“What happened to not being seen with married men outside of this place?” They have a rule against getting together with their clients outside of work. They know the risk of bumping into wives is huge.

“Argh man he’s just taking me out for dinner that’s all.”

“Mandy.” Betty says hoping that Mandy will reconsider her decision to go on this date.

“Betty please tuu.” Once Mandy has made up her mind there is no changing it.

“Hmmm.” Clearly defeated Betty cuts the conversation.

“You need dick in your life.” They chortle. Betty fixes her wig then grabs her bag.

“Bye baby I’ll see you tomorrow.” She blows her a kiss.

“I love you be safe.”

“I love you too nawe be safe. Sharp.” She walks out passing by the bar to check on Molemo but she’s told she’s done for the day. She was hoping she would catch her before she left.

Betty is waiting for the elevator when she suddenly feels his mighty presence. She turns her head slightly and finds him standing not so far from her. Heat travels all throughout her body. The doors open. She steps in and he follows her in. She can feel his intense gaze on me and her stomach churns. His presence does things to her that she can’t explain.

The doors open and she step out with him hot on her tail.

This underground parking is dodgy and she is actually grateful that he’s walking behind her. She gets to my car and she can feel that he’s closer.

He cages her in between the car and her breathing escalates. He has this effect on her that she really has no control over. He plants a wet kiss on her neck and she moans as his warm lips against her skin sends signals straight down to her quim. His hand running up and down her arms gently sending tingles throughout her whole body.

“Bye Betty.” He says softly against her ear. All she can do is nod. She can’t believe what just happened.

He opens her door and she slides in then buckles up.

She sees him through her rear-view mirror standing there watching her as she drives away. She battles in her head as to what she will do with this pool between her legs.

ONE

“You’re already guzzling down your stuff so early though Mandy?” Betty says with shock evident in her words.

“Phela some of us need that extra boost.”

“You just like alcohol that’s it.” Mandy shrugs and downs her drink causing Betty to chuckle. Mandy and her champagne darling are inseparable. For as long as Betty has known her she’s been sipping on the right kind of things as she calls them.

“Your ass looks extra today.” Mandy says checking her out.

“Squats lover squats.” Betty demonstrates how she gets her butt looking the way it does causing Mandy to chuckle lowly.

“You are serious about your job ne? As long as they have a hole to poke and jugs to rest on then I’m good.”

“I love your yellow tits.” Betty didn’t intend on that coming out. Mandy smirks.

“Are you ever going to let me eat you out mara?” Mandy asks while she refills her flute then takes a sip. Some of it runs out the mouth and travels from the corner of her mouth all the way down to the cleavage. Betty has the right mind of licking it off right now.

“I need to go find Molemo.” Betty practically runs out of there. Mandy has some sort of effect on her and she just doesn’t get it sometimes.

“Hey is Molemo in today?” Betty asks the lady behind the bar.

“Yeah I’ll get her for you.” She walks away and Betty settles at the bar. Molemo smiles when she sees her and Betty can’t help but return it. She’s a beautiful soul this one. She shouldn’t be here. This place is not for girls like her.

“Hey.”

“Well hello gorgeous look at you.” Her afro is out to play today. She has that kind of hair that everyone envies. Betty has always expressed how much she wants to chop it off.

“Thank you so do you.”

“Mxm.” She chuckles. “So how did registration go?”

“I got in.” Betty squeals and jumps on her.

“I’m so proud of you baby girl.” She says genuinely. From the first time she met Molemo she just knew in her that she had to look out for her.

“Thank you. Now I stress about funds.” Betty frowns. Molemo is only working this job just to get herself through life. See life doesn’t play nice with some people and it feels like it’s always the nicest people that have it hard. Her mother is an alcoholic and so she basically had to raise herself. She got the job at the bar a few months ago. She wants to start stripping because the money is better but Betty is having none of it. That side of things is not for the faint hearted. It’s not for nice girls.

“You know I got you.” Betty says but Molemo shakes her head. “Molemo just accept my help tuu. I told you that you’re my baby sister and I hate that you’re still working here but I understand.”

“Betty you don’t get it. I’ve always had to have my own back.” Betty heaves a sigh.

“I get it and I’m saying sometimes you need to accept that some people will care about you. Now I’m going to pay for the first semester and you better nail it.” She smiles and kisses her cheek.

“You’re the best prostitute I’ve ever come across.” Betty chortles. She isn’t fazed by anyone calling her a prostitute. It’s who she is and she’s proud of it.

“Waphapha wena.”

“I love you. Now let me get back to work before I get in trouble.”

“Love you too boo. Bye.” Betty leaves her to get on with her work and heads to her room. Madame walks in and Betty look at her blankly.

“You have a private dance request and a sit in.” Betty raises her eyebrow. She’s never heard of a sit in before.

“A what?”

“A sit in. He wants you to watch once you’ve given him his dance.” Betty chuckles. Some men are freaks.

“Okay.” She walks out. This is going to be a first for her. She’s never had to watch anyone before. Hmm should be interesting she says to herself. She puts on her lace thong and a matching bra and finishes the look off with her red thigh high boots. A red lip and that’s it. Showtime.

“Driver roll up the partition please

Driver roll up the partition please

I don't you need seeing 'Yonce on her knees

Took forty-five minutes to get all dressed up

We ain't even gonna make it to this club

Now my mascara running, red lipstick smudged

Oh he so horny, yeah he wants to fuck

He bucked all my buttons, he ripped my blouse

He Monica Lewinski'd all on my gown

Oh there daddy, daddy didn't bring the towel

Oh baby, baby we slow it down

Took forty-five minutes to get all dressed up

We ain't even gonna make it to this club

Take all of me

I just wanna be that girl you like, girl you like

The kind of girl you like, girl you like

Take all of me

I just wanna be that girl you like, girl you like

The kind of girl you like, girl you like

Is right here with me

Driver roll up the partition fast

Driver roll up the partition fast

Over there, I swear I saw them cameras flash
Handprints and footprints on my glass
Handprints and good grips all on my ass
Private show with the music blasting
He like to call me Peaches when we get this nasty
Red wine drip, talk that trash
Chauffer eavesdropping trying not to crash”

Betty struts into the room locking eyes with him. She should've known that it was him. He's the only one that ever wants just a dance. Something passes through his eyes and she's reminded of their moment outside of her car. How he left her wanting him. How she had to get home and well let's just say her hand shower did the right things.

Her shoulders up high and her back straight she swings her hips left and right as she walks with one foot in front of the other. He licks his lips and she just wants to pounce on him whoooah Betty that's not what you're here she reprimands herself. She glides her hands along her body. Betty stops when she reaches her breasts and gives them a tight squeeze and a moan escapes her mouth. Partition is also getting her in the mood.

They're still locking eyes and she gives him a slight smile. He chuckles and leans back on his chair. Very confident. She struts around the chair and she can feel him trying to move with me. She has her hands on his shoulder and his one hand is behind the chair and his other one is on his crotch. Betty stands in front of him with her legs slightly open. He runs his hand up and down the inside of her thigh and Betty can feel herself getting wet by the second.

She slowly lowers herself onto his lap and wraps her legs around the chair. She has her arms around his neck and his hands are holding onto her ass for dear life. Her lady on his pulsing bulge is driving her insane. She moves her waist around in circles and their mates continue having a conversation.

He gently licks her lip.

She wants him.

She wants more.

She slowly gets off his lap and spread his legs then stand between them. Her hands are on his knees as she slowly dips her body all the way to the ground and come up slowly. She

winds and dips making sure never to break eye contact. As she gives her boobs a squeeze then moves her hands down her body he looks at her with a smirk. His eyes have darkened and his bulge ready to play. Betty slowly moves towards him and stand inches away from him.

She keeps moving her hands up and down her body and she can see it's affecting him. Betty turns around and she hears him grunt. He has an obsession with her ass and it's quite clear. She bends over a little and shakes it causing him to chuckles but she has come to know that that is not a friendly chuckle. Betty slowly gets down and puts her hands on the floor and continues backing it up. Her ass on his crotch is pure bliss. She gets up slowly and in on swift move she's back on his lap with his hot breath against her ear.

"I want to fuck you Betty." He gently bites her lobe sending shivers down her spine.

"Then why don't you?" She asks breathlessly. He chuckles and places a wet kiss on her neck.

"I can't Betty." He sucks on her neck and she tilts her head giving him more space. He's squeezing her boobs and sucking on her neck and his pulsing mate is not making things easier for Betty.

A knock comes through the door and he curses under his breath before letting her go.

"Ours ends here but you can make yourself comfortable on the couch." She gets off his lap and struts her way to the couch.

Betty settles on the couch and watches him take his clothes off. His dick springs free and she gasp. He looks at her with a smirk and strokes it as he walks toward the door. He opens and Betty hears as gasp before she walks in. Fucken hell Mandy gets to have this dick before me? Betty screams in her head. That's just fucked up, she thinks to herself. He puts on a condom then starts sucking on Mandy's neck and Betty's bean throbs. This is not fair. Betty wants him. She wants his black juicy dick deep inside of her. She wants him to tear her up. He's been teasing her for months now, so feels like she deserves the dick.

"Ahhhhhh." Mandy moans bringing Betty back to reality. He has Mandy on all fours and he's deep inside of her. He groans. Betty wants to cry. Her body is shaking with need. He's fucking Mandy hard and fast. Mandy's boobs are also doing the most right now. Those big ass tits will be the death of Betty. "Shiiit yes daddy harder." Mandy moans louder. Betty can't take this. Her hand travels down to my vagina and she get to work. She needs to release.

"Riiight there daady... yeeee. Shit your fucken cock feels so good inside my cunt." Oh Mandy and dirty talk are the best of friends. "Fuck me right there. Yees yess yess." She screams and Betty can see her knees give in. He holds her up and continues thrusting then groans.

Great now it's my turn Betty says to herself. She closes her eyes and imagines him pounding her inside out and just at that thought she comes undone. Betty rides out her wave before slowly opening her eyes. He's standing in front of her with a smirk plastered across his face.

"You're very beautiful Betty." He helps her up then places a kiss on her cheek. Betty leaves the room feeling confused. Now she needs to face Mandy. Bitch is going to go on and on for years about this, Betty thinks to herself.

TWO

“Bitch what the hell just happened?” Betty chuckle as she flop herself on the couch. She’s horny and mad as hell. It was the first time she ever did something like that. Sure she’s been in the orgy room before and she’s had a threesome but that? She has never.

“I don’t know.”

“Giiiiirlll phela that’s Mr Dance.” Mandy exclaims. She has a nickname for mystery man being Mr Dance because all Betty ever does for him is dance. He’s been coming in here for months and not once has he touched her or any of the girls, well that was until now.

“Haai.” Betty waves Mandy off.

“I’m sorry I had the dick before you ne.” Betty shakes her head. “Come on Betty.”

“Hawu kanti what did I say?”

“I can see you’re mad. Is it because you’re horny?”

“Nope.” Mandy chuckles and takes a sip of her drink.

“No for real though I’m sorry but you know a bitch gotta get paid.” Betty chortles. Mandy is a hoe of note.

“Yeah yeah I know.”

“Now let me take care of that itch for you.”

“Haai stay away from me.”

“We’re all just scared to ask but I’m going to take one for the team.” Betty looks at her with an eyebrow raised. “Are you lesbian?” The room is suddenly filled with Betty’s laugh. What the hell? She says to herself.

“What the hell Mandy? No actually what the fuck?” Betty is puzzled.

“I know I have that effect on you. Come on okay maybe you’re not lesbian but you’re horny and I have that effect on you. Let me have a taste.” Mandy says while holding a steady gaze on Betty.

“Stay away from me.” Mandy slowly makes her way to Betty and she stands frozen. Mandy pulls her closer and runs her tongue over Betty’s lips then gently bites her bottom lip.

“Mandy.” Betty doesn’t know if she wants her to stop. Actually no she’s too horny but damn it this is wrong. She doesn’t want to do that to Mandy but she’s not in control of her body right now.

“Let me take care of you baby.” She pulls Betty closer and gently places her lips on hers.

Her kiss is gentle and unhurried. Mandy’s hands are firmly on Betty’s ass and Betty can feel herself getting weaker. Mandy has always had this effect on Betty. From the first time Betty laid her eyes on Mandy her clit just went crazy. The way her juicy D’s just hang there, her flat stomach that’s not so flat but is very flat and don’t get her started on that juicy ass. The way it shakes when she’s doing her thing on that pole. Lort it should be illegal. Mandy’s fingers find Betty’s clit and she jump but Mandy pulls her closer. Betty hates how sensitive that shit is. She always feels like hers is ten times more sensitive than others. Mandy lays Betty on her back and rips her thong off. She moves from her lips and finds her pussy and gets right into it.

“Shiiit Mandyyyyyy.” Betty is holding onto Mandy’s head for dear life. She’s sucking and kissing and biting and Betty is a moaning mess.

“I love your fat juicy pussy baby.” She murmurs against it and the vibrations just send Betty into the land of the cummings. Her legs are shaking and her back is arched so much so that she feels like she’s reaching for the ceiling. She continues sucking while she rides out her wave. Well damn Mandy, she shouts. Betty eventually calms down from her high and Mandy comes up to Betty’s lips and she moans the minute she tastes herself on Mandy’s lips.

“I’m not lesbian just curious.” Betty murmurs against Mandy’s lips.

“Well you can be curious with me any day baby. Your pussy is life.” She gives Betty a soft peck then gets off of her and helps her up. Mandy winks at Betty then grabs her glass and walks out. Betty clean herself up then find a new set and put that on.

“Shit you did the things tonight. That fat ass tip that you got from that man? Damn.” Betty chuckles and zips her jacket up

“Yeah well it really isn’t such a big deal.” Mandy rolls her eyes.

“Konje wena you have nice life problems. You’re such a mystery friend.” Betty shakes her head and grabs her bag.

“And you’re dramatic.” Betty says.

“No really. I know the money here is good ne but that beamer? Hmmm.” Betty chortles.

“Like I said you’re dramatic. I just suck dick really hard that’s all.” She winks at Mandy and walk out.

It’s the end of the day and Betty just needs a bath, glass of red and a good read. Yes prostitutes read. They are human after all right? Betty is well aware of the stereotype surrounding prostitutes. It’s the same with car guards. Betty loves reading in fact if it were up to her she would’ve been some book reviewer or something along those lines.

“Leaving already?” Molemo says. Betty loves her innocence. It’s sad that life dealt her the worst hand but she’s strong and she’s making it work and for that Betty is proud of her.

“Yeah do you need a ride?” Betty asks.

“No double shift.” Molemo answers.

“Ahhha but don’t break your back akere Molemo.”

“I promise I won’t.”

“Come visit me next weekend that’s if you’re off.” She squeals almost breaking the glass she has in her hand. “Calm down.” Molemo puts the glass down and does a mini dance. Betty can’t help but laugh.

“Thank you sis.” Betty nods lightly.

“I’m not coming in tomorrow so I’ll see you Friday.”

“I’m not working on Friday so Monday it is sis.”

“Have a super weekend. Love you.”

“Love you too.” Betty leans over the counter and counter and place a peck on Molemo’s cheek.

He’s sitting in the corner booth and as usual he’s puffing on his cigar. Actually doesn’t he work? He’s always here. ALWAYS, Betty thinks to herself. He gives Betty a light nod and she returns it. Betty walks towards the elevator and just like the other the day he’s right behind

her. His presence always shrinks her. She's a long girl but in his presence she feels beyond small.

They walk into the elevator and silence takes over. He's still puffing on his cigar and well her clit is still throbbing.

"So Betty." She looks up at him and he has on his soft look this time.

"Yes." she says softly.

"Have I ever told you that you're beautiful?" Betty nods shyly. This man right here has the power to get her to agree to everything he says struu. "I can't hear you Betty."

"Yes." He moves closer to her and uses his arm to cage her in. He steps closer and looks her dead in the eye. Her stomach. Oh her poor stomach can't handle the zoo that is happening in there. The lift doors open and he doesn't move. "The doors." Betty says breathlessly. He lowers his head and gives her a soft peck. She closes her eyes and takes in his presence. Lort death is upon me, she says dramatically in her head. She opens her eyes and finds his looking at her with nothing but lust.

She doesn't know why but her eyes move down and boy his bulge, hmmm that's all she can say. He makes way for her and she walks out. He walks besides her and keeps stealing glances at her until they reach her car. She unlocks the car and he opens the door for her. She slides in and he buckles her up.

"I'll see you on Friday Betty." How did he know she's not coming in tomorrow? Well damn stalker tendencies.

"Okay."

"I'm sorry you had to watch me fuck Mandy." Her breath hitches and her clit does the dance. She nods lightly. He closes the door and watches as she drives off. Modimo that man is going to kill her. She needs to get home and take out her toy stash and play.

Ahhh home. The lift doors open and she walk in then proceeds to turn on the under floor heating and kick offs her shoes, she'll see to them later she says in the head. She throws her bag on the counter and grab a flute and heads to her cellar. She channels her inner Mandy and grab a bottle of champagne darling. This cellar was her personal touch in this space. It was a bedroom when she moved in here but it was useless to her because no one ever visits and she has that executive suite she uses for 'guests'.

She throws herself on the couch and turn on the TV. Her space is all white with couches of black, grey and random pops colours. Originally she wanted the whole thing all white but her interior decorator was having none of it. So she had to compromise and she must admit this looks so much better than her white nonsense. The high windows complimented by this Aztec inspired chandelier.

Her phone vibrates. It's a message from an unknown number.

"Betty I hope you got home safe. P.S I can't wait for the day I get to fuck your brains out."
She throws her phone aside and squeezes her thighs together.

"Fuck this man."

THREE

Betty has been lying awake for a few hours. Her mind is racing with thoughts of Mr Dance. The main thought being how he actually got hold of her number.

In all the times she has danced for him he has never, not once asked for her number. Was he some sort of stalker? One of those men that lurk in the dark that only comes out into the light to have their way with women then throw them into the claws of death? That thought sends chills down her spine. He's not that bad, she says to herself. Is she trying to convince herself that her perfect stranger isn't one of 'those' then again how sure could she be? She has barely had a conversation with the man.

Her phone pings breaking her out of her suspicious thoughts.

"Good morning sis I hope you have a great day. Please rest just stay in bed all day okay? Great LOVE YOU." Betty breaks out into a full-blown grin. The message from Molemo has just set the mood for her entire day.

"Thank you love. I sure will. Le wena don't work yourself to death. Love you too my angel." She presses send then rolls out of bed and settles on the floor. It's her morning ritual. Sit on the floor in complete silence before taking on the day. After a few minutes have passed she gets up then heads to the bathroom.

She examines herself in the mirror for a bit before knitting her brows. She looks horrible. Too much champagne can do that to you. She washes her face then brushes her teeth after. She's still looking at herself and she can't help but wonder if this is where she thought she would be. Growing up in the kind of environment that she did, her life choices would be frowned upon.

She shakes away her thoughts and finishes up then heads to the kitchen. Part of looking great is eating healthy. Betty isn't much of a health freak but her profession requires her to have energy and stamina so eating healthy and exercising has to be part of her everyday life.

She pulls out her ingredients for her green smoothie. It doesn't taste good but it gets the job done. She downs it while making funny faces and gagging in between. At the back of her mind she's thinking about all the reasons why she can't vomit this disgusting drink. She finally downs the last few drops and burps afterwards. She sets the glass in the sink then moves to her fridge to look for something to eat.

There's nothing.

She heaves a sigh, closes the fridge and walks to her bedroom. She makes the bed then rushes to the bathroom to take a quick shower. She finishes off, gets dressed then heads out.

If there is one thing that Betty hates more than anything it's the mall but she was grateful that it was a Thursday and it wasn't month end yet so she knew the mall wouldn't be that packed. Betty planned on having breakfast then doing her grocery shopping after.

Finding parking was a breeze for Betty. She thanked her lucky stars because she knew that it wouldn't be so packed inside.

Betty requested a corner table because she wasn't in the mood to have people look at her in pity assuming that she'd been stood up. In Betty's world there was nothing wrong with a person spoiling themselves with a well deserves breakfast for one but unfortunately in this world we live in dining by yourself means you're a loner.

The waiter brings Betty her food. She thanks him then says a mini prayer before digging in. As soon as the bacon filled croissant touches her tongue she moans. Her taste buds are going insane at the moment. She continues having her meal with moans in-between until she finishes.

Betty is pushing her trolley minding her own when her eyes spot him. He's wearing a black ripped jean with a black t-shirt and a black biker jacket. He looks effortlessly handsome. Betty has never seen him in anything else other than a suit. Heat spreads throughout her body as she continues to ogle him. A beautiful woman walks to him with something in her hand and throws it in their trolley. Mr Dance says something to her and she breaks into laughter.

The woman is beautiful even Betty is captivated by her beauty. Her skin looks like it has been kissed by the sun and her freckles seem to enhance her beauty. She is wearing a beautiful baby bump that has her glowing. The pregnancy looks like it agrees with her. He puts his hand on her stomach and rubs it gently while she smiles.

Betty can't help but feel a pang of jealousy. She can't help but wonder why he has been coming onto her so strong if he had a wife waiting for him at home. Sure most of her clients are married men but all they ever did with her was fuck her then leave. None of the things that he'd been doing. Why he would even cheat on such a beautiful woman was beyond what she could fathom.

Mr Dance and his Mrs were oblivious to the fact that Betty was standing there watching them. She finally gathers enough strength to carry on with her shopping.

As she moves from aisle to aisle she sees them walking towards her. Everything in her screams 'turn around' but it seems like there is a disconnection between her body and mind. She sucks in a deep breath and pushes her trolley.

For a few seconds Betty's mind is preoccupied. She crashes into something and realises that she just bumped into Mrs Dance.

"I am so sorry." Betty says in a panic.

"It's okay, I wasn't looking where I was going." Mrs Dance sounds like a humble soul Betty thinks to herself.

"I hope you aren't hurt." Betty says with her eyes looking at the baby bump.

"No I'm okay really." A sense of relief washes over Betty. She nods and apologises once more. She hadn't realised Mr Dance wasn't in their midst until he spoke.

"Is this brand okay?" He asks his Mrs.

"Yes." She responds in her angelic voice.

"Betty?" That came out as a cross between a statement and a question.

"You two know each other?" Mrs Dance asks with a hint of amusement in her voice. Betty suddenly feels small. She regrets wearing the extra tight shorts that she has on.

"Yes we do." Mr Dance responds in confidence shocking Betty. Mrs Dance nods and walks away. In this moment Betty feels bad. She can't help but wonder if Mrs Dance knows about her Mr's shenanigans.

"Hi." Betty says softly.

"You look good." He has his usual intense gaze on her but this time it feels different. Maybe it has everything to do with the fact that they're in public and that his companion might be looking at them.

"Thank you." Betty says shyly. Even in 'odd' places he still makes her feel all heated up.

"I have to go now but I'll see you on Saturday?" She shakes her head causing him to frown.
"What do you mean no?"

"I mean." She pauses and sighs. "I'll see you on Saturday." He gives her his signature smirk then nods.

“Bye Betty.” He walks away pushing his trolley leaving Betty heated. She knows it’s wrong but she can’t help it. She goes about her business with thoughts of Mr Dance running through her mind.

Betty is manoeuvring around her kitchen when her phone rings. She glances at it before clenching her jaws. She goes back to pots while shaking her body gently to the music that is playing softly through the speakers. Her phone disturbs her again. She heaves a sigh while staring at her flashing screen. She has no desire whatsoever to answer the call. The flashing stops but she doesn’t put the phone away. She feels wetness on her face. She’s crying. She vigorously wipes her tears then heads to her cellar to grab a bottle of wine to calm her thoughts and emotions.

FOUR

Puffy eyes and a stiff body are the order of the day for Betty. She spent her night drinking her emotions away after she received the mysterious phone calls. Betty eventually switched her phone and had her one woman party forgetting that she has work the following day.

She's been in the shower for close to an hour now but instead of feeling better, she feels worse. She eventually finishes off then makes her way to the kitchen in her birthday suit. She prepares her morning drink and downs it then heads back to the bedroom to get ready for the day ahead.

Betty is in her private room at the club doing her makeup when Madame walks in.

"Betty." Betty looks at her through the mirror. As much as Madame is the boss she knows that Betty runs the show. She is the best stripper she has.

"Yeah."

"You have a private dance request."

"Is it him?"

"Yes."

"No sit in today?"

"No just a dance." Betty nods. Madame walks out leaving Betty to get ready. Frustrations is what Betty is feeling at the moment. She hates the fact that he knows that he has power over her. She can't refuse to dance for him because it's her job and as much as she doesn't need it at the moment she enjoys it.

She finishes off then makes her way to the assigned room.

He's sitting on the couch puffing on his cigar. Betty wonders if his lungs are still intact because she has never seen him without a cigar in his hand.

"Hello Betty."

"Hi." She says not even attempting to move from her spot. She can't bring herself to engage in anything with this man knowing very well that she has seen him with his wife. His pregnant wife at that. She understands that men come in to blow off steam all the time however in this case it's different.

"Why are you standing there?" She struts her way over to him and he pulls her onto his lap.

"You requested a dance." She says. He places soft wet kisses on her neck sending shivers through her whole body. In true Mr Dance style he is gentle with her.

"I want something else now." He sucks on her neck and a soft moan escapes her mouth.

"What do you want?" She asks breathlessly.

"I want you to suck my dick." Betty lazily turns to look at him and he has a smirk plastered across his face.

"Okay." Betty says then licks her lips. It's her job after all.

Betty moves her hand from his thigh all the way up to his crotch. She slowly starts massaging his cock and balls outside of his pants. She keeps grabbing and squeezing then releasing the pressure. Mr Dance has his eyes tightly shut as he takes in what Betty is doing to him.

She gets off his lap then helps him to his feet and pulls his pants down along with his briefs. His cock springs free poking Betty on her abdomen. She has her eyes on his as she trails her finger around his crotch. He has his index finger in his mouth in attempts to stop himself from groaning out loud.

Betty falls to her knees whilst still locking eyes with him.

"How do you want it?" She asks seductively with his cock in her hands. He chuckles lowly then smirks. They have a conversation with their eyes and Betty nods. She places wet kisses all around his crotch then finds his balls and takes them in her mouth one at a time. Mr Dance is groaning out loud which motivates Betty.

She gently kisses him up his length until she reaches his mushroom head. She runs the tip of her tongue at the top of his head and he whimpers.

"Ahhh Betty." That's all the more motivation Betty needs. She appreciates it when these men squirm under her control.

“You like?” She asks repeating what she just did.

“Yes.” He says breathlessly. She flicks her tongue around his head and he goes insane. She sucks on his head while running her hand up and down the rest of his length. He’s groaning uncontrollably and Betty takes the opportunity to take all of him down her throat.

“Shiiiiit Bet..t.y.” She deeps throats him and the feeling is one he has never experienced before. She sucks and licks and gently grazes her teeth on his dick. He has his hand in her hair encouraging her to keep going.

She goes faster and sloppier and louder. He’s close she can feel it so she pushes her lips together around his cock and moves up and down slowly.

“Shiiiiit.” His grip on her hair gets tighter as he shots his load down her throat. Like the bad girl that she is Betty swallows then licks him clean.

“You like that?” She asks in her innocent voice. Mr Dance feels like life has been sucked out of him. He has never.

They’re sitting on the couch when his phone rings.

“Sis?” He listens then frowns.

“Okay I’ll come through later. Sharp.” He hangs up and turns to look at Betty.

“You were saying?” He says.

“Don’t you work?” She asks. He chuckles then frowns.

“Why?”

“Because you’re always here.”

“You’re also always here mos.” He responds.

“Well I work here.” She says back with attitude.

“Do you enjoy what you do Betty?” She frowns. Is he judging her? She thinks to herself.

“I do.” He nods lightly.

“If you weren’t doing this what would you be doing?”

“What makes you think that this was my second choice?” Betty is clearly getting worked up.

“So this was your first choice?” Betty chuckles and gets up.

“Thank you for your business.” With that said she walks out. She can’t believe that she heard a hint of judgment in his voice.

Mandy walks into Betty’s room and flops herself on the couch.

“I just had the smallest dick I’ve ever seen.” She says causing Betty to chortle.

“Small you say?”

“Friend? It was a waste shame but it still adds to my pay check so heey.” Betty continues chortling.

“Exactly.” Betty says. “How was your date?”

“It was good.” Mandy responds with a smile.

“Hmmm.”

“Stop with your judgmental shit all these men are married.”

“Okay Mandy. Bye Mandy.” Betty makes her way to the central space for her show.

“Yes baby.” Cheers and whistles erupt all around the room as Betty works her magic on the pole. Mr Dance is watching as Betty spreads her legs on that pole.

“Shit I want her all tied up.” One man says.

“I know right I’m sure her cunt can swallow this big dick of mine nicely.” Another responds. Mr Dance feels himself getting worked up listening to these men talking about Betty. He gets up and walks out leaving the show before it even gets anywhere.

As usual Mr Dance is waiting for Betty to knock off as always. He knows how dangerous the life of a prostitute is. That's why he always waits for her to knock off and walks her to her car. He goes inside to look for her but he's told she just went down. He rushes to the underground to look for her but he's too late. She's already left.

FIVE

It's been a week since Betty last saw Mr Dance and it's a bit unusual because she is accustomed to seeing him on a daily basis. A part of her misses him but she will not admit to it because she has a rule against having any sort of emotional connection with her clients.

She's just finished dancing for the day and she is relaxing in her room waiting for her last client of the day who will only be there just before knock off time. She lies on the couch and takes in the music that is playing softly through her speakers. A certain song comes on and her heart aches. She quickly changes it and tries to musk her feelings.

Mandy walks in with a glass in her hand as usual.

"Great dance as always friend." Mandy says as she throws herself on the couch.

"Thanks love. How's your day looking?" Betty asks.

"I have two clients left. I just hope the two remaining ones won't be disappointing because I really need something interesting." Mandy is unapologetic about her love for dick which is something that Betty admires.

"Nigerian dick?" Mandy looks at Betty as if she just grew horns.

"No nope had that once and I couldn't pee for the longest time. Just Venda dick will do really or maybe Sotho dick I hear your Sotho brothers are packing." Betty laughs out loud.

"Yes they are. Well the ones that I've had anyway. I remember this one though who didn't even wait for me to get slightly lubed up. Gosh plus he was a 2 minute noodle." Mandy chortles.

"Small dick and early ejaculation is a waste of my kegels really. I mean I squeeze and squeeze and for what? Haai." She throws her drink back then refills.

"Mandy." Betty says softly.

"Yeah?"

"Have you ever had a thing for a client?" Mandy nods lightly.

"His name was Tebogo and he was the most handsome client I had. He became a regular and the sex was just bomb. He had my body hanging upside down, I was flipped like a pancake gosh he did the damn things. He started taking me out on dates and shopping sprees and you know how stupid feelings are, they like to get involved in things that don't involve them. We both fell for each other and it was downhill from there. He became

jealous each time a client would look my way it got to a point where he wanted me to stop working and live off of his money but I couldn't. What would happen when he got tired of me? I couldn't do that to myself. So I told him that I couldn't be exclusive with him. He threw a fit and walked out with my heart." Betty feels her heart sink to the pit of her stomach. Mandy has tears coming out of her eyes and that is a heart breaking sight.

"Mandy." Betty says softly.

"I loved him. I fell for him and I bloody loved him but because of who I am and what I do we just couldn't be." She chuckles while wiping her tears.

"Where is he now?" Betty asks.

"I've seen him a few times here but that's it."

"If he were to ask again would you?" Betty needs to know.

"I don't want to depend on a man for the rest of my life Betty. I can't. I know that what I do isn't exactly ideal but it's my job and it pays the bills. I can't have that taken away from me." Betty is shook. Mandy has never been this deep before.

"I understand."

"It hurts that I could've possibly lost the love of my life but life goes on right?" She takes a sip of her champagne directly from the bottle.

"Mandy." Betty says with a frown on her face.

"Haai let's stop with the emotional stuff. I haven't seen Mr Dance in a while." Betty shrugs.

"Yeah me too."

"I hope he's fine or maybe he's found himself a new strip joint and he's forgotten about us here." They share a laugh. Betty knows that her life wouldn't be the same without Betty.

"I hope not because he makes for an interesting audience member." Betty says.

"Oh I bet he does."

"You have no idea."

"Bitch I've had his dick." Betty grunts.

"You're not going to let that up are you?"

"Nope." Mandy responds then laughs. "Okay I'll stop teasing you about it."

"Thank you." Betty says. They spend their time talking about unnecessary things while guzzling down Mandy's champagne.

Betty is getting ready for her client when she's told that someone has requested to see her. She makes her way to the room and finds Mr Dance sitting on a chair in the middle of the room.

"Hi." She says softly. She's relieved that he's fine. A part of her wants to ask about his disappearance but she reprimands herself.

"Hey how are you?" He gets up from his chair and makes his way to her.

"I'm fine and you?"

"I'm good."

"You wanted to see me?" She says.

"I just wanted to see you that's all."

"Oh." She doesn't know how to respond to that. "Well I have a client so I have to go." He frowns.

"I see."

"Bye." She turns around and walks out before he can even say anything.

Betty makes her way to the room and her client has his back to her. She closes the door and waits for him to turn around. She gets the shock of her life when she sees who her final client for the day is.

SIX

Betty can't believe her eyes. She wishes the earth could open up and swallow her whole. The man standing before her is also standing frozen. He feels like this is some sick joke.

"Betty?" He says in an uncertain voice.

"Ntate Mokoena." Betty says softly.

"Betty Moloji is this you?" Betty suddenly feels uneasy. She can't believe that her next client is a friend of her fathers. Tongue tied Betty just settles on the couch. This is a mess.

"Ntate Mokoena what are you doing here?" Betty finally breaks the silence.

"What am I doing here? I came to have a good time but instead I find something that will kill my friend." He says in a slightly raised voice.

"So you're cheating on your wife?" Betty asks.

"That's beside the point. Betty do your parents know what you do?" She doesn't respond.

"Of course they don't because they wouldn't agree to this filth. How could you do this to them?" He asks in a pained voice. Betty doesn't know how to respond to that. "After everything they've done for you this is how you repay them?"

"Are you going to tell them?"

"Do you think they won't find out on their own accord? Do you honestly think that someone else who knows you won't see you here then go running to them?" Betty sighs. "But no I won't tell them because you will do it yourself."

"I'm doing no such thing." She shoots back. Ntate Mokoena shakes his head.

"They are going to be very disappointed in you." With that said he grabs his jacket and walks out leaving Betty with a lump in her throat.

Betty is waiting for the elevator that won't seem to come down. She keeps pressing the button vigorously. She decides to take the stairs instead. As she's walking down the creepy stairs she feels a presence behind her, it's Mr Dance. She clicks her tongue and rushes down the stairs. She's not in the mood for him. Especially not after her encounter with Ntate Mokoena.

“Betty what’s wrong?” He holds puts his arm around her waist and pulls her closer.

“Nothing.” She says trying to shimmy her way out of his hold. He holds her tighter and pulls her to what she assumes is his car.

“Let’s go.” He says with so much authority.

“I’m not going anywhere with you.” She says.

“Betty stop being stubborn just get in the car please.”

“You don’t get to tell me what to do.”

“But I said please.” He flashes his sweet smile and she chuckles. She gets in the car and they drive off.

“Are you going to tell me what’s got you so upset?” He glances at her then focuses back at the road.

“It’s nothing. Where are you taking me?”

“To my place.” He says confidently. Betty nods then makes herself comfortable on the seat. A Ginuwine song comes through and he starts singing while stealing glances at Betty

“I’m just a bachelor

I’m looking for a partner

Someone who knows how to ride

Without even falling off

Gotta be compatible

Takes me to my limits

Girl when I break you off

I promise that you won't want to get off

If you're horny, let's do it

Ride it, my pony

My saddle's waiting

Come and jump on it

If you're horny, let's do it

Ride it, my pony

My saddle's waiting

Come and jump on it

Sitting here flossing

Peeping your steelo

Just once if I have the chance

The things I will do to you

You and your body

Every single portion

Send chills up and down your spine

Juices flowing down your thigh

If you're horny, let's do it

Ride it, my pony

My saddle's waiting

Come and jump on it

If you're horny, let's do it

Ride it, my pony

My saddle's waiting

Come and jump on it

If we're gonna get nasty, baby
First we'll show and tell
Till I reach your ponytail
Lurk all over and through you baby
Until we reach the stream
You'll be on my jockey team

If you're horny, let's do it
Ride it, my pony
My saddle's waiting
Come and jump on it
If you're horny, let's do it
Ride it, my pony
My saddle's waiting

Come and jump on it” Betty feels the heat emanating from her lady spread throughout her whole body. His voice alone is sending chills down her spine and the way he’s singing the song with so much intensity is sending a clear message to Betty.

They eventually get to his place and they ride up to his apartment is intense. The desire for each other is palpable. Both of them are breathing heavily. Betty can feel his eyes on her but she doesn’t look up.

The space is open and that’s all Betty can say about it. There’s a huge black and white portrait of two beautiful children hanging on the wall. The children look like him.

The rest of the wall is just grey. All his furniture is grey actually. Her eyes land on a picture of an older woman. She's beautiful and slightly thick. She assumes it's his mother. She admits as uninspiring as this space is, it almost tells a story of a man with deep issues.

Betty settles on the couch and waits for him to come back. She still doesn't know why she agreed to come back with him.

He walks in with a gown in hand. He's changed out of his tailor-made suit into sweats and a long sleeved vest that's just doing justice to his biceps. He's bare footed and Betty's eyes land on his beautiful toes.

"Put this on." He says handing her the gown.

"Thanks." She takes it and put it on. It smells like him. Manly. She wants to take it with when she leaves.

"Betty."

"Yes." He snaps her out of her thoughts.

"Do you smoke?" She shakes her head. He nods and takes out a joint from a jar that's sitting on top of the coffee table. "I'll be back."

"No it's fine." Betty says.

"You don't mind?" He asks searching for certainty in her eyes.

"I don't." She nods then goes on to light up his blunt. Betty stares at him as he goes in for the first pull. He has his eyes closed and she can tell that he enjoys his smoke. He puffs it out and the smoke immediately fills the space causing Betty to cough lightly.

"Shit Betty are you okay." He asks still holding in his breath.

"I'm fine." She says softly. It seems like this calms him down. He's going in on it and Betty just stares at him like he's some sort of snack.

"So Betty." He says moving closer to her.

"Yeah."

"I want to kiss you." He professes.

"Then why don't you?" She asks seductively.

"I don't just want to kiss your lips Betty. I want to kiss you here." He places a wet kiss on her neck. "And here." He places another one on her cleavage. Betty shivers. Her breathing has escalated and she feels like she's about to pass out. Why does he have this effect on her? There seems to be a seamless desire between them.

“Please.” She doesn’t know what she is begging him to do but she needs him to do something.

He leans in and captures her lips while untying the gown. It falls to the ground and he pulls her top up then undoes her bra. This man has seen her bare chest in the company of others so many times but right now it feels different for Betty.

He has her breasts cupped in his hands and his mouth on hers with his tongue exploring hers gently. She has never had such an electrifying kiss before. He picks her up and she locks her legs around his waist. He walks steadily with her in his arms.

They get to his bedroom and he lays her down gently then continues eating out her mouth.

The weight of his body on hers feels amazing. She inhales his delicious smell as she pulls him closer. He groans in her mouth deepening the kiss. Betty’s clit is throbbing, she is yearning for attention. Attention from him and no one else. He moves from her lips to her nipples and her whole goes into shock.

His warm mouth on her erect nipple sends all the rights signals down to her pussy. He pays attention to each of her nipples and she feels like she’s in heaven. He comes up to her face and stares deep into her eyes. His light brown eyes compliment his beautiful dark chocolate skin Betty thinks to herself.

“You’re so beautiful Betty.” His voice is dripping with lust. In one swift move her pants are gone. He palms her pussy through the material and curses. “You’re soaking Betty.” He says in a pained voice.

“Do something.” She says softly.

He gets off the bed and strips. She’s seen him naked before but in this moment it feels different. He reaches over to the side table and pulls out a condom. He looks into her eyes as she slides it on. He grabs her ankle and pulls her down the bed. He leans down and captures her lips as he helps her up to her feet.

He turns her around and bends her over. Her ass is high up and her hands are on the ground. In this moment she’s grateful for all the yoga classes she attends.

He slowly pushes himself in and she welcomes him.

“Ahhhhhh.” She moans as her pussy stretches to accommodate him.

“Shiit Betty.” He groans. He pushes his last remaining inches in. He holds onto her waist tightly as he attempts to calm his raging thoughts. Once he feels like he’s in control he starts thrusting. In and out. Hard and fast. His balls slapping against her ass drive him insane along with seeing his dick being swallowed up by her.

He slaps her ass and she moans. He's hitting all the right spots and Betty loses it.

"Oh shit." Betty says as she feels her orgasm approaching. He tries to push him out but he holds her tighter and keeps pounding. "Oh shit nooo no I can't no please I can't." She screams as her orgasm hits her. "Ahhhhhhhhh." She cries as her orgasm cripples her. Her body is shaking vigorously and her tears are just falling.

"Damn it Betty." He groans as he comes undone. He places soft kisses down her sine as they both calm down from their high.

He pulls out then carries her to the bed and lays her down. Her orgasm has crippled her. He grabs a towel and wipes her clean.

"I down even know your name yet you make her cum so crazily." Betty says lazily before shutting her eyes. He chuckles and kisses her forehead.

"Sleep Betty." He says before pulling her into his arms.

SEVEN

Betty wakes up feeling warm and well achy. She opens her eyes and realises she's in an unfamiliar room. She panics and jumps out of the bed but the burning sensation that's between her legs forces her to sit back down. Just then he walks in wearing nothing but his briefs. Betty remembers that she left the club with him and he pounded the shit out of her.

"You're awake." He places a kiss on her cheek.

"Hi." She responds softly. She suddenly feels shy around him.

"You had a good nap?"

"I did. What time is it?" She asks.

"Just after 9PM."

"Shit I have to get home." She stands.

"Your car is still at the club." She sighs then sits back down.

"I'll request an uber." She says then stands up again.

"Or you could spend the night with me and I'll take you to your place in the morning." Betty thinks about it for a little bit. It makes sense.

"Okay. I'm hungry." He chuckles.

"I thought you might be so I make us dinner. Woza." He holds his hand out for her and she takes it. Only when they start walking does she realise that she's still naked. She's so used to being practically naked that she doesn't even feel when she's bare.

"I'm naked." She says.

"Yeah I know." He responds and continues leading her to the kitchen.

They're sitting on the carpet having the meal that he prepared. It's steak and mash potatoes with a green salad.

"Where did you learn how to cook like this?" She licks the mash that's on her finger a bit too seductively causing him to groan.

“My brother is a chef.” He answers proudly. Betty can tell that he is proud of his brother because of the smile that is on his face.

“He must be a really great chef.”

“I actually learned how to cook from mom, we all did. We’d spend hours in the kitchen with her. We still do when I go visit home for the weekend.” He has a smile plastered across his face.

“Sounds like she is a wonderful mom.”

“She is the best a guy could ever ask for.” Betty nods then focuses back on her food.

“So what do you do?” She asks him.

“I’m a physicist.” Betty nods lightly.

“So you’re a smart man.” He chuckles.

“I just work hard.”

“So when do you get time to physicise when you’re always at the club?” He laughs out loud even throwing his head back.

“Physicise? Did you just make up a new word for the oxford dictionary Betty?” She chuckles lightly.

“Argh man.” He’s still laughing.

“Well my job is flexible.” He tells her coolly. Betty knows he’s not being truthful but she doesn’t probe him any further. She picks up the courage to ask him something that she’s been meaning to.

“Where’s your wife?” He looks at her then frowns. He looks like he’s thinking about it. Confusion passes through his face.

“Wife?” He asks.

“Yeah the one you were with at the store.” She says. He looks at her then breaks into a chuckle. Betty is confused.

“She’s not my wife.” He says. Betty looks at him.

“Fiancé?” She asks.

“No she’s my brother’s wife.” Relief washes all over Betty.

“Oh.” She says softly. She can’t believe she was almost jealous of his sister in-law.

“What made you think she was my wife?” He asks.

“I saw you rubbing her stomach.”

“I see. We’re very close.” He says genuinely.

“That’s a good thing right?”

“It is. My family and I are very close. We’re each other’s friends.” Betty nods. She can sense the love that he has for his siblings.

“How many siblings do you have?” She asks him.

“Two. I have an older sister and brother. They’re actually eleven months apart.” Betty looks at him in shock.

“How does that happen?” She’s genuinely shocked.

“My parents have a very health sex life.”

“You said have, does that mean they’re still having sex?”

“I think so.”

“How old are they?” She asks.

“In their sixties.”

“Oh wow.” That’s all she can say.

“And you?” She looks at him.

“And me what?” She hopes he won’t ask her about her family.

“Any siblings?” She shakes her head.

“No I’m an only child.” She says.

“Where are you from?” He asks.

“I still don’t know your name.” She says. She’s known him for a few months but still doesn’t know his name. She feels like that has to change seeing that they’ve already went the whole way.

“Malibongwe. Malibongwe Mkhize.” He says proudly.

“Malibongwe it’s lovely to finally know your name after all this time.”

“All you had to do was ask Betty.” He says seriously. Betty laughs because she’s asked him for his name a couple of times. They clear up their dishes and head back to bed.

They're in bed with him pounding the shit out of her.

"Ahhh Malibongwe." She moans out loud. She has her hands on his back while his are on her thighs.

"You like that?"

"Ahh yes shit harder baby." He increases his pace and Betty feels her build up.

"Betty." His voice sounds strained.

"No shit no please nnoooo." She tries to push him away as her orgasm hits her but just as he did previously he pounds her right through it. She feels her body giving in.

He grunts as he releases then flops on top of her.

Betty opens her eyes and she's blinded by the light. Her eyes land on the huge clock on the wall. She's late for work. She jumps out of bed and grabs the gown on the floor.

She finds Malinongwe in the living room watching the news.

"Hi" She says softly. He looks at her with a blank expression. She looks up and her face is plastered on the screen.

"Who are you?" He asks in a deadly voice that sends chills down her spine

EIGHT

Tears stream down Betty's eyes as she watches her pictures keeps popping up on the screen. Malibongwe is looking at her with the blank expression still. Betty settles on the couch next to him and listens to what the reporter is saying.

"Betty Moloi daughter of Premier Hlalefang Moloi is alleged to be working at a popular strip club in Johannesburg. It is alleged that Miss Moloi is a prostitute at the club. Now we don't have any more information on this story but we will keep you updated as we continue getting more information throughout the course of the day." Malibongwe decreases the volume then turns to look at Betty who is just a crying mess.

"Do you want to tell me what that was about?" He asks her. She shakes her head. He nods and gets up and walks to the kitchen. Betty remains seated and continues crying. She can't believe that she was exposed in that manner.

Malibongwe walks back in with a glass of water in his hand and hands it to Betty. She downs the water then sets the glass on the coffee table.

"Thank you." She says faintly.

"What's going on Betty?"

"My father is the premier of Free State." Malibongwe's eyes pop out.

"Mr Moloi is your father?"

"Yes."

"So if that's the case then why are you a prostitute?" Betty sighs.

"Can we not deal with that now?"

"Okay so how did they get this story?" He asks her.

"One of my father's friends was at the club last night. He was actually my last client. He promised not to tell my parents but I guess it was because he wanted to sell the scoop." She says then wipes her tears. He pulls her into his arms and she continues crying.

"I'm sorry Betty." He whispers in her ear. Her phone rings and she doesn't even attempt to move to go get it. Malibongwe gets up to go fetch it. He hands it to her and it's her mother. She tosses it aside. "You need to talk to them Betty." Malibongwe says.

"I haven't spoken to them in a year."

"Why?"

“Because they don’t care that’s why.” She responds.

“Well this might just be the time to sort things out don’t you think?”

“She’s only calling because my father’s name is being dragged.”

“But still Betty.” The phone rings again and he hands it to her. She sighs then answers it.

“Mme.”

“Betty hobane’ng o etsa ntho e kang ena?”

“E kang eng mme?”

“Hobane’ng o re tlontlolla ha kana Betty heh?”

“I humiliated you or your husband mme?”

“Both of us. This scandal sa hao is not only hurting your father’s name but mine as well.”

“Ke masoabi heh.” She says.

“Sorry? Sorry? O etsa manyala ha qeta o re sorry?”

“What do you want me to say?” Betty shouts.

“You do not raise your voice at me Betty.”

“Bye mme.”

“Don’t you dare hang up on me Betty.” Betty sighs and stays on the line. “Your father and I are coming to Joburg tomorrow. You better prepare a room for us.”

“I don’t have space in my apartment.”

“Betty don’t you dare. Now don’t answer questions from anyone until your father releases his statement.”

“Hmmm.” Betty hangs up and throws her phone to the side. She can’t believe that as always her mother has disregarded her feeling.

“Are you okay?” Malibongwe snaps her out of her thoughts.

“I’m not ashamed of the fact that I’m a prostitute you know. I came into this line of work with both eyes wide open. I choose it and I enjoy it but they will never understand that.”

“Did you run away from home?” Betty shakes her head.

"I just left." He nods and pulls her into his arms. She tilts her head and looks into his eyes. "Please kiss me." She says softly. He smiles faintly then lowers his head and places his lips on hers.

Betty and Malibongwe are lying in bed naked. She has her head on his chest and he's running his hand up and down her back.

"Are you going back to work?" He asks her.

"Yeah after the scandal dies down."

"But you don't need the job Betty."

"I might not need it but I enjoy it." She responds.

"I understand." They sit in silence listening to each other's breathing.

His phone rings and he looks at the screen then sighs.

"Ma." He answers.

"Malibongwe Simphiwe Mkhize you said you'd return my call and that was two days ago." His mother whines and he smiles.

"I'm sorry mom I just got busy."

"Busy with what?" He looks at Betty and smiles.

"Work."

"Are you lying to me boy?" He grunts. He hates it when she calls him that.

"Never gorgeous."

"Hmmm. So how are you?" He heaves a sigh.

"I'm good."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive mom."

"Please just come home Bongwe." She says.

“I swear I’m fine mom I promise you.” He tries to assure his mother.

“I just worry about you phela you’re my baby.” He chuckles.

“Yes even though I’m a 26 year old man I know I’ll always be your baby.”

“Good. So are you dating?”

“Oh now I remember why I didn’t call you back, it’s because you were prying.” They share a laugh.

“Shoot me for taking an interest in your life Bongwe.”

“I appreciate you for that mom.”

“I love you and I’m here for you okay.”

“Thank you and I love you too.” He hangs up and looks at Betty who is looking at him with an amused look on her face.

“You’re a mama’s boy?” Betty asks him.

“Would it be a problem if I was?” He shoots back.

“No it wouldn’t.” She rests her head back on his chest.

“I’m neutral. My sister is daddy’s princess and my brother is mommy’s champ. Mina I enjoy the company of both my parents.” Betty nods and listens to his heartbeat. She feels herself slowly drifting to sleep and she welcomes it.

Betty is in her apartment running around like a headless chicken making sure that everything will be up to her parent’s standard. Reception calls to let her know that her parents are downstairs and she lets them up.

The doors open and her parents step out followed by three security guards. Betty stands there looking at her parents who clearly don’t look too happy to see her.

“Ke manyala a eng heh Betty?” Her father roars which sends a cold shiver down Betty’s spine.

NINE

“Mme, Ntate welcome. Please make yourselves at home.” Betty says and shows her parents to living room. They settle on the couches and sit in silence. Betty looks at the security and sighs. She knows they won’t leave her parent’s sight until they give them the order to. “You guys can go sit on the balcony.” Betty says looking at the security. He father nods at them and they make the way out to the balcony.

“Betty what is your problem?” Her father roars.

“Nothing.” She responds.

“You leave home to come to Johannesburg to prostitute yourself? What is your problem heh?” Betty leans back on the couch and looks at her parents. Her father is fuming and her mother is well on her way there

“Betty what is that we didn’t do for you?” Her mother adds in.

“You mean material things? Oh you took care of that and I thank you for that.” She says calmly.

“What more did you need Betty heh? We worked hard to ensure that you had the opportunities that most didn’t have.”

“We’re working hard Betty to ensure that the lives of our people are bettered. Isn’t that what we’re fighting for?” Her mother says.

“I admire the work that you do.” Betty shrugs.

“Dammit Betty stop acting like a spoilt brat.” Her father shouts then stands on his feet.

“I’m acting like a spoilt brat?” She says softly.

“Yes you are. You went to the best schools, had the best clothes, travelled to the best holiday destinations yet you throw it all in our faces?” He has his finger pointed at her which just angers Betty.

“I HAD EVERYTHING EXCEPT FOR MY PARENTS ATTENTION AND SUPPORT.” Betty shouts. She is getting worked up.

“Betty.”

“No mme. You guys never listened to anything I had to say because you were always busy saving the world.”

“So you decided to cheapen yourself because of that?”

“No I decided to be a prostitute because I feel free. I FEEL ALIVE AND I FEEL LIKE MYSELF.”

“Wabona Elizabeth we should’ve just sent her packing to boarding school when we had the chance to.” Her father says looking at his wife.

“AND THAT’S ANOTHER REASON WHY I FOUND MYSELF HERE. YOU WANTED ME TO FOLLO IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS. YOU NEVER CARED ABOUT WHAT I WANTED TO DO.”

“Betty do not raise your voice at us.”

“No mme, it was always about you and what your society of housewives was going to say or ntate and his high and mighty friends. What about my dreams? What about what I wanted to do?” Betty says calmly.

“WHAT YOU WANTED TO DO WAS NEVER GOING TO CUT IT AND YOU KNOW IT.” Her father shouts.

“Because to you the most important thing was your career akere ntate? Screw the fact that your daughter had dreams.”

“You had everything a child could ever wish for oena ngwana empa ho oena that was nothing?” Betty sighs. She gets up and walks away because she feels like she’s having a conversation with brick walls. She gets to her room and flops herself on the bed then shuts her eyes.

Her mother walks in and settles next to her.

“I understand that you feel like we were too hard on you growing up but Betty you need to understand that with the lives that we had we needed to ensure that you would make it out there.”

“Mme you guys have always mme, always been all about ntate’s career. Yes the career afforded us a lot of luxuries but at what cost mme? You guys were always busy even when we were on holiday. When I had plays at school. Even when I just needed an ear. I was practically raised by Aus’Rose because my parents were out there being heroes to everyone else except for me. I understood though. I understood that you were working hard to ensure that the lives of thousands of people would be changed. I understood it all mme but when you denied me the chance to live my life the way I wanted to live it, that hurt me.”

“But did you have to go into prostitution Betty? You could’ve just been a rebel child who drank every weekend and dances on tables but this Betty?” Betty chuckles while shaking her head.

“You know what mme? I actually enjoy what I do. I love it. I love the thrill of it.” A hot slap lands on Betty’s cheek. Betty can’t believe that her mother just slapped her.

“You will not say such filth to me. Masepa fela. Shit. Rubbish. I did not raise a hoe man.”

“You’re right. You raised a prostitute.” Betty’s mom is fuming. Her body is even shaking.

“You will leave that filth you call a job and move back home. Do I make myself clear?”

“I’m not going back to the Free State forget it.”

“You will do as your mother says.” He father says walking into the bedroom.

“And I am telling you that we are leaving. If you don’t come back home we will cut you off.” Her mother says.

“Go ahead.” She stands up and walks out the room. She grabs her phone and requests an uber then heads out.

“I’ve been trying to get hold of you.” Mandy pulls Betty in for a hug. When she left her place she came to Mandy’s hoping that she would find her and she did.

“I’ve been ignoring my phone.” They settle on the couch.

“I saw the news. The club was buzzing last night. I think all those men hoped they would get a glimpse of the Premier’s daughter shaking her ass on the pole.” Betty laughs.

“Well it’s a pity they won’t be seeing this ass for a while.”

“Are you quitting?” Mandy asks.

“No I’m just going to let this die down a bit then I’ll be back.”

“Madame was throwing a fit. Wait let me go get us some champagne and I’ll fill you in.” Mandy walks away and Betty makes herself comfortable on the couch. She has her shoes off and her feet tucked under her butt.

Mandy comes back with two bottles and two mugs.

“Mugs?” Betty asks.

“This isn’t a happy moment angithi so the holder of the content needs to reflect that.” Betty shakes her head. The explanation Mandy just gave doesn’t make sense.

“I see friend.” She takes a sip on her drink and sighs.

“Why are you working this job B if you’re rich as hell?” Mandy asks.

“Why are you working this job?” Betty asks back.

“Because it pays the bills and I like dick so.” She shrugs.

“Well I enjoy what I do”

“But you don’t have to Betty. You could enjoy owning some boutique somewhere in the mountains selling expensive silk scarves to other rich folks who don’t know what to do with their money.” They burst into laughter. Mandy is a special case.

“I don’t want to be selling scarves though.”

“Then sell shoes.” Betty shakes her head. “Help me get it Betty.”

“I was rebelling against my parents but I ended up enjoying the freedom and sexual liberation.”

“You could still enjoy all of that on the mountains hawu.” Betty chuckles.

“Mandy Mandy Mandy you’re just crazy.”

“No for real though when you’re ready to tell me the real real reason behind everything.” Betty nods and they spend the rest of their time together drinking and talking about small dicks.

Betty walks into her penthouse stumbling a bit. The drinking session she had with Mandy was insane. Her father is sitting on the couch. He was waiting for her to come back.

“You’re drunk.” He roars. She giggles.

“Duh.” She drags herself to her bedroom and her father follows her.

“WE HAVE A SCANDAL ON OUR HANDS BECAUSE OF YOU AND YOU’RE OUT GALAVANTING GETTING DRUNK!!!” Betty ignores him and flops herself on the bed and shuts her eyes.

TEN

It's been a week since the Moloji scandal broke out and Betty has been cooped up in her penthouse since. Her parents left the following day after their arrival because her father was called in for an urgent meeting by the President.

They thought that the story would die down but instead it keeps on growing. Videos of Betty doing her thing on the pole have emerged and have been broadcasted on all news channels and are trending on every social media platform. Men have also taken to social media platforms to tell of their night with the minister's daughter. The actions of those men have left Betty feeling a bit emotional not because her face is blasted out there but because they took it upon themselves to share the details of their encounter.

Betty is in bed stuffing her face with junk when her phone rings.

"Hello."

"I'm here." Molemo's sweet voice comes through on the other line.

"I'm coming." Betty responds then jumps out of bed and throws on her gown. She grabs her key card and heads to reception to fetch Molemo. When she gets to reception Molemo is standing with Mandy, both of them with overnight bags in their hands.

"Hey." Molemo practically jumps on Betty and gives her a tight squeeze.

"You're squeezing me too tight." Betty says.

"Sorry." Molemo lets go of Betty and Mandy pulls her in for a hug.

"We come bearing gifts in the form of junk, alcohol and love." Mandy says.

"Thank you guys. Let's go." They step into the elevator.

"It needs a special key card and all hmmm." Mandy says and they all break out into laughter.

The second they step into the penthouse Mandy loses it.

"Bitch I knew you was balling." Betty and Molemo chortle.

“I only have one guest bedroom so we’ll share my room akere?”

“Yeah.” They walk to Betty’s room and now it’s Molemo’s turn to lose it.

“This room is amazing.” Molemo exclaims. She throws herself on the bed and sighs as her body takes in the luxury of Betty’s feather bed. “I can’t wait for the day I can afford such a comfortable bed.”

“Soon baby soon. Wena just focus at school.”

“Yes baby study the shit out of that and graduate so that I can retire and sponge off of you.” Mandy says causing Molemo to chuckle.

“I promise I won’t let you guys down and I will sustain your champagne drinking lifestyle Mands.” Molemo says.

“I knew there was a reason why I liked you so much.” They share a laugh and head back to the living room.

“I’m hungry do you have food?” Mandy asks.

“Nah I haven’t gone grocery shopping because well I’m on lockdown.” Betty responds then laughs.

“Argh pizza it is then.” Mandy grabs her phone and places an order.

“Please order the share meal ya McD’s as well I just want the fries.” Betty says. Mandy orders their food then puts her phone aside.

The ladies are in the living room in just their underwear.

“I’m just saying if I had powerful parents like yours I wouldn’t even lift a finger.” Mandy says then takes a sip of her champagne. The ladies are talking about Betty’s scandal and how her parents reacted to it.

“I agree.” Molemo says. She’s on her second glass of wine and you can tell that she’ll well on her way to getting drunk.

“Molemo slow down on your drink honey.” Betty says. She knows that Molemo isn’t much of a drinker.

“Relax B.” Molemo waves her off. Betty’s phone rings and its reception letting her know that her food has arrived. She throws on her gown and grabs her purse then heads down.

The food is set out on the floor and the ladies are digging in.

“So girl I haven’t seen Mr Dance since the story broke out.” Mandy says. Betty shrugs.

“I’m not his keeper.”

“He’s probably feeling like an idiot for not getting it on with the minister’s daughter.” Mandy says then laughs.

“Maybe ne.” Molemo adds in.

“Haai.” That’s all Betty can say.

“Maybe he knows she won’t be in because of the scandal and that’s why she’s staying away.” Molemo says with her mouthful.

“True.” Mandy sips her drink and sighs. “This is life I tell you.”

“It’s what you do

It’s what you see

I know if I’m haunting you, you must be haunting me

It’s where we go

It’s where we’ll e

I know if I’m onto you, I’m onto you

Onto you, you must be on to me

My haunted lungs, ghost in the sheets

I know if I’m onto you, you must be haunting me

My wicked tongue, where will it be?

"I know if I'm onto you, I'm onto you

Onto you, you must be onto me

You want me? I walk down the hallway.

"You like it? The bedroom's my runway

Slap me! I'm pinned on the doorway

Kiss, bite, foreplay"

They're singing out loud as they shake their asses and jugs. Sensual is the theme and they sure are adhering to it. Mandy winks at Betty and she shakes her head. Betty knows what's happening. Mandy makes her way over to Betty and whispers in her ear.

"I want to lick you." Betty's breathe hitches. Just as she's about to respond Mandy's phone rings. She walks away to answer it.

Mandy looks at the number and she hesitates to answer because she doesn't recognise it.

"Hello."

"Mandy." She sucks a breath. She recognises that voice.

"Hi." She says softly.

"Can we meet?" The caller asks.

"I don't know."

"Please Mandy." Mandy sighs.

"Okay." She settles on the bed and listens as the caller just breaths.

"I spoke to Madame." Molemo blurts out. She's had a bit much to drink. Both Betty and Mandy frown.

"What for?" Betty asks.

"The stripping gig."

"Molemo I thought we spoke about this." Betty says with a frown on her face.

"And I told you I need the money." Molemo responds.

"I told you I'll take care of school for you akere?" Betty is getting worked up. Mandy is just guzzling down on her champagne watching the exchange.

"I know."

"Do you think it's going to stop at stripping?" Betty asks.

"That's as far as I'm willing to go." Molemo says. Betty chuckles while shaking her head.

"So you want random men to just touch you all over every day?"

"It's not that bad."

"Not that bad Molemo?" Mandy chirps in.

"You guys do it mos." Mandy chuckles and goes back to her drink.

"Molemo you don't want to do this."

"I need the money."

"For what? Let me help you." Betty shouts.

"Not all of us were born in money anyway Madame said I can start as soon as I've completed my lessons."

"So you want some random guy to break your virginity is that it Molemo?" Betty is worked up. Molemo shakes her head. Betty gets up and heads to her room to cool down.

Betty's phone rings. She answers without checking the caller ID.

“Hello.”

“Betty.” His warm rustic voice comes through calming the fire that was brewing in her.

ELEVEN

“Betty.” His warm rustic voice comes through calming the fire that was brewing in her.

“Malibongwe.” She says faintly.

“How are you?”

“I’m fine and you?”

“I’m good.” Silence passes between them. “I just wanted to check on you.” He finally breaks the silence.

“Thank you.”

“I’d like to see you sometime if that’s okay with you.”

“Errrm yeah.”

“Awesome. Take care Betty.” He hangs up leaving her hot and bothered. The effect that he has on her always leaves her weak.

She’s forgotten all about Molemo’s ridiculous idea and is focusing on the heat that is passing through her body because of the call.

She calms herself down then heads back to the living room to join the ladies. Mandy winks at her as she sips on her champagne. She shakes her head and settles on the floor.

“So I spoke to Molemo and she agreed to let this silly idea go.” Mandy says. Betty turns to look at Molemo.

“Bua le nna Molemo. Ho etsahalang?” Unexpectedly Molemo breaks out into a sob. Betty and Mandy are frozen momentarily but snap back to their senses just as quick. Each on either side of Molemo comforting her.

“What’s wrong baby?” Mandy asks. Molemo shakes her head and wipes her tears.

“Can I go lie down just for a bit?”

“Sure. Come.” They help each other up and head to the bedroom. Betty and Mandy tuck Molemo in then head back to the living room.

“Do you think she’ll be fine?” Betty asks Mandy.

“She will. She has to be.” Mandy says softly. Mandy gets up to refill her drink.

“Oena le champagne eo ya hao Modimo.” Mandy chuckles.

“I have fine taste darling.” She responds in her best Bonang voice.

“You’re a special case.” They share a laugh. Mandy’s phone rings. She looks at it and tosses it aside. Betty wants to ask but she knows her friend.

“What’s wrong?” She takes the chance. Mandy heaves a sigh.

“It’s Tebogo.” Betty gasps.

“Your man?” She exclaims.

“He’s not my man you idiot.”

“Yeah yeah you know what I mean.” Betty waves her off.

“Yeah him. He wants to meet. I don’t know if I want to or not.”

“Mandy you clearly love this guy.”

“Loved. I loved him. Now not so much.” Betty shakes her head.

“Who are you trying to convince?”

“Betty.”

“All I’m saying is that love doesn’t come easy these days and when you find it you need to hold on to it.”

“Would you give it all up for love? Your security? Your independence? Yonk’into?”

“I would.” Mandy nods.

“But then again even if it were to happen that he leaves you high and dry you’d still have your parents to fall back on.”

“Mandy.”

“No don’t get me wrong friend. It’s not coming from a bitter place, all I’m saying is that I honestly cannot afford to fall in love right now.”

“And all I’m saying is Tebogo might not be like all those other pieces of shits.” They chortle.

“Maybe, maybe not either way no thank you.” Mandy get up and walks to the kitchen. Betty can’t help but wonder whether her friend I really sure about the decision she’s taken on relationships.

It's the Monday after the sleepover and Betty is walking around her penthouse in her underwear. The weekend with her girls did her good and as much as she can't go anywhere she feels much better than she did a few days ago.

She's in the kitchen frying up some bacon when her phone rings.

"Hello."

"Betty." She can't help the faint smile that creeps out onto her face.

"Hey."

"I'm here to pick you up. Come down."

"Huh?" Betty is puzzled.

"I'm here by reception."

"I'm coming." She rushes to her room to throw on a gown then heads down to fetch him.

He's wearing a jean with a biker jacket and shades. Betty smiles when their eyes meet. He makes his way towards her.

"Hi."

"Betty." He pulls her in for a hug and places a soft kiss on her cheek.

"Come." They get in the elevator.

"What do you have under that gown Betty?" He asks as soon as the doors close.

"You want to see?" She asks seductively.

"Yes." His voice sounding unnatural. She unfastens her gown and he groans when he sees the lace underwear she has on.

"You like?" She asks.

"I want to tear it off with my teeth." Betty's breathe hitches. "Then I want to fuck the shit out of you." Her clit throbs at mention of fucking. Her mind runs back to their first time together and an involuntary moan escapes her mouth.

The doors open and they step inside.

“Welcome to my humble abode.”

“This is anything but humble Betty.”

“Says you. Would you like something to eat?”

“No but you will need the energy so I suggest you go get dressed while I make you something to eat.” Her insides churn. Malibongwe is making her feel hot and bothered.

“Okay.” Betty walks away leaving Malibongwe in the kitchen.

“You look good.” He says to Betty. She’s wearing a black jean with a black bodysuit and a biker jacket.

“Thanks.”

“Change the shoes though.” She looks at her black red bottom heels then back at him.

“What’s wrong with my shoes?”

“Just put on a sneaker or something.” She nods and rushes to go change her shoes.

She walks back to the kitchen and finds him dishing up.

“It smells food.”

“Just an omelette nothing special.” Betty shakes her head.

They settle on the high chairs and dig in. Betty moans as her mouth takes in the flavours.

“You’re a fucken great cook dude.” He chuckles.

“Don’t swear and thank you. Now finish up so we can go.” They finish up then head out.

She understands why he wanted her to wear sneakers. They’re riding on his bike and the wind is doing the most but Betty seems to be enjoying it.

They get to his place and settle on the couch. The adrenaline rush is too much. Betty can't believe he convinced her to ride on his bike. As much as she's still shocked she admits that she enjoyed herself.

"Are you okay?" He cups her face.

"I did." She says softly.

"Good." He lowers his head and captures her lips. She scoots closer to him and settles in his arms. The kiss is hot and passionate. His tongue in her mouth and hers returning the favour.

"Ahhh." She moans in his mouth. He pulls back and sighs.

"Shit. Come I want to show you something." The head to his bedroom and she looks at him questioningly.

"Huh?"

"Do you think you can handle this?" He asks looking at her with an intense look.

TWELVE

“Do you think you can handle this?” He asks looking at her with an intense look.

Betty’s insides churn at the sight that stands before her. She doesn’t know how to feel about this.

“Betty.” He says softly against her ear before taking her earlobe in his warm mouth. She moans lightly as he presses his bulge against her firm ass.

“Malibongwe.” She’s barely audible.

“CAN YOU HANDLE THIS BETTY?” He says through gritted teeth.

“Yes.” She says breathlessly.

“Good.”

Betty is standing on her toes in the middle of the room with her heart in her stomach. Like a prey Malibongwe keeps circling around her slowly which adds to the already palpable tension in the room.

“Let me take you down

I really wanna take you down

And show you what I’m about

Can I take you down?

Your body body oh

Your body body up and down

So don’t stop, girl, get it

Quit playing with it

Can’t wait no more

I wanna take you down

I really wanna take you down

Take you down

Pretty girl, let's take it off in this room

No time to waste, girl, you know what we came to do

We got all night to try to get it right, girl

I hope you're ready, hope you're ready, hope you're ready

I hope you're ready babe

'Cause here we go, you know how we do

It ain't my first tie

But, baby girl, we can pretend

Hey let's bump and grind

And, girl, tonight will never end

Let me take you down."

Chris Brown is playing softly through the speakers, setting the mood.

"I'm going to ask you one last time Betty. Do you think you can handle this?" Betty nods.

"Words Betty. I need you to use your words."

"Yes." She says softly.

He tightens the rope around her hands causing her to lean forward a bit. Her legs are wide apart exposing her pussy and ass.

"I'm going to blind fold you now. If it gets too much just let me know okay."

"Okay." He puts the blindfold over Betty's eyes. The darkness heightens all her other senses.

She can feel him walking around. Her breathing is erratic. Just the tension alone is pushing her over the edge. She hears his pants drop and her heart races.

Out of nowhere she feels his warm mouth on her nipples. She staggers a bit before regaining her balance. She sucks on her nipple hard and fast. She's wrestling with the rope, attempting to free herself but she knows it's impossible.

He alternates between her nipples sucking on the one and pinching the other. He gives both of her babies enough attention and Betty feels like she's going out of her mind.

Her bean is throbbing and her quim is pulsing insanely.

He continues to torture her nipples as she screams and moans out of control. Her body begins to shake not because she's on her toes but because of the need.

Malibongwe grabs hand-blown glass whip that doubles as a glass dildo. The glass can be heated or cooled according to how you like it. He delivers a firm whack on Betty's ass and she moans out loud. He repeats the action over and over until Betty stops screaming.

"Did you like that Betty?" The need to cum seems to have disrupted Betty's speech because he doesn't respond. Malibongwe chuckles as he drops his whip on the bed and grabs nipple clams. Betty whimpers as soon as her body registers as to what is happening. The tension in her nipples is sending all of mama's signals down to her quim.

He dips his finger into her pot and groans as he comes into contact with all of her moisture.

She is dripping wet.

So wet that it's even running down her thighs.

He cups her face and kisses her. The kiss is hurried and sloppy. Both of them are pouring their need for each other into the kiss. He pulls back and Betty grunts.

"Malibongwe I need to cum please just make me cum." He smirks. He's got her right where he wants her.

He grabs his whip and heats up the glass dildo. He slowly pushes it up her honey pot and she loses it.

"Ahhhhhhhh. It's... ah... hot... shit." She tries to wiggle herself out of the rope to no avail. He keeps thrusting the dildo in and out at a fast pace.

"Cum Betty. You wanted to cum now fucken cum." Just hearing him say that pushes Betty over the edge.

"No shiiiit Bongwe pleaseeeee no I can't." Her tears drop as her body releases all the tension that's been building up. She creams all over the dildo then lets go of her body.

He keeps fucking her with the dildo as she moans out loud. His cock is throbbing. It needs some attention. He pulls the dildo out.

Betty feels empty.

“Put it back in.” She says breathlessly.

“With pleasure.” He responds.

He pushes it back in. He works it in and out of her cunt. The pleasure that Betty is feeling is immeasurable. He removes a nipple clam then latches onto her nipple with his mouth.

Sucking and gently grazing his teeth on her nipple.

Betty feels like she’s going out of her mind. She’s vigorously trying to free her hands. Malibongwe continues to torture her with his mouth as well as the dildo.

“Fuuuck shit noooooo please stop... I can’t take it.” Betty screams another orgasm hits her.

Malibongwe unties her and sets her on the floor gently.

He has her hands and feet tired each on their own poles. Her quim is fully exposed to him with all its juices.

“Betty.”

“Hmmm.” He chuckles lightly. He grabs his vibrator and teases her bean. She jerks and tries to kick her legs. She starts fighting vigorously as the pleasure spreads throughout her whole body.

“Are you good Betty?”

“Hmmm.” He keeps the vibrator on her clit as he inserts himself to the hilt. She gasps for air. His pulsing shaft inside of her pushes her over the edge. She lets out a low scream and accommodates him.

He thrusts deep and moves the vibrator on the clit in circles. Betty’s body can’t handle the pleasure.

He sets the vibrator aside and goes to work. He pounds her in and out. Hard and quick. Betty is letting out incoherent sentences. He drops his head and takes her lips in his. The kiss is intense and he wants more of her. He pulls his cock out and pushes back in roughly.

“Mali... ahh.”

“I want you to cum Betty. I want you to cum until you pass out.” She still has the blindfold on and the fact that she can’t see or touch her is driving her crazy.

He pinches her clit and she feels her orgasm nearing.

“Pleaseeee stoop. Please I can’t cum no more.” She says softly

“Cum Betty.” He orders her.

“Noo please no I noooo oh shiiiit.” She begins to sob as the wave hits her.

He fucks her right through her orgasm. Betty’s feels her body tapping out on her.

“We’re not done yet.” He whispers in her ear.

Betty is lying flat on her stomach on the bed. Her body is exhausted from all that Malibongwe has been doing to it.

She feels him insert himself and she moans out loud. She chokes her lightly and pulls her head up.

“I can’t take it anymore.” He takes her nice and slow this time. Savouring the moment.

He flips her around and gazes deep into her eyes.

“One last time Betty. Cum.” She closes her eyes and shakes her head.

He continues with his slow and unhurried thrusts.

“Cum with me.” He picks up his pace and Betty tries her best to meet his thrusts. She feels her body give in as her wave approaches. She flops on the bed and Malibongwe groans then falls on top of her.

He gets off of her and goes to discard the condom then heads back to the room with a wet towel. He wipes her clean then puts her into the blankets and pulls her close.

“Rest my beautiful Betty.” He kisses her forehead then closes his eyes.

THIRTEEN

Betty groans as she opens her eyes. Her body is in pain. She tries to move but a sharp pain shoots through her abdomen causing her to groan as she gently kicks the blankets off. She sets her feet on the floor and exhales. Slowly she makes her way to the bathroom.

She shuts her eyes tightly as she lets her pee out slowly. She finishes off then washes her hands and finds her reflection. Her lips are swollen. She touches them and she can't help but smile. The way Malibongwe possessed her body left her amazed. She can't believe the things he did to her. How he commanded her to reach her high.

As she's lost in her thoughts Malibongwe walks in and gently wraps his arms around her waist. He rests his chin on her shoulder and looks at her through the mirror.

"Hello Betty." His voice sends shockwaves throughout her entire body.

"Hi." She says softly. Something about him makes Betty shrink.

"How are you?"

"Good, considering and you?" He chuckles.

"I'll fill the tub for you hopefully the water will soothe your aching muscles." She didn't expect him to exactly be apologetic.

"Thank you." They stare at each other through the mirror. He has a slight smirk on his face and she has an innocent smile on. He kisses her cheek and she closes her eyes taking it in.

He lets go of her and walks over to the tub and lets the water run. He sits on the edge of the tub and watches as she brushes her teeth. His eyes travel from her breasts down to her thighs and up to her face. She looks at him and smiles. He smiles back at her.

Her smile and eyes are what captivated him. Those two features drew him in.

He gets up and walks out of the bathroom leaving the water running. He comes back holding bath salts and essential oils.

"I don't know if I pour all these oils in here or just one." He says looking at Betty.

"Do you have lavender there?" He nods.

"Yeah, so just lavender?"

"Yes." He throws in the bath salts then adds in a few drops of the lavender essential oil.

“Come.” He holds his hand out to Betty and she makes her way to him. He helps her into the tub and she groans when the hot water comes in contact with her delicate skin. She settles in the tub and allows the water to do what it’s meant to.

Malibongwe is in the kitchen making breakfast for Betty. He pours himself a stiff drink and downs it then pours another one. His phone rings and he groans before answering it.

“Manqoba.”

“Simpfiwe.” He chuckles.

“Ufunani?”

“Just checking in on my brother. Unjani?”

“I’m okay and you.”

“I’m good. I’m back, when are we doing drinks?”

“Is Amanda going to cook for me?”

“My wife is pregnant.”

“Pregnant not disabled futhi she said whenever I feel like a home cooked meal I should come through.” Manqoba laughs.

“Amanda spoils you. You should get your own wife.”

“You know what? I just might.”

“Are you dating anyone bra?”

“Nah.”

“Just fucking?”

“Yeah.”

“I hope you’re being safe.” Malibongwe chuckles.

“I am.”

“HmMMM tomorrow night?”

“Sounds like a plan bro.” Betty walks in wearing Malibongwe’s shirt. He looks at her and a smile creeps onto his face.

“Ungizwile?” Manqoba says.

“Heh?”

“What are you doing?”

“Look I’ll see you tomorrow bra. Kiss my babies for me.”

“Malibongwe.” Manqoba shouts but Malibongwe hangs up.

“Hello there.” He walks up to Betty, grabs her by the waist, pulls her closer and kisses her. She hooks her hands around his neck and gets on her toes. He deepens the kiss and she meets his intensity.

He picks her up and she locks her ankles around his waist. He sets her on the counter and they continue kissing. He can feel himself growing. He groans in her mouth and pulls out of the kiss.

“You’re sore.” He says softly.

“I want you.” She responds genuinely.

“I made breakfast.” He picks her up and walks to the living room and gently puts her on the couch. “Coffee, tea or a mimosa?” Betty chuckles.

“Mandy would be so proud of me. A mimosa please.” He laughs and walks back to the kitchen. He finishes off making breakfast and sets everything on the tray.

“This looks heavenly.” Betty says.

“I hope it tastes just as good.” He made a stuffed croissant. It has mushrooms, bacon, cheese, tomato and avocado.

“I bet it will.” They dig in and Betty smiles.

“And that beautiful smile?” He asks.

“As always your food tastes heavenly.”

“I try kodwa I don’t come anywhere near my brother and his wife.”

“If this is what amateur food tastes like then I don’t even want to taste professional food.”
He smiles.

“You’re good for my ego Betty.” She chuckles and goes back to her food.

Betty and Malibongwe have been stuck in the bedroom the whole day just watching movies. It’s almost 7PM and none of them feel like cooking.

“Do you want to go out for dinner?” Betty shakes her head.

“I’ll pass, I’m still tired and sore.”

“Okay we’ll order in.” Malibongwe picks up his phone and orders dinner.

“Thank you.” He nods.

“So are you planning on staying in the house until you die?” Betty laughs.

“No I’m actually going back to work next week.” Malibongwe turns to look at her.

“You’re going back to the club?” He asks.

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“What do you mean why, it’s my job.” Malibongwe clenches his jaws and blankly stares at Betty.

“Betty.”

“Malibongwe.”

“Don’t go back there.” He says in a stern voice.

“Why?”

“Don’t test me Betty.” Betty chuckles.

“We just fucked Malibongwe you don’t own me.” She jumps out of bed and walks to the closet. She puts on her clothes and grabs her backpack. Malibongwe walks in and cages her in. “Malibongwe SUKA.” She tries to push him off but it’s like attempting to push a brick wall.

“You’re not going anywhere.”

“And I’m not staying here either now get the fuck out of my way.” He clenches his jaw.

“If you go back there Betty.”

“What? Then what are you going to do?!” She shouts. He doesn’t say anything. “Exactly.” She pushes him and walks away. She grabs her phone on the bed and requests an uber.

FOURTEEN

Betty is back at work and she understands that things will be different but she feels ready for it all.

She hasn't spoken to Malibongwe since their little fight. She doesn't appreciate his attempt to control her but she knows he will not apologise for it.

She makes her way to Madame's office. She knocks once then enters.

"Betty?" Madame seems shocked to see her back.

"Hello. I'm back. Where am I stationed?" Betty asks in a flat tone.

"Are you sure you want to come back?"

"Yes."

"Okay. I'll see what I can do."

"Thanks." Betty turns on her heels and makes her way to her room.

"I thought they were lying when they said you are back." Mandy says as she walks into Betty's room.

"Yeah I'm back."

"Are you good?" She searches her friend's face for certainty.

"I promise." Mandy nods and walks over to Betty.

"I missed you."

"I missed you too." Mandy cups Betty's face and place a soft peck on her lips. She looks into Betty's eyes looking for something.

"Betty." Mandy says softly. Betty pulls Mandy closer and kisses her. Mandy curses against Betty's lips and pushes her against the wall.

She continues with her assault on Betty's lips as her hands roam around her body. Her hand slides from Betty's waist down to her ass and roughly squeezes it. A moan escapes Betty's mouth as she deepens the kiss.

Mandy moves from Betty's lips to her neck and latches on. She uses her tongue and licks her up to her ear. Mandy uses her knee to open Betty's legs. She raises her leg a bit and her knee comes into contact with Betty's underwear.

Betty rips off Mandy's sheer babydoll leaving her bare. Mandy continues feasting on Betty's neck as Betty works her way around Mandy's body. Betty's hands trail to Mandy's breasts and Mandy moans as Betty's fingers come into contact with her erect nipples.

Betty pinches her nipples lightly and she moans against Betty's neck.

"Betty." Mandy says softly.

"Yes baby."

"I want you." Betty pushes Mandy out slightly and smiles. She takes her hand and moves them to the bed. She pushes Mandy onto the bed and he jugs dance a bit. Betty drops her dress and her underwear and smiles.

She gets on the bed and takes Mandy's nipple in her mouth.

"Shiiit." Mandy cries out as Betty's warm mouth comes in contact with her over sensitive nipple. She gently runs her teeth on her nipple and pinches the other. She sucks and trails her tongue around it then goes back to sucking. She gives the same amount of attention to the other nipple.

She stops sucking and goes on to give her chest kisses.

Betty places small wet kisses all the way down to Mandy's centre. She licks her thighs gently then places a kiss on her quim then goes back to licking her thighs.

"Stop teasing me." Mandy says sounding like she's in pain. Betty continues licking her thighs until Mandy grabs Betty's hair and directs her face to her quim. Betty chuckles as she slowly starts kissing on Mandy's cleanly shaved quim.

She opens Mandy's pussy lips and digs in. She's licking like she's licking ice cream. She slurps then spits and goes back to licking. Mandy is moaning out loud.

Betty points her tongue into Mandy's hole. She continues licking and pointing and sucking. She slowly moves to her clit and starts sucking. Mandy loses her mind. She starts grinding herself against Betty's face as she feels her high nearing.

Without warning Mandy lets out all her juices.

“Fuuuuuuuck.” Mandy has a hard grip on Betty’s hair. Betty licks Mandy clean then goes up to her face and gives her a lust filled kiss. Their breasts are rubbing against each other creating much needed friction.

Mandy flips Betty over so that she’s at the bottom. They continue with their sloppy kiss. Mandy’s fingers find Betty’s hole and go to work.

“Shit.” Betty moans. Mandy works her fingers at a fast pace. She goes down to Betty’s breast and starts sucking. Betty can’t handle the pleasure that she is feeling.

She feels her orgasm nearing and she loses it.

“Mandy stop please.” Mandy doesn’t let down, instead she goes harder on the sucking and finger fucking. “Oh shiiiiiiiiit.” She screams as a wave washes over her. Mandy pulls her fingers out and licks them clean then places a kiss on Betty’s lips.

“The things you do to me B.” Betty chuckles and closes her eyes. Mandy settles next to her and rests her head on Betty’s chest.

“The things we do to each other you mean.” Mandy smiles. She turns her head and latches onto Betty’s nipple and starts sucking.

“So I tried calling you last night but your phone was off.” Molemo says to Betty.

“I’m sorry baby I wasn’t feeling well.”

“Why what’s wrong? Are you okay?” Molemo asks sounding worried.

“I’m fine. Now tell me what’s with you. You don’t look good.”

“I’m fine.” Molemo says softly. Betty takes Molemo’s hand in hers and pulls her outside. They sit under the tree.

“Let’s talk. Ho etsahalang ka oena? Why do you look so gloomy?”

“I’m okay really I swear.”

“I love you Molemo and I care about you. I can’t take this ‘I’m okay’ story you’re trying to sell. So tell me what’s wrong. I want to help you.” Molemo bursts into tears and Betty pulls her into her arms.

“I’m tired of living.”

“No no no we don’t say such you hear me? Never.”

“I just want to let go Betty. I don’t know why God is still keeping me.” Betty continues rocking her back and forth.

“I love you and whatever it is we’ll deal with it together. Oyeswa?” Betty says in her broken Zulu. Molemo giggles. “There we go.” Betty says with a smile on her face.

“Mandy would be so disappointed at your attempt at Zulu.” Betty chuckles.

“As if her Sotho is any better.”

They sit in silence for a while. Out of nowhere Molemo starts sobbing all over again.

“Molemo bua le nna hle.” Molemo holds onto Betty tightly as she continues sobbing. “Baby I can’t help you if you don’t let me in. I know you’re trying to stay strong but you know you don’t have to put that face on for me.”

“You can’t help me.”

“But I can try. Let me in Molemo please.” Molemo wipes her tears and gets up.

“Thank you for everything you’ve done for me.”

“Molemo.” She shakes her head and walks away leaving Betty feeling worried.

She knows that whatever Molemo is facing is big and she can’t handle it by herself.

“Have you spoken to Molemo?” Betty asks Mandy. Mandy frowns.

“No why?”

“Something is wrong with her but she doesn’t want to talk about it.”

“I saw her izolo and she wasn’t fine. I thought it was just the extra shifts she’s been putting in.” Betty frowns.

“She’s putting in extra shifts?”

“Yeah she’s been working double shifts. I tried to talk to her but you know she does that thing where she smiles then leaves you hanging.”

“I’m worried about her.”

“Me too. She’s not the happy Molemo that we met a while ago.”

“I wish she would just open up to us and let us in on what is happening so we can find a solution.” Mandy sighs.

“Maybe we should kidnap her and interrogate her like how they do in the movies.” Betty laughs. Mandy is crazy.

“Like that will work ne.”

“Ei ngoba vele unenkani loyo.” Betty continues laughing.

“It takes a stubborn person to know one.”

“Hmmm. Wena where’s Mr Dance?” Betty sighs. She hasn’t let her friend in on her extra activities with Mr Dance.

“I don’t know.” She answers honestly.

“Skawara now that you’re back we’re going to be seeing a whole lot more of him.” They share a laugh and make their way to their rooms.

Betty is on her way to stage when she someone grabs her from behind. She screams.

“Betty.” He says softly. She turns around and gazes upon his face.

“Hi.”

“So vele you chose to disobey me?” His voice sends chills down Betty’s spine.

FIFTEEN

“So vele you chose to disobey me?” His voice sends chills down Betty’s spine. Betty chuckles and looks at his hand that is holding her arm.

“Let go of my arm.”

“I told you not to come here anymore Betty.” He says through gritted teeth.

“And I told you, you do not own me. Now let me go.” He lets go of her arm and she walks away.

Malibongwe finds a seat in front and watches as Betty does her thing on the pole. The men around the room are going crazy over Betty. Betty drops her top and her perky breast stand tall. He clenches his jaws at the sight that stands before him.

Betty struts her way to the man sitting next to Malibongwe. He keeps his eyes on her as she whispers something to the man.

“How many rounds do you think we can go for?” The man asks Betty. She giggles and lightly bites his earlobe.

“You seem like a stallion, so all night long baby.” He chuckles while giving Betty’s breast a squeeze before flicking his tongue over her nipple. She moans and Malibongwe loses it. He gets up from his chair, kicks it then walks away. Betty watches him until he disappears then goes back to the pole.

Malibongwe is leaning against his car smoking a joint trying to calm his nerves. His phone rings and he answers without checking the caller ID.

“Ya.”

“Simphiwe.” She says softly.

“Nqo.”

“Ukuphi?”

“What’s wrong?”

“I just need a friend right now.” He sighs.

“What happened?” He asks.

“Please come see me when you’re done with whatever you’re doing.”

“Melokuhle what happened.”

“Nothing specific I’m just sad.” He rubs his face in frustration. He hates it when her sister is feeling down.

“Okay I’ll be there soon. I love you okay.”

“I love you too. Bye.”

“Sharp.” He hangs up and sighs. He continues puffing on his joint. Betty has him by the balls. He can’t stop thinking about her.

Betty is sitting at the bar having a cocktail. He sits next to her and orders a glass of whiskey.

“Betty.”

“O batla eng?” He looks at her like she’s lost.

“Uthini?”

“Ke thini? Wena o reng.” He chuckles while shaking his head.

“You’re so stubborn.”

“So I’ve been told.”

“I’m sorry.” Betty gasps.

“For what?”

“For everything.”

“What is everything Malibongwe heh?”

“I’m sorry okay.” She gets up and walks to the corner booth because she can feel people’s eyes on them. He follows her and settles next to her.

“You were saying?” She says with attitude.

“You’re so beautiful even when you’re being disrespectful.” She rolls her eyes. Malibongwe is full of himself, she thinks to herself.

“Look you and I had amazing sex but guess what? I’ve had amazing sex with other men before and you don’t see them out here trying to control me.” He clenches his jaws.

“You don’t say shit like that Betty.”

“Like what? Like I sleep with men for a living? Kanti where are you? You’re in a fucken brothel what did you expect to find? Women who shine shoes for a living?”

“Betty.”

“No Malibongwe. You’re wrong in trying to stop me from doing my job. We had sex. Yes. And that’s where it ends.” Betty is getting worked up. She feels like Malibongwe is not hearing what she is saying.

“What if I don’t want it to end?” He asks.

“It doesn’t work like that?” She says.

“Why?” He moves closer to her and cups her face.

“Malibongwe.”

“Betty.” He leans in and captures her lips in his. She holds onto his waist and slides closer to him. He picks her up and sits her on his lap. He sweeps his tongue in her mouth and she can’t help the moan that escapes her mouth.

She gets off his lap without breaking the kiss then straddles him. When his bulge and her quim come in contact they both moan and groan respectively.

Molemo has just gotten off the taxi and she is making her way home. She sighs when she sees that her house is the only dark one in the street. She walks slowly taking in the outside light before having to go sit in the darkness.

She enters the yard. She can see that the candles are on meaning her mother is home.

She opens the door and finds her mother passed out on the kitchen floor with a bottle in her hand. She heaves a sigh. She jumps over her mother and makes her way to her bedroom. She puts her bag in the wardrobe then takes her clothes off and puts on her pyjamas.

She makes her way to the kitchen to look for something to eat. She finds nothing. Tears make their way down her face. She puts her hands over her mouth and lets out a muffled sob.

A rough knock comes through the door and she vigorously wipes her tears and stands there with her heart beating out of her chest. The knock startles her again and she slowly makes her way to open.

She opens and the person on the other side pushes it wide open causing her to fall. His presence fills up then room and terrifies Molemo.

“Do you have it?” He asks in a petrifying voice. Molemo nods vigorously. “Good.”

Malibongwe is having dinner with his sister at her place.

“Now are you ready to tell me why you’re sad?” She sighs.

“I was at the centre.” He nods.

“Why do you keep doing this to yourself Nqo?”

“What am I doing kanti?”

“You’re hurting yourself.”

“Shut up Simphiwe just shut up.”

“At the end of the day you know it’s true.” She gets up and walks out of the room leaving him feeling like crap. He rubs his face in frustration and waits for her to come back.

He’s been waiting for her to come back but she hasn’t. He makes his way to her room and finds her crying.

“I’m sorry.” He says pulling her into his arms.

“I know you mean well but you’re an ass about it.”

“I know and I’m sorry. We don’t have to talk about this okay.”

“Okay.” He kisses her cheek.

“I need to send a text ngayabuya.”

“Haibo what kind of text is this that needs you to leave the room Malibongwe?” He laughs and walks out of the room.

Betty is lying in bed when a text comes through.

“BE MINE.”

SIXTEEN

“BE MINE.”

“NO.” She responds then switches her phone off and goes to sleep.

Molemo groans and opens her eyes. She cries as she drags herself to the bedroom. Her eye is swollen shut and her lip is busted. She pulls herself onto the bed and sobs. Her life is in danger and it isn't even her fault.

She cries until she feels a headache coming on. She checks the time and it's 6AM. She should be getting ready for work but how can she report for work when she looks like she has been hit by a tornado.

Her mother walks into her room.

“Ngwanaka ke kopa 20 nyana fela.”

“I don't have.” She says softly.

“Please hle Lemo waka.”

“I don't have it mama.” She says with her voice slightly breaking.

“Give me the money you were going to use tomorrow, I swear I'll replace it later.”

“Mama I don't have money OKAY.”

“Oho.” She walks out of the room leaving Molemo sobbing.

Betty has been trying to get hold of Molemo to no avail and she's starting to freak out.

“T Molemo hasn't arrived still?” She asks the guy at the bar.

“Nah and she was supposed to be here really early to help count the stock.”

“But that’s not her job mos.”

“Yeah but she said she needs the extra money.” Betty nods and walks to Mandy’s room.

As usual Mandy has a glass of champagne in her hand.

“Hey love.”

“Hi.”

“You look distraught what’s wrong?”

“I’ve been trying to get hold of Molemo mara nex and I’m starting to freak out now. She really sounded out of it and I’m so scared now Mandy.” Tears fall out of her eyes and she wipes them with the back of her hand.

“Don’t cry please.” Mandy pulls her into her arms.

“I’m scared Mandy what if something happened to her? I won’t be able to forgive myself.”

“We won’t be able to forgive ourselves but I’m sure she’s fine.”

“I hope so.”

“Let me get to work. I’ll keep trying her okay. Just calm down.” Mandy places a soft peck on Betty’s lips before heading out.

Betty is sitting by herself outside when Malibongwe makes his way to her.

“Hi.”

“You’re always here. Don’t you work? Don’t you have a life?”

“Betty.” He seems shocked by her response.

“Ke eng?”

“What’s wrong?” His voice is laced with concern.

“Just stay away from me please.”

“Betty khuluma nami.” She wipes her tears and sighs.

“My little sister is missing. She’s not answering her phone.”

“Have you opened a case?” She shakes her head.

“I don’t even know where she lives exactly.”

“Huh?” He’s shocked.

“She’s my friend but I consider her my baby sister.”

“I see. Now how sure are you that she’s missing?”

“She hasn’t come into work today and she never misses work.”

“Molemo?”

“Yeah.” He sighs and pulls her in for a hug. He understands why she’s worried. He knows that Molemo is not the type to just disappear without an explanation. They aren’t friends but as a customer he knows how dedicated she is.

“I’m sure she’s fine. Let’s have faith that she is okay.” Betty nods against his chest. They sit in silence listening to the sounds of the passing cars.

Molemo uses the last bit of energy that she has to pull herself towards the house phone. She has a cut on her head and the amount of blood that is coming out is blinding her vision.

She dials the one number that she remembers and prays that she answers.

“Hello.”

“Betty.” She says softly.

“Who’s this?”

“Please help me.” She feels herself getting lightheaded and she knows she’s about to pass out.

“Molemo?”

“Heeeelp.” Her grip on the phone loosens and it falls down.

“Molemo?”

“Molemo?” Betty shouts but no one responds.

“What’s wrong?” Malibongwe asks.

“I don’t know but something is wrong with Molemo.” She gets up and walks back inside with Bongwe hot on her tail. She gets to Madame’s office and budes in.

“Betty what’s wrong and who’s that?” She asks pointing at Malibongwe who just stares her down.

“I need Molemo’s address.”

“I can’t give that to you.”

“You know I don’t beg so this should tell you how serious this is.” She sighs and pulls a file. She writes Molemo’s address and hands it to her.

“Here.”

“Thank you. I’m taking the rest of the day off.” She rushes out with Malibongwe still following her. She grabs her bag and makes her way to her car.

“Let me drive.” He takes the keys from her.

The drive is filled with silence with Betty’s occasional sniffs.

“She’s going to be okay.” Malibongwe says.

“I won’t forgive myself if something bad happened to her.” He puts his hand on her thigh and she puts hers over his.

They eventually get to the township and find Molemo’s house. The door is slightly opened.

“Stand back Betty.” He walks in and she follows him. “Sanibonani bakhona abantu endlini?” They get no response.

Malibongwe spots Molemo’s lifeless body on the living room floor and freezes.

“What’s wrong?” Betty asks. “Molemo?” She says softly before rushing to her. She turns her around and rests her head on her lap

“Betty.”

“Call the ambulance.” She says in a shaky voice. “Nana please wake up for Betty please. I’m sorry baby but just wake up.” The sight is breaking Malibongwe’s heart. He walks over and scoops Molemo in his arms.

“Let’s go.” They rush to the car and Betty sits with Molemo at the back.

Malibongwe is driving like a maniac. He says a silence prayer asking God to spare Molemo’s life.

SEVENTEEN

Malibongwe scoops Molemo in his arms and runs into the hospital.

“I NEED HELP.” He sets her on stretcher and she starts shaking vigorously.

“She’s seizing.” Someone shouts. Next thing there are doctors and nurses surrounding her. They wheel her away leaving a sobbing Betty in Malibongwe’s arms.

“Shhh. It’s okay baby, she’s going to be fine.”

“She wasn’t breathing Malibongwe and then and then.” Her words fail her.

“She’ll be fine.” She continues sobbing on his chest for a while.

The stay in that position for a while until Betty’s phone rings.

“Hello.” She says faintly.

“Babe ukhuphi? Like what’s happening?” Mandy asks in a panicky voice.

“Molemo is in hospital.”

“Whaatt? Wait how? When? Why? Is she okay?” The last part comes off as a whisper.

“It’s bad Mandy.” Her tears start falling all over again.

“Betty.” Mandy says softly.

“I need you please come.”

“Send me the details.” She hangs up and sends Mandy the details.

She goes back to resting her head on Malibongwe’s chest. He pulls her closer and places a sweet kiss on her forehead.

“She’ll pull through don’t worry.”

It’s been a few hours since Molemo has been brought in and the doctor hasn’t given them an update yet. Betty is going out of her mind but she’s trying to keep it together.

“Betty.” She freezes when she sees her in Malibongwe’s arms.

“Hi friend.” She gets up and they share a hug.

“Bitch you got a lot to tell me.” Mandy whispers in Betty’s hear. Betty chuckles.

“Yeah I do.”

“How’s Molemo?” They settle on the couch. Malibongwe walked out while the girls were sharing a hug.

“I don’t know, the doctor hasn’t come to see us yet.”

“What happened?”

“I don’t know. She called asking for help so I got her address from the office. When we got there she was lying there lifeless.”

“Whaaat?” Tears flow down Mandy’s face. They hold onto each other and just cry. So many thoughts are running through their heads.

Malibongwe walks back to them with three cups of coffee in his hands and a paper bag.

“Ladies I know food is the last thing on your mind kodwa you need to keep your energy levels up.” They wipe their tears and turn to face him.

“Hello Mandy.” He says.

“Hi.”

“I’m Malibongwe.” She nods and grabs a cup of coffee.

“Thanks for the coffee. B thatha.”

“I can’t eat.” Betty responds.

“Betty you need to have something please, baby.” Betty nods and takes a sip of her coffee.

The doctor eventually comes to them.

“How is she?” Is the first thing that Betty asks.

“She’s stable. The cut to the head wasn’t too deep so not a lot of damage was done. The swelling on the face should go down in 72 hours.”

“Can we see her?” Mandy asks.

“She is awake but she might be slightly out of it”

“Okay.”

“This way.” The doctor walks away and Mandy follows him.

“I’ll be right here.” Malibongwe says giving her a soft peck.

“Thank you.” She follows the doctor and Mandy.

Molemo is lying awake with tears running down the side of her face. She’s lost deep in thought when she feels someone hold her hand. She turns her head slowly and sees Betty and Mandy. She gives them a faint smile before facing the other side.

“Baby.” Mandy says softly. Molemo bites her lip trying to keep herself from crying.

“Molemo bua le rona please.” Betty says with tears falling down her face.

“I just want to die. I don’t want to live anymore. I want to die.” She says more to herself than to the ladies.

“Molemo.” She doesn’t respond.

“I’m getting Malibongwe.” Mandy says.

“Why?”

“He seems like he can help.” Mandy walks out leaving Betty to try and talk to Molemo.

“I know you don’t want to talk but baby I just want to help you. Just let me help you please.”

Mandy walks in with Malibongwe who cringes when he sees the state Molemo is in.

He gets a flashback of a memory he would rather forget.

He walks closer to her and takes her hand in his.

“Hello Molemo.” She turns to look at him. She’s shocked to see him here. She doesn’t understand why he’s here.

“Hi.” She croaks. He gives her a warm smile and she tries to return it.

“I know you don’t want to talk believe me I do but I just need a little bit of information from you so we can help.” She nods lightly. “Can you talk?” She nods. “Okay when you’re ready.”

They sit in silence waiting for her to talk.

“My mother is an alcoholic. She has been for as long as I can remember. Whenever I got money she would take it and go drink. When I started working at the club I did everything I could to ensure that the household ran smoothly. I made sure we always had electricity and food but somehow she would sell the food and buy alcohol. I don’t know how she got mixed up le Bozza but she owes him money. So I’d give her the money to pay him but she’d just drink it. The debt got so huge that he started coming to the house and threatening me. So I told him I’d pay him and I tried but it seemed like it wasn’t even going down. This side mom borrowed money from our neighbours as well so it was bad. When he came in last night he beat me up. He said that I was making a fool out of him and people would start taking advantage of him. So he beat me up then left. He came back during the day to I guess finish me off. I think he stabbed me on my head I don’t know. I just want to die. I don’t want to go back there.” She starts sobbing and Malibongwe gently pulls her into his embrace. He has his jaw clenched.

“You don’t have to go back there baby. I’ve got you.” Betty says softly.

“Yeah we got you.” Mandy adds in.

Molemo continues sobbing against Malibongwe’s chest until she passes out. He gently lays her head on the pillows then walks out. He is burning with anger. Betty rushes after him and finds him sitting outside by the bench.

“Are you okay?”

“I hate hospitals.” He responds.

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay”

“Thank you for what you did.” He nods lightly and they fall into comfortable silence.

EIGHTEEN

It's been two days since Molemo has been discharged from the hospital and she has been living with Betty and Mandy has also moved in with them for a while. Molemo hasn't spoken to any of them since the day she cried in Malibongwe's arms.

"I'm worried about her." Mandy says to Betty, They're in the kitchen making breakfast.

"Me too but we can't exactly force her to talk."

"I know but there has to be something we can do." Betty sighs and continues chopping the onions.

Molemo walks in shocking both the girls.

"Hi baby." Mandy walks over to her and helps her settle on the chair.

"Hi." She says softly.

"We're making a full fatty breakfast, do you want that or cereal?" Betty asks.

"Would it be too much to ask for porridge?"

"Nope futhi mina umdoko is my speciality." Mandy says and walks over to the stove.

"Thank you guys." Betty and Mandy communicate with their eyes before going back to what they were doing.

"Would you like something to drink?" Betty asks Molemo.

"No thank you." Betty nods and get on with making breakfast.

The ladies are now sitting in the living room having breakfast. Molemo is having her soft porridge while Mandy and Betty are having their fatty breakfast.

"You should've invited me to come live you a long time ago wena Betty." Betty chuckles.

"And why is that Mands?"

"Because your ass is a good cook. I could be getting juicier la." They all chortle.

“Well you’re here now akere?”

“Yes and you better keep these fatty meals coming.” Betty shakes her head.

Molemo is eating her soft porridge lost in thought. She feels tears stream down her face and before she can contain it she begins to sob. Both Mandy and Betty rush to her side.

They wrap their arms around her as she continues to sob loudly. Both the ladies have tears falling down their faces. Molemo’s sobs are cutting through their hearts. She eventually stops crying and wipes her tears.

“I never knew my father and whenever I would mama about him she would freak out. She would shout at me who God knows what so I stopped asking about him. When I got to high school her drinking was worse. I’m grateful for all the teachers who took an interest in me because they made sure that I was always feed. Mama would take all my grant money and spend it on alcohol. I’m shocked that we actually still have a house. When I graduated from matric I didn’t know what I would do. I applied for scholarships and bursaries but none came through well except for one but I didn’t get it because I didn’t have money to go for the interview. So I spent a few years taking odd jobs here and there just so I could survive until I got the job at the Club. I thought things would get better you know. I thought that I would out myself through school and finally get the life that I wanted but I guess that life is not meant for me.” She says softly. Betty wipes her tears and gets up then walks away.

Mandy pulls Molemo into her arms.

“You are destined for greatness baby and you are going to be great. What happened in your past is unfortunate but the future is bright. You have us now and we love you and only want what’s best for you.” Molemo nods against Mandy’s chest.

“Thank you.” She says softly.

“I love you okay and we’re going to get through this together. The three of us.” They sit in silence with their thoughts raging.

Betty is sitting on the kitchen floor with tears streaming down her face. The kettle boils bringing her back to reality. She gets up then vigorously wipes them and proceeds to pour the water in the mugs. She takes a handful of mini marshmallows and throws them in each cut.

She grabs a tray and puts the mugs and biscuits on it and head back to the living room. She finds Mandy and Molemo holding onto each other.

“I have a hug in a mug.” They pull apart and sit up.

“Thank you.” She hands them their mugs then joins them on the couch with hers in hand.

“So I was thinking.” Betty says.

“It better not be a dumb idea.” Mandy says and Molemo chuckles. She loves how extra Mandy can get at times.

“Waphapha.” Betty says.

“Just talk already.”

“I was thinking that Molemo could move in with me just until you’re ready to stand on your own two feet you know.”

“Betty.”

“Bona if you’re not comfortable with living with me forever then I can get you a unit in the building then you can live alone.”

“She’ll take it.” Mandy jumps in causing Betty to laugh.

“Of course she will.”

“And I’m moving in with her. The rent I used to pay at my flat will go towards paying the rent here.”

“Well there you go. Done.” Betty says.

“Do I have a say in this?” Molemo asks.

“No you don’t. We’re moving into that apartment and there is nothing you can say about it.”

“But I can’t leave mama.” She says softly.

“Molemo you almost died because of that woman. Do you actually want to die?” Betty asks.”

“He said he’d kill her if I don’t pay Betty I need to pay him.”

“When we go fetch you clothes we will ask her how much she actually owes and we will pay it off. What happens after that you can’t feel guilty about that.”

“I can’t let you do that Betty.”

“Think of it as an investment. When you’re all monied you will take care of me.”

“What did I do to deserve you?” She smiles faintly.

“I love you baby. Now should we fetch your stuff today?”

“What if that man is there?” Mandy asks.

“Let me ask Malibongwe if he can come with us.” She gets up and walks to her room.

She dials Malibongwe’s number and it rings unanswered. She tries again and still voicemail.

“Hey please call me when you get this, it’s kind of urgent. Sharp.” She hangs up and walks back to the living room.

Malibongwe groans as she clenches her pussy around his cock. He begins to move slowly then picks up the pace.

He squeezes her breasts tightly and she cries out.

“Shit its sore.” He loosens his hold on them.

“You said you can take it. So take it.” He continues to pound her hard and fast. She moans out loud as she grabs onto the sheets.

“It’s too deep.” She cries out.

“Take this dick.” He pulls her closer and thrusts deeper. His balls are knocking against her door and she’s a mess.

He freezes then groans as he releases all his content into the condom. He pulls out the walks to the bathroom to discard the condom.

He comes back wipes her clean before checking his phone. He sees the missed calls from Betty and he tells himself he’ll attend to them later.

NINETEEN

“Hello.”

“Betty. I just saw your missed calls.”

“Oh okay.”

“You said it was urgent.”

“I just wanted to find out if you would be able to go with us to Molemo’s house. We want to fetch her stuff.”

“Sure. When do you want to go?”

“Today if possible.”

“Ngyeza ke.”

“Thank you.”

“Sharp.” Malibongwe hangs up and heads to the bathroom to take a shower.

Betty walks back to the kitchen where the girls are.

“Malibongwe says he’s on his way so we should probably go get ready.”

“Let me go bath.” Molemo says then walks out of the room.

“Why is Mr Dance so invested in you?” Mandy asks. She gives Betty the ‘don’t you dare lie to me’ look.

“We fucked.” Betty blurts out. Mandy squeals and pushes Betty.

“You sly fox. Details details details.” Betty chortles. She knows that Mandy will not let it go.

“Let’s go shower while I let you in on everything.” They make their way to Betty’s room. They get in the bathroom and strip naked.

They step in the shower and allow the water to hit them for a few minutes.

“Tell me.”

“He took me to his place and pounded me. What more can I say.”

“Did you like it?” Mandy asks as she applies shower gel on her breast.

“I did.” She replies with a smile on her face.

“And you want more of it?”

“He wants exclusivity.”

“And you don’t?”

“You do understand that me agreeing to be exclusive with him means that I have to stop working right?” Betty says.

“Yeah well like we have already established you don’t need the job.”

“You don’t want to give this up for a man yet I should?”

“I need the income, you don’t.”

“And if I were to say I’ll give you a monthly income would you give Tebogo a chance?”

“Deputy Minister giving away ama funds we government heh?” They both chortle.

“No really if I’m going to take this chance with Malibongwe then you’re going to hear Tebogo out at least.”

“I don’t have to date him angithi.”

“Just hear him out Mandy phela the guy has been blowing up your phone.” They chuckle.

“Okay now can we get to the nice stuff you know sucking boobs and all?” Betty chuckles. She steps closer to Betty and captures her lips in hers. Mandy squeezes Betty’s ass and they both moan in each other’s mouth.

The ladies and Malibongwe are on the way to Molemo’s house. The silence in the car is deafening. You can tell that Molemo is nervous. Mandy pulls her closer and rests her head on her chest.

They finally arrive at Molemo’s and make their way inside. Molemo leads the way and they all walk in. They find her mother sitting on the couch drinking a beer.

“Hau o tswa kae?” Her mother asks. The ladies and Malibongwe can’t hide their shock.

“These are my friends. I came to fetch my clothes I’m going to be living with Betty for a while.”

“And then who’s going to pay Bozza?” Malibongwe clenches his jaws.

“I am.” His loud voice fills the room.

“And o mang wena?”

“How much do you owe him?” He asks.

“25 thousand.”

“Mama.” Molemo says softly.

“Ukuphi yena lowo muntu? Mbize.” Molemo’s mom looks at Malibongwe in disgust.

“Who do you think you are?”

“Molemo go pack.” Malibongwe commands and Molemo rushes off.

“Hehe mehlolo.” Molemo’s mother claps her hands dramatically.

“You will call that loan shark right now and when he gets here I will pay him. You will not contact Molemo again. Uyangizwa?”

“My child will never leave me.”

“She’s not leaving you. I’m taking her.” Betty and Mandy are shocked by this encounter. They didn’t expect Malibongwe to take charge.

“O Molemo.” The mother starts wailing dramatically.

“You will get groceries every month and that is all you will get from Molemo.” The wailing continues.

Molemo emerges dragging a suitcase. Betty takes it from her and walks out. Molemo goes back to her room to fetch the rest of her bags. She comes back with them and Mandy takes those.

“Mama.” Molemo says softly. “I love you mama and I’m sorry I have to leave you.”

“Don’t leave my child.” Molemo shakes her head.

“I’m sorry mama.” She walks out leaving her mother with Malibongwe.

“You have a very beautiful daughter. If you don’t want to get better for yourself then at least do it for her. She deserves a mother. She deserves a healthy environment. Please just get yourself together.” The only thing you can hear in the room are her sniffs.

Bozza eventually came and Malibongwe paid him. He promised never to bother them again. Molemo’s mother made no promise of sobering up.

The gang is now on their way back to Betty’s apartment.

They get there and head inside. Mandy and Molemo drag her bags to the bedroom while Betty and Malibongwe head to the kitchen.

“Thank you for today.” Betty hands him a glass of juice.

“Pack a overnight bag and let’s go.” Her breath hitches.

“Malibongwe.” She says softly. Her mind raises back to the last time she spent the night at his house.

“I just want to talk.” He says.

“Okay.

She walks to her room and starts packing. Mandy walks in and sits on the bed.

“You’re leaving with him.” She says with a smirk on her face.

“Yes.”

“Don’t come back pregnant.” Betty chuckles.

“You know I play it safe.”

“HmMMM.” They walk out and find Molemo and Bongwe having a conversation.

“I’m done.” Betty says.

“Just think about what I said okay.” Malibongwe says to Molemo.

“Okay.” She gets up and they share an embrace. They eventually let go and Betty shares a hug with her friends then heads out.

They get to Malibongwe's and he takes her bag to the bedroom while she settles on the couch. He walks back in and sits next to her.

"I need to pay you back the money you used to pay that guy." He frowns.

"I did it out of the goodness of my heart. I don't want it back but thank you for the gesture."

"I insist."

"Betty stop being stubborn please."

"Okay." He moves closer to her and pulls her in for a kiss. Just as she begins to enjoy the kiss he pulls back.

"Take your pants off." He commands. She gets up with her body shaking and takes her pants off.

She stands there in nothing but a top. He holds his hand out to her and she walks to him. He grabs her waist and bends her over his knee.

She trembles and shivers as he moves his hand around her ass. A stinging slap lands on her ass.

"Ahhhh." Betty cries out.

Another one lands on her other cheek. She shuts her eyes as her body absorbs the pain. He caresses her butt softly. Betty still has her eyes shut as she tries to shut out the sting.

He lowers his head and kisses each of her ass cheeks.

"I love your ass Betty."

He runs his fingers over her slick seam and she moans. He slides a finger in and moves it in and out. He pulls it out then starts rubbing on her clit vigorously.

"No don't." She says breathlessly. He continues to rub then stops and gives her ass a few more spansks.

"You like that?"

"Yes." He smirks. He helps her up and she stands there feeling helpless. He gets up and starts stripping. She watches in amazement. She has never met a man with as much confidence as Malibongwe.

His cock springs free as he lowers his pants along with his briefs. She gasps. She can't get over how gifted he is.

“Your top Betty, it has to go.” She takes her top off with shaky hands. She throws it on the floor and stands before him in all her glory.

He slowly makes his way towards her then circles around her. She holds her breath as he runs his finger around her waist.

“Bend over the couch.” She obeys command and bends over the couch. He puts on a condom then pokes her quim with the head of his cock before rubbing it up and down her wetness. He wraps his arm around her waist and pulls her back.

He slams into her and a loud scream escapes her mouth.

She feels him all the way in her belly. She gasps for air as she tries to adjust to his hardness deep inside her.

He begins to move with each thrust it feels like he digs himself deeper. Betty moans out loud. Extreme ecstasy is what she is feeling. She feels herself build up. She tries to get out of his hold but he pulls her closer.

“No I can’t. Oh shit. I can’t.” Her orgasm hits her and her legs shake uncontrollably. He fucks her right through it.

“Do you like how I fuck you Betty?” He thrust deeper and she cries out.

“Ahh yes... ah I do.”

“I’m marking you Betty.” He rolls his hip hitting her pleasure spot. “Did you hear what I just said? I said I’m making you mine Betty all mine.” He rams into and she feels gasps for air.

“ooh.”

“Yes baby. With my cock deep inside of you I’m claiming you.” He lets go of her waist and holds onto her hips. He pumps into her harder and faster. Her moaning has become louder with the pleasure that he is giving her. The thrusting of his cock against all her wetness feels amazing.

He lets go of the one side of her hip and reaches for her breast. He squeezes hard then rubs on her nipples which raises her oncoming wave.

“Oh shiit.”

“That’s it. Let it go.”

For some reason Betty is enjoying being led by his command. His hip action is powerful and has purpose. One final thrust and her wave hits her.

“Fuuck noo.” She screams out loud as she releases her juices.

“That’s right. Mine Betty. You’re mine.”

“Yours.” She says softly.

“Yes mine.” He continues moving in and out but at a slower pace.

TWENTY

“Please don’t... I’m sorry.” Betty opens her eyes slowly. It’s still dark outside. She switches on the bed side lamp and turns to Malibongwe who is groaning and fighting in his sleep.

“I’m sorry.” He continues fighting. Betty attempts to shake him but he doesn’t wake up.

“Malibongwe.” She continues to shake him.

“NO!!” He screams then wakes up abruptly gasping for air. He rubs his face a few times before turning to look at a terrified Betty.

“Are you okay?” She asks softly.

“Ya.” He gets off the bed and walks to the bathroom. He splashes cold water on his face before heaving a sigh.

He walks back to the bedroom and finds Betty still sitting in the same position. He walks out of the bedroom without saying anything. Betty grabs his shirt and puts it then follows him.

Malibongwe gets to the kitchen and grabs a glass then pours himself a drink. He downs it then throws the glass across the room and it lands on the fridge and shatters. Betty stands frozen. He turns to look at her and she gets scared. He doesn’t look like the friendly, possessive guy that she knows.

His face is hard and has no hint of emotion. He grabs the bottle and takes a rather long sip. Betty slowly makes her way towards him. He has his eyes set on her and she has hers on him. She stands in front of him and gently takes the bottle out of his hand.

She places it on the counter then cups his face. He clenches his jaws and fits his hands.

“What’s wrong?”

“Step away Betty.” His hoarse voice fills the room.

“Bua le nna.”

“Betty ngithe suka.”

“I’m not going anywhere now please talk to me please because you’re scaring me.”

"I'm fine."

"Malibongwe."

"Just go back to bed I'll be there soon." She looks deep in his eyes and sighs because she can tell that he won't let her in on what is happening. She gets on her toes and places a soft peck on his lips.

"Okay." She turns and walks back to the bedroom. She can't help but wonder what his issue is.

Malibongwe gulps his drink and takes the bottle with. He gets to his study and grabs the house phone. He dials his sister but it rings unanswered. He tries her again.

"Ya" She says in a sleep laced voice.

"Nqo."

"Ya."

"I'm failing for her." She doesn't answer for a while then sighs.

"Who is she?"

"Some girl."

"How do you feel about that fact?"

"I don't want to fall for her Nqo."

"Yet you have?"

"I am. I tried to fight it. I tried it so hard but she keeps drawing me in."

"Is it?"

"Her eyes and smile." He chuckles while shaking his head.

"Look if you're happy then I'm happy. Just come see me soon so we can actually have this conversation face to face okay baby."

"Okay."

"Just stop over thinking."

"I'll try."

"And stop drinking and smoking like a chimney Malibongwe that shit is not attractive."

"I didn't call you so that you can shout at me."

“Would you rather mom does?”

“Leave her out of this.”

“I can’t. Not when she cries because wena you haven’t gone to see her in a while. Go see mom please.”

“I will.”

“HmMMMM. Goodnight.”

“Thank you for listening.”

“Anytime.” He hangs up then takes a sip from the bottle. He can’t control his emotions right now. He feels like he’s losing the plot.

He grabs his grandfathers picture off of the shelve and looks at it with his tears falling down his face.

“Mkhulu how do I do this?” He slides to the ground and lets out a gut-wrenching sob.

Betty is sitting on the bed waiting for Malibongwe to come back to bed. The door opens and he walks in. She frowns when her eyes land on his. They’re blood shot red. He walks to the bathroom then walks out a few minutes later.

He gets in bed and pulls Betty into his arms.

“I’m sorry if I scared you.” Betty wants to ask him but she’s scared he’ll brush her off.

“It’s okay.”

“I meant what I said Betty.”

“About what?” She asks clearly confused.

“About you being mine.” Her heart races.

“Malibongwe.”

“Mine Betty.”

“You can’t put a claim on me like I’m some piece of land.” He chuckles and kisses her forehead.

“Ok ke.” He heaves a sigh. “Look all this is new to me. You intrigue me, there is something about you that just keeps drawing me in. I’d like explore that. I’d like to see where this could go.”

“What does this entail?”

“Us being monogamous.”

“What about my job?” She asks. He clenches his jaws.

“You will quit working at that club and you will find something else.” She chortles.

“How many people are unemployed in this country?”

“You don’t need the money.”

“And you know this because you’re my personal accountant akere.”

“You will watch how you talk to me.” He says through gritted teeth.

“You can’t just tell me to quit my job.” He sighs.

“Betty please.” He says softly. That shocks Betty because he wasn’t soft just a second ago.

“Okay.”

“You’ll quit?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll take care of you Betty I promise.”

“Just don’t hurt me.”

“I wouldn’t dream of it.” He pulls her up and gently puts his lips on hers.

TWENTY ONE

It has been a few months since Malibongwe and Betty decided to give their relationship a try and things have been going really well. They are still getting to know each other, slowly but surely both of them are learning to open up to each other. Betty has since stopped working at the club and has officially become a house girlfriend.

She's sitting in her apartment with Mandy.

"So how's the whole monogamous setup going?"

"It's going really well. Malibongwe isn't so bad. He's soft when he wants to be." Betty responds with a smile on her face.

"You look like you're in love friend."

"I'm well on my way there and I honestly don't mind it. This guy is something else." Mandy smiles widely. She is genuinely happy for her friend.

"I'm so happy for you. As long as you're happy then a bitch good." Betty chortles.

"You're so extra."

"Argh whatever. Where's Molemo? She said she was coming up to you."

"She's in the bedroom studying." Mandy nods.

"She's so much better now. I'm proud of her."

"We'll you see more of her than I do."

"Angithi wena you live with your man."

"Hai I still live here."

"No you don't, because if you did you'd know Molemo and I come through and steal your bottles." They both chortle.

"I should take my key card back mxm." Betty's phone rings and she gets up to go answer it

"Mme."

“Betty how are you?”

“I’m fine mme and how are you?”

“Ngoanaka I need you to come back home.”

“What for mme?”

“We need you to come Betty.”

“Unless you tell me what it is about then sorry but no.”

“Why are you so stubborn?”

“I took after you.”

“Why are you so disrespectful heh Betty?”

“Mmee if that’s all you called to say then goodbye.”

“We have an interview lined up with a journalist. Your father’s career is taking a knock because of your scandal. They’re even thinking of removing him all because his daughter decided to become a hoe. Now you will come home and help us fix this mess.” Betty wipes the tears that make their way down her face.

“Mme.” She says softly.

“You better be home this weekend or I will cut you off Betty.” Her mother hangs up leaving Betty stunned. She throws herself on the bed and allows herself to process her emotions. She can’t believe that just happened.

Mandy walks in and finds Betty crying.

“What’s wrong?” She sits on the bed and wipes her tears.

“I just had a fight le mme.”

“Are they still on your neck about the whole thing?” Betty nods.

“For how long though Mandy?”

“They’ll come through just don’t stress about it.”

“I can’t take it anymore.”

“Bazoba strong just do you babe.” Betty chuckles.

“Argh I need a drink. Some champagne maybe?”

“Now you’re talking my language not all these tears.” They share a laugh as they make their way to the living room.

Betty knocks on Malibongwe’s door and he opens in nothing but his briefs. Her eyes travel down to his bulge and she chuckles.

“I keep telling you to take the extra key.” He says with a smirk on his face.

“Not now baby. Hi.” She gives him a soft peck then pushes him aside and walks in. She heads to the kitchen and grabs a bottle of water from the kitchen.

“How was your afternoon with the girls?”

“It was just Mandy and I and it was good as always.”

“Kodwa awukho right. Yin’ndaba?” Betty chuckles while shaking her head. They always fight about this. He speaks a lot of Zulu and she responds in Sotho.

“You’re lucky Mandy always says that so I know what means.” He laughs and wraps his arms around her waist.

“So???”

“I need to go home this weekend.”

“What for?”

“Some interview mme has set up to clear the scandal or something.” He frowns.

“Do you want to do it?”

“I have to.”

“That wasn’t the question though.”

“That’s the only answer that matters.”

“Hmmm.” Betty sighs and leans into his hold. “My girlfriend is famous.” He says and she chortles.

“Dumb you.”

“I like seeing your smile.” He kisses her cheek.

Malibongwe has his arm wrapped around Betty's waist when he starts groaning in his sleep.

"I'm sorry." He shouts. Betty opens her eyes and tries to wiggle herself out of his hold. He continues groaning and fighting.

"I'M SORRY." He cries out. Betty tries to escape his hold but he tightens it.

"Malibongwe." Betty calls out to him. He groans like a wounded animal before grabbing Betty by the neck. She tries to remove his hand around her neck but fails.

"Bongwe." She shouts. He tightens his grip and she feels herself getting weaker. She hits his hand but nothing.

He groans then starts crying. Betty feels her body shutting down because of the lack of oxygen.

"Malibongwe." She says softly before closing her eyes and letting her body go."

TWENTY TWO

Malibongwe wakes up from his dream and realises that he has his hand on Betty's neck. He jumps off the bed and stares at her lifeless body.

"Betty?" He says softly.

He slowly makes his way to her side of the bed and starts shaking her. He begins to panic when she doesn't wake up.

"Betty vuka. I'm sorry Betty please baby." He cups her face and places a peck on her lips. "Betty please don't leave me please baby please wake up." Malibongwe has tears flowing down his cheeks. His heart is racing and his body feels weak.

Betty slowly opens her eyes and looks at Malibongwe who looks devastated.

"Are you okay?" He asks her. She sits up and continues to look at him.

Betty is alert and aware of everything and she isn't panicked.

"I'm okay." She says softly. She cups his face and wipes his tears.

"Let me go get you water." He says before getting up and leaving the room.

Betty sinks into the bed and heaves a sigh. Everything feels like a dream to her. She can't believe that she almost went out like that.

She wonders what is haunting Malibongwe so bad.

He walks back in carrying a tray.

"I made you rooibos with a bit of honey." He places it on the bed.

"Thank you." She takes a mug and sips.

They sit in silence, each of them listening to their own thoughts.

"I'm sorry Betty I don't know what happened there I am so sorry." Betty turns to look at him. He looks vulnerable and broken. She knows that she needs to be extra gentle with him in this moment.

"I know you would never hurt me on purpose."

"I'm sorry." He begins to sob and that sight breaks Betty's heart.

She pulls him into her arms and holds him tightly.

“Shhhhh it’s okay baby it’s okay. I’m okay.” He continues to sob on her chest. Betty feels helpless as she holds him. She wants to help him but she doesn’t know what to do.

His sobs eventually subside.

“Please don’t leave me Betty.”

“I could never leave you Malibongwe I love you.” She shuts her eyes when she realises what she has just said. He looks up.

“You love me?” She heaves a sigh and nods with her eyes still closed. “Betty look at me.”

“No.”

“I love you too Betty. I love you.” She opens her eyes and finds him looking at her.

“Why me? You’ve been dodging this question.”

“Your eyes and smile they drew me in.” She smiles and he can’t help but smile too.

She pulls him up and places a kiss on his lips.

“Now will you tell me what’s wrong?” He rests his head back on her chest.

“Sleep Betty.” She chuckles and pushes his head off then gets off the bed.

She slowly makes her way to the kitchen. She feels a bit off. Her head hurts and and she feels high. She sits on the kitchen floor and closes her eyes. The fact that he won’t lwt her in after he almost killed her pisses her off. She knows that he is closed off but she expected him to shut her out but not like this.

Malibongwe sits in bed waiting for Betty to come back. He can’t help but feel bad for what just transpired. He could’ve killed her.

He rubs his face and gets off the bed.

He finds her sitting on the kitchen floor. He settles next to her and she rests her head on his shoulder.

“I lost my grandfather when I was younger and I was never the same again. When he left he took a huge part of me that could never be filled by anything.” Betty’s heart sinks.

“I’m sorry for your loss.”

“Thanks.”

“So is that where you go in your dreams?” He sighs.

“I sometimes think that if he was still alive things would be better. I wouldn’t be this person.”

“You’re not so bad Malibongwe.” He chuckles.

“You’re just sweet. Now can we go back to bed?” Betty knows what he is trying to do. Over the past few months that they’ve been together she has learnt that he deflects a lot but she is grateful that he has let her in even if it was just a bit.

TWENTY THREE

Mandy makes her way into the restaurant with her heart beating out of her chest. Her palms are sweating and her armpits itching. She doesn't understand how he convinced her to meet up with him.

She spots him and draws a huge breath before walking up to him.

"Hi." He looks up and smiles.

"Mandy you look breathtaking." She can't help but blush.

He gets up and pulls her in for a hug. Both of them get shockwaves throughout their bodies. She tries to pull back but he holds her tighter. She sighs and sinks into his embrace. Neither of them can fight the attraction.

"Can we sit now?" Mandy says and Tebogo chuckles before letting go.

"How are you love?" Mandy frowns.

"It's Mandy and I'm okay and you?" He chuckles lowly.

"Okay Mandy, I'm also okay."

"Tebogo why am I here?" She asks.

"Because I missed you Mandy."

Mandy and Tebogo were together for a long time before her profession got in the way of things. He didn't want her working at the club anymore and she wasn't willing to become someone else's liability so they called it quits.

"Udlala ngami yazi wena." She says.

He chortles.

"Marry me Mandy." He says with an intense look on his face.

Molemo is on her way to go see her mother. She hasn't seen her since the day she moved out. She knows that she shouldn't go there but she can't help it, she's her mother she raised her. As much as she's the reason she almost died.

She walks in the yard and her heart begins to race. She gets flashbacks of Bozza beating her up. Her own screams are ringing in her head. She does her breathing exercises and calms herself down. She knows that she can't afford to break down now. She draws in a huge breath and knocks.

She continues knocking for while before she tries to open the door. It's not even locked. She sighs and walks in. She remembers the nights she would go to sleep with the door unlocked because her mother wasn't back yet. She remembers how paranoid she was thinking that someone would barge in and rape her. She remembers how she spends most of her days in fear.

Her mother is lying on the floor passed out with beer bottles all around her. Molemo chuckles while shaking her head and starts clearing them- out. She heads to the kitchen to check if there is something to eat.

She finds cabbage in the fridge and decides to cook that. She cooks while she cleans the rest of the house.

"Betty."

"Yes." Betty steps into the bedroom wrapped in a towel.

Betty and Malibongwe have practically been living together. They spend most of their days at his place. They haven't spoken about the choking incident since the night it happened.

He tilts his head and chuckles.

"Woza la." She slowly makes her way to him and stands in front of him.

He runs his hands from her knees up to her thighs where he keeps drawing circles. Betty's breathe hitches and she holds onto his shoulders. His finger travels to her clit and starts gently rubbing it. She moans out loud and throws her head back.

Malibongwe loves how Betty reacts to his touch. He slides a finger in and she bites her lip.

"Bongwe." She says breathlessly.

He drops the towel leaving her exposed. His mouth finds her nipple and goes to work. Betty holds the back of his head and pulls him closer. He lightly grazes his teeth over the nipple and she loses it. His finger his still working her and she is clenching her walls crazily. He rubs her clit with his thumb and she comes undone.

He looks up and her and chuckles.

“So beautiful Betty.” He pulls her to sit on top of him and they share a kiss.

Molemo’s mom wakes up and finds her daughter sitting on the couch.

“Wena.” She says shocking Molemo. “What are you doing here?” she asks.

“I came to check on you mama.” Molemo says softly.

Her mother laughs until her laughter turns into coughing. She coughs for a while. Molemo gets up and fetches a glass of water for her. She downs it in one go.

“You came to see me? Why? Because it’s not like you care about what happens to me. You left me all alone. When that boyfriend of yours came into my house and disrespected you didn’t defend me.” She shouts.

Suddenly Molemo regrets coming here. She thought that her mother would have at least tried to get her act together.

“I should go.”

“Oh because you’re living the fancy life now akere Molemo. I CARRIED YOU FOR NINE MONTHS. I FEED YOU. I CLOTHED YOU. I RAISED YOU ALL BY MYSELF. WHEN YOUR FATHER TOLD ME THAT HE DIDN’T WANT YOU BECAUSE HE WAS MARRIED. I RAISED YOU AND TODAY YOU TURN AROUND AND DO THIS TO ME?”

Both of them have tears falling down their faces. Molemo has always asked her mother about her father and that conversation would always end with her mother angry.

“So you slept with a married man and that’s how I was conceived? Who is he?”

“Voetsek Molemo. You said you’re leaving akere so leave.” Her mother says and gets up.

“And I don’t know who told you to clean my house man. Nxaa watena watseba.”

Molemo wipes her tears and grabs her bag. She has a lot to say but she knows it won’t end well. She walks of the house with a heavy heart and more questions than answers.

Betty and Malibongwe are in bed making out when Betty's phone interrupts them. He groans and pulls her closer.

"I have to take that." She murmurs against his lips.

"No you don't." He responds.

She giggles and pulls back. She reaches for her phone and answers.

"Betty hle." Betty sighs and rubs her forehead.

"Mme."

"When are you coming home?"

"I'm fine thanks and how are you mme."

"I don't have time for your stupid games Betty. You need to come home now. Tomorrow afternoon you better be here!"

"Or else what heh mme?"

"DON'T TEST ME."

"Hmmm." Betty says and hangs up.

She groans and rests her head on Malibongwe's chest. He pulls her closer and rubs her back.

"What's the story between you and your parents?" He asks.

Her body tenses and tears shine in her eyes. She clears her throat.

"Nothing." She says softly.

"Betty you know you can talk to me about anything right?"

"Just like how you can talk to me about anything." Betty shoots back.

Malibongwe's grip on her body gets tighter.

"Whatever demons you're facing we can face them together Malibongwe. I chose you."

Malibongwe sighs and kisses her forehead.

"Let's take a nap." He says.

TWENTY FOUR

“Are you comfortable?” Malibongwe asks Betty.

Betty nods lightly while looking deep into his eyes. Malibongwe chuckles as he continues to tie Betty up. He pulls the rope down and runs it beneath the band beneath her breast.

“Bend over.” He commands.

Betty does as she is told with her heart beating out of her chest. He grabs one breast and wraps the rope around it. He moves on to the next one. He secures the loops causing the breast to bulge outward.

Betty sucks in a breathe causing him to chuckle.

“Now you’re easily accessible to me. I can suck, massage and pinch your nipples without any interference from you.” He says lazily and a moan escapes Betty’s lips.

Malibongwe has Betty’s hands wrapped around a pole. Her movements are restricted just the way he wants her to be.

He lowers his head and takes her nipple in his mouth. Betty moans softly. She desperately wants to touch him but she can’t. He continues with his assault on her nipples alternating between the left and right. All the sensations shoots straight to Betty’s pussy and she finds herself clenching and unclenching like crazy.

He eventually stops teasing her breast and moves to her lips. He gently kisses her and she moans in his mouth.

“I want you to beg me Betty.” He says against her lips and she gets tingles throughout her entire body.

“Tebogo please.” Mandy says pleadingly.

Tebogo chuckles and begins to thrust very slowly. He knows how much she hates it when he takes her slow.

“Tebogo please I need to cum.”

“Say yes baby and I’ll make you cum.” He says in a strained voice.

Mandy's eyes well up with tears. She blinks once and they fall. A mixture of frustration and pleasure. She desperately needs to cum and she knows that he won't let her reach her high unless he gets what she wants. She still hates the fact that he enjoys having conversations during sex.

"Tebogo nyakcela we'll talk just please."

He continues with his controlled thrusts and that just frustrates Mandy even more.

"I love you Mandy and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Just say yes." He lowers his head and captures her lips in his.

The kiss is slow and passionate. Both of them are pouring all of their emotions into the kiss. All the unresolved issues that they had. The love. The disappointment. All of it.

Betty has her hands tied and mouth gagged and is practically under Malibongwe's mercy. Her heart is racing uncontrollably and her body slightly shaking. She doesn't know what to expect this time around with all this freaky shit that Malibongwe is into. She's still trying to figure out how he even got into all of this.

She can't believe that he woke her up just so he can tie her up and have his way with her. She looks at him as he takes something from the drawer and walks over to her with it.

"This is going to make your clit so sensitive. You are going to squirm under my control my Betty." He says with a proud smile on his face.

Betty's eyes widen and she shakes her head. She knows that her body will not be handle all the pleasure that is about to be dished out to her. She murmurs against the gag and vigorously shakes her head.

"This clit pump sucker is going to stimulate as well as enlarge for clit kancane nje. Now be a good girl and spread em wide." He orders.

Betty shakes her head and squeezes her thighs together.

"You don't want this?" He asks.

She shakes her head.

"You want it?" She nods her head and slowly spreads her legs.

He smirks as he gently pulls on her clit. She loses her mind when she sucker comes in contact with her clit. She's screaming and trying to free her hands to no avail. Malibongwe steps back and watches as she goes crazy.

He slowly takes off his sweats along with his boyleg and his cock springs free. Betty looks at his cock with passion.

"Let's see." He says while stroking his cock as he makes his way to her.

He removes the sucker and she screams out loud. Her legs are shaking slightly and that seems to please him.

"I'm going to use my vibrator on you and you're going to cum then I'm going to use my dick on you until you pass out. Do you understand me Betty?" His voice sends chills down her spine.

She nods like a possessed woman. He dips his finger inside her pot then pulls it out and sucks it clean. Her breathe hitches. He grabs the vibrator and puts it directly on her clit. She feels something that she has never felt before. She screams and tries to shake it off.

"I know how sensitive you are right now and so you should cum real quick. So on the count of ten you're going to clench your walls and let go okay." He says while looking directly in her eyes.

She shakes her head and mumbles something that sounds like no.

"Now Betty."

Betty squeezes her thighs together and throws her head back. She screams as pleasure spreads throughout her entire being. Her legs shake vigorously and she feels them giving in. Malibongwe can see that and he holds her up.

Mandy and Tebogo are cuddling after an intense session. She has her head rested on his chest and his keeps drawing patterns on her back.

"I've missed you Mandy." He says softly.

Mandy heaves a sigh. She can't bring herself to admit that she has missed him too. The truth is that she loves him and she knows that she wants to be with him but being with him means having to give up her independence. She doesn't see herself living off of him for the rest of her life.

“Tebogo.” She says softly.

“Bona baby I know that you don’t want to be dependent on me and I respect that but you also need to know where I am coming from.”

“I hear you I really do but this is who I am. This is all know. This is all I have.”

“I can give you something more Mandy. Anything you want, anything you need I can make it happen.”

“I just want my independence. I want my own shit Tebogo.” She says faintly.

“Then let me give you that.”

“So you can turn around years later and tell me just how much you made me and how I ain’t shit without you? No Tebogo.” She feels herself getting worked up.

‘Men will promise to take care of you and they will for a while until something better comes along then they remember just how you aren’t anything without them and that’s when everything changes’ her mother’s words ring in her head and she feels her tears burn her eyes.

“I would never do that Mandy. I love you.”

“The timing is all wrong and-“

“The timing will never be right. I want you to be my wife now. We can work around everything else later.”

“Angazi Tebogo.”

“Please lerato laka.” He pleads.

She looks up and she can see how sincere he is. She can see the love that he has for her and that scares her.

“Please agree to be my wife Mandy.”

“Oh shittt.” Betty moans as Malibongwe inserts himself. Her pussy stretches to accommodate him.

He untied her and laid her down on the bed. She knows that he will keep his promise to fuck her until she passes out.

She wraps her legs around his waist and pulls him closer. She wants to feel him on her. He's looking into her eyes and something flashes across his face. Something unpleasant. Betty cups his face and smiles at him.

She knows that something has just shifted in him. She wants to ask but she knows he will dismiss her.

"I'm here for you." She says before pulling him down and kissing him.

He groans in her mouth and his hand travels to his breast and rests there. He gently pinches her nipple and she cries out. He deepens the kiss and she takes all of him in. His slow controlled movements suddenly become hard and fast. He is balls deep inside her and he is losing control. He pulls out of the kiss and focuses on his movements.

"Malibongwe." Betty tries to push him off as she feels herself building up.

He continues thrusting like a possessed man.

"Wait I can't make it oh shiiiiit." She cries out as her orgasm hits her.

Malibongwe fucks her right through it. He continues to pound her in and out. Hard and quick. Betty's body can't handle anymore but she knows he won't let up anytime soon. She knows he's going to keep making her cum over and over again.

"Malibongwe I can't take anymore." She says softly.

He groans and stops moving. He opens his eyes and finds Betty lazily looking at him. He wants to let her rest but he also needs to release.

"I'll be done in a sec okay."

"A sec Malibongwe." She says with a lazy smile on her face.

He chuckles lowly and lowers his head to take her lips in his. He kisses her gently and slowly almost like he's scared of something.

"I love you so much Betty." He murmurs against her lips.

"I love you too. Now hurry up and cum." She responds and they both chuckle but that turns in his groans and her moan when he starts moving.

TWENTY FIVE

“Are you sure you’re going to be fine?” Malibongwe asks Betty. She nods lightly and carries on packing.

Her parents ‘summoned’ her home and this time she has no choice but to go. She has been avoiding seeing her parents since the news of her profession broke and her father’s name got dragged because of that. Her mother keeps reminding her that she needs them in life and if she still wants them to fund her then she should make her way home.

She hates that they’re treating her like one of their subordinates but she knows the number one principle in life is to respect your parents even when they don’t deserve it.

“I’m still driving you to the airport right?” He asks.

“Of course baby.”

“Good. Now do you think it would be possible for me to get a quickie before you go?” He says causing Betty to chortle.

She knows how much of a sex freak he is and she knows that that quickie will leave her burning for days. Sex with Malibongwe is the most intense sex Betty has ever had and she has had quite a few encounters. The manner in which he possesses her body always leaves her questioning what exactly it is that he is running away from.

“You don’t know what a quickie is so nope not a change.” He grunts and Betty just goes on laughing.

She eventually finishes packing then settles next to him. She rests her head on his shoulder before heaving a sigh.

“Are you sure you want to do this?” He asks.

“I don’t know but they are my parents at the end of the day.” She responds.

“Uyazi ukuthi ngihlezi ngikhona angithi.”

Betty chuckles lightly. He knows she doesn’t understand a thing but he still insists on addressing her in Zulu.

“Ho baneng o bua le nna ka seZulu?” She asks.

“Uyazi ukuthi le ‘hajwe’ yenu angiyizwa Betty.”

“O nahana hore seZulu nna ke a se utlwa?”

“Uthini?”

“Oena uthini?” She says in her Sotho accent.

He breaks into a fit of laughter and pulls her into his arms placing a kiss on her forehead. He slyly places a kiss on her lips and she feels butterflies at the pit of her stomach. She can't fathom the effect he has on her sometimes and she won't crack her head trying to figure it out.

“You sure we can't steal a session?” He murmurs against her lips.

Molemo is sitting in the library studying. She studies at the library twice in a week because she feels like she gets more done in that environment than she does at home. She has been in a much better space ever since she moved into the apartment that her and Mandy share. She feels like a huge weight has been lifted off of her shoulders and as much as she still worries about her mother, she tries her best to push those thoughts to the back of her mind.

She knows that her mother will never change but deep down she wishes that she could just get herself together and start living.

“Hi.” A voice interrupts her thoughts.

She looks up and she is met by what she could only describe as the most breathtaking smile she has ever had the honour of seeing. His perfectly set of choppers make his smile that much greater.

“Are you okay?” He asks leaving her embarrassed.

She can't believe that she openly drooled over this guy.

“Yeah no I'm fine and you?” She says trying to sound casual.

“I'm good. I just thought I should just say hi. I always see you studying and today I thought you know why not.” He says shrugging.

Molemo feels herself heating up. It's been a while since a figure of the opposite sex has somewhat taken an interest in her. The men at the club don't count because to them, she's just another piece of meat waiting to be devoured.

“Uhm oh okay. Thanks I guess.” She says nervously.

She doesn't know how to react to what he just said.

"I guess I'll see you around." He says before walking away.

Molemo breaks out into a smile and does a mini happy dance. 'Stop it' she reprimands herself. She composes herself and gets back into her books but fails dismally when her thoughts keep drifting off to the perfect stranger.

Betty grunts as she spots the driver waiting for her at the airport. She wanted to catch a cab like a normal person but she knows that that can't be. She makes her way towards him and he rushes to her when he sees her.

"Hi ma'am." He says taking her bag from her.

She rolls her eyes and follows him to the car. She hates the unnecessary attention and everything that comes with it. They get to car and she slides in after her opens the door for her.

"Motho can't even open their own damn door! Nxaaa" She says angrily.

She knows that her father is going to have a lot to say and she's just not ready for him.

"So taba ya mahadi?" Tebogo asks Mandy.

She sits up and looks at him with a frown on her face. She hasn't accepted his proposal yet however he is so optimistic that he has spoken to his uncles and they're reading to send the letter to Mandy's family.

"Tebogo I thought we spoke about this."

"Mandy you want me to be content with just being your boyfriend for the rest of our lives?"

"Are you going to be okay with a prostitute for a wife?" She asks.

Tebogo shakes his head while chuckling. He can feel himself getting worked up because of her question.

“Is that what you’re planning on doing for the rest of your life heh Mandy?” He didn’t mean to raise his voice.

“YES! IT’S ALL I FUCKEN KNOW SO YES!” She shouts back.

“THEN WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE MANDY? YOU CLEARLY DON’T SEE A FUTURE WITH ME SO WHAT THE FUCK ARE WE DOING?”

“Good question.” She shoots back.

He gets off the bed and walks out of the room banging the door behind him. He doesn’t understand just why Mandy is being so difficult about this whole situation.

Mandy grabs her phone and dials Betty hoping that she’ll answer.

“Babe.” As soon as Betty’s voice comes through she bursts into tears holding nothing back. “Shit Mandy what’s wrong babe?” Betty asks.

“He...he.” She tries to construct a sentence but her words fail her.

“Ho tlo loka Mandy. Whatever it is I have your back and we will deal with it.” Betty says gently.

Hearing her friend say that calms her down a bit and she manages to draw a deep breath.

“I was okay engekho and he decided to worm his way back into my life and now things are messy and I just can’t do this Betty. I can’t.”

“Kaosane I’m getting on the first flight out and we’re going to have this conversation over ‘champagne darling!’ how does that sound?”

“Sounds perfect. I know I wasn’t making sense there.” Mandy says chuckling.

Betty chortles.

“I’m glad you recognised that. I love you okay and everything is going to be just fine.”

“I love you too Bets and strength for the parents.”

“I’m definitely going to need it.” Betty says.

They talk for a little while before hanging up. Mandy gets off the bed and decides to go look for Tebogo.

“Betty.”

“Mme. Dumela ntate.” Betty says.

“Betty ngoanaka dula.” Mr Moloji says.

Betty settles opposite her parents and blankly stares at them.

“I don’t know why you decided to get into this shit of yours and frankly I do not care. What I do care about however is the fact that my career is going down because of your little scandal that won’t die down. I’m this close to being fired and you’re just going on with your life like nothing happened. You have to fix this mess.”

“And how do you suggest I do that ntate?” She asks.

“You’re going to give an interview and you are going to tell the world how you were force into this prostitution thing by someone you cared about. You’re going to tell them that they threaten your family and that you stayed because you were afraid.” Her mother says.

Betty chortles loudly even throwing her head back.

“I will not lie like that. The truth is I do what I do because I enjoy it so I will not lie about shit.”

“YOU’RE SUCH AN UNGRATEFUL LITTLE BRAT. AFTER EVERYTHING WE HAVE DONE FOR YOU THIS IS HOW YOU REPAY US?” Her mother roars.

“I didn’t ask you to do that for me mme.” Betty responds calmly.

“YOU DESERVE TO STAY OUT IN THE COLD WATSEBA. YOU DON’T DESERVE TO BE IN HERE. YOU’RE JUST LIKE-“

“ENOUGH!” Ntate Moloji roars.

“Just like eng mme? Say it! Finish your sentence.”

“Nxaa.”

“I know mme. I know everything and it’s fine.” Betty says before nodding lightly and walking away.

“I told you to keep your cool.” Ntate Moloji says.

“Betty watena and I will not dance around her emotions.” She says clicking her tongue.

TWENTY SIX

“Ngoan’o wa tella Moloji!” Mme Moloji is spitting fire.

She’s pacing up and down the bedroom while her husband watches her. He feels defeated by his wife’s actions because he had made it clear that they needed to take the civil approach with Bety. He knows that his daughter is a hot head and will rebel at any chance she gets.

“Please just sit down you’re giving me a headache.” Ntate Moloji says calmly.

“I’m giving you a headache? We might just lose everything that we have spent our entire lives working hard for all because of that little brat.”

“I understand that you are frustrated but you will watch how you talk to me!” He says sternly.

“I will not forfeit my status because of Betty. Speak to your daughter and make her realise just how important this is.” She says before walking out the room.

Ntate Moloji remains seated in his original position. He knows just how important his status is to his wife and that if he was to get, she could possibly leave him. The prospect of his wife leaving him breaks his heart because she is the love of his life and he would be lost without her. She has held his hand through his dark days and never let go. Even when the situation called for him to let go she didn’t, instead she stood by him and held on tighter.

He knows that the relationship between his daughter and her mother is a tricky one. Betty and mme Moloji have never seen eye to eye probably because they’re both so stubborn. His wife was never affectionate towards Betty and when his political career started taking off Betty was put aside and the focus was on the state dinners and everything that came with it. Betty was then raised by helpers and would occasionally see her parents.

Ntate Moloji heaves a sigh as he gets up and makes his way to his daughter’s room.

“I shouldn’t have come here.” Betty says.

“Do you want to come back?” Malibongwe asks her.

They've been on the phone for a few minutes with nothing being said. Betty needed to blow off some steam but the minute she heard his voice a certain calm washed over her.

"I'm coming back tomorrow morning plus Mandy needs me." She says softly.

"Is she okay?"

"Yeah she is. Girl stuff."

"Okay baby I understand. So are you ready to let me in on what happened in the meeting?" He asks.

Betty chuckles lightly. She doesn't want to go into detail about what transpired between her and her parents but she doesn't want to seem like a hypocrite because she has been asking him to let her in.

"They wanted me to lie about how I got into prostitution."

"To save your father's career?"

"Yes."

"So why don't you?"

"Excuse me?" She slightly raises her voice.

"Look those are your parents. I mean if mom needed me to lie about something I definitely would just to save her."

"Not all of us grew up in a cushy household so forgive me for not wanting to bend over backwards for them. Actually you know what re tla bua later. Bye." She hangs up without warning.

She can't believe that Malibongwe would even suggest that when he knows that she got into this job because of her parents. She's actually disappointed in him.

A soft knock comes through the door and her father walks in.

Malibongwe downs his whiskey as he tries to calm himself. He can't believe that Betty hung up on him just like that. He doesn't even know what he said that was so wrong in her eyes. He knows that Betty is a stubborn one but he just didn't expect her to be so hard headed. He has always wondered what drew him in about Betty aside from her eyes and smile

because her stubbornness is not something that he appreciates. He grabs his phone and dials his sister.

“Baby.” She answers cheerfully.

“Ubiza bani ngo baby?” A male voice says in the background.

She giggles and Malibongwe can’t help but chuckle. His sister is a character and a half but he loves her as she is.

“Unjani Melo?” He asks.

“I’m fine and you baby?”

“Usaqhubeka ngalo baby wakho Melokuhle.” The male voice says.

She laughs.

“Hamba tu. Anyway what’s up? Talk to Melo.”

“Entlek what do you women want kahle kahle?” He blurts out.

He knows that she’s probably confused and he is too. He didn’t mean to just spit it out like that however Betty frustrates him so much that he just doesn’t know what to do at times like in this instance

“So I’m guessing something happened with the girlfriend.” She says.

“Yes. Like I was trying to be supportive but no she gets all worked up and hangs up on me. Fuck no one has ever hung up on me, not even mom. I just don’t get why she couldn’t say kahle ukuthi she didn’t appreciate what I said or whatever.”

“You know how sometimes when I get into that space where my infertility issues hit me the hardest and I just don’t want anyone to say anything and I’m sometimes not so nice kodwa you are able to understand angithi. So understand that whatever it is that you were talking about is probably one area that she needs you to tread lightly kuyo. She probably didn’t mean whatever she said but she was just probably frustrated.”

“Why didn’t she just say that? Why am I supposed to guess or sense that? Kanti what is communication for?”

“You didn’t hear what I said did you baby?”

“I heard you Melo but argh whatever. See this is why I don’t do this relationship shit.”

“Oh please I bet you’re so closed off that the poor girl has to work a million times harder just to get you to open up kodwa you’re here throwing a fit because she hung up on you.”

“Whose side are you one?” He asks chuckling.

“Do you love her?” Melokuhle asks.

She knows that her brother has never loved anyone since the death of his fiancé, so she is worried. The fact that she has his going crazy like this is a good thing however she also knows just how obsessive and intense he can get. She just wants to make sure that he is actually with her for the right reasons.

“I think I do. I mean I’ve said it and I feel somehow when I’m with her.”

“Baby don’t you think you should take some time out and figure this whole thing out?” She says gently.

“Look I have to go.”

“As long as you heard what I said Malibongwe. Don’t use the girl for your own selfish reasons.” She says before hanging up.

He chuckles lightly while shaking his head. He knows she did that just to annoy him. He pours himself another drink before calling Betty.

“I know I haven’t always been the best father and I do apologise for that but Betty ngoanaka for you to go down that distasteful road is shocking. How can you enjoy being a sperm dish for all those men? Men as old as I am Betty? I understand that you were rebelling empa ngoanaka couldn’t you choose something else?”

“That has always been your problem ntate. Everything ends up being about you. You have never taken an interest in me, oena le mme. You have always been about yourselves and not about me. It’s like with this issue now, you’re more worried about your reputation than you are about me. I was dragged through the mud and not once did you ask me how I feel about that. Why ntate? Why don’t you love me enough to care about me?” Betty says softly.

“Betty.”

“And mme ena? Why does she hate me? I didn’t ask to be born ntate. Why don’t you guys love me?” She says softly before breaking into a sob leaving her father shocked.

TWENTY SEVEN

Mandy watches Tebogo as he packs his bag. After their fallout nothing more was said and it seems as though nothing more will be said. He finishes packing his bag and zips it closed before he settles next to her and heaves a sigh. A lot of things are running through both their minds but none of them are raising those points.

“When we first started dating Mandy I knew you had deep issues and I got to see just how deep when you turned down my proposal because of the fact that you had to leave your job. I don’t and I still don’t understand why you think I would turn around and drop you after I stuck around through this phase of our relationship. I had to watch you dance for other men while they touched you and felt on you, how do you think it made me feel to know that a few of them would get t dip their filthy dicks into your sacred place? Fuck Mandy I came back to you every night and made love to you after you spent the day having sex with countless men now tell me why I would then suddenly leave you after sticking around through that? Do you think I enjoy seeing you sell your body off like that?”

“That’s how you met me Tebogo. You also bought a piece!”

“And I fucken fell for that piece. I LOVE YOU MANDY WHAT DON’T YOU GET ABOUT THAT? I WANT THE BEST FOR YOU MAN.” He says in a raised voice.

They both have tears streaming down their cheeks. Mandy breaks out into a sob and Tebogo pulls her into his arms. He knows just how much she hates being vulnerable so he knows that this moment is big.

“I love you baby please believe me when I say that. I don’t know what else to do to make you see that. I stayed away because that’s what you wanted but my heart wants you and only you.” He says gently.

She pulls herself out of his embrace and vigorously wipes her tears.

“My father left my mother for a younger, sexier woman. He told her that she disgusted him and that her fat ass wasn’t attractive anymore. He left us with nothing. I watched mom struggle to feed us until she took her last breath. See she didn’t die because she was sick, her broken heart killed her. She gave her all to a man who would later turn around and shit on her face later. I don’t want to become that woman Tebogo! I don’t want to die of a broken heart like my mother.” She says faintly.

“I would never do you like that rato laka and deep down you know that. If it will ease your anxiety we will sign everything in your name baby. The house, the cars, kaofela baby. I just want you in my life Mandy.”

Mandy continues sobbing. Her heart and mind can't fathom how Tebogo is so in love with her and is willing to do so much just so that she can be comfortable. She can't however bring herself to fully let him in. The fear that is in her heart is prohibiting her from fully experiencing his life.

Betty opens her eyes and takes in her surroundings and when it hits her that she's home her heart sinks. Her mind drifts off to the conversation she had with her father last night. The shock he was in when she balled her eyes out. A part of her is disappointed at the fact that he didn't even attempt to comfort her, instead he just stood up and walked out leaving her in tears.

She knows that her father has never been affectionate towards her but she expected him to at least give her a comforting hug. She wipes her tears and drags herself out of bed to the bathroom and gets into the shower and allows the water to wash away the pain in her heart. She thought that she would be able to deal with her parents but that's not the case. She shrugs off her thoughts and finishes up bathing then heads to the bedroom to get dressed before making her bed.

She grabs her phone and smiles slightly when she finds a dozen missed calls from Malibongwe. She dials him back and he answers almost immediately.

"Betty." He says breathlessly.

"Malibongwe how are you?"

"I'm fine and you Betty?"

"I'm okay, I'm sorry I couldn't take your calls last night." She says faintly.

"Hey what's wrong? Are you okay?" He asks with worry dripping all over his words.

That's all it takes! Her heart constricts and tears flow freely down her cheek. She's biting her lower lip in an attempt to stop a sob from escaping her mouth which is working. She clears her throat before responding.

"Yeah I'm okay."

"Khuluma nami Betty. I can hear that you're not okay. Tell me what happened."

"I'm leaving now. I'll catch a cab straight to you when I land." She says.

"Ngyaphuma manje I'll wait at the airport until you land."

“You don’t have to do that.”

“I want to. Now cheer up kid!” he says mockingly.

Betty can’t help but laugh at how much of an idiot he is. She appreciates his efforts in trying to make her smile and laugh.

“Your smile is so beautiful.” He says randomly.

“Thank you.” She says shyly.

“I’ll see you in a few hours okay?”

“Okay.”

“Sharp ke.”

“Sharp.”

“Betty I’m too old to be playing this ‘hang up, no you hang up’ game.” They both share a laugh before Betty hangs up.

She chuckles lightly just thinking about how the ever so intense Mr Dance actually has a soft and fuzzy side to him. She grabs her bag and heads down to look for her parents.

She finds her parents in the living room laughing while drinking tea.

“Dumela ntate. Mme.”

“Betty are you feeling better?” Ntate Moloji asks.

“Yes I am. I just came to tell you that I’m on my way home now.”

“Jwale o re interview yona?” Her mother shoots out.

Betty heaves a sigh while shaking her head. She knows that her mother won’t let up and she will pester her until she gives in however she has promised herself that this time she will not give in.

“Ntate le tla sala hantle.”

“Yeey oena Betty, you’re going to do that interview.” Mme Moloji shouts.

“Mme I will do no such thing. If ntate gets fired then it clearly means that the job wasn’t supposed to be his. Come on mme you know that akere you’re a praying woman.” Betty says with a smile on her face.

She knows that her mother is about to lose it and she is ready for her to burst.

“Wabona manyala a hao Moloji? You see the shit you brought into our lives?” She says looking at her husband.

“So I’m shit mme?” Betty asks.

“YES! SHIT! O MASEPA A NGOANA! O MAGOSHA, YOU’RE A BLODDY PROSTITUTE JUST LIKE YOUR MOTHER!” Mme Moloji roars.

Ntate Moloji is up on his feet looking at his wife with nothing but anger splattered across his face. He can’t believe his wife just said that to his daughter.

“Betty ngoanaka.” He says softly.

“Finally the truth comes out, pity I knew a long time ago that I didn’t belong to you mme. Ntate I hope that you have a long and peaceful life with your wife. Goodbye.” She says taking her bag and dragging it out.

“Why did you do that?” Ntate Moloji asks his wife.

“Bona mo I am tired of pretending. Betty is old enough she will survive out there.” She says then gets up and walks out leaving her husband with his head hung low.

“God help me.” He says softly.

The second Betty spots Malibongwe she drops her bag and runs into his arms and bursts into tears. They receive stares from passersby but that doesn’t seem to phase him.

“I’m here for you and whatever it is we’ll fix it together okay?” He says kissing her head.

Betty nods lightly and continues sobbing. Her heart feels like it has been ripped out of her chest and tossed into an inferno. Saying it out loud and actually acknowledging that her mother isn’t actually her mother is harder than she thought it would be.

“Jwale o re sefebe se sa hao wants her daughter now?”

“E ya. She says she’s in a better place now and can afford to look after Betty.”

“Over my dead body! I will not have my dirty laundry aired out for the entire world to see. Everyone knows me as Betty’s mother now what is my social circle going to say when the news break? I am going to be the laughing stock of the century, the woman who couldn’t keep her husband satisfied so he had to go out there and explore. I will not be embarrassed because oena you couldn’t keep your zip closed.”

“I have apologised! Its 18 years later and I am still reminded of my mistake.” Ntate Moloji says through gritted teeth.

“Well I’m reminded of your bloody mistake every day it say ‘dumela mme’. Do you know how hard it is for me to look at that child and having to remember how your slut walked through these doors heavily pregnant? You don’t know how painful it was for me to watch her push out your daughter and for her to actually come out looking exactly like you. I’m reminded of your infidelity every day I see Betty and that is all I can survive with. Your little slut should have thought about everything before she opened her legs for a married man.” Mme Moloji spits out with so much anger and disgust in her voice.

Her husband stands there taking in the punches he feels he deserves. He knows just how much he hurt his wife by having an affair. Deep down he knows that his wife knows Betty’s mother wasn’t just a basic affair. She knows that ntate Moloji loved and still loves Betty’s mother, which is the main reason she hates Betty.

When ntate Moloji met Betty’s mom he and his wife were going through things and it seemed as though they were on the verge of a divorce. Ntate Moloji was taken by her beauty and when she spoke it seemed like the world stood still. Her voice soothed every ache and made it seem like every problem would just vanish. The more time they spent together the deeper her fell for her. For a long time he fought the urge to have sex with her but one fateful night he failed at keeping to himself and they went all the way – that was the night Betty was conceived.

“I apologise for everything that I put you through my wife and I promise that I will do everything in my power to ensure that this remains our secret.”

“That’s all I ask for and you need to stop spoiling Betty she’s almost done with matric and is no longer a child so that weekend getaway you had planned for the two of you, you need to cancel.”

“Of course.” He says pulling her into his arms.

Betty slips away back to her room and locks herself in. She grabs a razor blade as she processes everything she just heard. It finally makes sense why her mother has never been affectionate and why she waved her off when she wanted to tell her about her father's friend who touched her inappropriately on multiple occasions. It explains why she was never there for her when she had her first period, when her first boyfriend dumped her. It explains everything! Betty allows her tears to continue falling as she slits her wrist.

Betty wakes up from her dream crying in Malibongwe's embrace. He hasn't slept a wink watching her sleep. The way she cried at the airport left him feeling something he hadn't felt in a while. He wanted to wrap her up and protect her from all of the world's struggles.

When they arrived at his apartment she went straight to bed and slept throughout the entire day. She only woke up when Malibongwe woke her up to feed her then she went back to sleep.

"Ungakhali Betty wami, I'm here. I'm here." He says gently rubbing her back.

His heart is breaking at the sight of Betty crying and the fact that he doesn't know why she is crying is killing him further. He wants to be there for her but he doesn't know how to be. He knows that she will stay closed off and not let him in on what the issue actually is.

"It hurts Bongwe, it hurts so bad." She says softly.

He tightens his hold around her body and kisses her head. There is something about her tears that is making him weak.

"I'm here baby. I love you, that's all that matters right?" He says.

"I love you." She says in between her hiccups.

Bongwe's heart swells and breaks at the same time.

TWENTY EIGHT

Malibongwe has been awake for a while watching Betty sleep. He hasn't left her sight since she came back from her trip. He hasn't been going to work or answering his calls much to everyone's annoyance but he doesn't seem to care about that. All he cares about is the fact that his Betty is alright.

It's been a week since Betty came back and it has been a tough time on both of them. She hasn't opened up fully to Malibongwe about what happened between her and her parents and he isn't pushing her either. He knows that once she's ready she will let him in on whatever it is that is wrong.

"God Betty you're so beautiful." He says softly as he caresses her face.

He places a sweet kiss on her lips before rolling out of bed and making his way to his study. He grabs his phone and dials his sister.

"Bongwe I have been trying to get hold of you kanti why do you own a phone if you don't use it?" Nqobile says.

He chuckles while shaking his head. He expected his sister to throw a fit obviously because he hasn't been returning her calls.

"Ngyaxolisa Melokuhle I was just caught up in something."

"Yeah in a skirt." She spits out.

Malibongwe just shakes his head and heaves a sigh.

"Do you want me to call you back once you've learned how to address people?" He asks with a smirk plastered across his face.

He knows that his question is going to annoy her and he's just waiting for her to blow up.

"You know what I just had me some bomb sex so I will not entertain your stupid ass. We just wanted to check if you're okay, mom has been really worried and the fact that you don't go by to see her anymore is really getting to her. So please brother even if it's just for five minutes please go see mom okay?"

"I promise I will."

"Please baby. Anyway how's that girlfriend?" Nqobile enquires.

"I'll come by one day and we will talk about her for now I have to go. I love you."

"I love you too stranger." She says before hanging up.

Bongwe flops himself on the couch then buries his face in his hands. He knows he needs to make more time for his family but he just can't stand the fussing and everything that comes with it.

Betty stands leaning against the door looking at Bongwe with questions running through her head. She can tell that something is bothering him but she knows he will not let her in which frustrates her because he expects her to open up while he doesn't even bother. He lifts his head and he finds her looking at him.

"Hey how long have you been standing there?" He asks.

She struts her way towards him and settles on his lap. She places a kiss on his lips and he deepens it. An involuntary moan escapes her mouth causing him to groan in hers. She giggles and pulls back.

"You have really soft lips." She says.

"It's all the smoking baby." Bongwe answers wiggling his eyebrows.

She giggles and places a kiss on his cheek.

"Thank you for this week." She says softly.

Deep in her heart she knows that she wouldn't have made it without his support. Yes she knows she has Mandy and Molemo but she wouldn't have allowed herself to be as vulnerable with them as she allowed herself to be with Bongwe. There is something about his presence that just calms her soul.

"There's no other place I would rather be Betty."

"Why do you love me?" She blurts out.

He gives her his dashing smile.

"I just do Betty. You somehow wormed your way into this icy cold heart of mine." He says absentminded.

Betty frowns at how quickly he went from warm to cold. She can't get used to how he just switches up sometimes. She gets off from his lap and makes her way to the kitchen to get started on breakfast leaving him to his thoughts.

Molemo is walking to the library when she feels a light tap on her shoulder from behind. She turns around and finds her perfect stranger standing there. She almost breaks out into a full smile but reprimands herself before doing so.

“Hey.” He greets.

“Hi.”

“How are you?”

“I’m good and you?” She responds.

“Good. Erm I just wanted to say hi again but I was hoping this time my hi could be accompanied by a drink or something.” He says nervously.

Molemo looks at him with confusion written all over her face. She doesn’t understand what he is saying.

“Huh?” She says.

“Would you like to have a drink with me?” He asks.

Suddenly she feels dumb for not being able to figure out what he was saying. She feels butterflies in her stomach but she cautions herself not to get too excited.

“Oh okay. Yeah that sounds good.” She responds shyly.

“Great so after studying?” He asks.

She thinks about it for a second before nodding. He breaks out into a smile and Molemo hurries away like she is being chased by hot lava.

“You know I’ve been with you for a couple of months now and I still don’t know what it is you do.” Betty says to Malibongwe.

He laughs out loud even throwing his head back. He realises that as much as he and Betty talk they never touch on the issues that they need to. Her age, his career, their emotions, they can touch on everything else but the second it gets deep they shutdown.

“Just like I don’t know how old you are Betty.” He says.

“So you’re just fucking me and you don’t know how old I am?” She gasps dramatically.

He laughs and lightly bites her ear.

“Tsek yezwa Betty. I’m a physicist but I work at dad’s organisation offering my knowledge in science to the less privileged.”

“So who’s been standing in for you since you’ve been cooped up in here with me?” She asks him.

“Don’t worry about that but I will be going back tomorrow now that I’m confident you won’t jump out the window.” He says laughing earning him a pinch from her.

“I wouldn’t kill myself.” She says softly.

“That’s good. I’m glad because I would really hate you if you did.” He says seriously.

“Awww you’re scared of losing me. That’s cute Bongwe.”

He gives her a faint smile before getting up and walking out the room. Betty doesn’t read much into it because he does it often. He gets in the bathroom and splashes water on his face. He looks at his reflection with his jaws clenched. The one thing he had promised never to do he has done, he fell in love but he doesn’t regret it because he sees something in Betty that he hasn’t seen in a female in a very long time.

Mandy is lying in bed waiting for Tebogo to come back. They had a conversation about her fears and everything else that is keeping her from fully committing to him. She laid all her cards on the table and Tebogo understood where she was coming from. He promised to walk this journey at her pace which seemed to settle her.

She grabs her phone and dials Betty.

“Mandy babe.” Betty answers cheerfully.

“You don’t miss us anymore ne.” Mandy says.

“I miss you so so much and you know that. Eish it’s just been hectic but I will be back at my place kaosane.”

“Ubuye tu ngoba we have a lot to talk about bitch!”

Betty chuckles lightly. She understands Mandy’s dramatic nature.

“Such as?” Betty asks.

“The fact that I’m choosing to commit to one dick for the rest of my life.” She says.

“Wait are you saying that-“

“YES! My champagne loving self is getting married!” Mandy says cheerfully.

Betty breaks out into a scream while Mandy just laughs. She knows the screaming won’t stop anytime soon so she chills waiting for her to settle.

“I’m not even going to say anything. I’ll see you tomorrow.” Betty says before hanging up leaving Mandy in stitches.

TWENTY NINE

“You don’t wanna fall back
I don’t want to fall back tonight
I just want my old baby
You just want to know it’s alright
For you to take it all off
For me to take care of you
‘Cause you been taking it all in stride

Now I’m gonna make a time to make love
I’m gonna make it a point to just focus on us
Now I’m gonna make sure you get enough
When I make it all about you, take care of us

Look what you made me do, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh
Look what you made me do, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh”

Malibongwe slowly rubs himself up and down Betty’s slick seam torturing her further. He’s been rubbing his tip up and down her entrance for what seems like an eternity for Betty. She’s been trying to get him to stop torturing her but he just smirks and continues with his game.

“Malibongwe please.” Betty cries out.

He smirks, lowers his head and captures her lips in his while rubbing his tip at her entrance. Betty hungrily kisses him. She locks her ankles around his back and tries pushing him in but he doesn’t budge.

“Please Bongwe I’m begging you.” She murmurs against his lips.

“Ufunani Betty?” He asks.

“I want you to fuck me.” She says on the verge of tears.

He chuckles lightly before slowly inserting himself in. She moans out loud and clings onto him for dear life.

“Fuck Betty you’re so hot. Shiiit.” He says breathlessly. “And I’m not going to fuck you, I’m going to make love to you.” He says.

He begins to move slowly and Betty loses it. In this moment he owns each and every inch of her being. He could ask her to sell her soul and she would without even blinking.

“Look at me Betty.” He says.

She opens her eyes and meets his passion filled gazers. They have a conversation through their eyes. Each trying to conceal their demons from the next. Love for each other they have, no doubt however their pasts are holding them back from fully experiencing the fullness of their love.

Malibongwe continues with his controlled movements. He is savouring the moment, trying to imprint it into his heart forever.

“Oh shit... Oh shit.” Betty moans out softly.

“Are you going to cum for me?”

“Uh huh!” She says trying to push him off.

He knows that she can’t handle the pleasure wave but he knows his job is to make her cum real good.

“Oh shiit Bongwe I can’t... Wait, ahhhh.”

“Calm down Betty.” He says softly.

A pleasure wave shoots through Betty’s body and she finds herself shaking. He thrusts right through her wave much to her annoyance.

“You can’t possibly want to go home and leave all this.” He says taking her lips in his.

She chuckles and pulls his closer as he continues with his journey around nirvana.

“So we’re you able to study?” He asks Molemo.

She nods lightly and takes a bite of her burger. Molemo and her perfect stranger are having lunch at a fast food joint near the library. After her study session she found him waiting for her and they decided to go get food.

“And you?” She asks.

“Ahh sort of.” He says nonchalantly. “Anyway so Molemo do you live around here? I mean I only started seeing you recently.” He says.

“Yeah I recently moved in with my sister.”

“Oh okay so that means I’m going to be seeing a lot of you.” He says biting his lip.

Molemo can’t even hide the fact that she is blushing. There is something about this guy that makes her want to throw caution to the wind. A part of her feels like he isn’t real but another part knows he is because she can physically touch him.

“I guess so.” She says shyly.

“Hey hey don’t be shy here.”

Molemo giggles and goes back to her food. She doesn’t know how to respond to that.

“Can I see you again tomorrow?” He asks.

“I don’t know because-“

Her phone interrupts them. She gets the caller ID and it’s Mandy

“Hey.”

“Hey baby I just got home and you’re not here obviously. Ukuphi? Are you okay?” Mandy asks.

Molemo’s heart swells. She’s never had anyone to care about her the way that Mandy and Betty care. She can’t believe that she has been blessed with two big sisters who would go through hell and back just for her.

“I’ll be back soon sis and I’m fine.”

“As long you’re okay. Tebogo is here as well ne.”

“Okay. I’ll see you guys in a few.”

“Sharp.”

“Bye” She hangs up.

She finds her perfect stranger looking at her with questioning eyes. She shrugs and dives into her fries.

“Does your sister always call you to find out where you are?” He asks.

“Yes.” She responds.

“Oh wow oh okay.” He says trying to sound chilled.

Molemo rolls her eyes inwardly. She could hear his judgemental tone even though he tried to mask it. In this moment she decides that he’s not so perfect anymore.

“Malibongwe.” Betty calls out to him.

He snaps out of his thoughts and looks at her softly. She gives him her beautiful smile and he returns it.

“What are you thinking about?” She asks.

“You haven’t spoken to your parents since you came back.” He says.

“If nntate wanted to reach out he would’ve so clearly he doesn’t.” she says shrugging.

“What happened?”

“Ahh life happened Bongwe. Sometimes grownups make decisions based on ‘batho batlo reng’ then turn right round and regret that decision. You know after I overheard my parents talking about it I thought that I heard wrong and for a long time I tried to convince myself that it wasn’t true, but as time went on I realised that that was the truth.

I remember when I something happened to me and I tried talking to mme but she brushed me off. I swear I felt like God was punishing me for my father’s sins. Angithi the bible even says something along those lines? Actually talking about this is taking me back into a space I don’t want to be in.

I understand now that my father doesn’t care and it’s fine by me. So ya that’s what happened but I’m not entirely alone now akere.” She says with a full blown smile on her face.

“And you will never have to be alone my beautiful queen.” He places a kiss on her lips.

They soak in each other’s love. In this moment everything feels at peace in their little bubble.

THIRTY

Malibongwe walks into his office and settles in his chair. He grabs his phone and dials Betty. It rings for a while before her voice comes through on the other end.

“Bongwe.” She answers sheepishly.

“Baby you’re still sleeping?” He asks.

“No Malibongwe I’m out fishing stars.” She shoots back.

He laughs loudly. He loves her sarcastic moments. She doesn’t have a lot of those but when she does they’re the best.

“Well I just wanted to say good morning and mina I’m already at the office although I do wish I was in bed with you.”

“No I’m glad you’re at work hobane oena you don’t even give me a chance to breathe once you’re between my legs.” She says.

Again he breaks out into laughter.

“It’s not my fault you’re so hot my queen.” He says.

Betty giggles lightly. He breaks out into a wide smile because her laugh is his favourite sound. He loves it when she is happy.

“Bye bye Malibongwe. Have a great day.”

“You too Betty.”

“I need to find a job.” She says causing him to frown.

“You don’t need a job baby I’ll take care of you.”

“Yeah that’s cute and all but no. Anyway go work. I’ll see you later akere?”

“Yes later baby.”

“Sharp.” She says then hangs up.

Bongwe leans back on his chair and chuckles. Each time he speaks to Betty he can’t believe that she is in his life. For the longest time he believed that he would spend the rest of his life alone but that was until he laid his eyes on his beautiful Betty. Unknowingly she opened him up to the prospect of love and life.

Lwandle stands leaning against the door watching his son with a smile on his face. He heard the conversation between Betty and his son and he is happy that Malibongwe is opening himself up. He hasn't seen him smile like that in years and as a father he feels slightly at peace knowing that his son is coming alright.

"You look like someone in love." Lwandle says walking in.

Bongwe looks up and smiles when he sees his dad. He hasn't seen him in a few weeks along with his mom. He gets up and they share a hug. Bongwe clings onto his father like a monkey does its parents.

"I missed you." He whispers.

"We missed you too but I'm glad you're fine." Lwandle responds.

They settle on the couch and Lwandle looks at Malibongwe expectantly.

"I met someone but I'd like to keep it to myself to a while and once I'm ready I'll introduce her to everyone. I don't know how it happened dad but all I know is that I love her and I'm scared of being without her. I hate feeling this way because I've felt this way before and look how that ended. I tried to fight the attraction dad, I tried so hard but the more I fought it the bigger it grew.

I've found a home in her and as fucked up as we both are we love each other. It's not the most ideal situation but it's working you know. I'm taking everyone's advice and opening up my heart. I don't know all I know is that should this not work I don't think I'll be able to survive." He says.

Lwandle nods lightly taking in what his son just said. Suddenly he is fearful because he knows his son and him saying he wouldn't be able to survive means he already knows what he will do should it not work.

"You know nothing in life is ever cast in stone Simphiwe. Often times we have everything worked out in our heads forgetting that we don't have that kind of authority. It is unfortunate that we don't always get what we want but that is life and we have to take it as it is. I know that you've been broken beyond what you thought you could handle but here you are living and pushing through.

I don't want to sound as if though I don't have faith in whatever you're building with your girl but please guard your heart. Yes we should love unconditionally but a little caution is needed especially with how things are with you. I fear that you're using this girl to close the gaping hole that is in your heart. We both know that you never fully dealt with everything which is why you are the person you are today.

I'm not saying there had to be a time frame to your grieving process however you needed to grieve and heal before jumping into anything serious."

"I have healed dad." Bongwe says defensively.

"Have you really? Can I mention her name without you clenching your jaw and fisting your hands?" He asks.

Malibongwe looks at his father angrily.

"Exactly!" Lwandle says. "As long as you're not using this girl to get over everything then it's good. I'm happy that you're happy bud!" Lwandle says roughing up Bongwe's hair causing him to laugh.

"I am happy dad and thank you for everything." He says.

They chill for a while catching up before it's time for them to get back to work.

Zobuhle walks into Malibongwe's office with a lunchbox in hand. His heart swells when his eyes land on her. He rushes over to her and they share a warm hug. She places a kiss on his cheek before letting go.

"You're only happy to see me because I came to see you." She says sulking.

Bongwe chuckles and pulls her to sit next to him.

"I'm sorry for being distant. I just didn't want you to be constantly worried you know but I'm in a very great space now."

"Your dad tells me you have a girlfriend." She blurts out.

"Your gossip buddy kuthi he couldn't wait until he got home to tell you this but yes I have a girlfriend and no I will not tell you anything about her." He says.

"He tells me you're happy."

"I am mom."

"Then that's all that matters. Now eat up I bought you dumpling and chicken livers."

Bongwe's mouth instantly salivates. He always says no one cooks better than his mom, not even Amanda and Bandile with their professional training. He doesn't waste time digging into his food. Zobuhle looks at his son and acknowledges in her heart that he isn't the shell he was about a year ago, clearly this girl is good for him.

"I'm downstairs." Malibongwe texts Betty.

After a few minutes she comes down wearing a short and a crop top much to Bongwe's disapproval.

"You're not dressed Betty." He sulks.

"When you met me I was wearing but a thong so whooah." She says getting on her toes and placing a kiss on his lips.

"Betty." He grunts.

"Are you coming up or?" She asks.

"No I have to go check on my kids. Futhi we have a new addition into the family and I haven't been spending time with him so I need to make up for lost time."

"Are any of those kids yours?" She asks softly.

They've never touched on that subject.

"Are you jealous my Betty." He steps closer and wraps his arms around her waist.

"No I'm not."

"Good because you have no reason to be." He says.

He dips his head and pulls her in for a passionate kiss. They get lost in it forgetting that they're in public. Betty tries to pull back but Bongwe just deepens the kiss even grabbing her ass in the process. Betty feels like a teenager stealing a moment with her boyfriend.

THIRTY ONE

Awkward tension passes between Betty and Malibongwe. He steals a glance at her before heaving a sigh. She's on her phone absentmindedly typing. They arrive at their destination and Malibongwe shakes her lightly. She looks up and realises that they have arrived. She grabs her bag before opening the door and heading out. He chuckles lightly before following suit. Betty's nerves are more than she can handle. As much as she does this regularly it is always nerve wrecking when she does.

Their appointment went well and both of them came out negative. They heaved a sigh of relief when they got the results. They decided to take this next step in their relationship because they felt like it was time and Bongwe was getting tired of having a rubber between them.

"Are you okay Betty?" He asks.

"Yeah." She responds softly.

"How do you feel?"

"I've never slept with a man without a condom so you're going to be the first and I'm scared." She says.

Malibongwe looks at her with shock spread out across his face. He didn't expect that. He knows that some clients prefer to have it raw so for her to say she's never had sex without a condom is shocking.

“Not even your boyfriends before?” He enquires.

“Not even them. When I say you’re going to be my first raw act I mean it. As reckless as I’ve been I’ve always been careful. Not only am I not ready to be a mother but unwanted diseases are lurking around and I’m not willing to spend my life on a catheter.” Betty says.

“Or you can just say you were waiting for me.” Bongwe says with a smirk across his face.

They share a laugh. Bongwe looks at Betty with nothing but love in his eyes. He can’t believe that he found her and he is not planning on letting her go anytime soon. He knows that they’ve got a very long way to go before their relationship is stable but he’s willing to put in the work.

“You’re so full of yourself.” She says smiling.

“Ungithanda nginje.”

“That’s what you think.” She shoots back.

He chuckles and takes her hand in his then kisses the back of it.

“I love how it fits perfectly in mine.” He says with so much intensity in his voice.

She looks at him and smiles faintly. He thinks she doesn’t notice these random moments where he disappears into a dark space in her presence. She wants him to open up but she knows not to push him.

They drive in complete silence until they arrive at his place. Hand in hand they make their way up to his apartment. They step in and Malibongwe disappears to the bedroom while

Betty heads to the kitchen. She's come to learn that he sometimes needs his space and she respects that.

"So taba ya mahadi re etsa jwang?" Tebogo asks.

Mandy heaves a sigh and shrugs. She keeps brushing off the lobola conversation because she doesn't have any clear answers for him. The only family she remembers is her mother and since she's passed away she has been on her own. After her mother's burial all her extended family members disappeared and she hasn't heard from them since.

"I don't know Tebogo like I have no family. I have no one. So I don't know." She says with tears threatening her eyes.

He scoots over and pulls her into his arms. She hates how vulnerable he makes her. She has never been one to cry over such issues but since they started conversing about the marriage she has been in tears all the time.

"Re tla etsa plan baby even if it means us getting my friends to stand on your behalf then we can do that. Fuck we will turn this world upside down as long as by the end of it all you are standing next to me as my wife." He says kissing her head.

"Why do you love me?" She asks faintly.

"Because you love me." He says.

He pulls her in for a deep passionate kiss pouring his all into it. In this moment all the doubts that she had slowly fade away. She can feel that he will do just about anything in his powers to ensure her happiness.

“Fuuuuck Betty shiiit!” Malibongwe groans out loud.

Betty is going ham bouncing up and down, riding his dick. She’s going in on the reverse cowgirl which is driving him insane. Seeing his cock being swallowed by her ass is fuelling him.

“Shit Bongwe I...I can’t.” She says trying to get off of his dick.

He grabs her waist and pounds her from underneath. She screams out loudly as her orgasm washes all over her as he continues thrusting until he reaches his pinnacle. He groans as he shoots up his soldier’s right up her nirvana.

“Fuck it feels so good to have you without anything between us.” He says chuckling.

She shakes her head lightly before getting off of his dick. Their juices run down her legs and she grunts.

“I don’t think I’m going to like this.” She says.

He rushes over to the bathroom and comes back with a towel. She cleans her up before carrying her to bed and cuddling her from behind.

“Have I ever told you how beautiful you are?” He whispers.

“Every day Bongwe.” She says warmly. “Actually what attracted you to me?” She adds on.

He tightens his grips around her body and places a kiss on her shoulder. He thinks back to the day her first saw Betty.

“Your eyes and your smile. They drew me in and they still do. It wasn’t your body, it wasn’t your great ass. It was your eyes Betty. They spoke to me and yeah.” He says.

“Do you ever sit and think ‘damn it I’m dating a prostitute?’” She asks.

“Never! I’m dating a phenomenal woman and that’s all there is to it. Which reminds me, Betty how old are you?” He asks laughing.

She joins in and they share a good laugh for a few minutes.

“You’ve been sleeping with me without knowing how old I am vele?” She asks.

“Because it doesn’t matter futhi this isn’t a very conventional relationship.”

“hmmmm.” She says.

“So?”

“I’m 24.” She says.

“And I’m 26.” He adds in.

“I know.” She says proudly.

“Kanjani?” He asks laughing.

“I have my FBI ways.” She says innocently.

He laughs softly before turning her around and capturing her lips in his.

“I love you so fucken much Betty.” He murmurs against her lips.

A single tear rolls down his cheek and before he can pull himself together a couple more follow. Betty deepens the kiss while wiping his tears with her thumbs. He grabs her ass and pulls her closer.

“Betty.” He says faintly.

“It’s okay baby. I’ve got you.” She says pulling him closer.

THIRTY TWO

Betty has been awake for a few minutes and she has been watching Malibongwe sleeping. She can't believe that this tall, dark man with thick soft lips is all hers. Her heart swells when she thinks back to the past couple of days they've been spending together. Since the night he broke down in her embrace he has been clingy. So clingy that he checks in on Betty throughout the day. When she asked him why he was so vulnerable he just told her that he didn't want to ever spend his life without her. She promised that for as long he treats her good and loves her then he would never have to be without her.

She gently caresses his face then pecks his nose. He grunts causing her to giggle lightly. He pulls her closer and holds her in his arms.

"Good morning Betty."

"Good morning Bongwe."

"Did you sleep well?" He asks.

She nods lightly while chuckling.

"Come on baby you know I don't to open my eyes so khuluma." He says sulking.

"Malibongwe o tloba late so vuka." She says placing a kiss on his lips.

He deepens the kiss and Betty welcomes it. When his finger finds her clit, she jumps out of bed laughing. He lazily opens his eyes and chuckles. Betty shakes her head and grabs her gown. She knows that he doesn't want to go to work and he was going to use morning sex as an excuse to skip work.

“While you get ready I’ll fix you some breakfast.” She walks out.

He lies back on the bed with a full blown smile on his face. His heart is filled with joy and happiness. He knows that he wants to spend the rest of his life with Betty and he doesn’t need any more convincing. He rolls out of bed then heads to the bathroom to prepare himself for the day ahead.

“It’s not much but I made you a burger for lunch.” She says handing him a lunch box.

He smiles widely and makes his way towards her.

“I’ve never had anyone make me lunch before. Thank you Betty.” He says pulling her into his arms.

They hold onto each other for a while until Betty pulls out. She fetches his keys then hands them to him. He takes them along with his lunch and laptop bag then heads out after giving his lady a passionate kiss that leaves her yearning for more.

Betty is sipping on some champagne with Mandy at her apartment. The girls haven’t seen each other in a few days and today is a proper catch up session. They have wings, ribs, pizza and champagne obviously.

“So you’re telling me that there is absolutely no one that we can ask to negotiate on our behalf?” Betty asks.

“Yho babe no one.” Mandy says shrugging.

“Fuck le nna I don’t have family that I could ask to step in. Eish maybe we could ask Bra Jo.” Betty says.

They look at each other before bursting out into laughter. Bra Jo is the head of security at the club and he takes care of all the girls like they are his own. He would probably step up if they approached him but they’re definitely not going to do that.

“Argh Tebogo said he’ll make a plan and I trust him.”

“Are you happy though?” Betty asks genuinely.

“Happy? Yes but relaxed? Now that’s where the problem is.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean Betty I left my job for this man because I love him but I feel like I didn’t love myself enough to actually secure myself before everything you know. I’ve got my savings to sponge off of for a little while but after that I’m done for. Yes he’s promised that he’ll take care of me kodwa you know I’m not the type to be kept. Ngapha I don’t even know what I’d want to do with my days ngoba he said he’s ready to pump money into whatever project I want to do.”

“I hear you love. Bona nna I’m not going to lie and say I’m not happy about the fact that you took a chance on love. It’s hard to let go of the one thing you’ve always known as your it thing empa in the end it will be worth it. Look you used to say to me that if you had the kind of money I had you’d open a boutique so that should give you an idea of what to do.” Betty says.

Mandy heaves a sigh before grabbing a bottle and refilling her glass. She downs it in one go then refills it again.

“I will do some research on that. Anyway how are things with the mysterious Mr Dance?” Mandy asks squealing.

Betty chuckles and rolls her eyes.

“Mysterious.” Betty responds.

“Huh?” Mandy says in confusion.

“I don’t know this man. I mean look yes we’re getting to know each other and I have basically moved into his space but like yho it’s hard trying to get this man to open up. He has his random moments where he lets me in but the rest of the time is just us winging things. I know I love him and he loves me wholeheartedly and right now that’s what we’re capitalising on but you know.”

“Nawe Betty I doubt you’re letting the guy in so cut him some slack. Don’t rush things. The pace you guys are going at is working for you so don’t try and fly into the whole thing. You guys are gelling well so just take that.”

“Babe.”

“Hai Betty just love the man and let him love you. You’re the one who told me to let go and let Tebog in so please.” She says dramatically.

Betty chortles while shaking her head.

“I love and appreciate you yeswa.”

“Yees baby you’re trying futhi kumele vele ukhulume isiZulu ngoba indoda ngum’Zulu.”

“Oena o tla bua ne neng hobane monna ke moTswana?”

“Hai phela he’ll learn Zulu.” Mandy says laughing.

“You’re so full of it.” Betty says.

The girls spend their afternoon catching up and engaging in heartfelt conversations that leave both of them in tears at some point.

“Betty.” Malibongwe shouts stepping into the apartment.

Betty emerges from the bedroom and runs into his arms. They share a brief kiss before making their way into the bedroom. She sits on the bed and watches as he changes out of his suit. He strips until he’s left in just his boyleg. Betty wants to pounce on him but she is keeping her cool.

“Actually get dressed we’re going somewhere.”

“Where?” She asks.

“To my parents.” He says coolly.

She shakes her head. She’s not ready to meet his family as yet.

“Betty.”

“No Malibongwe I will not meet your family not now.”

He makes his way to her and takes her hands in his then places a kiss on both. He gazes deep into her eyes before breaking into a smile.

“I love you and I see a future with you. It hasn’t been easy accepting that you are the centre of my life now but I can’t fight it anymore. Betty me wanting you to meet my family should tell you just how serious I am about you. You are IT for me baby uyangizwa?”

Betty nods lightly before hiding her face on his chest. She wants to tell him that she’s scared but she knows that he knows that. Thinking about it she has never gotten to meet any of her previous boyfriend’s families so this is a huge step for her.

“Okay let’s go.” She says.

“I love you B.” he says smiling.

“Family.” Malibongwe shouts as he and Betty make their way in the dining room.

The family turns to look at them and in this moment Betty wants the earth to open up and swallow her up. Malibongwe on the other hand looks as cool as a cucumber. He has Betty's hand firmly in his and the more she tries to discreetly pull hers out the tighter he squeezes it.

"What the hell is this Malibongwe?" Zobuhle shouts.

"This is Betty, my girlfriend." Malibongwe announces.

"A fucken prostitute Simphiwe!" Zobuhle shoots out causing Betty to cringe.

She wasn't expecting this kind of reception.

"Zobuhle." Langa says sternly.

"That prostitute better be out my house when I get back." Zobuhle continues as she gets up from her chair.

"If she goes then I go and you will never see me again." Malibongwe says coolly leaving the rest of the family gobsmacked.

"Then get out of my house and don't look back." Zobuhle says walking out of the room.

Lwandle gets up and goes after his wife leaving everyone else in awkward silence. Betty has tears threatening her eyes while Bongwe has rage burning throughout his entire being. He didn't expect his family to know about Betty's scandal.

"Hello Betty." Sibahle greets her.

“Hi.” Betty says softly.

She squeezes Bongwe’s hand hoping that he will get that she wants to leave. He turns to look at her softly and nods lightly.

“We’re leaving I guess.” He says.

“Let me talk to you before you do.” Langa says getting up from the chair.

They walk out of the room and leave a distraught Betty with Sibahle. Khanyile walks into the room shouting something and pauses when she sees Betty. She steps up to her and gives her a warm hug.

“You’re very beautiful.” She says.

“Thank you.” Betty responds awkwardly.

“Ask your dad to tell you the entire truth and only then will you be able to fully heal and move on.” She says before walking out leaving Betty shocked.

“She has a gift.” Sibahle says. “Come sit Betty.”

Betty settles next to her and fidgets with her fingers.

“I’m not going to ask whether you love him or not because the fact that you have made it to this stage of your relationship says a lot. I am however going to ask you to be patient with him. I think you’ve realised by now that he isn’t exactly the guy next door but he is very loving and the fact that he wanted you to meet his parents says a lot about his feelings for you.

I'm sorry about what just transpired. Bongwe's mom is very protective of him and that was just mama bear ready to kill for her cub. I think that--

They're interrupted by Langa and Bongwe walking back into the room. Betty gets up like the chair she is sitting on has suddenly been thrown into a sea of thorns. Bongwe makes his way to her and takes her hand in his.

"I'm sorry." He whispers.

"Betty alright?" Langa asks.

Betty nods absentmindedly. She doesn't even hear when Langa bids them farewell. They head out and the second she gets in the car her tears cascade down her cheeks leaving Bongwe broken.

THIRTY THREE

“Do you think you family would ever accept me?” Betty asks softly.

Malibongwe heaves a sigh and pulls her closer then places a kiss on her head. It’s been a week since the drama at his parent’s house and he hasn’t spoken to them since. A part of him understands but a very large part of him is angry and doesn’t care. He feels like his mother should have listened to him before going off like that. He thought that his mother would be happy that he is moving on with his life.

“I-” His ringing phone interrupts him.

“Hi sis.”

“Dude what is this I hear about your girlfriend being the minister’s daughter?” Nqobile asks.

Malibongwe chuckles lightly. He’s happy that she called her the minister’s daughter and not a prostitute.

“Hello nawe Nqobile.”

“Argh shut up and answer me. Like dude this is huge considering she was in the news and all. Ei nawe how could you sneak her up on us like that? Like why couldn’t you sit your parents down and let them in on what is what? Ai.”

“I know it was a dumb decision on my end.”

“A very DUMB decision.” She emphasizes.

“I know but whatever I’m done with them anyway.” He says coldly.

“Wow Bongwe just wow. Ngenxa ye kuku? You start chowing and suddenly your parents are public enemy number 1? The very same people who lost a few years of their lives because you were losing yours? The very same people that gave their all for you? Wow Malibongwe.”

“What do you expect me to do Nqobile? You weren’t there. You didn’t hear what your mother said!” He says with his voice slightly raised.

“What the fuck did you expect her to say? Did you want her to her some tea and crumpets? Bona mo papa your girls scandal was all over. Her clients were also out here singing like canaries, we know the gory details so please explain to me how MY MOTHER seeing as though she’s not yours anymore, was supposed to react.” Nqobile says getting worked up.

“Baby calm down I can hear you all the way from the kitchen.” A male voice says to Nqobile.

“You know what fuck you Nqobile.” Bongwe says.

“Well fuck you too Malibongwe yezwa! Fuck you!” Nqobile says before breaking out into a sob.

Malibongwe’s heart constricts. He hates it when his sister cries and he realises that he went too far. Another thing is he knows just how much her man doesn’t want to see her crying and he isn’t afraid to put him in his place when he messes with his woman regardless of her being his sister.

“Malibongwe what did you do to your sister?” He asks.

“I didn’t mean to. Please give her the phone.”

“She doesn’t want to talk to you. I swear Malibongwe if-”

“I’m sorry. Please tell her I’m sorry.” Bongwe says before hanging up.

Betty chuckles while shaking her head before getting out of bed. She puts on her shoes then heads out of the bedroom. Bongwe rushes after her and holds her front behind. She pushes him off and walks towards the fridge. She stands there looking for something until she gets frustrated and roughly closes the door. He stands there watching her as she moves around the kitchen doing nothing in particular.

“Betty.” He calls out to her.

She ignores him and continues with what she’s doing. She switches on the coffee machine then makes her way back to the bedroom with him following closely behind. She gets in the bathroom and fills in the tub while he watches.

“Betty khuluma yini?”

She shoots him the eye and he raises an eyebrow.

“Are you going to tell me or do I have to force it out of you?” He asks.

“Oh are you also going to cut me off?” She asks cheekily.

“What?”

“I don’t like how you disrespected your sister and your mother just now.”

“I was defending you Betty.” He shouts.

“No you were defending your decision to be with me, not me. Even so to tell your sister to fuck off was just unnecessary. Ke dutse mo right now with no family and that fucken hurts! It hurts so much and I don’t want you to experience that. You don’t pull that stunt for nothing! Dammit we’re just dating and even if we were at a much deeper stage I still wouldn’t want you to do that.

Yes what your mother said hurt but then again who would want their son dating a well known prostitute? I can understand your hurt and anger towards your mom but your sister? What did she do to deserve you swearing at her?”

“Betty.”

“And I can tell just by looking at you that you don’t regret it. You still have that arrogant face on which I don’t understand.”

“I’m not sorry vele.” He shoots back.

“And I will not be held responsible for you being without your family. Go make things right with them. I’ll be going back to my apartment today.” She says dropping her gown.

He struts towards her and pulls her into his arms. He kisses her passionately and she melts into his arms. He picks her up and she wraps her legs around his waist.

“Sex doesn’t fix everything.” she murmurs against his lips.

He holds her up against the wall before lowering his briefs and inserting himself all the in. Betty cries out as she feels him all the way in his belly. She tries to push him out but he tightens his hold against her and goes to work. He is moving in and out of her like a possessed man.

“Wait you’re too deep.” She cries out.

He ignores her pleas and continues thrusting. He groans out loud as he reaches his destination.

“You can’t leave me Betty.” He whispers against her neck.

“I said you’re too deep.” She says crying.

“Don’t leave me.” He says softly before capturing her lips in his.

Betty grabs her keys and makes her way out.

“Betty.”

“Just make peace with your family.” She says before making her way to her car.

THIRTY FOUR

“I’m going out on a date.” Molemo blurts out.

Betty sets the knife in her hand on the counter and turns to look at her while Mandy just sips on her juice. Molemo gives them an awkward smile before burying her face in her hands. Mandy chuckles lightly while Betty keeps a straight face.

“Oa jola Molemo?” Betty asks.

“No sis it’s just a date. I swear we’re not dating.”

“Where did you meet?” Mandy asks.

“At the library.” She responds softly.

“I see and how old is he?”

“24.”

“I see and how old are you?”

“19.”

“Huh.” Betty says.

She goes back to chopping her onions while Molemo looks at Mandy who just shrugs. They understand that Betty is overly protective of her baby sister. Molemo signals for Mandy to talk to Betty and she shakes her head. She has never had to deal with mommy Betty before so she doesn't know where to start. She doesn't know how hectic Betty might get.

"Betty man, allow the child to go and enjoy herself. Molemo is a good girl and I'm sure she wouldn't have agreed to this date if she didn't think that the guy is all good, so relax. Futhi she will let us know where she is going and she'll give us his picture and details angithi nana?" Mandy says.

"I know that but I'm just a little worried you know after everything that's happened."

"I promise I will be safe Betty." Molemo says walking towards Betty.

She hugs her from behind and places a kiss on his cheek. She is grateful to have met Betty in this lifetime. To have someone who cares about her more than she's ever been cared for in her life.

"As long as you also promise not to slack off on your school work because of a boy." Betty adds.

"I promise I won't waste your money like that."

"It's not about the money Molemo. It's about you obtaining a qualification and making something of your life. Look I could twerk once and we'd make up that money so really."

"Whoooah don't let Mr Mystery hear you say that ngoba he would kill umuntu yhu." Mandy says dramatically.

The ladies share a laugh. Betty's heart constricts a bit at the thought of having not spoken to Bongwe in a week. He rejected a few of her calls and blue ticked her texts on WhatsApp. She doesn't understand why he's behaving this way when all she did was encourage him to make things right with his family.

"You should invite him over for dinner or something and I'll cook." Molemo says excitedly. "Actually Mandy you should bring Tebogo as well so I can spoil my brother's in love." She adds on.

"Do you think Tebogo and Mr Dance would get along?" Mandy asks.

Betty shrugs and goes back to her pots. Mandy notices that something is off with Betty and she makes a mental note to chat to her about it later.

"I think they will." Molemo says innocently.

"I think so too nana, anyway what time is your date?" Mandy tries to change the subject.

"At three."

"Niyakhuphi?"

"The Spur by the library." Molemo says shyly.

Mandy is looking at her with amusement written all over her face. She can tell that Molemo is really taken by this guy. She finds it cute and she is all for it because she feels that Molemo needs to have fun and experience life. She never got to enjoy her childhood because she was always looking after the household and her mother. This is actually her first chance at enjoying herself and life.

“Number, full name and picture please.”

“Of course.” Molemo walks out the room leaving the girls alone.

“Out with it, what’s wrong? You haven’t been to Malibongwe’s place this week.”

“Argh it’s nothing.” Betty says.

“When Molemo leaves we’ll talk okay.”

Betty heaves a sigh before nodding. She doesn’t want to talk about it but she knows Mandy won’t let it go.

Molemo walks into the restaurant and spots her the second she steps in. She makes her way towards the table with her heart in her knees. She admits that she likes this guy but she doesn’t want to come off as desperate because she doesn’t know where he stands. Is he only after friendship or does he want more. They speak almost every day over the phone and see each other at the library sometimes. She enjoys his company and hopes that she can get to enjoy it for some time.

“Hey.”

He looks up and breaks out into a broad smile when his eyes land on Molemo. He gets up and they share a warm hug.

“You look amazing.” He says breathlessly.

“Thank you.” She says shyly.

They settle in their seats and a waiter comes to take their order then walks off. Molemo texts her sisters to let them know that she arrived and that she will call them should anything feel off.

“So Molemo.”

“So Bongani .”

“You’re very beautiful.”

“Thanks.”

“So were you able to come alright with your assignment?” He asks.

She nods lightly. She was frustrated by an assignment and he tried to help her but that proved to be difficult because he’s an art student.

“Submitted it and I’m hoping for the best.”

“I know you’ve got this man.”

“Ke a leboga.”

“So how are your sisters?” He asks.

“They’re good thanks and your siblings?”

“Still driving me nuts but they’re good.”

“And is your mom feeling better?”

“A lot better. She has an appointment with the doctor next week and we’re hoping for the all clear.” He says heaving a sigh.

“Hey.” She puts her hand over his. “Have faith that she will be fine.”

He takes her hand in hers and gives it a gentle squeeze. Molemo feels butterflies in her stomach. She can’t contain her excitement as her heart begins to race uncontrollably. He has an effect on her and she can’t hide it.

“Thank you for being here.”

“You’re welcome.”

“I like you a lot Molemo.” He says softly.

“Bongani.”

“I know you might have your reservations but I promise you I will never hurt you, not intentionally anyway. I want to be the one to make you happy at all times Molemo. I want to be the one who hold you when your days aren’t going well and you need to be held. I want to be your man.”

Molemo tries to open her mouth to respond but no sound comes out. She can't believe that he just asked her out. She wants to jump on top of the table and do her happy dance but she knows she has to contain herself.

"Like I don't get it Mands, why is he acting up like this? Yes his mom went off but he sprung this on them, heck on us and I think her reaction could've been worse. Yes it hurt but it was the truth akere."

"Try look at this from his perspective."

"I'm trying but I don't see it. Why is he not talking to me Mandy? Why is Malibongwe hurting me like this? I just wanted him to sit down with his family and have a conversation with them, make peace you know. Argh shoot me for caring." Betty says rolling her eyes.

"You know what, we need to forget about le drama ka Mr Dance so we are going to go clubbing. We're getting pap drunk and forgetting all about our problems for a little while."

"Mandy."

"Hai Betty nami I need to get my mind off of this whole lobola thing so please. Block heels because bitch we are burning the dance floor all night long!" Mandy says causing Betty to chortle.

As much as she doesn't want to go out she knows that Mandy is right, they need to let loose, they haven't been out in a while and what better time than tonight. They decide to get some rest before burning the dance floor all night long.

THIRTY FIVE

“Baby Betty and I are going out to the club so I probably won’t be able to answer your calls but I’ll ping you our location.” Mandy says.

“Okay baby just be safe.” Tebogo responds.

“You know we will baby.”

“Don’t accept drinks from strangers and keep your drinks on you at all times.”

Mandy chuckles lightly while her heart flutters. The fact that he cares so much about her warms her whole entire being. She can’t believe that she bagged herself such a caring and handsome man. The fact he accepted her despite everything proves just how much he loves her and wants her in his life.

“You know I don’t guzzle down on those lousy drinks so you best believe we ain’t accepting drinks from nobody. We’re buying our own drinks baby skawara.”

“I love it when you speak my language even if it’s just a mere word but I’ll take it hobane soon you’re going to be crying and screaming in my language.” Tebogo says chuckling.

Mandy giggles sweetly and buries her face in her hand. She bites her lip as she thinks about being pinned under him while he makes love to each and every part of her.

“Baby stop it. You’re making me horny.”

“Are you wet for daddy baby?” He asks in his husky voice causing Mandy to shudder.

“Baby.”

“Do you want to touch yourself for me?”

“I want you here.” She says breathlessly.

“You can take care of that itch on your own baby but you better hurry because I know Betty is about to come knocking.”

“Tebogo.”

“Use your fingers motho waka while imagining me on top drilling the fuck out of you.”

Mandy’s breath hitches and she squeezes her legs together. Tebogo knows his woman is stubborn and she might not do as instructed but as long as he has her hot and bothered then he has achieved something.

“I’m so going to get you for this.” Mandy says giving her breast a tight squeeze.

“I love you too, now enjoy your night and let me know when you get home.” He says and hangs up.

Mandy grunts and flops herself on the bed before getting up and finishes getting dressed. She has an itch to scratch and she plans on doing it right.

Betty takes a good look at herself before grabbing her bag and heading out. She is rocking a pair of cheeky shorts with a body suit tucked in and a demin jacket on top. A pair of block heels completes the look. She heads to Mandy's apartment and just as she is about to knock the thick goddess opens the door. She is wearing a short red romper that has her girls out to play but in a sexy manner. Her hair is tied up putting an emphasis on her gorgeous face.

"You look smashing." Betty says.

"And you look yummy. Ngena phela your plate is in the microwave." Mandy says walking back in.

They settle in the kitchen and feast on their pap and chicken stew. Betty is going in on the meal like it is her last.

"The chicken is so succulent, I swear even Bongwe can't make it this good." She says before frowning when she realises she just mentioned him.

"You miss him and that's understandable babe."

"Argh whatever let's just finish up and go."

They finish off their meals in silence with Betty's thoughts on Malibongwe. She can't take the unnecessary silent treatment when all she wants is to be in his arms with her head rested on her chest. They request a cab and head out with the intention of getting wild.

The ladies arrive at the club and are immediately ushered to the VIP section – the perks of knowing the manager. Their order of champagne is brought to them and they don't waste

any time as they get into it straight away. They haven't been there for long but already they have attracted a number of men.

"I can't believe that men actually think that we live for their company and compliments like bitch please." Mandy says downing her drink.

She reaches over and refills her flute.

"Nawe Betty uphuza slow tjeeer."

"Hai phela you drink champagne like it's water." Betty says laughing.

The beat drops and the girls lose it. They down their drinks and make their way to the dance floor. As promised they're letting their hair loose. Betty is twerking the hell out of the song while Mandy cheers her on. A crowd has gathered around them and most of them have their phone put and are documenting this moment.

He slowly makes his way towards her and starts dancing. The crowd cheers them on and they give them a show. At some point he has his hand around her waist but she quickly shakes him off. They continue dancing until Betty has had enough and makes her way back to the VIP section.

"Dammit I missed seeing your sexy ass doing its thaaang!" Mandy screams as they settle back on the couch.

"I haven't danced like that in a while."

"Giirl and that fire man you were dancing with yeses if I wasn't accounted for I swear I would have him."

“He sure is fire.” Betty adds in.

“Hai I need the bathroom. Asambe.”

They grab their bags and head to the bathroom while going on and on about how sexy and yummy he is.

Mandy has Betty pinned against the cubicle door and is kissing the living hell out of her while giving her ass a tight squeeze.

“Mandy.” Betty murmurs against her lips.

“Yes baby.”

“I’m itchy.”

“Me too.” Mandy says unzipping Betty’s shorts.

They drop to the floor and she steps out of them leaving her with just her bodysuit on. Mandy wastes no time in shifting it to the side and inserting her finger as Betty moans out loud. She moves it around in circles for a bit before inserting another one.

“Maaand.”

“Shhhh.” She says deepening the kiss.

She continues working her way around Betty's pussy until she feels her clenching her walls around her fingers. It's not long before she falls apart and holds onto Mandy tightly.

"I love making you cum Betty."

The ladies are swapping spit in the elevator as they go up to their apartments. Betty has Mandy's boob cupped in her hand while Mandy has her ass in her hands. The alcohol in their system is also adding on to the fuel that is the slightly attraction that is between them.

"Goodnight."

"Goodnight." Mandy murmurs back.

The doors open and Mandy steps out and makes her way to her apartment. The lift doors open into Betty's flat and she drops her shoes, bag and jacket on the floor before walking further in. She is surprised when she finds Malibongwe sitting on her couch sipping on some whiskey.

"Hi." She says softly.

"Ubuya phi?!" He roars.

She frowns slightly. She can't believe that he just walked in after ignoring her for a week and demands from her.

"I went clubbing, not that it's any of your concern."

“FUCK!” He throws his glass on the floor. “YOU WENT OUT TO GO AND FUCKEN HOE ANGITHI? THAT’S WHY HE HAD HIS ARMS AROUND YOU AND THAT’S WHY YOU ENJOYED IT. YOU FUCKEN GIGGLED AS HE HAD HIS DICK PRESSED UP AGAINST YOUR ASS.” He continues roaring.

Betty stands there looking at him with terror in her eyes. She can’t believe that this man standing before is the same man that makes her feel giddy inside. He’s pacing around with his hands on his head.

“Please calm down.” Betty says faintly. She’s never seen Mr Dance in such a state before.

“Don’t tell me shit Betty.” His voice filling the room and sending chills down Betty’s spine. “You ain’t shit Betty. You’re just a dirty prostitute. You’re filthy. You’re a fucken hoe Betty.” He pauses then starts chuckling. “I don’t know what I saw in you. She’d be so disappointed to know that I replaced her with a dirty stripper, a fucken slut. You are nothing like she was and you never will be. Fuuck man.” He kicks the side table over and walks out.

Betty stands there shaken by what just transpired. Her heart shattered into a million pieces. She never thought there would come a time where he would utter such cruel and repulsive words to her. She sinks to the floor and hugs her arms around her knees as her tears trickle down her face. The words he just threw at her keep ringing in her head causing her to breakdown further.

He walks back in, grabs his keys and walks out without uttering a word. Feeling like keeping it in will kill her, Betty lets out a gut-wrenching cry that could pierce through the coldest of hearts.

THIRTY SIX

Malibongwe lays awake in bed thinking about Siyanda. He thought that he was over her, or getting over her rather but it turns out he hasn't been doing such a great job. He wonders whether or not she is looking down on him with a frown or a smile in her face. He wonders if she is happy that he is with Betty considering her previous occupation. Tears run down his face when his thoughts rush off to the first time he laid eyes on Betty. It was her first week at the club and when she walked on stage his heart stopped. Her eyes and smile reminded him so much of Siyanda that he was convinced they were related. After conducting intensive research he found no relation between the two ladies.

After that first encounter he began frequenting the club more often until he eventually established some sort of relationship with Betty. She became the only girl at the club that could get close enough to dance for him. He enjoyed her dancing, how she took her time each time, how at some instances she would look deep into his eyes. He felt like she could see parts of him that others couldn't. He felt a connection with her but was scared to explore that because he knew at some points things would get tough and he wasn't ready for that.

The day he had Betty watch him fuck Mandy was an attempt to repel Betty away because he knew that as much as she had an effect on him, he had one on her too. He couldn't stand the attraction and he thought by having her sit in, that attraction would somewhat fade away but he was wrong. As the days went by he longed more and more for her until he couldn't hold it in anymore. He never wanted to fuck her at the club because he didn't see her as one of his random fucks. When he got the chance to taste her, he knew at first thrust that he was screwed because he knew he wanted more of her and wouldn't be willing to share.

He vigorously wipes his tears but they continue to fall. He knows that he screwed up by uttering those words to Betty. He didn't mean to but seeing that video of her dancing in the club brought back all the anger that he harbours and unfortunately Betty was at the receiving end of his wrath. He gets off the bed and grabs his keys and heads out.

With tears blinding his vision he flies down the highway. He safely arrives at Betty's and makes his way up to her apartment. He finds her wrapped up in a ball in the same spot he left her in. His heart constricts at the thought of her having slept on the cold hard floor with nothing on. He makes his way over to her and picks her up in his arms but she wakes up before he can even take a step. She jumps out of his arms and steps back. He takes a step towards her but she shakes her head and moves back.

"Get out." She says faintly.

"Betty."

"Malibongwe Mkhize get out of my apartment please." She continues.

"Betty I'm sorry sthandwa sam I was just angry I didn't mean any of it."

She shakes her head vigorously with tears falling down her eyes.

"Tsamaya please just go. Get out." Her voice is still faint.

"I can't Betty, I can't leave yo-"

"GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY APARTMENT" She interrupts him with her roar.

He's taken aback a bit but nods lightly and heads out. The second the doors close, she slides to the ground and continues crying. She can't believe that he uttered such words to her especially after she had asked him if he ever thinks about her prostitute title and he said no. She remembers how he said he is dating a phenomenal woman and that's all he sees.

She knows that the prostitution will always be an issue especially after his mother pointed it out but she didn't expect him to also share the same sentiment. She never thought that he would turn around and use that against her. Now she understands why Mandy was so apprehensive about letting go of her financial security for love.

She wipes her tears and gets up from the floor. She makes her way to the bathroom and steps in the shower with her clothes on and allows the water to fall on her. She wishes that she had a mother who cared for her and would take the time out to listen to her. A mother who would come rushing in this moment just to hold her in her arms while rocking her back and forth. Her mind drifts off to what Khanyisile said and she can't help but wonder what her father is keeping from her. She decides there and then that she is going to ask him and hopefully he will tell her the truth.

Betty dresses up in her onesie and gets into bed. She grabs her phone and without thinking twice calls her father. It rings for a while for her answers.

"Betty."

"Ntate."

"How are you my child?"

"I'm fine. Ntate who is my real mother?" She asks.

Ntate Moloi heaves a sigh.

"Ntate please."

“I’ll see you in a few hours.” He says.

“Don’t come here if you’re not planning on being honest with me ntate. If you’re going to come here and apologise then I suggest you stay mo le mosadi oa hao and if you’re thinking of bringing her with then just know that I am going to kick her out and I will not be apologetic about it.” She says before hanging up.

Malibongwe has been blowing up Betty’s phone to the extent of her blocking his calls. She knows he will come here and demand that she talk to him but until then she doesn’t even want to see his name pop up anywhere. He sent her a lengthy text about how sorry he is and how he isn’t in a good space and seeing that video made him lose it. She deleted the message and decided that she was done with him.

Ntate Moloi calls Betty to let her know that he has arrived. She heads down to fetch him and silence engulfs the elevator. The doors open and they step inside and make their way to the couch.

“Can I make you some tea?” She asks.

He shakes his head and heaves a sigh.

“You don’t look well. Ho etsa halang Betty?” He asks with concern dripping all over his words.

“Ntate for 24 years of my life I’ve felt out of place like I never belonged. When I overheard you and mme, I mean your wife talking it all made sense. I just don’t understand why you as the man that was supposed to be my superhero would pick everything over nna, your child. Anyway that’s beside the point, just tell me who my mother is.” She says coldly.

“Betty.”

“I never had parents ntate,I was always alone. Even when he, when he- I just want a mother. Tell me who she is, maybe she might just accept me and your will never have to deal with me again.” She says crying.

“Even when who did what Betty?”

He pulls her into his arms and comforts her. He knows that he failed his daughter and that it might be too late to try make up for it.

“It hurts so bad ntate.”

“I’m so sorry ngoanaka, I am so sorry.”

“Who is she?”

“MaMoloi is your mother Betty in every sense of the word.”

“Okay get out.” She says untangling herself from his hold.

“Betty.”

“The truth or you leave and never look back.”

He rubs his face in frustration and heaves a sigh.

“Your mother is MaMoloi’s sister.”

THIRTY SEVEN

“I was still a young man when your mother and I got married.”

“Your wife.” Betty says sternly.

Ntate Moloi heaves a sigh while shaking his head.

“Moleboheng and I met when I was in my final year of varsity. From the second we started talking we just clicked and the more we spoke the more I fell for her. Not only was she gorgeous but she was intelligent as well and unapologetic about her beauty, smarts and attitude. I fell for her deeply, so deeply that a few months into our relationship I proposed. I was a nervous wreck but clearly I had no reason to be because well here we are married.

I did right by her family and we got married. We obviously had nothing at the time and were staying at my parents house in the backroom outside. I had never thought I would meet a woman who would understand my love for politics and the need to change the lives of my people but she got it and she shared the same sentiments. So she supported my studies and ideas and when I graduated a few months later she was there holding my hand and cheering me on. That day was one of our happiest days ever. We made a decision to hold off on having kids at least until I was in a stable position within the political party.

Things slowly started working out and it was three years into our marriage when I was offered a job at Luthuli House in Johannesburg, obviously she couldn't come with because she was working full time as a clerk at one of our municipal offices in the Free State. After a lot of tears we came to a decision that I would go to the big city because it was good for my career.

Things were going well job wise but I was missing her everyday and it hurt that I couldn't go home as often because we needed to save every cent we got. She was also always cranky because of the distance. It was hard Betty. Eight months after I moved I was able to bring her up to come visit me for a week. Things weren't the same, the distance had put so much

strain on our relationship and with Moleboheng's attitude it was hard to try and work on things.

By the time we were four and a half years into the marriage things were very rocky. I was a member of parliament by then which meant the travelling had increased. As much as I would've loved to spend every second with her I just couldn't because I needed to work and feed my family. Also the fact that I was an MP who was under the age of 30 meant that I had to never drop the ball because it was and still is very rare hobane usually when you're around that age you're still in the youth league.

Moleboheng was always angry and whenever I was home or she came to me we wouldn't be intimate. It was as though I repulsed her but I respected her so I kept my distance. It was very hard knowing that my marriage was falling apart and all because of something we both wanted. She wanted me to make a name for myself and it hurt me to know that I was losing her to something that she encouraged me to do." He stops and heaves a sigh.

Betty sits there watching her father narrate his story with sadness in his eyes. She wants to feel sorry for him but her heart isn't having any of it. She just wants to know about her mother.

"Jwale where does my mother make her entrance in all of this?" Betty asks.

"Right. It was a random encounter that changed the rest of my life. She was walking passed the main entrance at our offices and I was heading out. She needed directions and thankfully I was the only one around to help her. Her voice sounded like angels singing right in my ear. She said she didn't know the area very well so I offered to walk her to her destination. I took her bag and we made our way there. We spoke like we had known each other for year. God she was so easy to talk to.

She laughed at everything I had to say and she was interested as well. I learnt that she was there looking for a job and was hoping to get one soon because she had to survive. I wanted to offer her a job but from the conversation we were having I knew she wasn't one to accept 'handouts'. We eventually arrived and I promised to call her later at night and true to my word I did that and we spoke every day.

I fell in love with her in a very short space of time and with the way things were between Moleboheng and I, I didn't regret it. I knew that a divorce was looming and I guess I was okay with it. We went on date, we spent time indoors, she even took me to church. I was always at peace in her presence.

I loved her. I still love her. I know that she was and still is the one for me but circumstances you know."

"But how did you not know that she was her sister Ntate?"

"Thandeka and Moleboheng are sister's through their father. It turns out he had a lot of children, everywhere and they happened to be sisters. They'd only met on three different occasions and Moleboheng didn't feel the need to tell me about that side of her life. We only found out when Thandeka came to our house to tell me about the pregnancy."

"So is that when Moleboheng found out you had cheated on her?" Betty enquires.

"Yes. Thandeka and I were never really intimate until that one time which is when you were conceived. I still can't believe that we were able to come together and in the end have a product of our love for each other.

Anyway a few months after our passion, Thandeka just dumped me. She told me that she couldn't be with me anymore and that was that. I tried calling but she had changed her number. I tried looking for her but she had moved out of her place. I tried for months Betty without any success. I was crushed. I was broken but I had to be a man about it.

Around the same time I was offered a post in the provincial government in the Free State, so I took it. Moleboheng and I decided to give things one final try to see how we would be now that we were living together again and ya ne. A month before you were born a heavily pregnant Thandeka came knocking on our door and I swear that was the best and worst day of my life.

When they revealed that they were sisters my world came crashing down and when we told Moleboheng that the pregnancy was actually mine everything came to a standstill. It was a mess. Both the women that I promised to love and protect were broken and I was the cause of it all. Moleboheng wanted to throw Thandeka out but she explained that she only reached out to me because she wouldn't be able to afford to raise you because she had to leave her job in order to get away from me.

She thought that she would find something else where she settled but nothing was coming up and her due date was nearing, plus she was also going through depression. She didn't want to give you up for adoption while I was still alive so she asked one of my friends in Johannesburg and he helped her get to me. Moleboheng wanted her gone but we agreed that she would only leave after giving birth which happened two weeks after she came to us.

You looked so much like me at birth my Betty but you had her features as well but now as you're growing up into this beautiful woman you look more and more like her each day. After you were born I offered to get her a job and pay for her therapy but all she wanted was for me to take care of you. She wanted you to have the best life that she couldn't afford to give you ngoanaka.

I can still hear her sobs when Moleboheng took you from her arms and walked out of that room. I wanted to turn back and choose her but I couldn't Betty. I couldn't just leave my wife life that."

"So I lived my whole life unloved and treated like garbage because you couldn't leave your wife." Betty says with tears cascading down her face.

Both she and her father are crying but none can comfort the other.

"Betty you have to understand that I never meant for things to be like this."

“Why did your wife take me in if she knew what she hated me? She should’ve thrown me out with my mother. We probably would’ve been poor but I still would’ve had a mother who loved me.” Betty says getting up.

She runs to her bedroom and throws herself on her bed. She lets out a ferocious cry that cuts through her father’s heart. In her head right now she is convincing herself that she is unlovable. Her mother left her. Her father was never there for her. Her step-mother hates her and Malibongwe just broke her heart.

She gasps for air as her chest tightens at the thought of being all by herself once more. Everyone who was supposed to be there for her is not.

THIRTY EIGHT

Ntate Moloi slides next to Betty and pulls her into his arms. He comforts her as she cries her lungs out. Her heart is shattered and in this moment she feels like she doesn't belong. She wants the world to open up and swallow her. She wants to sleep and never wake up again. The pain that she is in currently is crippling.

"Ngoanaka I know that I have failed you and I hope that one day in this life time you will find it in your heart to forgive me." He says tightening his grip around her.

She sniffs and wipes her tears before sitting up. She heaves a huge sigh before turning to look at her father.

"You had your reasons for the decisions you made and quite frankly I don't give a rat's arse about those reasons. All I want right now ntate is for you to get me in contact with my mother. That's all I want." Betty says softly.

"Your mother reached out to me years ago. She wanted to meet you and build a relationship with you but."

Betty zones out and gets excited at the possibility of meeting her mother. She wonders why she couldn't have come back for her sooner but she knows they'll be plenty of time to talk about that when they meet. She can't help but wonder what type of person she is. Is she still as beautiful as her father set her out to be? Is she still as warm and caring? Or maybe because of everything that has transpired she is as bitter as maMoloi. Her thoughts are interrupted by her father calling her.

"Huh?" She says looking at him.

"Did you hear anything I said?"

“No sorry what did you say?”

He heaves a sigh and buries his face in his hands.

“I can’t facilitate the meeting between you and Thandeka hobane Moleboheng wants nothing to do with her.”

“So what are you saying to me ntate?” Betty asks with tears threatening her eyes.

“I’m sorry ngoanaka.”

“Again you’re choosing your wife over me? You’re putting Moleboheng over my needs? Over my right to a mother? A mother who wants me?” Betty says choking on her tears a bit.

“Betty that’s not what I’m sayi-”

“You know what, get out ntate. Leave and forget that you have a daughter. Get out and never look back.”

“Ngoanaka.” He says shaking his head.

He wants to explain what he meant by that but Betty is not hearing any of it. He gets off the bed but not before kissing her head.

“I know I haven’t shown it in the past but you are the best gift I have ever been granted. I love you so much my beautiful Betty.” He says then walks out.

Betty buries her face in the pillow as once again disappointment steps into her house. All she wants is a chance to feel loved.

“Lemo have you spoken to Betty today?” Mandy asks.

Molemo shakes her head and continues eating. Mandy has been trying to get hold of Betty to no avail. She even went to go check if she was in her apartment but she wasn't. She concludes that she is with Malibongwe because she has no other friends outside of them.

“Maybe she's with her man.” Molemo says.

“I think so too.” Mandy adds in.

“Anyway so I need your advice.”

“Sure.”

“So I've never been in a relationship before and I'm quite scared because I don't know what to expect. Also he is older so he's definitely having sex and might expect that from me. I've thought about the whole sex thing and I think I'm ready to lose my virginity but I just don't know what to expect.”

“Whoooo no sex for you until we're actually sure about this guy's intentions. For now just look at it like a friendship. Be yourself. Laugh out loud. Fart in his presence. Eat as much as you want. Just be you nana and if he really is serious about you he will accept you as you are.” Mandy says.

“But what of that drives him away?”

“Then he wasn’t the one for you. A man who loves you will accept you with all you flaws and love them more than the perfect parts of you. Look at me and Tebogo, no man could’ve easily stomached being with me but he proposed because he is the one for me. So wena just do you baby and don’t try acting and behaving like someone you’re nnot.”

“I hear you.” Molemo says softly.

It’s official, she is Bongani’s girlfriend and she couldn’t be happier. She feels like thing between them might work out but she knows it might just be the excitement of it all speaking. She knows that relationships are a lot of work and she is willing to put it in. She wants to be happy with him.

“ You ain’t shit Betty. You’re just a dirty prostitute. You’re filthy. You’re a fucken hoe Betty.”

“YES! SHIT! O MASEPA A NGOANA! O MAGOSHA, YOU’RE A BLODDY PROSTITUTE JUST LIKE YOUR MOTHER!”

Those words ring in Betty’s ears over and over again. She chuckles lightly and takes a sip from the bottle. She has a bottle of gin in her hand and she is sitting in her car in the underground parking.

“YES! SHIT! O MASEPA A NGOANA! O MAGOSHA, YOU’RE A BLODDY PROSTITUTE JUST LIKE YOUR MOTHER!”

“ You ain’t shit Betty. You’re just a dirty prostitute. You’re filthy. You’re a fucken hoe Betty.”

She breaks out into a loud sob as the words hit her deep.

“Okay Betty seeing as though you are shit, a hoe and a fucken prostitute, let’s go live up to your name.” She says to herself taking another sip.

“So rock right up to

The side of my mountain

Climb until you reach my peak babe, the peak, the peak

And reach right into the bottom of my fountain

I wanna play in your deep baby, your deep baby, the deep

Then dip me under where you can feel my river flowing flow

Hold me ‘til I scream for air to breathe

And wash me over until my well runs dry

Send all your sins all over me babe, me.”

The song is playing loudly as Betty makes her way onto stage. Cheers and whistles erupt and Betty feels herself regaining the confidence she once had. She climbs on top of the pole and magic happens. She owns the room and everyone in the room is drinking from her cup. A couple of hundreds are thrown at her from appreciative men in the audience.

She finishes her set and receives a huge applause as she makes her way down from the stage. As she is walking down the passage towards her room she passes by Malibongwe who is looking at her with nothing but anger flashed across his face. He roughly grabs her arm and she slaps him right across the face as she turns around.

He is taken aback a little but regains his composure.

“Uwenzani Betty?”

“You have no right to ask me that.” She says turning around and walking away.

He grabs her again and again she turns around and slaps him across the face.

“Fuck you.” She says pushing him back.

He clenches his jaw and looks at her with a hard face on.

“Stay away from me.” She continues pushing him.

“BETTY.”

“I want nothing to do with you Malibongwe so stay the fuck away from me.” she says and walks away.

He watches as she walks into her changing room and shuts the door.

THIRTY NINE

Madame walks into Betty's room and settles on the couch. Betty looks at her through the mirror with an eyebrow raised. Madame gives her a slight smirk before slowly clapping. Betty rolls her eyes and continues fixing her makeup.

"I am so happy to have you back Betty, you know you've always been the queen of this castle. Without you things haven't been the same but I know now that you're back men are going to come flocking in here. You my Betty are a star." She says getting up.

Betty nods lightly and continues with what she is doing.

"Well I just came in here to tell you that you have a 'welcome back' client and he is waiting for you in the suite. Give him a good time." She says then walks out.

Betty finishes up then heads to the suite with her heart in her stomach. She doesn't know whether or not she will be able to go through with the act but she knows that she has no choice because this is what she signed up for. She gets to the suite and draws a deep breath before opening the door and walking in.

Anger flashes across her face when she finds Malibongwe coolly sitting comfortably on the couch. She can't believe that he has the nerve to come here and act this cool. She chuckles lightly while shaking her head.

"Betty." He says softly.

"You bought a piece huh? So how would you like it?" She says with no emotion whatsoever.

He heaves a sigh and gets up from the couch. He takes a few steps towards her but she motions for him to stop but he doesn't listen. He stands right in front of her and looks deep in her eyes which are glistening with tears.

"Ngyaxolisa Betty wam. I am so sorry." He says faintly.

It's like he is struggling to piece together that mere sentence. Betty blinks once and tears rush down her beautiful face. He cups her face and wipes her tears with his thumbs but they continue flowing like a river.

"I didn't mean to Betty."

"But you did! You meant to utter those words and you didn't miss a beat. I know I was a prostitute, wait I know that I'm a prostitute and you calling me one didn't hurt me. What hurt me was the fact that I left everything I know and everything that I was comfortable with just for you Bongwe. I gave it all up to pursue a relationship with you and what do you do? You turn around and throw it back in my face. Fuck you spit it back in my face.

I asked you countless times if those thoughts were lingering in your mind and each time, each bloody time you would tell me no. I don't even get what I did that was so big that earned me those punches especially after you threw a fit when your mother came at me in the same manner. I'm cracking my skull trying to figure out how the man that I love and shared a bed with could make me feel so small but you know what it doesn't matter now because we're through and I don't have to worry about anything else.

"So Mr Mkhize how would you like your ass served? Would you like me underneath or on top?" Betty asks stepping back.

She takes her lingerie off and stands before him in all her glory. He grunts and turns back to settle on the couch. He is at a loss for words and doesn't know how to even go about fixing things with her.

“You do understand that you’re losing thousands by not utilising my service right?”

“Betty please put your clothes back on.”

“Are we done sir?” She asks.

He shakes his head lightly before heaving a sigh. He wants to grab her and shake her back into reality but he knows that won’t do any good. If anything it will do more harm.

“I love you Betty.”

“Well I’ve walked this life thing without any love being given to me so you sir can keep yours because I don’t need nor do I want it.” She spits out.

She puts her clothes back on then walks out of the room leaving Malibongwe feeling crushed.

Molemo rushes into the lounge shouting Mandy’s name.

“Whoooo uyarasa Molemo yini?”

“I just got off the phone with T, the barman from the club.” She says breathlessly.

“Yeah?”

“He says Betty is back at the club working.”

“That’s impossible, I mean Malinbongwe wouldn’t allow that futhi she said she was done with this life.” Mandy says.

She is confused as to why Betty would go back. She knows they wouldn’t lie about her being back at the club for no reason.

“But T says it’s her sis.” Molemo says softly.

“Okay tell you what, I’ll go check if it really is her but you’ll see there’s probably a mistake or something.” She says getting up.

“But it’s late.” Molemo says.

“I will only be an hour tops nana, I promise okay.”

They share a hug and Mandy rushes to go get dressed. She wonders why Betty would go back to prostituting herself when she’s been in such a good space. She hopes that she will get all the answers to her questions when she gets there.

“Betty.” Mandy says shaking her head.

It’s as if though life has been sucked out of her and she doesn’t know what to do to get it back. Seeing Betty in that skimpy outfit and a full face beat isn’t a scene she thought she would find. She follows her into her room and as soon as they get in and shut the door she

pulls her in for a hug. Betty stands there with tears falling out of her eyes while Mandy rubs her back.

“I don’t know what’s happening B but all I know is that you don’t have to be here. This isn’t your home anymore so please just grab your stuff and let’s go. I promise I will try and fix whatever it is just come with me.” Mandy says trying to keep it together.

She knows her friend and she knows that something is definitely up and it that it has to do with Malibongwe not talking to her. She hopes that Betty will listen and actually go back home with her. Betty pulls herself out of Mandy’s embrace and wipes her tears before giving her a faint smile.

“I love you Mandy. Now go home before you cause problems between oena le Tebogo. I will see you in the morning.”She says softly.

“Betty baby please let me in. Ngtshele ukuthi kwenzenjani.”

“Mandy go. Just go.”

“B.”

“FUCK MANDY DON’T YOU LISTEN? I SAID GO!” Betty roars.

Mandy heaves a sigh and settles on the couch. She knows that it’s just the hurt talking and not her friend. Betty shrugs and grabs her gown then walks out leaving Mandy wondering what the hell is going on.

“Shit baby.” He moans as he thrusts in and out.

Betty lies there beneath him motionless. Her tears are falling down the sides of her face and she lets them. He continues huffing and puffing while she lets out a fake moan here and there. A memory flashes through her mind but she quickly shuts it out as she wishes for this man to finish. A few more thrusts and he releases his content into the condom. He pulls out cleans himself up then gets dressed leaving Betty in the same position.

FORTY

Malibongwe walks into the house and finds his sister and her man cuddling on the couch. He flops himself on the one setter and buries his face in his hands. Melo sits up and looks at him with concern written all over her face.

“What’s wrong baby?” she asks.

“I hurt her real bad. I love her Melo but I said some pretty awful things to her. I was just so angry in that moment and I said things that I can never take back.”

“Did you tell her to fuck off too?” Melo’s man asks.

“Love.” She says softly.

“Baby.” He responds with a warm smile on his face.

She looks at him pleadingly and he heaves a sigh while shaking his head. Melo places a kiss on his cheek before resting her head on his shoulder. He chuckles lightly before kissing her head.

“What happened Malibongwe?” He asks.

Bongwe heaves a sigh and looks up. He finds them looking at him with concerned faces. After the incident on the phone, he came to see his sister and apologised. However her man wasn’t as forgiving because he felt that Bongwe had overstepped his line and that his woman didn’t deserve that kind of disrespect.

“I lost it. We hadn’t spoken in a week and I went to go check on her but she wasn’t there so I waited and waited, I then saw a video of her dancing with some man and I lost it. I couldn’t help it sis. When she came back I just threw the words around and fuck I regret it so bad.”

“Utheni Bongwe?”

“It doesn’t matter. All that matters is the fact that I pushed her away and now she hates me and she’s back in the space that I met her and-” He rubs his face in frustration. “I don’t know how to fix things.” He says faintly.

“Your words can be very lethal Bongwe and that is something we all know. I thought attending therapy would help with all the anger that you possess but it seems like you actually want to be this angry forever. I’m quite surprised that you actually moved on and actually fell in love with someone because you are still holding on to Siyanda and it’s not healthy.” Melo says.

“Have you seen pictures of this girl?” Melo’s man asks her.

She shakes her head lightly.

“Mom told me she was on the news but I didn’t care to research on her.” She says.

He looks at her and nods before turning his attention to Bongwe.

“No one can help you until you actually want to get help. You attended therapy because your mother wanted you to. You did everything because your family suggested it. Now you know I refrain from talking about this situation because I’m not in a position to actually understand just how much you loved Siyanda but you have tried to make me get it and I get it. You loved her as much if not more than I love your sister but that doesn’t give you the right to try and use some girl to fill the void. If you love this girl, love her for the person she is and not because you know. Is that what attracted you to her in the first place?” He asks.

“Initially but as time went by I got intrigued by her and as I got to know her, I fell in love with her not because I want to replace Siyanda ngaye but because I genuinely want to spend my days with her, loving her, protecting her and everything.” Bongwe says

“Have you tried to reach out to her?” Melo asks.

“I have but she told me to stay away and I don’t know what to do.”

“Give her space and once she has calmed down then you can talk to her.”

Bongwe nods in acknowledgement. He knows that Betty will not calm down anytime soon but he hopes that when she does it won’t be too late to save their relationship.

Betty is at home lying in bed while cuddling with her pillow. Her tears are flowing freely down her cheeks. Her heart has been trampled upon and she feels like there is no coming back from such. All she wants to do now is either dig a hole and bury herself or continue prostituting until she feels nothing.

Her phone rings and she reaches over for it.

“Mandy.” She answers softly.

“Are you home?” Mandy asks.

“Yeah.”

“Come open.”

“I want to be alone.” Betty responds.

“You won’t even know that I am here, now please come open baby.”

“Okay.” She says then hangs up.

Betty gets out of bed and drags herself across the apartment to go open the door. She opens the door for Mandy before dragging herself back to the bedroom. Mandy walks in and kicks her shoes off before climbing into bed. She pulls Betty in for a hug and rubs her back until she hears her sniffs.

“I don’t know what is happening but all I know is that I’m here for you and that I love you. We’re going to get through it all B, you know I’d do through hell for you and if this is it then I’m ready.”

“Why is life so unfair?” Betty asks softly.

“Unfortunately that’s just how it was meant to be.”

“I’m just tired Mandy. I’m tired of being unloved. I’m tired of being trampled on. I’m tired of being used. I’m just tired.”

“Is that why you went back to the club?”

“I went back to the club because I enjoyed it. I loved the freedom. I loved the fact that I can be myself in that space.” Betty says.

“You used the word loved.”

“It’s all the same Mandy. That’s my home. That’s where I belong. That’s where I am most accepted.”

“I’m going to keep quiet for now but best believe you will quit working there. Actually where’s Mr Dance?”

“We broke up.” Betty says dismissively.

She doesn’t want to tell Mandy that they broke up on the night they went clubbing because she might just blame herself. A part of her believes that whether or not she had gone to the club something like this would’ve still transpired.

“Why?” She asks.

“Ai it’s a long story. Can I just sleep a bit, I have to be at the club at 10PM.” Betty says.

Mandy attempts to say something but decides against it. They reposition and Betty goes straight to dream land while Mandy stays up wondering how she is going to help her friend.

Ntate Moloi looks around before dialling a number on his phone. It rings for a while before someone answers.

“Hello.”

“Dumela.”

“Oh hi how are you?”

“I’m okay and you?”

“I’m alright. What do you want?”

Ntate Moloji heaves a sigh and pauses for a while. He is wrestling with himself on whether to tell her or not.

“Our daughter needs you.” He says.

FORTY ONE

Malibongwe sits in the crowd and watches as Betty shakes her ass for all the men in the room. His heart breaks at the thought of being the one who pushed her back into this life. She struts over to one of the men in the space and settles on his lap. He grabs her ass tightly and she giggles even resting her head on his shoulder. Bongwe looks on with a hard face and his jaws clenched. He has the right mind of getting up and beating that man to a pulp but he knows that will push Betty further away so he sits there and watches as he continues to feel on the woman he loves.

Molemo and Bongani are at the park having a picnic. She was nervous at first but as always Mandy assured her that she was just one phone call away. Mandy wanted to meet Bongani before they became too serious so he fetched Molemo at the apartment. Mandy isn't as sure yet about the guy but she is giving him the benefit of the doubt.

"So you say you matriculated when you were 16?" He asks Molemo.

"Yeah I started school early."

"Wow I've just never met anyone who finished school early. Hmmm."

"When did you know that the arts were for you?" She asks.

He smiles lightly before chuckling while shaking his head.

"I used to draw at school but I wasn't so into it but as time went on I put more effort into it and by the time I got to matric I was a frequent visitor at art galleries. When it was time for

me to go to varsity I knew exactly what I wanted to do. The journey has been slow but it's worth it." He says with a broad smile on his face.

Molemo looks up at him with nothing but admiration in her eyes. She can't believe that she has found herself a man with vision and passion when they're so hard to come by. A part of her believes that it's too good to be true but she doesn't want to jinx anything by having negative thoughts.

"So you're like the next Picasso huh?" She says giggling.

He chuckles lightly and pulls her in for a kiss. She has come to enjoy her kisses with Bongani. At first she was shy and self-conscious however as the days are passing by she is getting more and more comfortable with having his hands on her and his lips on hers. She scoots closer and settles on his lap while he tightens his hold around her waist pulling her closer. He deepens the kiss and she moans in his mouth causing him to groan. Molemo pulls out of the kiss and buries her face on his neck and he chuckles lightly. He loves just how shy she is

"Baby did you hear anything I said?" Tebogo says snapping Mandy out of her thoughts.

She turns to look at him and finds him looking at her with concern written all over his face. She heaves a sigh and buries her face in her hands. She is thinking about Betty, who she is pretty sure is resting before her shift starts tonight. She's thinking of ways she can help her but she is coming up short every time. She feels so helpless. Like she is a bad friend because Betty was the one that convinced her to get out of this life but she can't do the same for her.

"Baby what's wrong?" Tebogo asks pulling her into his arms.

"I feel like such a horrible friend right now." She says softly.

“Why?”

“Betty is just going through some things and I can’t help her. I don’t know how to help her and it’s frustrating me so much baby.” She says faintly.

“Is there anything I can do to help?” He asks.

She shakes her head lightly and heaves a sigh.

“I don’t think there’s anything anyone can do to help her. All I can do is be there for her and hope that will be enough.”

“Your being there for her will be enough for her. Do you want to go spend the night with her?” He asks.

“Yes baby.” Mandy whispers.

“Okay. Get dressed so I can drop you off.”

“You’re such an understanding man baby.”

“I just love you. Now let’s go be there for Betty, ebile we should get you guys a lot of junk akere.”

“I love you Tebogo.” She places a kiss on his lips before heading to the bedroom to get ready.

“Thandeka.”

“Moloi.” She greets as she settles on the chair.

After he called her she made her way to the Free State and they’re having a meeting at his office. Thandeka jumped at the chance of being a present mother in her child’s life. She knows that it’s going to be difficult but she is willing to put in the work. The first time she reached out to Moloi was when Betty was 18. She wanted to be part of Betty’s life but Moleboheng didn’t want that. She threatened to leave nstate Moloi so he chose to stand with his wife.

“You look beautiful.” He says mesmerised.

She rolls her eyes and leans back on her seat.

“Where is my daughter?”

“In Johannesburg. Betty is living the kind of life that no parent would be proud to have their child live.” Ntate Moloi says sounding defeated.

“When I left my daughter in your care I asked you for one thing and that was to take care of her. I asked you to take care of OUR daughter. The product of the love we shared kodwa you couldn’t do that. I know for certain that Moleboheng didn’t treat my child as her own and I am also certain that as the weakling you are you just let her.”

“I am not a weakling Thandeka.” Ntate Moloi roars.

“Oh please, you showed just how she has you wrapped around her skirt all those years back but it doesn’t matter now. All I want is to know where my child is.”

Ntate Moloi looks at Thandeka softly. Even after all these years of not seeing her, he is still madly in love with her. Deep down he knows that he was supposed to end up with her.

“I have never stopped loving you Thandeka. I loved you and you just disappeared on me. To this day I don’t know your reasons for deciding to just leave me without telling me that you’re carrying my child.”

“I left because I didn’t want to ruin things for you. You were growing in your career and I didn’t want you to worry about me and this child but I came back and I found out that you were married and that everything we shared was a lie. You lied to me, you made me believe that I was the only one in your life but you lied to me. I love you but you lied and you broke my heart and now it seems like you broke our daughter’s heart as well.”She says.

“You love me?” He asks sounding hopeful.

“Is that all you heard? Arggh just give me Betty’s address and let me go get my daughter.”

“I was just about to leave.” Betty says as Mandy walks in.

“I know you’ve made up your mind and I will respect that but all I ask is that you spend tonight with me please. I need a friend right now B and you’re that friend.” Mandy says hoping that Betty will buy what she is selling.

“What’s wrong?” Betty asks sounding concerned.

Mandy bursts into tears alarming Betty who makes her way towards her and pulls her in for a hug. She has wanted to cry for a while and what better time than when Betty wants to go to the club.

FORTY TWO

“So Tebogo said he’ll talk to his friends but then who’s going to walk me down the aisle B? Who is going to help me on this new journey? Ngizolayelwa ngubani? A woman is supposed to be ushered into her marriage by women who have walked this journey but I have no one. I have no family B.” She says while Betty brushes her hair.

She has her head rested on Betty’s thighs. After she burst into tears Betty led them to the couch where Mandy continued to cry while Betty comforted her. After a while she finally pulled herself together and Betty managed to call the club and let them know that she would be in for the day shift. Mandy was disappointed but she was glad that she was able to keep her home while she works on a plan to get her out of that life for good.

“You have me baby and that’s all you need Mandy. We’ve had each other’s backs for so long and that will never change. Sure I don’t know much about marriage but I do know that you and Tebogo love each other dearly. I know that you are going to do your utmost best to be the best wife to him, yes you will make mistakes along the way but the love that you have for each other will sustain you while you educate each other on certain things.

The beauty of marriage is in the getting to know each other on a much deeper and more personal level and no adult or married person can tell you how to do that hobane what worked for them will definitely not work for you because these men aren’t the same. So yes hobohloko hobane ha hona an elder who can help and guide you through the process empa even if there was the main and most important thing will be that at the end of the day you will be standing there as one with your perfect match.

“I’ve got your back. We will hire these actors for the part ya mahadi. I will walk you down the aisle and still be your bridesmaid if need be.”

“Maid of honour.” Mandy corrects her.

“Maid of honour.” Betty says with a smile plastered across her face.

“I love you B and as much as you’ve got my back, I’ve got yours and whatever it is that you’re facing is mine to face as well.”

“I know babe.”

“So let me in Betty please.”

“Ke sharp Mandy. It’s just the breakup messed me up pretty bad you know. I loved that man and I honestly thought he was my home, my safe space but I guess I was wrong. I really thought I would get my Cinderella happily ever after story and all but I’ve come to understand that happy isn’t a word that can be used in the same sentence as a reject like myself.” Betty says.

“Now you stop right there!” Mandy says angrily. “You are not a reject. You are my beautiful, gorgeous, kind hearted, all that more Betty. You are my go to person. The word reject doesn’t even deserve to be in the same line as your name so you take that back!”

“Mandy you don’t understand.”

“Because you’re not telling me anything Betty. All I know is that you cannot call yourself such words because you broke up with Mr Dance. Sure he is sexy and an all round amazing human being but he isn’t God.”

Betty heaves a sigh as her thoughts drift off to the night Malibongwe crushed her soul. A part of her wants to forgive him and give him a chance to fully explain himself but another part of her believes that given the chance he would do the exact same thing again.

She misses him and all she yearns for is to be in his arms. It’s quite funny how the one who crushes or breaks your heart is the very same one you want to comfort you. You want him to hold you and tell you everything will be alright while kissing on you.

“I miss him but I know that as time goes on it will hurt less.” Betty says.

“So there’s absolutely no way that you two will fix things?”

“Right now? No. Maybe in the future however with the way that I’m feeling right now I don’t think there is a chance for us. I love him wholeheartedly yes but ah ah I can’t put myself in that position again.”

“I just want you to be happy B and if that means you without Mr Mystery then I’m down for that but if it also means you forgiving him for whatever it is that he did then you now I’m with you on that as well. All I want is for you to be happy.”

“I know and I appreciate you for that. Anyway do you want to stuff your face?”

“I thought you’d never ask.” Mandy says jumping up to her feet and making her way to the kitchen.

Betty chuckles lightly and follows suit. She appreciates Mandy for always having her back. She knows that friends like her don’t come around often and she plans on holding tightly for as long as she lives.

Molemo is in her bedroom studying when her phone snaps her out of her session. She smiles when she sees who is dialling her.

“Baby.” She says softly.

“How are you love?”

“I’m fine and you?”

“I’m good, just missing you.” He says chuckling.

Molemo bites her lip while blushing. She misses him too and wishes she could spend more time with him. Her heart feels as if though it is on the verge of exploding with the amount of love and happiness dwelling in it. She wants to do any and everything to ensure that her man remains happy at all times.

“I miss you too.” She responds shyly.

“How about you spend the weekend at my place?” He asks.

Her heart begins to beat uncontrollably. She has never shared a bed with a man before and she knows what could possibly happen should she sleepover. She isn’t ready to take that step as yet.

“I don’t know.” She responds honestly.

“Look nothing is going to happen I swear. I just want to snuggle up on the couch with you while watching a movie or something.” He says.

She trusts him and she believes that he will stick to his word and not pressurize her into something that she isn’t ready to do.

“Okay ke.”

Betty walks into her change room and finds a bouquet of roses waiting for her. She reads the cards and frowns when she sees who they're from.

'I'm sorry my Beautiful Betty. I love you. Malibongwe.'

The card reads. She tosses it aside and begins to get ready for the day. After a night of gossip and girl talk they went to bed in the wee hours of the morning. Mandy was knocked out when Betty woke up so she used that time to bath and get ready for the day. She knows that Mandy will be furious when she realises that she is not there but she had to come to work.

Madame walks in and gives her her instructions for the day. She only has one client which will be an hour before the end of her shift later on in the day. She will be dancing throughout the entire day though which is fine by her. She gets ready then makes her way to the main stage for her show.

As she gets onto the stage she locks eyes with Malibongwe who is looking at her pleadingly. She wants to get off of the stage and run into his arms but she pulls herself together and gets on with the task at hand. With whistles and cheers all around her, she gets on the pole and works her magic.

"Whooooo baby I can't wait to have you that wide open with my dick buried deep inside you." One man screams.

Malibongwe clenches his jaws at that remark and at the fact that Betty blows a kiss to that man.

Betty is bouncing up and down this man's dick while his hands have her perfect breasts cupped. He is groaning while Betty is breathing heavily. A few more bounces and he comes undone.

"I swear you're my go to girl now." He says lazily.

Betty gives him a faint smile while she gets dressed. He reaches for his wallet and gives her a handsome tip which earns him a kiss on the cheek.

"Bye lover man." She says as she walks out leaving him feeling like she owns him.

Betty makes her way into her building after a long day at work. The security at reception makes his way towards her and she stops and looks at him.

"How are you ma'am?" He asks.

"I'm okay and you?"

"Well thank you. That lady over there has been waiting for you the whole day." He says pointing at a woman Betty doesn't recognise.

She thanks him then makes her way towards the woman with her heart in her stomach. She hopes that she isn't one of her client's wives who came to accuse her of all sorts of things.

"Hi." She greets.

The woman looks up and gasps when she sees Betty. She stands up and looks at her with tears shining in her eyes.

“You’re so beautiful.” She says.

Betty lets out an awkward thank you. She has never seen this woman before and she is making her feel uneasy with her behaviour.

“Oh I’m sorry, erm, there is no easy way to say this. My name is Thandeka, I’m your mother.” She says awkwardly.

FORTY THREE

Betty frowns as she looks at this woman who just dealt her a huge blow. She looks her up and down before laughing out loud which catches Thandeka completely off guard. Thandeka stands there awkwardly waiting for her daughter to calm down. Betty eventually gathers herself then lets out a loud sigh.

The two ladies are staring at each other with so much intensity that a passenger by can tell that something deep is happening. Thandeka is nervously waiting for Betty to say something while Betty just looks at her. She doesn't know what to say to this woman who is standing before her claiming to be her mother. As much as she knows that her mother is somewhere out there, she didn't expect her to just pitch on her door step unannounced.

"I don't have a mother." Betty says before turning around and walking away.

Thandeka rushes after her and grabs her from behind but Betty yanks her hand out off Thandeka's hold.

"DON'T TOUCH ME!" She yells startling Thandeka.

"I'm sorry." Thandeka says softly.

"Good. Now please leave this building and don't look back." Betty says calling for the elevator.

"Betty please just hear me out. That's all I ask for my baby, a chance ngyakucela sthandwa sami." Thandeka says pleadingly.

Betty fights to push back her tears as she waits for the elevator which seems to be taking forever to come down. Thandeka stands there looking on with a broken heart. Her baby girl refuses to acknowledge her presence. She knew coming here that it wouldn't be easy but she didn't realise that it would hurt this much.

"Fuck man." Betty shouts then kicks the elevator doors.

She turns around and rushes towards the stairs then makes her way up leaving Thandeka standing there crushed. Thandeka walks back to the couch she was sitting on and settles while dialing ntate Moloji. The phone rings unanswered but she tries again, and again, and again until he eventually answers.

"Thandeka." He answers in a whisper.

"She's angry. She hates me Tebello, my daughter hates me." She says with tears rolling down her face.

"What happened?" He asks.

"She told me that she doesn't have a mother. She told me to basically get lost. I just want to explain to her."

"Don't cry rato laka, I'll call her okay but please don't cry." Ntate Moloji says sadly.

Thandeka nods forgetting that he can't see her.

"Moloji o etsang ka mo?" Moleboheng shouts.

"I have to go but I will call her. I love you." He says before hanging.

Thandeka buries her face and her hands and lets her tears run. She prays that Moloji can get through to Betty.

Betty steps into her place and throws her bag across the room. She makes her way to her cellar and grabs a bottle of gin and gulps down a sip straight from the bottle. She kicks off her shoes in there then makes her way to the living room. Her mind is racing with a million thoughts but the main one being, why is Thandeka only making her entrance into her life now. She takes another sip before breaking out into loud laughter.

Her phone rings but she decides to ignore it until it begins to irritate her and she makes her way to her bag and answers it.

“Ntate nka o thusa?” She answers.

“Betty ngoanaka.”

“Ntate what do you want?”

“Thandeka tells me she is there.” Ntate Moloji says.

Betty chuckles lightly while shaking her head.

“So your girlfriend called to tell you that I turned her away. He he he must be nice watseba.” Betty says laughing.

“I understand that you’re angry my child and you are allowed to be but please Betty just listen to what she has to say. She travelled all the way just for you and it would crush her to have to leave having not spoken to you. Please ngoanaka ka kopo hle.” Ntate Moloji says humbly.

Betty shakes her head with tears falling out her eyes. Her heart wants to hear Thandeka out but her head is very stubborn.

“Please ngoanaka and if after this you want nothing to do with her then I will support your decision.” He adds on.

“Okay.” She says faintly.

“Thank you and Betty?”

“Yeah.”

“I-”

Ntate Moloji stutters a bit before telling her that he has to go. He hangs up abruptly leaving Betty shocked. She places her phone down on the counter then takes another gulp hoping that it might calm her down but it doesn’t. She attempts to psyche herself up but the words seem to fail her. After a few more sips she heads down to go face the woman who birthed her.

Thandeka quickly gets up when she sees Betty approaching. Betty gets to her and looks at her with nothing but anger written all over her face. She’d played out the meeting between herself and her mother a million times before in her head and this scenario never played out

in her head. She'd always assumed that they would run into each other's arms and all would be right in the world but unfortunately that isn't the case.

"You only have 10 minutes." Betty says then turns around and walks away.

Thandeka grabs her bag and follows her into the elevator where they make their way up in awkward silence. The doors open up into Betty's apartment and they step in. She leads them to the couch and they settle there in silence for a few minutes until Thandeka gathers the strength to speak.

"You're so beautiful Betty wami."

"I'm not yours." Betty shoots out.

"Betty." Thandeka says softly.

"If I was yours you wouldn't have left me but to prove that I am not, you did."

"I had no choice sthandwa sam."

"BUT YOU DID AND YOU CHOSE THE EASY WAY OUT." Betty roars shocking Thandeka.

"If there was any other way my baby I would've taken it."

"YOU were a coward."

"Betty."

“You said you wanted to talk, so talk.” Betty says leaning back on the couch.

Tebello had let Thandeka in on the fact that Betty can be a fire cracker sometimes but what she is witnessing is the whole volcano however she is willing to sit here and take it if it means getting the chance to work on a relationship with Betty.

“I know you have a lot of questions and I promise that I will answer all of them. I just firstly wanted to start off by saying that I am sorry for letting you sthandwa sam and if there was another way believe me I would’ve taken it.

I know you might be thinking that I left you because your father was married but that’s not the case. I left you with your father because I wanted a better life for you, a life that I could never be able to afford you. I was unemployed, depressed and on the verge of suicide and I did not for the life of me want to leave you abandoned. When I left you with your father I knew that he would take care of you and love you wholeheartedly because you were our precious love child.

I knew that financially you would be secure and that’s what I wanted. I was living in a very unsafe environment and as much as at that time all I craved for was death, I loved you enough to want what was best for you.”

“Only it wasn’t best for me Thandeka. You threw me into the worst environment a child could ever find themselves in.” Betty says chuckling. “You know the type of person your sister is.”

“Moleboheng has always thought she was better than everyone else but she was always loving. I thought you were in good and capable hands sthandwa sam.”

“You should’ve taken me with you Thandeka. Killed me if you wanted to kill me but you should’ve taken me with.” Betty says softly.

“I am sorry. I am so sorry my baby. Please forgive me sthandwa sam. Ngyakcela.”

FORTY FOUR

Thandeka and Betty have been sitting in silence for a while with both their thoughts raging. Betty has a lot to ask and say but her heart is filled with so much anger that she feels should she open her mouth to speak the earth would shake. Thandeka on the other hand realises and understands that she needs to put in a lot of work before Betty can utter the words 'I forgive you'

"When you left me, was your sister happy? Did she look at my innocent face and see a child who knew nothing and didn't ask to even see the world? Did she promise to love and protect me with her all or was she disgusted by the product of her husband's infidelity? Did she see a mini Thandeka that she would torture just so her husband could feel the pain she felt?" Betty asks softly.

Thandeka snaps her head up so quickly that she even feels she could've twisted it. She moves closer to Betty and attempts to pull her in her arms but Betty shrugs her off.

"I'm sorry." She whispers.

Betty remains staring into space with tears falling down her face.

"What did Moleboheng do to you?" thandeka asks hoping that Betty will answer.

"She just never loved me." Betty says faintly.

"Did she mistreat you?" Thandeka asks.

"I was raised by the house help while ntate and his wife were going around campaigning and taking holidays. Your sister was just my mother ka lebitso fela empa she was never a

mother by action. As I got older she couldn't keep it together anymore and she would just spew out whatever hit her tongue first and your boyfriend ena he just stood by,"

"Betty."

"I'd always imagined how I would feel meeting my biological mother and this isn't it. I hate you so much Thandeka because looking at you now you seem to be in a good space in life. I understand it would've been harder to get there with me but maybe I would've been the push you needed to work on yourself quicker."

"Sthandwa sami." Thandeka says faintly with tears rolling down her cheeks.

Hearing the words 'I hate you' roll off of Betty's tongue just hit a nerve in her that she never thought existed. She wants the earth to open up and swallow her never spitting her out again.

"You want to know why I feel this way? Let me tell you about my upbringing oena Thandeka. While you were out there doing whatever it is to try and get yourself back on your feet, I spent my days crying. Sure I had it all, the money, I was always fed and clothed and I never laced for anything materially however emotionally I was never nurtured.

My own father has never embraced me warmly. He's never told me he loves me. He has never taken his time out to actually find out just what is happening with his Betty. While you were out there finding your smile, I was stuck in that house with a mother that didn't care for me. A mother who had my father wrapped up around her finger that t was almost impossible for me to even get a greeting out of him.

Your sister oena Thandeka brushed me off when I told her that ntate's friend was making me uncomfortable. She told me I was being dramatic and that I was seeking for attention in a horrible way. You see-"

"Betty my baby please stop." Thandeka says shaking her head.

Her heart can't take anymore of Betty's revelations.

"I was 15 when I lost my virginity and no, I didn't give it to a boyfriend but the very same man whom I had tried to tell my supposed mother about took it from me. He raped me in my own home then went to go dine with my parents like nothing happened. I had to see this man every other day and I couldn't react because when I told your sister about this again she brushed me off. Told me if I wanted nstate to lose his career then I would go and spread these vile lies.

He'd come to what was supposed to be my home and touch me inappropriately with my so called parents in the next room. I was just a baby Thandeka and I had no one to cry to. I had no one to comfort me and tell me that they'd fight tooth and nail to ensure that justice was served. I had no one but myself and I couldn't fight for me because I felt unworthy.

SO WHILE YOU WERE OUT THERE SORTING YOUR SHIT OUT, I WAS GROWING UP TO BE PROSTITUTE." Betty says chuckling.

Thandeka feels as if though an arrow has been shot through her heart. She is struggling to process everything that Betty has just revealed. Her natural reaction is to wail however she is fighting hard to keep it together for Betty's sake.

"When I found out about you the first time in high school I prayed that you would fight harder but you let her win, AGAIN. You and nstate let that woman win on so many occasions like I wasn't your child. Nstate said I am your love child but none of you have done anything to protect that precious love you claim to have shared."

"Betty I-" Thandeka attempts to speak but words fail her.

"It's okay Thandeka. Anyway." She says getting up. "Let me go call work and see if I can put in another shift." Betty says walking away leaving Thandeka crushed and stunned.

FORTY FIVE

Betty has just taken a bath and is getting ready to leave for the club when Thandeka walks into her bedroom with tears in her eyes. She makes herself comfortable and watches as Betty does her make up before putting on her shoes. She has a lot to say about what her daughter just revealed however she isn't sure how to go about it because she knows that Betty is still hurting and that she most probably blames her for the situation she found herself in.

"I'm leaving for work so I'm sure you know your way back to your hotel." Betty says getting up.

"Oh where do you work?" Thandeka asks.

"Your boyfriend didn't tell you that I'm a prostitute?" Betty shots back.

Thandeka chuckles lightly while shaking her head. She remembers seeing the Betty scandal on the news but she brushed it off as an attempt for ruin Moloji's name. In her mind she assumed that her daughter was living a good and straight life with her parents.

"Oh okay. I assume you strip as well."

"Yes."

"Am I allowed to come and watch?" Thandeka asks shocking Betty.

She doesn't understand why her 'mother' would want to see her in that position. She nods lightly and grabs her bag. Thandeka wants to establish trust between herself and Betty and

she knows she will not get anywhere by forcing her to quit this life. Her plan is befriend Betty before she tries to play the role of a mother.

They walk out and get in the elevator in silence. Thandeka is somewhat hoping that Betty will grow a conscience and decide to stay home instead. As the lift doors open Betty spots Bongwe chatting to the security guard. She draws a deep breath and releases it before stepping out.

“Betty.” He says striding towards her.

Betty shakes her head and continues walking.

“Betty sthandwa sam nyakcela.” He says taking her hand in his.

Thandeka is watching on with questions running through her mind. She wonders if this is one of her clients or her boyfriend. She steps back and watches the interaction in amusement.

“Malibongwe please let go of my hand.”

“Not until you give me a chance to talk to you Betty.”

“Well I don’t have anything to say to you Malibongwe. SO PLEASE LET GO OF MY HAND!”

“STOP BEING FUCKEN STUBBORN BETTY AND JUST HEAR ME OUT. NOW I UNDERSTAND THAT I CROSSED THE LINE IN THE MANNER THAT I ADDRESSED YOU BUT DAMMIT WOMAN I LOVE YOU. So please just give me a chance.”

Betty is looking at him with a soft expression on her face. She can tell that he meant it when he said he loves her but her heart cannot get over all the vile words he spit out. The worst being that he compared her to someone she doesn't even know. That hurt her more than him calling her a slut and all those other words.

Malibongwe pulls Betty into his arms and holds onto her tightly. She heaves a sigh before wrapping her arms around his waist which brings a smile on his face. He has just made a lot of progress with her and he knows it.

"I'm really sorry baby." He whispers.

"I have to go to work Bongwe." She says faintly.

Malibongwe frowns and tightens his grip around her body with his heart beating uncontrollably fast. Betty attempts to untangle herself from his tight hold but he just tightens it even further. He hates the fact that she is back at the club because of him.

"Whatever you want me to do Betty, I'll do it just please don't go back to that place, please Betty wam."

"You hurt me." She says softly.

"I know and I will spend the rest of my life trying to make it up to you. I'm so sorry Betty."

"How do I trust you with my heart again when you made me feel so worthless after you created this shelter for me to dwell in? You made me feel safe only to snatch the carpet from up under my feet. I don't think I'll ever be free around you anymore." She says genuinely.

Bongwe heaves a sigh and kisses her forehead. He understands that his words did real damage. Damage that will not be fixed in a day however he is willing to put in the work, as long as she is back in his life.

“Can we go talk inside please?” He pleads.

“Okay.” She says softly.

They walk off but Betty remembers that Thandeka came down with her. She makes her way towards her.

“Do you need me to call a cab for you?” Betty asks.

“No it’s fine I’ll find my way but can I see you tomorrow?”

“I don’t know Thandeka.”

“Betty please. Just an hour of your time.”

“Fine.” Betty says walking away.

Thandeka frowns when she catches Malibongwe looking at her with intensity. She brushes it off as a caring boyfriend who is just wondering what is going on. She grabs her bag and makes her way out after calling for a cab.

Thandeka has been trying to call Moloji to no avail. She told herself that she will call until he answers even if that means him getting in trouble with his wife. He eventually answers just as Thandeka is about to hang up and call back.

“Thandeka.”

“How the hell could you allow your wife to break our daughter like this?” Thandeka asks trying to keep her composure.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that my daughter was molested and raped in your house and your wife knew about it.” She says with her voice slightly cracking.

“What?” Moloji says softly.

“My daughter is so broken and for that I will never, ever forgive you.”

“Did you just say that Betty was raped?”

“I regret ever being with you because if I hadn’t been with you Betty wouldn’t have been conceived and she wouldn’t have had to go through the hell that she has been through.” She says angrily.

“Thandeka.” Moloji says faintly.

“I’m back now so tell your wife to stay the hell away from my daughter because if she doesn’t I will personally deal with her.” She says before hanging up.

Betty and Malibongwe are sitting on the couch with neither of them saying anything to the other. Malibongwe's mind is still on the woman that Betty was talking to.

"Who is that woman?" He finally asks.

"Which woman?"

"The one you were talking to."

"That's my biological mother." She answers.

Malibongwe nods lightly before heaving a sigh.

"Has she been in your life for long?"

"No I actually just met her tonight." She says shrugging.

"How do you feel about that?"

"I don't know. I've always thought that I would be happy to meet her but that wasn't the case. My meeting her opened up some old wounds that I would've liked to stay closed and now I have to deal with them again. Meeting her is worse than finding out that mme isn't my biological mother." Betty says.

"You don't mean that Betty."

“I do and I don’t want to talk about this. You said you wanted to talk, so talk.”

Bongwe rubs his face in frustration. He knows that it is going to be a heavy task to try and get her to give him another change.

“I messed up... Big time and I am sorry about that. I have no excuse for my actions that day but I am truly sorry. I love you Betty and I want to spend my life with you. Please just give me another chance to prove myself to you. I beg you sthandwa sam. Just one final chance.”
He says.

FORTY SIX

Molemo is waiting for Bongani to pick her up for their weekend together which was supposed to happen last week but they had to cancel those plans because Bongani had an emergency to attend to. This is the first time that Molemo is spending the entire weekend with a male companion and she is nervous. She has already worked out in her head that they will probably engage in intercourse but she is hoping that things don't go that far because as much as she knows it might happen, she isn't as ready as she thinks.

Bongani calls to let Molemo know that he is downstairs and she excitedly grabs her bag and rushes out of her room. Mandy and Tebogo are relaxing on the couch in the living room in each other's embrace.

"I'm leaving now." Molemo announces.

"CONDOM Molemo." Mandy shouts and Molemo chuckles nervously.

Mandy and Betty both have had this conversation with her however hearing Mandy yell out the word condom at her makes her nervous. Tebogo chuckles lightly making Molemo feel shy and embarrassed.

"Baby I think Molemo isn't irresponsible, akere Molemo?" Tebogo says.

"Yes." She responds softly.

"I'm just saying be safe baby please and if you feel uncomfortable in any way please call and I will be there in a flash." Mandy says.

"I promise you. Okay let me go. Bye bye."

“Sharp.”

“Bye baby.”

Molemo rushes out leaving Betty worried.

“She’ll be fine baby.” Tebogo tries to assure Mandy.

“She’s young and in love and I know how boys operate. He’s going to manipulate her and because she doesn’t know any better she is going to give in and I hope and pray that she doesn’t regret it. I hope that I never have to comfort her because of this boy.”

“Baby.”

“The world is a cruel place and you men make it harder. Molemo has been through a lot and being played by a guy isn’t something that I want her to experience.”

“We’ll go break his knees together ne love?” Tebogo says stifling a laugh.

“It’s not funny babe.”

“I know I know but really Molemo is grown and trust that she will make the right decision okay.”

“Yeah yeah.” Mandy says then snuggles closer to Tebogo.

Betty finishes getting dressed, grabs her bag and heads out. She is meeting with Malibongwe for lunch and she doesn't know what answer she is going to give to him. It's been over a week since he apologised and they have been talking every day since then. A huge part of her is leaning towards forgiving him because in her little world, apart from Mandy, he is the only other person who has always been on her side.

He has been her strength in the most difficult of times and it seems as if though he is right on time once more. They've touched on the Thandeka issue and Bongwe has tried to get Betty to see things from Thandeka's perspective but she isn't having that. She is too angry and hurt to consider forgiving Thandeka even though she has been keeping in touch with her. So much so that Thandeka is planning on spending the night at Betty's tomorrow. As stubborn as Betty is, she wants to one day have that mother – daughter relationship that she has never had.

Malibongwe heaves a sigh of relief when he sees Betty walk out of the building. A huge part of him believed that she would stand him up, so seeing her walk out of those doors looking like a dream calms his raging thoughts. He steps out of the car and opens his arms for her which she gladly steps into. They hold onto each other for a while with none of them willing to let the other go.

"You smell so amazing." Bongwe whispers.

"You feel so good." She says back causing him to smile widely.

They eventually break their embrace, get in the car and drive off. Betty's mind is racing with different scenarios of how the evening is going to play out. It's either both of them are going to walk out of that restaurant with their hearts shattered or mended. Malibongwe's phone rings snapping Betty out of her thoughts.

"Princess." He answers with a smile on his face.

“You call me princess but you don’t even spend time with me anymore. What did I do to you Wewe? Did I perhaps wrong you on some way? Make me understand.” She says softly.

Malibongwe heaves a sigh. He knows how emotional she can get at times.

“Khanyisile Langalakhe Mkhize. Firstly I love how matured you sound right now. Now I’m sorry I haven’t been spending time with you, it’s just that things have been so hectic and I haven’t been feeling too good and you know how I feel about seeing you when I’m not that great.”

“Firstly I love you a mess or not. You’re my big brother Wewe and yes I may be young and not understand a whole lot but you know you can’t put me in the same box as all those other eleven year olds.”

“I know baby okay I’m sorry ne and I promise that I will try and come see you this weekend.”

“Thank you. So why haven’t you been feeling well, is it the baby?” Khanyi ask.

“Baby? What baby?”

“Mom is calling me. I love you and I’ll see you tomorrow.” She says quickly before hanging up.

Betty turns to look at Malibongwe with her questions clearly visible on her face.

“My loud mouth baby sister. You’ll love her.” He says turning to look at her with a smile on his face.

“She doesn’t sound eleven like she said.”

“She’s gifted so at times she comes across a little wiser than most in her age group.”
Bongwe says.

“Hmm I see.”

They drive the rest of the way in silence. They arrive at the restaurant and make their way in.

“I miss you, I won’t lie about that but I can’t get over the things that you said to me Bongwe. You hurt me so much and I don’t think that I will be able to be me around you anymore because I will always be anticipating you to blow up in that manner again. What you did was uncalled for Bongwe. You knew I was a disgusting prostitute when you decided to sleep with me then claim me. So why did you have to throw that in my face during you explosive moment?”

Then there’s your mother. There is absolutely no way that she will accept me, I saw it in her eyes and I don’t want you to have to be caught in between the two of us. Kamo nna le nna I’m having mommy issues of my own. It’s just a lot is going on. As much as you are my safe place I don’t know if I want to come running into your arms right now.” Betty says calmly.

Malibongwe’s expression is hard to read which is worrying Betty. She knows just how he can blow up now and she is afraid he will do it in public.

“I understand your concerns baby but we can make it work. We’re both fucked up people and before that incident we were making it work for us and I truly believe that we still can. I promise that I will never address you in anger again. I will walk away calm my thoughts and come back once I have calmed down then we can talk about whatever it is.

With my mother, she'll come around once she realised just how special our relationship is. Betty I love you and I don't want to lose you. I will work my fucken ass off just so I can regain your trust."

"Bongwe."

"Betty." He says pleadingly.

Betty heaves a sigh before slightly shaking her head.

FORTY SEVEN

Malibongwe lies in bed with his mind on Betty and everything she said to him during their meeting. She made it very clear to him that she would not get back together with him unless they sit down and unpack their feelings. She brought up the fact that he compared her to someone else which to her meant that he was still in love with her and was trying to replace her. She also made it clear that should they get back together that she would not hesitate to leave him should the need arise.

He then also had the chance to bring up his conditions and the main one was the fact that she runs back to prostitution whenever things get tough. He let her know just how tough it is for him to sit in the crowd and watch on as every man fantasises about her. He then apologised for everything that transpired between them and promised that he would be mindful of his words in future arguments.

His phone rings disturbing his quiet moment. A smile creeps up onto his face when he sees his sister's name flashing on the screen.

"Melo."

"Wewe wabo how are you?"

"I'm fine and you?"

"I'm good. Listen would it be possible for you to come by today? I wanted to talk to you about something."

"You sound a bit off what's wrong?" He asks sitting up.

His sister is his everything and she has played a vital role in getting him into this place that he is in now. When he had his suicidal episodes she would be the one holding him and assuring him that tomorrow would be a better day.

“No there’s nothing wrong. Wena just come. You boys will braai and we’ll have a good time.”

“Okay then I’ll see you later.”

“I love you.”

“I love you too Melo.” He says before hanging up.

He heaves a sigh before sinking back into the bed. A braai with family is what he needs right now.

“Bongani wait it’s sore.” Molemo yells out.

“I’m sorry baby but it’ll get better.” Bongani says.

With one final push he has made his way into Molemo’s sacred land. She cries out as he stretches her out completely with tears falling down the sides of her face. He lowers his head and kisses her eyes before wiping her tears.

“I love you.” He whispers while gazing in her eyes.

“I love you too.” Molemo says faintly.

Last night they spent the night getting to know each other and Molemo feel deeper in love with him. His go getter spirit drew her in and she found herself seeing a future with him. They spoke about this moment and he promised that it wouldn't change anything and that if anything it would strengthen their bond even further. Molemo had her reservations but the minute he pulled her into his arms she found herself agreeing to his request.

He thrusts gently as he whispers sweet nothings in her ear but all her mind is focused on right now is the end of this session. The pain and the friction isn't what she has read about in books and articles. They have told her that the act is passionate and satisfying however all that she is feeling right now is pain. As she is lost inside her mind, Bongani groaning brings her back to reality. He flops on top of her and rests his head on her bosom while panting.

“I love you and thank you for this precious gift baby. I promise that I will cherish it for as long as I am alive.” He says.

Molemo just lays there not responding to what he has just said. A part of her feels like things are about to change now that they have gone all the way and she can only hope that it is in a good way.

Betty and Thandeka are sitting on the couch having lunch when Thandeka's phone rings. She looks at it then at Betty before answering.

“Hlalefang.” She answers.

Betty looks at her and chuckles lightly. She can't believe that he father still has a thing for her biological mother.

“Where, at Betty’s?” She asks.

Betty puts her plate on the table wondering that the conversation might be about. She waits for Thandeka to wrap up the phone call before looking at her expectedly. Thandeka heaves a smile then turns to Betty with an awkward smile on her face.

“Your father says he’s downstairs.” Thandeka says nervously.

Betty bursts into laughter while shaking her head.

“Did you call him to come here? Is that why you supposedly wanted to spend the weekend with me? So that your boyfriend can come here and you two can sneak without his wife in your face?” Betty says.

Thandeka is looking at her with her eyes popped out of her head. She wasn’t expecting any of the things that Betty has just said.

“What? No baby, of course not. I wanted to spend the weekend with you because I want to get to know you. Your father being here is purely coincidental, I swear to you my Betty. You have to believe me.”

“Just like I don’t have to forgive you, I don’t have to believe you. I can’t believe that oena le ntate are using me like this. It was so stupid of me to actually believe that you came back for me when it’s quite evident that you came back for your true love and that isn’t me.” Betty says softly before getting up and walking out of the room.

Thandeka heaves a sigh. Just as she thought that she was making progress, a stumbling block stands in her way and sets her back. She gets up and follows her to the bedroom.

Malibongwe walks into Melo's house and he finds Melo and Sfiso sharing a deep and passionate kiss. He smiles lightly before clearing his throat announcing his presence. They pull apart and turn to look at him. Melo runs into his arms and they hold onto each other for a little bit before pulling back.

"You look better than the last time that I saw you." Melo says.

Bongwe chuckles lightly as he places a kiss on her forehead.

"I know." He lets go of her and goes to greet his brother.

"Sho."

"Eita ugrand?"

"Yeah and you?"

"Yeah. You do look better like your sister said." Sfiso says laughing.

Bongwe shakes his head and makes his way to the couch.

"I'll be right back." Melo says then disappears.

"So did you have a chat with her?" Sfiso asks.

“I did and if I want her back then I’m going to have to open up to her about Siyanda. How do I tell her about this girl that had held me hostage from the grave? How do I tell her just how much I loved Siyanda without making it seem like I don’t love her at all? I don’t know how to do it.”

“It’s obviously going to be a difficult conversation but nothing ever grew in shallow waters. The tough conversations are the ones that grow the relationship. You have to be honest with her if you love her as much as you claim you do and if she loves you as much then she will understand that the love you shared with Siyanda was different from what you share with her. Just have the talk and take it from there.”

“I hear you man but I’m shit scared. What if I lose her?”

“Then it wasn’t meant to be. That’s that.”

“I love her.”

“I know you do. Just talk to her.” Sfiso says.

Just then Melo walks in carrying a baby in her arms. Bongwe looks at them with confusion written all over his face.

“Remember we told you that we applied for adoption?” Sfiso says.

“Yeah.” Bongwe responds in a shaky voice.

Melo settles next to him and removes the receiver off of the baby’s face. Malibongwe looks at her with tears threatening his eyes.

“We got her Bongwe. She’s ours.” Melo says trying to keep it together.

“Why didn’t you tell us?”

“We didn’t want to get your hopes up for nothing.” Melo responds.

“She’s my niece?” He says.

“Yes this is your princess.”

Bongwe blinks once and tears fall down his face. Sfiso takes the baby and walks out leaving the siblings to have their moment. They hold onto each other as they cry tears of joy. Malibongwe knows just how much this means to Melo.

“What’s her name?”

“Lethokuhle.” Melo says.

“You deserve this Melo.”

“At some point they didn’t want me to have her Wewe but Sfiso fought so hard for us and we get the honour of showering her with love.”

“Has mom seen her?”

“I told them and everyone is coming tomorrow to see her. You’re the first to see her.”

“I love you and I love her and I promise that I am going to be the best uncle in the whole wide world.” He says choking on his own words.

FORTY EIGHT

“Betty ngoanaka.”

“Ntate.” Betty says and makes her way to her cellar.

She grabs her favourite bottle before making her way back to the living room. Her parents are sitting next to each other watching her as she moves around. She finally settles on the couch with a glass in her hand and the bottle on top of the coffee table. After she left the room earlier Thandeka followed her and convinced her to let her father in. Betty told her to do whatever she feels like and left her gobsmacked. Ntate Moloji and Thandeka have been sitting here waiting on Betty to join them.

“Sthandwa sam can we talk now?” Thandeka asks.

“Bua Thandeka.”

Ntate Moloji heaves a sigh before rubbing his face in frustration.

“Let me start.” He says. “I haven’t been the best father in the world, in fact I haven’t been a father at all. I was too focused on my career and keeping Elizabeth happy that I didn’t leave any attention for you. I should’ve protected you Betty. I should’ve known that something was happening but I didn’t because I never paid attention. I am so sorry ngoanaka. I am sorry for being a bad father and I am sorry that you had to find out about Thandeka in the manner that you did.”

“Hmmm.” Betty says taking a sip of her wine.

Thandeka and ntate Moloji know that they're going to have to grovel before Betty can even consider forgiving them but they're willing to put in the work.

"Are you two going to get married?" Betty asks shocking them.

"What?"

"I asked if you two are going to get married, I mean you claim to love each other so much. So are you going to get married?"

"We're not going to get married." Thandeka answers.

"Is that why he's here with you and not his wife?" She spits out.

"Betty."

"Oena o re mosadi oa hao areng when you are busy with you bitches like she would call them?" Betty continues.

Thandeka is shocked at Betty's behaviour. She doesn't know how to react to everything that is happening at the moment.

"What's wrong Betty?" Ntate Moloji asks.

"What's wrong?" She snickers. "Let me tell you what's wrong ntate. Before my prostitution scandal broke out you had never ever been here to see me and when that happened you rushed here because your reputation was at stake. Now you're here because Thandeka is here. You clearly always make time for the things that matter to you and I'm not one of those things. I am angry ntate. I am so angry that I don't even know where to start dealing

with my anger. Le oena Thandeka your presence in my life is very upsetting. You just came from nowhere and you expect me to jump into your arms and call you mommy. The both of you are selfish and in as much as I really want to hate you, I can't because you are the reason that I am here."

"What do we have to do in order for you to forgive us?" Ntate asks.

"I don't know ntate but all I want right now is for the both of you to leave and give me space."

"But I thought we were spending the weekend together." Thandeka says softly.

"Yeah but that was until you decided to invite your boyfriend over. Look I'm pretty certain that ntate can organise a hotel room for you somewhere." She says gulping down her drink.

"I'm really sorry for everything Betty and if it is space you need then I will grant you your wish but don't think that I am giving up on you because I am not my baby." Thandeka says getting up then walks out of the room.

"If you want someone to hate, hate me but give your mother a chance because she deserves it."

Malibongwe has his niece in his arms and is looking at her with nothing but love. Melo walks in and sets everything on the table before gushing over her daughter.

"Khanyi said something about a baby kimi." Bongwe said.

“Your girl is pregnant?”

“I think so because we hadn’t been using protection but I’m hoping that she isn’t.”

“Malibongwe.”

“I don’t want her to be pregnant Melo, you know I don’t want a child.”

“I know baby but if she is?”

“I don’t know maybe we’ll get rid of it.” He says shrugging.

“You’re an ass.”

He heaves a sigh.

“I’m sorry I said that but I don’t know Melo. Right now I’m working with what Khanyi said and I pray that she is wrong. That’s all I’m saying.”

“Hmmm. Give me my daughter and eat your food.” She says.

Betty grabs her phone and dials Malibongwe who picks up almost immediately.

“Betty.”

“Hey, I hope this isn’t a bad time.” she says softly.

“No it’s not. What’s up?”

“I could use a friend right now, that’s if you’re not busy.”

“I’m on my way.” He says then hangs up.

Betty sighs and downs her drinks before settling back into the couch. She doesn’t know why she called him, all she knows is that she found herself yearning for him.

Betty finds herself in Malibongwe’s arms the moment her steps into her penthouse. He holds onto her for dear and ends up carrying her to the couch when he sees that she is not letting go. They find themselves sharing an unexpected kiss which has both their blood raging.

“Let’s talk first.” Bongwe says breaking the kiss.

Betty nods lightly and looks deep into his eyes which freaks him out even further. He’s not ready to divulge about his relationship with Siyanda but he knows that he has to.

“You wanted to know about the ‘her’ that I compared you to, so here goes. When I was sixteen I met a girl and the thing is that I wasn’t even looking for a girlfriend but I met her. Anyway we began dating and I knew that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her shortly after. Fast forward to a few years later and we were grown and ready for marriage. I proposed when we were twenty and she said yes. I was so happy and excited to begin my

life with her but God had other plans. We were involved in a car accident and just like that she was gone.

Our plans for the future were scrapped off the face of the earth just like that. I spent years blaming myself for her death because I was the one driving. I thought that maybe had we left earlier or had I driven slower or faster or even taken a different route then maybe we wouldn't have been in that accident.

I loved her Betty, I truly did and losing her broke me. I spent years alone and not even searching but then you came along and the second you smiled and I looked in your eyes I knew that there was something special about you. I am sorry for comparing you to her. I am sorry for making you feel like less of the woman that you actually are.

I am sorry Betty for it all but I am not sorry for loving you.”

FORTY NINE

“You uttered something along the lines of ‘she’d be disappointed to know that you replaced her with a dirty stripper, does her opinion of who you’re with now count that much from the grave?’” Betty asks.

Malibongwe rubs his face in frustration. Betty gets off of his lap and settles next to him. She needs answers and she hopes that he will provide them.

“It doesn’t count but I guess I’d been holding on to her for so long that I felt, I don’t know Betty.”

“You can’t decide to start something then say I don’t know in the middle of it. You said you wanted to talk so we are talking.”

“Look Siyanda was the only girl I’d ever dated in my life and I guess I felt like I owed it to her to be with someone who she would approve of because like I said I felt and to some extent still feel responsible for her death.”

“So she’s the reason you were holding out on me and having nightmares?”

Malibongwe nods lightly and heaves a sigh. All he wants to do in this moment is to fix things with Betty.

“How do I know that you’re not going to compare me to her again? How can I be certain that my heart is safe with you?”

“You can’t be certain but you can take my word for it. If I ever make you feel like that way again you can walk away from me and never look back.”

“Hmmm.” That’s all Betty says.

“Can we touch on your issues now?” Bongwe asks.

Betty shakes her head as she gets up from her seat. She makes her way to the kitchen leaving Malibongwe puzzled. He gets up and follows her to the kitchen where he finds her pulling plates out of the cupboard. He stands there looking at her as she dishes up for the two of them. Once she’s finished she sets everything on a tray and makes her way back into the living room. He follows her then settles next to her and grabs his plate.

“I grew up in a household where I didn’t feel love. It was just cold and it was a house and never a home. My parents, I mean my father and stepmother were always on the road and never had any time for me and because of that they didn’t notice when my behaviour began to change. See I was molested then later on raped by nate’s friend in my own home and when I told my stepmother about it, she just brushed me off.

I have carried that pain and guilt since and I doubt that I will ever be able to shake it off. I felt disgusting Bongwe and when I got the opportunity to leave home I grabbed it. You see you look at my profession as something filthy but I see something that saved me. Prostitution saved me.”

Malibongwe heaves a sigh and puts his plate away. He slides closer to Betty and attempts to pull her into his arms but she shakes her head. His body is shaking with rage and it is taking everything in him not to burst out. The fact that Betty is so relaxed about the bomb she has just dropped is worrying him. He knows that Betty isn’t very in touch with her emotional side when she’s around him but he thought that she would at least show some sort of emotion on this issue.

“Betty look at me.” He commands.

“I’m still eating Malibongwe.”

“Betty.” He says in a much softer tone.

Betty heaves a sigh while shaking her head. She turns to look at him and her heart breaks a little when she notices the tears shining in his eyes. She sets her plate on the table then cups his face just in time to catch his tears.

“Please don’t cry.” She says trying to control her voice.

“I’m so sorry Betty. I am so sorry that you had to go through that. I’m sorry that I didn’t meet you sooner. I’m sorry that I made you feel like crap. I’m so sorry Betty. I promise that from now on all you’re going to receive is nothing but love and happiness. I’m going to do my utmost best to ensure that you always have a smile on your face.” Malibongwe says faintly.

Betty shakes her head as her own tears make their way down her cheeks.

“If I give us another chance you have to promise to be truthful all the time Malibongwe. You have to promise that you’re going to let me in and actually walk this journey openly with me.”

“If only you promise to do the same.”

“I do, but just give me time to work through a few things. What you said to me hurt me and I’d be lying through my teeth if I said I was over it. So just give me time.”

“You’re going to give me another chance?”

“Yes but like I said just give me time.” Betty says.

“I love you Betty.”

“I know and I love you too Malibongwe.”

It's been a week since Molemo broke her virginity and things between her and Bongani have been going well. Today she is spending the day with Betty and Mandy and they have decided to go grocery shopping before heading back to their apartment and having a three woman show. She still hasn't let the girls know that she gave herself to Bongani but she plans on telling them tonight.

“I'm just saying there are certain things that you need to know about your partner before you actually decide to fully commit to the relationship.” Betty says.

“But isn't a relationship all about learning?” Molemo asks.

“Yes it is however like I said you need to know certain things about a man before saying I'll love you forever and I'll marry you. Often times women make the mistake of being caught up in the now and how great things are in the moment forgetting that in the future this now moment will be gone. It's all cute and games until you realise that you missed certain red flags or that you just never really knew your person.”

“And that is why I am an advocate for living with your man before you decide to actually take the next step. You get to learn so much about a person when you live with them and it helps you make the right decision for you when the time comes.” Mandy adds.

The ladies are having this conversation as they do their shopping. As they turn into the sweet aisle they're met by an oblivious Bongani sharing a cute moment with a woman and a

baby. Bongani leans over and places a kiss on the baby's cheek before reaching for the cheese puffs and throwing them in the trolley.

Molemo stands there frozen not knowing how to react to this situation. Mandy on the other hand is fuming and is ready for a showdown whereas Betty is more calm and worried about Molemo.

"Come baby let's go." Betty says taking Molemo's hand and turning around.

Bongani looks to their direction and finds them looking at him with Molemo in tears. He attempts to open his mouth to no success. Betty pulls Molemo away and leaves Mandy to push their trolley.

"Uzonya wena." Mandy shouts before turning on her heels.

FIFTY

“I gave him my virginity just last weekend kanti he has a girlfriend and a child. Why would he hurt me like this Betty?” Molemo asks softly.

After their encounter with Bongani Betty and Molemo went straight to the car while Mandy stayed behind to pay for the groceries. The second they got home Molemo ran into her room and locked herself in. Betty and Mandy understood her need for space so they let her be as they cooked and made snacks. Neither of them said anything to the other but their anger and hurt they both understood.

When Molemo finally decided to walk out of the room the food was ready and so were the boxes of tissue. They're now sitting on the couch with Molemo seated in the middle of them and with her head rested on Betty's thighs.

“You gave him your virginity?” Mandy asks with shock evident in her words.

She knew that something had happened when Molemo came back from her weekend with Bongani but she didn't think that he had popped the cherry.

“I know you warned me.” She says faintly.

“No baby no, I mean in that moment it felt right and don't you feel bad about it.”

“I thought he loved me. He promised me the entire moon and the universe. He said that he would never hurt me. He said I was his true love and that he would marry me. WHY DID HE LIE TO ME?”

Molemo yells before letting out a gut wrenching sob. The girls pull her into their arms and comfort her. Betty feels defeated because she feels like she was supposed to take care of Molemo. As much as she knows that there was nothing that she could've done to prevent this from happening, she still feels like she could've done more. Molemo gets up and runs to her room leaving them feeling defeated.

"I feel like it's my entire fault. I knew something was off about this guy but I still let her go." Mandy says.

"We couldn't have known Mandy. Also we tried to make sure that she was prepared for the possibility of heartbreak but there is nothing else that we can do now. All we need to do is to let her go through it and just be there for her."

"She's still so young. Too young for this shit man."

"Unfortunately life doesn't dish out according to age."

"Do you think she's going to be fine?" Mandy asks.

"She has us." Betty responds.

Molemo's phone rings and she hesitantly answers it.

"Baby I'm downstairs please just give me five minutes." Bongani pleads.

"Why should I give you a chance to lie to me?"

“What you saw is not what you think baby, I can explain. Please give me a chance to.”

“You hurt me Bongani.”

“I’m sorry Lemo waka, please just five minutes.” He begs.

“Okay.” She says then hangs up.

Molemo rolls out of bed and drags herself to the bathroom to wash her face. Her eyes are puffy and swollen a clear indication of how much she has been crying. She wipes her face then makes her way out.

“I’m coming.” She says softly.

Betty and Mandy both look at her with their eyebrows raised.

“He’s here ne?” Betty says.

Molemo nods before making her way out the door. Mandy gets up but Betty stops her before she can even take two steps.

“Let her grow and learn. Look soon she’s going to be living here alone with no one to baby her. We need to let her grow.”

“She’s going to take him back Betty.”

“We’ll advice her but we cannot force her to leave him. Like I said let her grow and make her own mistakes that she will learn from.” Betty says.

Mandy heaves a sigh and shakes her head as she makes her way to the bedroom. She is angry but she knows that Betty is making a lot of sense.

“Thandeka.”

“Betty how are you?”

“I’m fine and you?”

“I’m okay. I’m here and I would like to see you, that’s if you’re home.”

Betty heaves a sigh. She hasn’t spoken to Thandeka or nate Moloji since last weekend. She has been so caught up in her own pain that she wanted nothing to do with her parents. Each time Thandeka would call she would reject the call without feeling any guilt.

“Are you alone?”

“Yes it’s just me.”

“Okay I’m coming.” Betty says.

She turns to look at Mandy who has her face buried in her phone with a wide smile on her face. She is definitely chatting to Tebogo Betty thinks to herself.

“I’ll be back just now.” She says as she makes her way out.

Thandeka is sitting on the same couch she sat on the first time she came here looking for Betty. She has on the very same nervous look on her face but this time she fears that she might lose Betty before she even gets the chance to even build a relationship with her.

“My baby.”

“Thandeka.”

“I know you feel like I planned the entire thing with your father but I swear to you that it was just coincidence. All I want Betty is a chance to get to know you and to build a relationship with you. I don’t want anything to do with Hlalefang sthandwa sami. All I want is to get to know you. Please give me that chance.” Thandeka pleads.

Betty looks at her and feels some warmth spread through her body in this moment. She believes her and she believes that they might just be able to build a very solid relationship.

“One chance Thandeka and if you mess it up I swear I will cut you off quicker than I did with your boyfriend.”

“I promise you will not regret this.” She says pulling Betty in for a hug.

Betty feels the warmth of Thandeka’s hug but is trying her best to fight it. She’s scared of letting herself feel the love that she knows Thandeka has for her.

Molemo and Bongani are sitting in his car. All Molemo wants is an explanation and nothing more.

“The situation you saw earlier was me spending time with my son and his mother. Yes I have a son, he’s seven months old and his mother and I broke up before we even found out about the pregnancy. I was wrong in not telling you about him but I just wanted you to get to know me for me Molemo. I was scared that you wouldn’t give me a chance if you knew that I had a child.”

“So you took my choice away from me.”

“I know I went about this the wrong way and I’m sorry but damn it Molemo I love you. I love you so much and I mean it when I say that I see a future with you baby. Please just forgive me. I’m sorry baby.”

FIFTY ONE

It has been two weeks since Molemo found out about Bongani having a child and her mind has been on that discovery as well as Bongani's apology. After he apologised and begged her to give him another chance, she just stepped out of the car and left him hanging. Her mind was racing with a million thoughts and she didn't trust her response at the time. Mandy made it clear that she didn't want her to get back together with Bongani whereas Betty told her that she understands that her heart is still with him and even though they don't want her with him she might choose to go back and even then they'd still support her decision.

At the moment Molemo is sitting at the library trying to study because exams are upon her. Last night when she was getting ready for bed she realised that she needed to forget about dating and focus on her studies if she wanted to make something of herself. As much as she has Betty and Mandy she knows that in the end all she has is herself and she needs to make sure that at the end of it all she is proud of herself.

As she has her nose in her books she feels someone pulling and a chair and settling next to her. She looks up and she finds Bongani looking at her pleadingly.

"You're disturbing me." She says softly.

"Molemo please, just one more chance to prove myself to you."

"You had ample time to come clean but you didn't and that kind of tells me a lot about your character. It's not even about you having a child or spending the day with him and his mother, it's about you not trusting or respecting me enough to tell me about that side of your life. It's about you somewhat taking my right of choice away. The fact that you wanted me to fall in love with you before telling me about your child is sick.

I had the right to know and decide whether I'd be comfortable enough to stick things through, through it all because we know how the baby mama drama goes. So I'm sorry but I can't give you another chance. I'm still young Bongani and I have a lot on my plate. Also how

do I then trust that you and your child's mother are through when you looked so cosy and comfortable with each other? I may be young but I've been through a lot and I know how life goes. I am not naïve Bongani.

So please leave me alone and go find someone else." Molemo says as she packs up her books.

She puts everything in her bag before getting up and leaving Bongani there with cake on his face.

"So you say that your father had children all over?" Betty asks Thandeka.

They have been spending every day together for the past two weeks and slowly but surely Betty is learning to open up to Thandeka. Thandeka knows that it won't happen in the next month and she knows that she will have to be patient and she is willing and ready to put in all the work.

"Yes. There are probably a million more of us out there but outside of Moleboheng I have a sister who I'd actually like you to meet if you would be willing. We all have different mothers but ngathi mina naye get along. We also have a couple of brothers scattered all over the country."

"Why do you only get along with just the one?" Betty asks.

"I guess it's because of her nature. She accepted me and gave me all the love that I needed."

"She sounds like a great woman."

“She is. Would you be willing to meet her?”

“Maybe we’ll see.” Betty says stuffing a popper into her mouth.

Thandeka draws a breath. She knows she might be overstepping her mark but she has to.

“Are you pregnant?” Thandeka asks.

Betty turns to look at her with shock written all over her face. She doesn’t understand why Thandeka would ask her something like that. Her heart starts beating uncontrollably as she thinks about the possibility. She knows that she wasn’t using protection with Mlaibongwe but she thought that she was protected.

“Hey baby look at me.” Thandeka says cupping her face.

Betty attempts to control her wild thoughts.

“I’m here Betty. If you are then I am here for you and I will hold your hand through it all. Just breathe.”

“I can’t be pregnant.” Betty says softly.

“Do you want to go find out?”

Betty shakes her head vigorously. The thought of confirming a pregnancy is freaking her out.

“Okay let’s go.” She says getting up.

Thandeka doesn't even ask whether or not she is sure because she knows she might just change her mind. They go get ready and make their way to the doctor's office.

The drive back home is filled with silence as mother and daughter try and digest the results of the test. The doctor confirmed that Betty is indeed pregnant. For Thandeka she feels as if though she has been given another chance at being a parent. She never got the chance to mother Betty, she never even got the chance to change her diaper and she feels that this is her second chance at that journey.

Betty's thoughts are on how off the timing of this pregnancy is. She and Malibongwe are only starting to work things out now and she doesn't want a baby to be the reason that they're forced to be together. She's also thinking about how much Malibongwe's mother hates her and how she would think that she is using this baby to trap her son.

As soon as they arrive at Betty's she makes her way to her bedroom and throws herself on the bed. Thandeka follows her and settles next to her.

"What are you thinking baby?"

"What if I'm a bad mother? What if I project my feelings onto the child? I mean I grew up in a shitty situation and I'm not the most loving and caring person in the whole, so what if I mistreat this child? Thandeka what if I hate my baby?" Betty asks faintly.

Thandeka pulls her into her arms and allows her to let it all out. She continues to rub her back as she cries her eyes out. She understands Betty's fears but she also know that whatever she says in this moment Betty will not take in, so she decides to just comfort her for now.

Malibongwe is at his sister's spending the day with his niece when his phone pings. He reads the message and chuckles lightly before tossing the phone over to his sister. Melo reads the message and heaves a sigh afterwards.

The message is from Betty and reads as follows:

"I'm sorry if this comes across as a bit impersonal but I felt that this was the best way to do it. I know that I would've chickened out doing it face to face. I went to the doctor with Thandeka earlier and I'm pregnant."

"So?"

"I'm not ready Melo."

"But."

"I thought that I was fine Melo. I thought I had healed but when Khanyi mentioned it I realised that I'm not okay and I am not ready."

"So what, you're going to ask her to get rid of it?"

"I don't know." Bongwe responds.

"You knew the consequences of having unprotected sex Malibongwe so don't you dare ask that girl to get rid of it because I swear Simphiwe."

"You don't understand Melo." He yells.

“Don’t you shout at me in front of my child! And fuck you for that statement. I’ve been here, I’ve been the one helping you fight so don’t tell me I don’t understand. Your selfishness has nothing to do with Siyanda and Liyana but everything to do with you.”

“Melo.”

“Haai voetsek.” Melokuhle says getting up and walking out of the room.

FIFTY TWO

Malibongwe gets up and makes his way to Sfiso's study where he finds him on the phone. He decides to pour a stiff drink for himself while he waits for him to wrap up his call. He downs the drink then pours another glass and settles on the couch. His mind is racing with a thousand different scenarios. Sfiso wraps up his phone call then settles next to Bongwe.

"When I left you with your niece and sister you were fine and now you're downing le whiskey yam sengathi ngamanzi. What happened?"

"Betty is pregnant."

"Huh I see and how does that make you feel?" Sfiso asks leaning back on the couch.

Malibongwe rubs his face in frustration before throwing back his drink. He feels as if though he can't handle the emotions that he is currently feeling.

"I'm scared."

"And what are you scared of?"

"I'm scared that Betty and I might get into an accident and she might lose the child, or that I might strangle her in my sleep like I did the one time, I'm scared that I'm going to cause the death of my own child again and then end up losing the woman that I love." Malibongwe says then huffs.

"So you're basically scared that history is going to repeat itself?"

"I guess" he says shrugging.

“Like I always say I didn’t witness your love with Siyanda but I know that it was deep if it left you this crippled. Malibongwe you’re almost twenty seven which means that it has been almost seven years since Siyanda and Liyana passed away. Believe me when I say that there is no time frame as to how long a person should grieve however the problem here is that you actually decided to move on. You went out there and fell for this girl and decided to make her yours.

I know that your sister always asked you whether or not you were over Siyanda’s death and your answer was always yes when it should’ve been no. Malibongwe you jumped into this relationship with Betty before you actually worked on your hurt. Yes you have been able to control it but Betty being pregnant is showing the cracks in you supposed healing.

If you were over the deaths of your fiancé and child then this wouldn’t be so crippling.” Sfiso says calmly.

Malibongwe heaves a sigh and rubs his face.

“I am still dealing with my loss yes but the fear is real Sfiso. I love Betty so that goes to show that I’m not suck on Siyanda as having been my only one. I want to build a life with her but I’m not ready for the child aspect. I’m scared that I’m going to lose her. The reason I lost Siyanda was because we lost the baby what if I lose Betty again because we lose the baby?”

Malibongwe wipes his tears before getting up and pouring another glass for himself.

“I would lose myself if anything were to happen to Betty, if I were to lose her. I’m scared man.”

“Sometimes the past holds us hostage but we need to fight to break that bond. Yes it hurt and yes it is scary but sometimes our greatest joy lies in the place we fear the most.”

“What if I don’t want to go there?”

“Life is not about staying in one place Wewe wabo. We need to grow and evolve and we cannot do that if we’re stuck in a single position.”

“I don’t know bra.”

“Tell you what, how about we go visit Liyana and Siyanda’s graves and you can let them know that you have found someone else and that you’re having a baby with her. Let them know that you’re not replacing them but that you’re simply moving on with life because I can tell that that is also another reason you’re holding back.”

Malibongwe shakes his head and makes his way to the door.

“Melo is going to shit on your head.” Sfiso says laughing.

Betty and Thandeka are lying in bed stuffing their faces with ice cream. After she sent the sms to Bongwe, Betty decided that she needed a pick me up and they settled on ice cream and a romcom.

“So the two of you are dating?” Thandeka asks.

“It’s complicated.”

“Uncomplicate it for me then my baby.”

Betty chuckles lightly. She loves how Thandeka is slowly creeping into her heart and she appreciates the fact that she has someone in her corner in this specific moment.

“We dated then we broke up and now we’re trying again.”

“So you conceived during your breakup?”

“Before. We weren’t broken up for that long. Well it was long but you get what I’m saying.”

“I see and his family? Do you know them?”

“His mother hates me. My scandal was all over the news and she saw it. The second we stepped into her house she told me to get out Thandeka so I know that she will not be thrilled about this development.” Betty says chuckling.

As they’re talking Betty’s phone flashes indicating an incoming call. It’s Malibongwe.

“Hey.”

“Hey I’m downstairs.” Bongwe says.

“Use your code.” Betty says before hanging up.

“He’s coming up? Do you want me to go?” Thandeka asks.

“No I’d actually like you to meet him.”

Thandeka feels herself getting a bit emotional. For her this is a very big breakthrough for her. She nods lightly and gets off the bed and makes her way to her room to get dressed while Betty just slips into her slippers and remains in her gown.

Malibongwe steps out of the elevator into the penthouse with his heart beating out of his chest. He doesn't know what he is going to say to Betty but what he knows for sure is that he doesn't want to hurt her.

He smiles when she sees her making her way towards him. She steps into his embrace and they share a passionate kiss before letting go and settling on the couch. Both of them feeling anxious about the conversation they're about to have.

FIFTY THREE

Malibongwe heaves a sigh as he takes Betty's hand in his and kisses her palm. His eyes move to her stomach and even though there is nothing showing as yet he can't help it.

"So we're pregnant." Malibongwe says faintly.

Betty nods lightly as she drops her head.

"I wasn't expecting this." He says truthfully.

"Neither was I." She responds.

"Can I be honest?"

"Sure." Betty says.

"I don't think I'm ready to be a father. I've lost so much that the void is still there and the wound doesn't seem to be healing. I'm trying to work on myself Betty and be a better man for you but the news of the pregnancy has just put so much fear into this heart of mine. I'm scared that I'm going to lose you along with this baby Betty."

"Why would you lose us?" Betty asks.

Malibongwe heaves a sigh and hangs his head. He knows exactly where his fears stem from and how those fears have held him prisoner for the better part of his life however he is not ready to let Betty fully in.

“Things happen Betty. Accidents happen.” He responds.

Betty takes his hand in hers and gives it a gentle squeeze. She realised that his fears come from losing Siyanda in the accident and she understands that. She wants to assure him that nothing will happen to her and their child but she doesn't know where to start. For as long as she's been with Malibongwe, he has been a closed book and as much as he has tried to open up to her he still is a closed book. She understands that he doesn't wear his heart on his sleeve.

“I know that losing your fiancé probably hurt you in ways that I could never understand and I am not taking away from your pain and fears however don't you think it's time to start being 'positive'. Look if this has been keeping you from getting into relationships for so long and you're finally in one with me now, don't you think that's something to be positive about? Don't you think you should try and heal and move on from that hurt so that you don't end up messing up and losing me?”

As much as I love you now and I have forgiven you for that one thing, it doesn't mean that I am going to forgive you for the next thing, more so if it has something to do with your late fiancé. I can't compete with a ghost Malibongwe and I hope that you don't expect me to.”

“I hear everything that you're saying and I respect it. I'm working on myself but I do ask that you be patient with me Betty. It's not going to happen overnight and it's not going to be pretty I acknowledge that. I do promise though that I will try.”

“We both have things that we need to work on both as individuals and as a couple. If we want this to work then we're going to have to learn how to communicate honestly and truthfully. Our relationship has been surviving on just love and nothing else. I realise now that love isn't the end all and be all of a relationship and as much as we're scared about this pregnancy, we need to do better for her sake.” Betty says.

“You want a girl?” He asks faintly with tears glistening his eyes.

“Maybe, I don't know. I haven't even wrapped my head around this so I'm just saying.”

Malibongwe nods lightly as he gets up and makes his way to Betty's bedroom leaving Betty puzzled. He gets into the bathroom and locks the door then allows his tears to fall a little bit better catching them. He knows that he needs to put in a lot of work if he is going to accept this pregnancy and actually allow himself to fall in love with this child. He wipes his face and makes his way back to the living room where he finds Betty sitting with Thandeka. Again he looks at her with so much intensity that it makes Thandeka feel uncomfortable.

"Malibongwe this is my biological mother Thandeka, Thandeka this is Malibongwe."

"Hello Malibongwe."

"Hello Thandeka." He greets back still looking at her with so much intensity.

Malibongwe settles on the couch still looking at Thandeka. Betty gets up and heads to the kitchen leaving the two together.

"Do you have a problem with me?" Thandeka asks.

A frown falls on Malibongwe's face.

"I don't even know you so why would I have a problem with you?"

"I might not have been in Betty's life as she was growing up but I am here now and I intend on protecting her from everything that is not good for her. I hope that you have good intentions for her and that child she is carrying. She has cried enough and this is her chance at happiness so if you don't plan on making her happy and keeping her happy, please leave her alone."

"I love Betty."

“Hmmm.”

“You look like someone I know.” Malibongwe blurts out.

Thandeka looks at him with expectancy written all over her face. Just as Malibongwe is about to speak, Betty walks in with a tray in her hand. She places it on the table then settles next to Malibongwe.

“I miss you, can you please spend the night with me?” Malibongwe whispers to Betty.

She giggles sweetly before nodding slightly. He runs his hand over her thigh and she gets chills all throughout her body.

FIFTY FOUR

Betty is in her bedroom packing an overnight bag while Thandeka sits in the bed.

“What do you think of him?” Betty asks.

Thandeka heaves a sigh while shaking her head. Her encounter with Malibongwe was one that she doesn’t understand. She doesn’t understand his behaviour towards her and the fact that he said she reminds him of someone he knows left her feeling somehow.

“Erm he’s okay, I don’t know. We’ll see as time goes.”

“He has his flaws but above all else he is a great guy and I believe that he’ll only get better as time goes on.”

“Hopefully. Please talk to him about his family and how he plans on telling them about the pregnancy, we also have to let your father know about this new development in your life so that the right processes can be followed.”

“You mean damages and all?”

“Yes. I don’t know how things are done in the your father’s culture but thina ngesintu sethu Malibongwe’s family has to come and do right however the two of you have to talk about all of that then you will let me know how that goes, but I will talk to your father later on today and let him know.”

“Okay, kealeboha. Are you going back to your hotel or are you staying here?” Betty asks.

Thandeka is taken aback by that question. She wasn’t expecting it at all.

“I’ll go back to my hotel baby but thank you for the offer. I’ll probably go and see my sister for the remainder of the days that I am around.”

“Maybe I can meet this sister of yours next weekend.” Betty says.

“I thought-”

“From finding out that I was pregnant to this moment here a lot has been running in my mind, as much as my situation isn’t the most ideal I would like this child to receive all the love that I never got the chance to feel and if you have close family and they could offer this soul a chance at a normal and happy childhood then I would love for her to experience that. Oena le nna, we’re still getting to know each other and as hard as it is for me I am trying to open myself up to you.”

“I hear you sthandwa sam and you have no idea how grateful I am for the chance to get to know you and be present in that child’s life.”

Betty nods and continues packing her bag. Thandeka walks out and makes her way to her room to grab her bag. Once she’s done she heads to the living room where she finds Malibongwe lost in his thoughts. She tries to study him but she soon realises that he is a closed book and his body language gives nothing away.

“Malibongwe.”

He raises his head slowly and looks at her with an eyebrow raised.

“Don’t hurt my daughter please.”

He nods absentmindedly.

“I am assuming that you have not told your parents about this.”

“I’ll tell them as soon as Betty and I have spoken in detail about this. I love Betty Thandeka, that’s something you don’t have to worry about.”

“Hmmm.”

Malibongwe chuckles lightly while shaking his head. His head is all over the place. He is thinking about how his mother is going to receive the news and whether or not she will even accept Betty and their child.

“Okay we can go.” Betty announces as she walks in.

They all get up and make their way to the elevator.

“You just disappeared on us.” Mandy says as she answers the phone.

Betty chuckles lightly. She knows that Mandy is going to have her head when she sees her but she hopes that the baby news will soften her up.

“I know, I know and I’m sorry but I’ll explain everything when I see you. I’ll come see you when I come back.”

“Where are you?”

“Hai Mandy.” Betty says laughing.

“You’re getting dick aren’t you?”

“MANDY!”

“You little bitch! Well do enjoy yourself darling and I will see you when I see you.” She says while laughing before hanging up.

Betty laughs softly while shaking her head. She steals a glance at Malibongwe who has his eyes focused on the road. She can’t help but wonder what exactly is going through his mind. She knows that he didn’t let her in fully on his fears and she hopes that being in his own space will make him relax a bit and open up. They arrive at his place and make their way in. Betty hasn’t been in this space in a very long time and the few changes he has made are quite visible. The huge black and white portrait that hung on the wall has been changed and now has four beautiful children. The picture of his mother has been replaced by one of himself and his mother.

“You know where the bedroom is.” He says disappearing into the kitchen.

She makes her way to his room and throws her bag on the bed before settling on the couch. The picture on his side table catches her attention and she gets up to get closer to it. It is a picture of her in the kitchen cooking in his shirt. She doesn’t remember the day but she can tell that she had had a good night judging by the look on her face.

Malibongwe walks in and gently wraps his hands around her waist then rests his chin on her shoulder. Betty leans into his warmth and allows herself to soak all of it in.

“This is my favourite picture of you.” He whispers in her ear which sends shockwaves down her spine.

“It’s beautiful.”

“I’m lucky to have you Betty.”

“As am I.”

She turns around and drapes her hands around his neck before getting on her toes and placing a kiss on his lips. He doesn’t waste time in pulling her closer and kissing her right back. As their mouths create magic, Betty feels herself floating on cloud nine. Bongwe scoops her up in his arms without breaking the kiss and she wraps her legs around his waist. He gently sets her on her bed before pulling back and giving her his panty dropper smile. She returns it accompanied by a giggle then hides her face in her hands.

“Don’t hide yourself from me Betty.”

She moves her hands and looks at him with a shy smile on her face. He leans down and they share another kiss while he runs his hands up and down her body which is reacting effortlessly to his touch. In a flash her dress is on the floor and she is left in just her underwear. He places soft, sensual kisses from her neck down to her stomach the back up until he settles on her breasts which he gives attention to. Betty is a moaning mess and Bongwe gently sucks and grazes her nipples in between his teeth.

“Bongwe.” She moans softly pulling him closer.

He continues his assault on her breasts before moving down to her thighs and placing soft kisses all over them. He then takes her underwear off leaving her fully exposed. He gets off the bed and slowly undresses as she looks on with nothing but lust in her eyes. Her eyes travels down to his harden shaft which is leaking at the head. He chuckles lightly as he continues to stroke it.

“I want you.” Betty says softly.

Malibongwe's plan was to have Betty begging for it before he gives it to her but he himself is in dire need of her sweet loving and can't wait any longer. He climbs onto the bed and kisses her as he runs his hard one up and down her dripping seam. He gently pushes in and settles there as Betty clenches her walls around him uncontrollably.

"Betty don't." He says in a strained voice.

He begins to thrust slowly while looking into her eyes which are shining with tears. As their bodies dance their souls also communicate with each other letting each other in on how they feel. Both their fears clearly visible in their eyes. Malibongwe continues to make slow love to the woman he loves.

As always Betty's orgasm creeps up on her and she tries her best to resist it.

"Bongwe I can't... Oh shit..."

She tries to push him out but he continues with his slow controlled movements which are making Betty vulnerable. Betty cries out as she reaches her high. Malibongwe chuckles lowly at how Betty looks so vulnerable before dipping his head and capturing her lips in his.

The love birds spent the entire night making love and solidifying their connection. At some points both of them found themselves in tears as their souls connected. For Malibongwe, being so vulnerable was hard for him because he has always been about not showing his emotions however Betty just makes it so hard to stay in that character.

Bongwe's phone rings and he quickly reaches for it hoping that it hasn't woken Betty up.

“Sawubona mama.”

“Hello baby how are you?”

“I’m alright and you?”

“I’m good. I just wanted to check up on you, I haven’t seen you in a while.”

“I miss you too mama and I also have something that I want to talk to you about. Maybe I can come through next weekend because I have to be at dad’s centre the entire week and I can’t slip away.”

“Next weekend sounds perfect. How’s everyone at home?”

“They’re good. Melo adopted a baby so we’re all still gushing over her right now.”

Mam’Zonke chuckles lightly.

“I bet you spend all of your spare time with them.”

“Guilty as charged. You know how Melo deserves this.”

“And you also deserve the chance at that kind of happiness yourself Malibongwe and I hope that you will realise that one day. They would want you to be happy.”

“I know ma.”

“Okay then let me not keep you, I’ll see you next weekend.”

“Yes. I love you and take care of yourself for me.”

“I always do and I love you too.” She says then hangs up.

Bongwe puts his phone away then pulls his Betty closer and places a kiss on her forehead.

FIFTY FIVE

Molemo's thoughts have been on her mother lately and today she has decided to go and see her without letting Betty and Mandy know because she knows that they would prohibit her from going. As risky as it is, she cannot live with herself knowing very well that she has a mother out there who is probably living as a dog. Often times we say that the heart is a treacherous thing and in Molemo's case it really is. As much as her mother has never been much of a parent to her and has been the cause of her being battered, she can't stop caring.

The taxi comes to a halt and Molemo jumps off then starts her walk to what once used to be her home. From a distance she can see the overgrown grass peaking through the fence. Her heart breaks a little bit but she knows that even if she were to offer her mother help she would refuse.

She opens the gate and walks in with her heart I her stomach and knees feeling like jelly. The closer she gets to the door, the more her heart beats uncontrollably. The door is wide open and Molemo draws a deep breath before stepping in. The kitchen is a mess with dirty dishes overflowing the in the sink and beer bottles all over. As she walks into the dining room she finds her mother with a beer bottle in her hand looking deep in thought.

"Mama." She says softly.

Her mother looks up and immediately bursts into tears when her eyes land on Molemo. Molemo quickly rushes over to her mother and pulls her into her arms comforting her. They cry in each other's arms for a while before pulling back.

"I thought you were done with me."

"I am, I mean I was." Molemo heaves a sigh.

This is harder than she thought it would be. She had expected her mother to throw her out the second she set foot in the house.

“So what are you doing here?”

“I just came to check up on you.”

“Hmmm.” She takes a sip of her beer.

“How have you been?”

“You left me akere Omolemo, when your friends with their fancy car and money came here to disrespect me you chose to leave with them.”

“I left because my life was in danger. I left because I was beaten to a pulp and I almost died mama. You cannot persecute me for choosing myself over this toxic environment.”

“Hehehe.” She laughs loudly while clapping her hands. “Utlwang bo Molemo ba bua ka bo persecute. English heh. If this environment was so toxic then why are you back here? Or ke eng your friends are tired of you sponging off of them?”

Molemo chuckles lightly while shaking her head as she gets up and picks up her bag. She knew that their cute reunion was going to be short-lived.

“I’m sorry for coming back here to disturb your life I just wanted to see if I could reconcile with my mother but clearly that is not going to happen so bye mama.”

Molemo’s mother clicks her tongue and downs her beer.

“Ntja e ba reng ke ntatao was looking for you apparently he saw you at some mall and recognised you. That man stole so much from me, and now he is back to take some more from me.”

Molemo turns around.

“How is he stealing from you when you didn’t and still don’t want me?” Molemo yells.

She cannot believe her mother. All her life all she had ever wanted to do was to know her father and to know that her mother wants to deny her the opportunity to hurts her.

“Tsamaya Molemo.”

“Mama.” Molemo says faintly.

Her mother gives a look before chuckling and taking a sip of her drink. Molemo walks out with tears threatening her eyes. Her heart is heaving and her spirit crushed. She wishes that she hadn’t come here in the first place.

“So I assume that you and Mr Mystery are back back back together.” Mandy says.

Betty and Mandy are at Mandy and Molemo’s apartment enjoying some down time together. They’re in the kitchen preparing some lunch while catching up.

“Eish it’s a bit complicated but I guess so.”

“What do you mean you guess so, you either are or you aren’t?”

“We love each other and we know that we want to be together but man he has deep issues kamo his mother hates me and I also have my own mommy issues. Like I’m trying to warm up to Thandeka now and that’s a struggle.”

“Betty do you know how blessed you are to have a second chance at having a present mother? Sure she should’ve been there from the beginning and she wasn’t but she is here now and she is willing to work on gaining your trust and everything that comes with it. Allow yourself to be mothered Betty and to feel her love because I can guarantee you that she wouldn’t have come back if she didn’t want to be in your life. She made a mistake but forgive her and give her a chance, I mean if you can give Mystery a second chance then surely you can give her one as well right? I would kill to have a mother figure in my life right now, so don’t throw that chance away.” Mandy says.

Betty heaves a sigh before drowning her juice and refilling her glass. What Mandy just said hit her hard and she realises that she needs to give Thandeka a chance. She walks over to Mandy and wraps her hands around her.

“My Thandeka is your Thandeka as well. So that mother figure you need, you can get.”

Mandy chuckles lightly.

“You’re so cute.”

“I just love you Mands.”

“And I love you too and thank you. I can’t wait to meet your Thandeka.”

“Have you and Tebogo decided on a date for mahadi?”

“He’s waiting on me to give him the details and all of that.” Mandy says then huffs.

“We can ask Mr Mysterious if he can’t be part of your delegation.” Betty says.

Mandy laughs loudly while shaking her head.

“Futhi he’s Zulu angithi and dangerous looking! Yaas I’ve got myself a lead negotiator.”

“You see?” Betty says laughing.

They continue making lunch while conversing about the issue. Mandy is adamant on not including her estranged family in these negotiations and Betty respects that.

“I’m pregnant.” Betty says softly.

“What?” Mandy turns to look at her.

“Yeah I know.” Betty says chortling.

“You’re always so careful though?”

“Well we went to go get tested and decided to go all raw and shit and he left his seed in me. I’m so scared Mandy because this guy’s mother hates me and I don’t know how she is going to react to the news of my pregnancy. What if she thinks that I am trying to trap her son with this child?”

“Haai it’s not like you need Malibongwe’s money so that idea she can get out of her head. If she acts all fresh about this baby then it’s fine ngoba lo baby will be loved by me and Molemo as well as your mother so worry not.” Mandy says.

She continues stirring her pot before dropping her spoon and turning to look at Betty.

“Shit you’re pregnant!” She exclaims.

Betty laughs at how delayed that reaction was.

“Shit I’m pregnant.”

“You and Mr Sex on Legs are having a baby? Oh my fuck that child is going to be so sexy. He or she better take their dad’s complexion, that rich chocolate skin!”

Betty rolls her eyes while laughing.

“Whoooooah Malibongwe and I need to have a conversation.” Mandy continues.

Betty is still laughing when Molemo walks in looking like she is carrying the world on her shoulder. The minute she sees the girls she burst into tears and they rush over to comfort her.

“It’s okay baby. Whatever it is we’ll deal with it, the three us.” Mandy says softly.

Molemo nods her head believing what Mandy is saying. She knows that they have her back no matter what.

FIFTY SIX

Malibongwe is on his way to see mam'Zonke as promised. He decides to stop by the store to get her a few things. He grabs everything he thinks she will enjoy as well as a bouquet of roses before paying and making his way to the car. His thoughts are on the pregnancy and how he is going to break the news to his family. He knows that his brother and uncle will be happy and that his dad will accept the situation at hand but it's his mother's reaction that has him stressing. He hopes that Lwandle will be able to convince her to calm down and open her heart to things.

He arrives at mam'Zonke's and drives in. She beams broadly when she sees him and clasps him into her arms. They share an embrace before letting go. Bongwe takes out everything that he has for her and they make their way inside to the kitchen.

"You're the only person that gets me flowers." Mam'Zonke says taking a whiff of her flowers.

Malibongwe chuckles as he pulls her into his arms and places a kiss on her cheek before letting her go.

"You deserve much more than flowers, you know that right?"

"Hai suka la. Grab your drink and those snacks siyohlala ngaphandle." She says as she puts her flowers in water.

He does as instructed then heads outside and waits for her to join him.

"So how are you?" She settles next to him on the couch.

“I’m okay and you?”

“I could be better if you were happy.”

Malibongwe heaves a sigh before rubbing his face. He knows just how much she worries about him and she wishes that she didn’t worry so much but he know that’s impossible.

“Then I guess what I am about to tell you will make you happy.”

“Go on.” She says with curiosity taking over.

“Months back I met someone, she reminded me so much of Siyanda that I had to get to know her.”

Mam’Zonke frowns.

“Anyway I did my research and made sure that she wasn’t related to Siyanda in any way before making my move. The more time I spent with her, the more I fell for her. I love her mama and I think I want to spend the rest of my life improving myself just for her.”

“Oh Malibongwe.” She says softly.

“I’m trying ma, I’m trying to move on with my life.”

“And you’re in love you don’t understand how big that is for me. I am so happy baby. I truly cannot be happier because you deserve all the happiness in the world and this is it for you. I pray that you don’t sabotage your own happiness. Be happy Simphiwe. Enjoy life. Create memories. LIVE!”

“I am mama. One step at a time,”

“I am so happy and I bet Zobuhle is too.”

Malibongwe bursts into laughter at the thought of his mother and how she hates his relationship with Betty.

“Well she hates my girlfriend because of her past and I fear she is about to hate her even more.”

“And why is that?”

“Because she is pregnant.”

Mam’Zonke squeals and pulls Malibongwe into her arms. She places kisses on his cheek.

“Oh God is good! My baby that is fantastic news. The greatest ever!”

“Well I am glad that you think so mama ngoba uZo uzongibulala.” He says laughing.

“She has always wanted the best for you and I don’t doubt that she still does, she’s being protective but once she realises just how happy you are especially after everything that you have been through.”

“So you’re not mad that I got someone pregnant?”

“I could never be Simphiwe. I have been dreaming of a chance to be a grandmother and look at you blessing me. I am very happy and I can’t wait to meet the mother of my grandchild.”

“I’ll bring her to you soon yezwa.” He kisses her forehead.

Malibongwe appreciates the relationship he shares with mam’Zonke. He realises just how lucky he is to be surrounded by such strong and phenomenal women who love and care for him so deeply.

They spend the rest of the morning catching up on everything before Bongwe leaves saying he is going to break the news to his parents.

“Hey mom.” Bongwe shares a warm hug with his mom.

She gets on her toes and gives him a soft peck. They haven’t really spoken about dinner where he introduced Betty to them but they have been checking up on each other.

“You get taller each time I see you Wewe.”

“You’re being dramatic Zo.” He says laughing.

They settle in the couch.

“Is dad home?”

“He took Khanyisile to get some ice cream but he should be back soon.”

“Oh she’s spending the weekend here?”

“Yeah, Ndalo is at camp, Zizwe is bonding with Langa and Siba just wanted to rest so ya.”

“HmMMM I missed her.”

“Did you want to talk to your dad about something?”

“Yeah nawe futhi kodwa we’ll wait for him.” Bongwe says sinking into the couch.

Betty and Thandeka are on their way to see Thandeka’s sister. The mother and daughter duo spent the entire week along with Mandy and Molemo who instantly fell in love with Thandeka. The motherly warmth and love she brought into their group dynamic has the girls feeling complete in some way. Thandeka has also offered to help Mandy with everything that she will need help with, with regards to the lobola process as well as the wedding.

“Are you ready?” Thandeka asks.

Betty nods absentmindedly as they drive into the yard. They’re welcomed by a light-skinned lady who is wearing a broad smile. She and Thandeka share a hug before she turns her attention to Betty. She cannot believe the resemblance; Betty looks just like her daughter.

“Yho Thandeka clearly our father’s genes are very dominant because your daughter looks so much like my angel.” She says with a smile on her face.

“Really?”

“Her eyes and that tight smile she has on right now, that is my angel straight.” She says opening her arms wide for Betty.

Betty steps into her embrace and immediately feels at home.

“You are so beautiful my love.”

“Thank you.” Betty says shyly.

“Come in.” She says leading the way in. “You actually missed my son, he was here earlier and thanks to him we have dessert.”

“What son manje?” Thandeka asks clearly shocked.

“It’s a long story but you’ll meet him one day. Anyway I am so happy to meet you Betty. Your mother here hasn’t stopped raving about you.”

Betty chuckles sweetly as she settles on the couch. She can see just how close Thandeka and her sister which warms her heart. She sees that she is in very loving hands here.

FIFTY SEVEN

Betty is sitting there watching the interaction between Thandeka and her sister with her heart beating out of her chest. All her life she had wished that she had a sibling to walk through this life journey with but unfortunately she wasn't afforded that chance but she is grateful for the fact that she has Mandy and Molemo. Seeing Thandeka so carefree and happy is something that she was yet to witness and seeing it in this moment has her seeing her birth mother in a different light.

Her phone beeps indicating a message and she reaches for it. As soon as she sees Bongwe's name on the screen she feels warmth spread across her body. The smile that creeps up on her face is one that reminds you of a child after receiving their Christmas gift.

"I love you. Please have dinner with me." The message reads.

Betty cannot help but blush uncontrollably. Malibongwe is undeniably the man of her dreams and she cannot deny that. With everything that they have been through and with the issues that they're both facing Betty knows that he has her heart even though the world seems to be coming at them hard. Malibongwe is the first man to ever see all of her and not just see her as a releasing dish. He sees a future with her and that means a lot to her.

"She looks taken." Zonke says to Thandeka with her eyes fixed on Betty.

Thandeka chuckles lightly. She can see now just how much Betty is into this guy even though things between them seem to be rocky. All Thandeka wants is for Betty to be happy and if the father of her unborn child is the one that can offer that happiness so be it.

"I met the boy and he is so hard to read but they seem to have an understanding so I guess that's a good thing." Thandeka says shrugging.

“I understand your reservations but the look on her face says it all and I think you need to put mommy bear aside and let her be. When my Siyanda said she wanted to get married at the age of 19 I lost it even when they fell pregnant at 20 I still couldn’t allow her but as time went on and I realised just how happy she was with him I let her be and that was the happiest I’d ever seen her.”

“You miss her don’t you?”

“Every day but I take comfort in the fact that she is at perfect peace. She is at home with the Lord where she feels no more pain and that is the main reason I am okay with her death. Yes I miss her and given the chance I would steal a day with her but this is how God intended it to be.” Mam’Zonke says before heaving a deep sigh.

Thandeka looks at her sadly. She can’t imagine how she would deal with her daughter’s death. She understands how hard it is living without your child and even though in her case Betty is still alive, she knows the pain.

“Don’t be sad for me, the 20 years that I had with her were the best years of my life and I’m also glad that she had the chance to taste a love so rare before she left us. Futhi because of her I gained a son.”

“The boy that was meant to marry her?”

Mam’Zonke nods.

“Well he’s a man now but yes him. He is my baby and that’s all thanks to my deceased baby. When he was here earlier he came to let me know that his girlfriend is pregnant and I know for certain that Siyanda is rejoicing where she is. That boy carried the pain of losing her for so long that I feared that he’d never move on but here he is having a child.”

“You’re going to be a gogo times two.” Thandeka says smiling.

“HUH?”

“Betty is also pregnant.”

“Oh my goodness Thandeka that’s amazing news!” Mam’Zonke exclaims.

“It is, you know for me it’s like receiving another chance to mother Betty. I just hope that I don’t mess it up.”

“You won’t. You’re a remarkable woman Thandeka.”

Thandeka heaves a sigh while shaking her head. She doesn’t feel like one most of the time.

“Moleboheng is going to freak out.” Thandeka says chuckling.

“Elizabeth will just have to be strong. This isn’t about her anymore. She had the chance to love and be a mother and friend to this child but she didn’t, so what happens from this point on has nothing to do with her.”

While the two sisters are going on about Moleboheng and her character, Betty is lost in her phone chatting to her love. The butterflies in her stomach cannot be contained. They have been flirting for the past couple of minutes and Betty’s cheeks are stiff from all the blushing she has been doing.

“Dad just got here, we’ll chat later. I love you baby mama.”

“I love you too baby daddy.” Betty responds.

When she lifts her head up from the phone she finds her mother and aunt looking at her with amusement written all over their faces. Embarrassment washes all over her and she hangs her head.

“Love is a beautiful thing baby and I am glad that you have a chance at it.” Mam’Zonke says getting up and making her way to the kitchen.

“No baba you cheated. Next time I am going to beat you.” Khanyisile’s voice fills the entire house.

Malibongwe shakes his head at how dramatic she sounds in this moment. He knows that he is also about to receive an earful from her because he hasn’t seen her in a very long time.

“Kodwa nkosazana we played fair.” Lwandle responds.

“No baba no. I want a rematch.”

“And then you two, what’s all this noise about?” Zobuhle asks as they walk into the living room.

Lwandle stifles a laugh while Khanyi huffs as she throws herself on the couch. Her eyes move to Malibongwe and she rolls her eyes causing him to chuckle.

“Mama, baba cheated. We were playing a game at the arcade and he cheated.”

“Love.” Zo says softly.

“Honey.” He responds in a soft tone.

He is looking at his wife with eyes filled with nothing but love.

“Next weekend you and Khanyi are going to back to wherever and you are going to give her a rematch and you will not cheat this time.”

“But honey.”

“But nothing love.”

They all chuckle as Khanyi does a mini dance. She then turns to look at Wewe with a soft face.

“Even when you don’t miss me, I love you. When schools close please take me to Durban.” She says.

Malibongwe realises that he has no choice but to agree to any and everything that she wants in this moment.

“Durban it is my princess and again I apologise for not being the best big brother.”

“It’s okay.” She says with a smile on her face then gets up and walks out of the room.

Malibongwe makes a mental note to talk to Khanyi before he leaves later.

“You good?” Lwandle asks.

“Yeah you?”

“Good.”

“I actually have something that I need to talk to you two about.” He says then heaves a sigh.

He hopes that his mother’s reaction will be a positive one although he knows that she might just lose it.

“Mom I know that you don’t agree with my relationship with Betty.”

“Of course I don’t.” Zobuhle spits out.

“This is the first relationship I have been in since Siyanda died. For years you have been pushing me to move on and when my heart finally decides to open itself up, you disapprove of the one it has chosen. Mom I love Betty, yes her past isn’t the most beautiful but we all have a past and to judge her based off of what you’ve seen in the news is totally unfair.

I love her. She came in and accepted me with my scars and all. Even when I almost took her life she stayed with me and was patient with me. I’m sorry if she doesn’t fit into what you had in mind for me but she is what I need right now.”

“Malibongwe.”

“Betty is pregnant mom and I would like us to go and pay damages for her.”

“And how sure are you that she is carrying your child?”

“Because when we started dating she left that life and has been solely focused on us.” He lies.

“Hmmmmm”

“Mom please give her a chance. You and dad hated Sfiso but look at how amazing he is with Melo and Kuhle. I’m not asking you to be friends with Betty but I am asking you as my parents to go do right by her family.” Malibongwe says.

Lwandle nods lightly while Zobuhle looks lost in her thoughts.

“You love her that much?” Lwandle asks.

“I never thought that I would move on from Siyanda baba but here I am, so yes I love her that much.”

FIFTY EIGHT

“I know that you don’t want to go back home and be associated with your family again but Mandy if we want this marriage to work we need to do things the right way. This lobola has to be accepted by your family, so baby I am asking you just try and talk to someone, anyone and I swear we will do everything in one day. The Saturday sa mahadi re tla mbesa that way you don’t ever have to go back again unless you want to.”

Mandy has been shaking her head since Tebogo started this conversation. She acknowledges that what he is saying is true however she isn’t willing to go back to her relatives and ask them for help especially after they left her out in the cold when her mother passed away.

“Then I guess we shall remain boyfriend and girlfriend until the day we die.”

“And what happens to our kids?”

“I don’t know.” She shrugs as she walks out of the room.

Tebogo chuckles lightly as he thinks about how stubborn Mandy actually is but he understands that in this case her stubbornness stems from being hurt. Although he does wish that she could see things from his point of view. All he wants is for her and their future kids to share his surname.

He gets up and follows her out into the kitchen.

“Can you stop being stubborn just this once.” He says wrapping his hands around her waist.

“I will not go back there.”

“Betty and Molemo will be there with you akere and so will Betty’s mom, you said it yourself that she is the mother you all needed so I know for certain that she will not let you go through all of this by yourself.”

“Fine I’ll talk to her.”

“Thank you and I love you.”

“Ya whatever I love you too.” Mandy mumbles.

She untangles herself from his hold then makes her way to the bedroom. She cannot believe that she has to reach out for those people for help after everything that has happened.

Betty makes her way into the doctor’s office where she finds Bongwe already waiting for her. She chuckles lightly before settling in the chair after greeting him as well as the doctor. They’re at the doctor because Malibongwe wanted to make sure that the pregnancy is going well even though it has been two weeks since he found out.

“So would it be possible for us to come in every week? “ He asks.

Betty shoots him the eye before turning to the doctor who is laughing silently.

“Not every week but once a month, unless it is absolutely necessary for us to monitor the pregnancy on a weekly basis.” The doctor says much to Betty’s relief.

“But if we want to come in every week we can?”

“Malibongwe we do not need to come in every week so relax. Now can we get on with the appointment so we can go because I do not want to be late?”

“Fine.”

The doctor is chuckling softly at the interaction between Bongwe and Betty. She finds it interesting and warming especially the fact that Malibongwe seems so invested in the pregnancy. In her profession she doesn't always see men that come in and actually enjoy the appointment so much.

Betty and Bongwe are now on their way to see his sister Melokuhle. She invited them over for lunch and Betty has been nervous since. She wasn't expecting the invite and the fact that their mother was so horrible to her still lingers in her mind. She can't help but wonder whether or not Melo will have the same attitude towards her. She has however decided that should that be the case then she and Bongwe will be through.

“Relax.” He says taking her hand in his.

“She's your sister.”

“Well I was relaxed when I met Mandy as your sister.”

“Yeah because you had fucked her before.” She responds laughing.

He cringes as those words roll off her tongue.

“I thought we agreed never to touch on that Betty.”

Betty bursts into laughter. She knows that he hates talking about that incident but she can't help but laugh about it. She understands that it was business and nothing more.

“Sorry ne.”

“Mxm keep your sorry because we're here.”

Betty gasps as they park in the drive way. The house is what dreams are made of. The fountain catches Betty's eye and she immediately falls in love with.

“This is gorgeous.”

“Wait until you see the inside. Woza.”

He takes her hand and they make their way in. Betty is holding her breath waiting for drama to ensue. She is more than ready to turn back and make her way to the car should things burst. They step in and immediately their noses are hit by the aromas coming from the kitchen.

“Nqobile!” Bongwe shouts.

Sfiso walks in laughing.

“My wife is not your wife so stop screaming her name in my house.”

“She was mine first.”

“Well she is mine now. Hello Betty.”

“Hi.” Betty responds shyly.

She is not sure how she is supposed to speak to this man in front of her. Besides the fact that she is nervous as is, she finds his presence intimidating. He commands the room without even saying a thing plus he is quite handsome.

“Baby this is Sfiso, Melo’s husband.”

“Hi Sfiso.”

Bongwe and Sfiso share a chuckle. Bongwe is amused by the fact that Betty can be shy at time while Sfiso is taken by the fact that Malibongwe looks genuinely happy.

“I thought I heard my name being called.” Melo say walking into the room.

She shares a hug with Malibongwe before giving Betty a hug as well.

“No wonder this idiot has been hogging you, umuhle.”

Betty blushes and smiles not knowing how to respond. She has relaxed a bit because she can tell that Melo and Sfiso are not about to throw her out of their house.

“You have a very beautiful home.” Betty says.

“Thank you, it’s all my wife’s doing, I just provided the funds.” Sfiso says.

“And I am grateful for that husband. Okay Betty do you mind keeping me company in the kitchen while you two idiots go check on my daughter.”

Bongwe kisses Betty’s head.

“I’ve missed my niece vele.” He says making his way out of the room with Sfiso following.

Betty then follows Nqobile into the kitchen where she settles on the high chair.

“Would you like some juice?”

“Please.”

“So how was your appointment?”

“It was interesting. Your brother was trying to get the doctor to agree to weekly appointments. Luckily she wasn’t having any of that.” Betty says chuckling.

“He’s nervous about this pregnancy but he is excited. I’ve seen him with every child in the family and he has a big and loving heart and I have no doubt that, that child you’re carrying is going to be very loved and highly spoiled.” Melo says.

“And I can’t wait to see him in action.”

“After the last time I didn’t think that he would be this happy about things.”

“After the last time?” Betty asks in confusion. “What do you mean?”

Right then Melo realises that Malibongwe hasn’t let Betty in on the fact that he was expecting a child with Siyanda. She can’t believe that he left such a crucial part of his life out of their conversations. She thinks on her feet about a story she has to spin for Betty because she knows that it is not her place to tell Betty.

“When I was pregnant Bongwe was very much invested in the pregnancy however I lost the child so that kind of crushed him.”

“Oh I’m so sorry for your loss.”

“It’s okay, it had to happen otherwise we wouldn’t have gotten the chance to adopt our princess.”

Melo makes a mental note to talk to her brother alone before they leave.

“She looks like Siyanda.” Sfiso says.

“No she doesn’t, well not anymore.”

“I hope you truly love her for her and not for the lookalike that she is.”

“Like I said before in the beginning I was intrigued by her looks and how much she looked like Siyanda but after the investigation I fell for her as her, as Betty. So I truly do love her as Betty.”

“As long as you’re sure. You do look very happy with her and that’s all we want for you, to be extremely happy.”

“I am. We’re going to the Free State next week to pay damages, I hope you can come with.”

“Yeah ubaba had already spoken to me and you know I have your back.”

“I want to ask her to move in with me, do you think she’d agree?”

“Maybe but just take things slow okay. Get your relationship to a certain level before thinking about moving in and all.” Sfiso says.

Letho starts giggling and Bongwe jumps up to go take her. He is in love with his princess and he can’t hide it.

FIFTY NINE

“So I hear that my mom wasn’t the friendliest when she met you.” Melo says.

“I understand where she was coming from though, I mean I doubt I’d want my child with a former prostitute as well. So I get it, she was being a mother... a protective mother at that.”

“I want to ask how you got into that but I know it’s a very personal question.”

“Maybe one day.” Betty says with a faint smile on her face.

“I understand. Can I ask you something?”

“Sure.”

“Why do you love my brother?”

Betty chuckles softly. She has never thought of the exact reason why she loves him and she doesn’t want to because that might ruin things.

“Why do I love him? I don’t know. If there was one specific reason as to why I love him then the relationship would be doomed. So I don’t know why I love him but I do know what I love about him. Malibongwe is not your typical boy next door. I’ve seen him as a bad boy and I’ve also seen him as a sexy business man and on both occasions I have been weak.

I love how underneath all his demons he is still somewhat a cuddly bear. He makes me feel special and appreciated, like I’m all that he sees. Every time that I’m in his presence I feel at peace and that isn’t something that I have always known. I feel the love that I have always

been yearning for. I was at my most miserable when we had broken up and as much as he had hurt me I couldn't help but still want him in my life.

Your brother makes me want to be a better person. Heck I left my previous life because of him, for him. Sure there are some qualities about him that can do with some improvement but above all he's a great guy."

Melo has a broad smile on her face as she watches how passionately Betty speaks of her brother. Without a shadow of a doubt she is certain that Betty is the one for Malibongwe and she hopes that her brother will grow up and let her in on everything because she knows that things will blow up in his face should he not.

"He's very lucky to have you in his life."

"I'm lucky to have him." Betty says with a warm smile on her face.

"Let me go get those two idiots so we can eat. Please grab some juice in the fridge and take it into the dining room. I'll be back just now." Melo says before walking out.

Betty does as instructed before settling into the chair and wait. She cannot believe that she was so comfortable in telling Melo about her love for Bongwe but she doesn't regret it, she wants to make things work with him not just for the baby but for herself as well. They walk in laughing with Bongwe holding Kuhle in his arms. That sight brings a smile to Betty's face.

"Baby met my niece, Lethokuhle."

Betty smiles when she finally gets to see the little princess. If she didn't know that she was adopted she would swear that the child was theirs. Her heart flutters when she looks at Malibongwe's face – he is in love with the angel and his face gives it away. Suddenly she cannot wait to meet her own bundle, as scared as she is she can see that the child will be in good hands.

“Simphiwe stop hogging the baby and let Betty hold her kanti unjani na?” Melokuhle says dramatically.

Sfiso chortles at Bongwe’s expression – he doesn’t want to let go of Letho. Malibongwe hesitantly hands Letho to Betty who gushes over her the second she holds her in her arms. As if she senses that all the attention is on her, Letho breaks into a giggle in her sleep which has Betty falling deeper in love with her.

“My baby just found herself another person to spoil her.” Sfiso says.

“She sure has.” Melo says giggling. “Okay sit let’s eat. Betty let me take her so you can eat.”

“No it’s okay I’ll manage.”

“Okay. Let me dish up for you then.”

She grabs a plate and dishes up a bit of everything for Betty who is still lost in Letho’s eyes whom is also enjoying the attention that she is receiving.

“Baby eat.” Bongwe says.

“Okay.” Betty responds without lifting her head up.

“See your child Melo, my child isn’t getting food because of yours.”

Everyone erupts in laughter while Bongwe frown. Betty kisses his cheek before taking a bite of the cheese and garlic bun. Everyone is relaxed around each other and that is the one thing that Bongwe appreciates the most.

Molemo is standing in line when she feels a light tap on her shoulder. She turns around and finds an older man looking at her with tears shining in his eyes.

“Omolemo?” He says in a shaky voice.

She frowns before looking around then turning her attention back to him.

“I’m so sorry to do this like this in a public space but I begged your mother for years but she just wouldn’t.”

“I think you have the wrong person.” Molemo says softly.

“Can you please pay so we can go talk in less busy place? I saw an Ocean Basket around here somewhere.”

“I don’t think I can do that.”

“Molemo please.”

“Why the hell didn’t you tell her about Liyana?” Melo says through gritted teeth.

She and Malibongwe are outside on the gazebo while Betty and Sfiso are in the house watching TV. It took everything in Melo not to burst each time she stole a glance at her brother.

“What?”

“I had to fucken lie because I realised that she didn’t know. You idiot! You said she knows everything kanti yini ngawe?”

“Liyana doesn’t affect our future.”

“Malibongwe.”

“Just let my child rest in peace Melo.”

“When Betty finds out that we both lied to her about this, she is going to be crushed but you, when she leaves you because of it do not come running to me. I’m only going to say this once, TELL BETTY EVERYTHING. If you want the relationship to work because this half lie half truth thing you’re doing does not help anyone.”

“Okay Nqobile.”

“Ya whatever!”

They make their way back in where they find their better halves glued to the screen.

“It is breaking news that leads our bulletin this hour: Minister of Home Affairs Zakes Tau was involved in a fatal accident this afternoon. The minister was declared dead at the scene. We

have our reporter Cindy Nkosi at the scene and she will be bringing us any updates as and when she receives them.”

Betty’s eyes shine with tears as his pictures flash across the screen. All that is playing in her mind at the moment is that fateful night when he took her innocence. She can feel his weight on her as her huffs and puffs before groaning loudly as her reached his destination. Her body begins to convulse and Bongwe rushes to hold her in his arms.

“Betty, baby what’s wrong.”

Betty struggles to breathe as her mind continues going down memory lane. She remember the first time her seal with his finger. For years she had suppressed all those memories in her mind, even when she told Thandeka about everything she wasn’t this triggered.

“Pick her up let’s get her to the hospital.” Sfiso shouts as he runs out of the room.

“Betty baby please be okay, please.” Malibongwe says softly.

“BONGWE GO!” Melo yells breaking him out of his spell.

He picks her up then rushes out saying a little prayer in his heart.

SIXTY

“Bongwe how is she?” Melo asks.

“She’s okay, sleeping. The doctor said he’ll discharge her when she wakes up.”

“That’s good, and the baby?”

“Also doing well thankfully.”

“Thank God. Okay let me know if anything changes.”

“I will, thank you. Sfiso should be there anytime from now.”

“He just walked in. Take care of Betty.”

“I will sis, I love you.”

“I love you too. Bye.” They hang up.

Malibongwe gives Betty’s hand a gentle squeeze before resting his forehead on it. When they arrived at the hospital Betty was attended to immediately and it was determined that she was having a panic attack. Malibongwe was going out of his mind but the doctor assured him that Betty and the child will be fine. The fear of losing them is greater than he would’ve liked to admit. He knows that should anything happen to Betty and the child then his life as he knew it would be over.

Betty stirs a little bit before opening her eyes. When her eyes met with Malibongwe's which are filled with worry and sadness the same emotions take over in her. Her hand travels to her stomach and tears immediately well up her eyes.

"He's fine baby but you gave us quite a scare. Please don't ever do that again."

"My baby is okay?" She says faintly.

Malibongwe nods lightly and Betty heaves a sigh of relief. The thought of something happening to her baby is not something she wants to even think about.

"Was that him?" He asks.

Betty thinks back to what happened before she passed out and she remembers that the man who violated her in the worst possible way has died. For years he has held her hostage and she isn't quite sure if his death has set her free or tightened the rope around her neck.

"Yes."

He gets up and settles next to her pulling her into his arms.

"You're safe baby, I'm never going to allow him or anyone else to hurt you ever again you hear me?"

Betty nods her head as her tears make their way down her face before a sob escapes her mouth. Malibongwe tightens his hold around her body as he allows her to release all of her pain and hurt. He knows that it is going to take some work before Betty gets into a space where she is free of her pain.

She eventually calms down and wipes her tears.

“I thought hore one day ke tlabā le matla a ho mobotsa hore why he stole my innocence like that. I wanted to ask him how he felt knowing very well that he ruined my childhood but again he had to be selfish and die. Why couldn’t he afford me the chance to get my answers? Why Bongwe?”

“I have learnt that in life when things happen, we don’t always get answers. We just have to pick ourselves up from the hurt and try to make sense of everything then move on. Yes it is hard but we soldier on baby. It doesn’t make sense now but one day it will.” Malibongwe says.

Betty notices that his whole energy shifted as he said that. She knows that he is battling with issues that he isn’t ready to let her in on as yet and she respects that. She just hopes that he knows that she is there for him always.

“I love you and thank you for holding my hand.”

“I will always have your hand in mine as long as you don’t let go.”

“Never Bongwe.”

“Promise me that no matter how tough it gets you will always hold onto us and what we share.”

He is looking at her with so much intensity that causes her to shift uncomfortably.

“Bongwe.”

“Promise me Betty.”

Betty heaves a sigh.

“I promise.”

“Great. Now let me go find the doctor so that he can discharge you.” He places a kiss on her forehead before walking out of the room.

It has been a week since Betty’s hospital incident and things between her and Bongwe have been extremely good. So much so that they have decided to spend most of their time at his place. His initial request was for her to move in but she graciously declined. She didn’t want to commit to such a huge step especially with everything that has taken place. All she wants is the peace of mind of knowing that she still has her own place should things go south between them again.

Right now Betty is currently setting up a romantic dinner for her man. Earlier on she went out to go and buy something sexy for her man and now she is making sure that the food and set up compliments the lingerie. Once she is done she heads to the bedroom to take a shower and get ready for the evening. She finishes then applies lotion all over her body before stepping into her outfit for the night.

The bustier and thong set is sure to have Bongwe going crazy, Betty thinks to herself. Just as she finishes up Malibongwe walks in and his jaw drops to the ground when he lays his eyes on her. His shaft immediately wants to come out to play.

“Damn it baby you look sexy.” He says breathlessly.

Betty giggles sweetly as she struts her way towards him. As a predator does to its prey, she circles him before standing in front of him and working his tie. Once that comes off she helps him take off his jacket before pulling him to the living room and instructing him to sit on the chair in the centre of the room. Malibongwe is speechless but he knows that he is going to enjoy what she is about to do. Betty grabs a set of handcuffs and cuffs his hands behind the chair.

Malibongwe chuckles lightly while shaking his head. He thinks back to the first time Betty ever danced for him and how he immediately wanted more and more. The way her perfect ass danced to the rhythm of its own beat. And when she turned to look him deep in the eye he knew he was a goner.

“What are you going to do to me Betty?” He asked.

Betty giggles sweetly as she struts her way to her position. She presses play on her phone and the seductive voice of Beyonce fills the entire room.

“Let me sit this ass

On you

Show you how I feel

Let me take this off

Will you watch me

Yes mass appeal

Don't take your eyes

Don't take your eyes off it

Watch it, babe

If you like

You can touch me baby

Do you

Do you wanna touch me baby

Grab ahold, don't let go

Let me know

That you

Ready

I just wanna show you now

Slow it down

Go around

You rock hard

I rock steady"

Malibongwe is taken by how Betty is moving her body around. She is winding and dipping while holding eye contact with him. It is taking everything in Bongwe to try and keep it together. His breathing is erratic and his shaft throbbing uncontrollably. All he wants to do is to grab Betty, pin her against the couch and pound her from behind.

When Betty drops to her knees and arch's her back pushing her ass up which drives Bongwe crazy. He groans like a wounded animal while Betty smiles proudly. The fact that she has this kind of effect on him makes her feel proud. She slowly turns around and seductively crawls over to him then takes off his pants with a little assistance from him. His shaft springs free and Betty licks her lips when she sees the head oozing.

"Betty..." Bongwe says with a bit of strain in his voice.

"Yes baby." She says while stroking his cock up and up.

He groans deeply and shuts his eyes. All he wants to do right now is to pound her hard and fast. As he is lost in his thoughts he feels her lips on kissing him up his length until she gets to his leaking head. Before he can even say anything she has his half his length in her mouth sucking him out and down. Malibongwe is groaning out loud while trying to free himself without success. She begins to pick up her pace and goes sloppier. Malibongwe shuts his eyes as he feels himself getting closer to his but Betty stops abruptly and quickly rises to her feet then takes her undies off. She then lowers herself onto his shaft and they both moan loudly throwing their heads back.

Betty knows that she can't go as hard as she wanted to but she cannot wait to make him squirm and cry even louder than he has been.

SIXTY ONE

Betty has been staring out of the window since they stepped into the car and it is worrying Thandeka and mam'Zonke. She has been in her own thoughts and world for the past week and no matter how hard they tried they couldn't pull her out of it. Even Mandy being here is not helping the situation. They're on their way to the Moloji residence because tomorrow is the day that the Mkhize's pay damages for Betty.

Betty has expressed just how much she doesn't want to be here but unfortunately she has no choice.

"I know that you're having a hard time with everything B but remember that it's not just about you anymore but there is a little human being inside of you now that needs you okay. So please stop stressing, remember that he can sense everything so your stressing is affecting him." Mandy says.

Betty chuckles lightly while shaking her head. She doesn't want to have this conversation right now even though she knows that her mother and aunt along with Mandy will not let up.

"I just don't want to be here Mandy. You don't know how hard it was for me here and for me to go back and face ntate and his wife, it's too much Mandy. Kamo that man died and his face is plastered everywhere. I just can't."

"After tomorrow you don't have to be here ever again, I promise you." Mandy tries to reassure her.

She knows that Betty is having a difficult time and she hopes that the little assurance that she is giving her will somewhat make her feel slightly better.

"I hear you." Betty says.

When the car comes to a halt she draws a deep breath before stepping out. The first person she sees is Moleboheng who is standing at the door wearing a very uninviting look on her face. Betty knows that they're not welcomed here and that the two days that they are going to spend here are going to be hell but she has to draw up enough courage to get through it all.

"Yhooo sefebe le ntja nyana ya hae." Moleboheng spits out.

Betty's eyes glisten with tears but she fights to keep it together. The pregnancy has messed with her hormones so much that even the smallest of incidents cause her to cry. Malibongwe is even threading carefully around her because she is somewhat of a walking time bomb ready to explode at any moment taking everything in its proximity with her.

"Elizabeth!" Ntate Moloji roars.

Moleboheng just takes one look at him before clicking her tongue then making her way inside the house leaving everyone outside seething. Ntate Moloji has the look on defeat across his face. Everyone standing outside knows that the next couple of hours are going to be difficult but they also know that they have to keep it together for Betty's sake.

"Ngoanaka."

"Ntate." Betty says softly.

He opens his arms for her and she hesitantly walks into his embrace. For as long as she can remember she has never shared a warm embrace with her father so all of this is foreign to her. He gives her a tight squeeze and she feels herself relax into his warmth as she attempts to fight off the tears that threaten her eyes.

"Ntate..." She says in a shaky voice.

“Ngoanaka.”

“I don’t want to spend the night here.” Betty cannot keep the emotions at bay.

“Betty.” He responds in a gentle tone.

“Ntate your wife doesn’t want us here.”

“I know ngoanaka but we have to do things right and that means you spending the night here. I know that it is going to be difficult but we have to do this. So for that child in your stomach, let us do things right. I will make sure that she stays away from you, okay.”

“Do you promise?”

“I promise. I love you Betty.”

The tears that Betty has been holding back manage to escape her eyes and stain her face along with her father’s shirt. Before she can contain it, she is sobbing. Ntate Moloji tightens his hold around her body which causes her to break down even further. For Betty as well as Ntate Moloji, the moment is a special one. One they have never shared before.

Thandeka and mam’Zonke as well as Mandy are looking on with tears in their eyes. They all have come to learn that it takes a lot for Betty to be so vulnerable. To open up and show her tears.

“I am so sorry Betty waka, I promise that I am going to ensure that I always have your back. I am so sorry.” He whispers in Betty’s ear.

Molemo is currently on her way to the restaurant to meet with the man that claims to be her father. After she paid for her items on the day that he approached her, she rushed out of the store with him following closely behind. When he eventually managed to get her to stop all she was able to do was give her his number and beg her to give him a call. Molemo just looked at him before she turned on her heels and walked away leaving him with a broken heart.

She has been thinking about him and she is actually anxious to hear what he has to say. The fact that she has a father out there is exciting and heart breaking at the same time. She grew up in tough conditions and knowing that she could've been on the receiving end of a father's love but wasn't afforded the opportunity to hurts.

When she arrives at the restaurant she finds him already waiting for her. He gets up when he sees her approaching.

"Omolemo."

"John." She responds.

"Please sit."

They settle and the waiter comes to take Molemo's order before leaving them in silence that Molemo breaks after a few minutes.

"You wanted to talk so talk."

"I don't even know what to say. When I found out that your mother was pregnant, it was already too late because I had already gotten married to my wife. So when I learned about

you, your mother wanted nothing to do with me. I tried on so many occasions but each time she would shut me out until I finally gave her, her space.”

“So you just forgot about me? Do you know how hard it was for me growing up with an alcoholic mother? Do you know the shit that I had to endure? Do you know?” Molemo says softly.

“Omolemo.”

“You don’t get to come into my life now and pretend like everything can be fixed because it can’t wena John. It just can’t!”

“Malibongwe.” Mam’Zonke answers her phone cheerfully.

“Ma wami, unjani?”

“Ngiyaphila unjani wena?”

“I’m nervous. Ksasa we’re paying damages for my girlfriend and I am scared about how her family is going to receive us.”

“Don’t worry; I’m sure they will be very accepting. I mean if they realise just how much you love their daughter then they will understand.”

“What if they don’t?”

“Then you work hard to ensure that they do. But I believe that everything will go well so stop stressing,”

“Thank you ma.”

“Anytime baby. Yazi nami I’m at my sister’s place ngoba they’re receiving damages for my niece.”

“Hawu, I hope that goes well.” Bongwe says.

“It will baby. God is at the centre of it all angithi.”

“I hear you.”

Mam’Zonke heaves a sigh.

“Do you miss Liyana? Especially manje?”

“So much mama.” Malibngwe answers truthfully.

It has been years since Liyana left but the memory is still fresh in his head. Most days he wonders what life would’ve been like had they survived but then he realises that life with Betty is amazing and he realises that he wouldn’t have this had they still been alive.

“I hope you remember that this coming child is not going to replace her.”

“Ma.”

“Just remember that. Anyway I have to go but I will see you when I come back angithi, I love you.”

“I love you too ma. Bye.”

SIXTY TWO

“We thank you for welcoming us into your home with nothing but warmth even though the circumstances aren’t so perfect. Nonetheless we appreciate you for allowing us to come into your home and try to rectify the error created by our son.” Langelihle says.

He is one of the people chosen to represent Malibongwe as they go and pay inhlawulo (damages) to Betty’s family. Malibongwe gave him clear instructions and that was to pay the Moloji’s whatever amount they requested.

“Realeboha Mkhize. We hope that we can conclude today’s business without hassle.”

“Of course. As we all know we are here to pay the damages for your daughter Betty. Now our instruction was to offer you as the Moloji representatives ten cows for the damage caused. In our culture we would also offer iinkomo ka ma for your daughter’s virginity however we are aware of the fact that isibaya sika Moloji asivulwanga ku Malibongwe, so we cannot offer that.”

“We accept your offer for the ten cows. As you can see we honestly do not need it however for ngoana le botswalle ba malapa a rona, we accept it.”

“Sibonge. With regards to the surname that the child is going to use once he or she is born-”

“Unfortunately we are unable to comment on that as we were only sent here to accept the damages. We will take this issue back to the head of the household and another date can be set with regards to that issue. Now seeing that we have concluded our business for the day please allow us to extend an invite for you to have lunch with us. They have gone all out in the kitchen.” Langa gets cut off.

“Thank you for the invite and we would love to.”

The uncle smiles and nods lightly before getting up and walking out of the room. Langelihle uses this moment to reach for his phone and dial Lwandle who, even though shouldn't have come along as well as Malibongwe and Zobuhle, are at a nearby BnB.

"Langa."

"Lwandle, everything went well so you can tell Malibongwe to relax."

Lwandle heaves a sigh. Everyone knows just how important this was for Malibongwe and they all knew that they had to do everything to ensure that it went well.

"Lume, are we allowed to come there?" Malibongwe shoots in.

"Angazi yazi. I don't think so Malibongwe I mean this isn't ilobola."

"I just want to see Betty..." He says softly.

"Okay, let me find out okay."

"Sharp."

Just as Langa gets off the phone he looks up and is met by a familiar face. However he doesn't understand as to why she is here.

"Zonke?"

"Langa, what are you doing here."

“I’m here representing uMalibongwe, uyahlawula... wena ufunani la?”

“My niece... oh no...” Mam’Zonke says.

They stare at each other as the realisation hits them. The horror splashed across both their faces is almost comical. The other people in the room seem to be invisible. Langa gets up and makes his way outside closely followed by mam’Zonke.

“So Betty is your niece?” Langa says the second they are out of sight.

“Yes.”

By the time mam’Zonke is done explaining to Langa exactly how she is related to Betty, he has his hands over his head.

“I’m worried about not just how Malibongwe is going to take the revelation but how Betty is going to feel. Knowing Malibongwe I doubt that he told her about Siyanda or even Liyana. Oh Nkosi this is a mess.” Langa says.

“You think he hasn’t told her?”

“Malibongwe is a closed book and we all know this. I don’t know the depth of their relationship but I can bet my last cent that she doesn’t know.”

“This is messed up.”

“Let’s hope that kuzolunga.” Langa responds defeated.

“Bakuphi?”

“They wanted to come here but now I don’t know whether or not it is wise for them to. I don’t want anything happening to either Betty or Malibongwe and we know that this revelation might rock them.” Langelihle says with doubt clearly audible in his voice.

“But rather now than when they’re alone don’t you think?”

Just then Langa receives an SMS from Malibongwe letting him know that they’re on the way.

“I guess we’re about to find out just how well they can handle it.

“Betty can I have a quick word with you?” mam’Zonke says.

Mandy grabs her plate and walks out of the room leaving Betty and mam’Zonke alone. After everything was concluded, Betty was told about how everything went and to say that she was relieved would be an understatement. All she wants to do in this moment is pack her bags and go because she doesn’t want to butt heads with Moleboheng more than she needs to.

“I just discovered something and I hope that you don’t freak out when you hear what it is that I have to say. So a few years ago my Siyanda fell in love with a man and they had planned to spend their lives together, unfortunately we all know that the story ends with Siyanda being no more. The man in question is the very same man that you happen to be in love with.”

Betty shakes her head slightly not believing what she is hearing. She doesn't want to believe that what she is hearing is true. The woman that has held the man that she loves so dearly is her own cousin who is no longer alive.

"Wait so my cousin and Malibongwe were meant to get married. They would be married had she not died? So she is the woman he feels so guilty about? The accident. Oh my god!"

"But he loves you and that baby so much. I have had this conversation with him and he loves you for you. He has moved on from Siyanda and loves you baby."

"You said I look like her so what if he's with me because of the fact that I look like her?"

"No Betty, that is not true. Look you two will have that conversation but I just wanted to let you know."

"Okay."

Mam'Zonke places a kiss on Betty's cheek before walking out. Betty sinks into the bed and allows her tears to flow. She doesn't understand why she is crying but all she knows is that she has to release it.

The Mkhize's were very shocked to learn of the relation between mam'Zonke and Betty. Maliabongwe immediately walked off and Lwandle advised that he should be left to cool off on his own. He and Betty are currently sitting in the car. None of them have said a word to each other, not that they don't have anything to say but because they both have so much to express.

"Did you chose me because I looked like her?" Betty finally breaks the silence.

Malibongwe turns to look at her. He knows that in this moment he can either tell her the truth or lie to her. In this moment he decides to be as honest as he can be.

“In the beginning when I first saw you yes you did remind me of her but as I got to know you I feel in love with you. Why do you think that I never wanted to have sex with you in that environment? Because I was attracted to you Betty.”

“So if I didn’t look like her you wouldn’t have given me the time of day?” She says.

“Angazi Betty but that doesn’t even matter because here we are today.”

“But it does! Because when you got angry you compared me to her.” She says getting worked up.

Just as she is about to continue going off she places her hands on her stomach as she feels a little movement in her stomach. A wide smile breaks out onto her face as she takes in this moment.

“What’s wrong?” He asks worriedly.

“I think he’s kicking.” She responds. “Want to feel?”

Malibongwe shakes his head lightly. His memory drifts off to the very first time he felt Liyana kick. The thought of possibly losing this pregnancy freaks him out so much so that he fears connecting with the child.

“I can feel it at a later stage. Are you leaving today or are you still staying?” he says dismissively.

Betty looks at him with disappointment plastered across her face.

“I don’t know. I’ll see you when I get back to Joburg.” She says before stepping out of the car.

Leaving Malibongwe feeling like crap.

The events of the day have died down and the Moloji’s are seated in the living room to discuss everything.

“So as we all know the Mkhize’s have given us ten cows and I believe that they should go to the mother of the child being Thandeka.” Ntate Moloji says.

Moleboheng snickers leaving everyone shocked.

“I raised Betty therefore that money should come to me. Ebile I don’t understand why Thandeka is here to begin with.

“Elizabeth.”

“Hai Moloji! Ebile oena Betty I hear that just like your mother you dipped in the same basket as you sister. He he he like mother like daughter.”

“You will not speak like that about my daughter. You can say all you want about me but leave Betty out of things.” Thandeka says.

“Kodwa Moleboheng why unje? Why are you so angry? So bitter?” Zonke asks.

“Mxm mother Mary oena thula.”

“That is what I am talking about. You are angry and in your anger you broke Betty and you didn’t even care about that. The child is grown now and she is about to be a parent herself, stop what you are doing before you end up alone with no one to blame for it.”

“If you don’t mind, I’d like to get some rest so may I please be excused?” Betty says softly.

“Come.” Ntate Moloji says stretching out his hand for his daughter to take.

She takes it and they make their way to her room.

“Would you like to leave now?”

“I’m too tired to travel. Can we make it tomorrow morning?”

“Tomorrow morning it is. I can’t wait to be a grandfather.” He says chuckling.

Betty joins in. She leans in and rests her head on his shoulder.

“I hope that you will love and protect my child in ways that you couldn’t do for me.”

“Betty.” He says with his voice breaking.

“It’s okay nstate. It’s okay...”

SIXTY THREE

It has been a few months since the Mkhize's paid damages to the Moloji's and things have been rather interesting. Tebogo finally managed to pay lobola for Mandy and it was a joyous occasion. Obviously Betty and Molemo were there to hold her hand through it all as she went back home after fighting it for months. Her aunts were excited to see her especially when they saw her car and the huge rock on her finger. They knew that the man who had requested her hand in marriage was wealthy and could somewhat help them out of the situation that they were in.

Mandy's plan from the onset was to have them keep the money because she wanted nothing tying her to them in the end. So lobola was paid and they had umembeso on the very same day as Tebogo promised. He knew that it would kill her having to go back to that place again so he insisted that everything be completed in one go. After the ceremony Tebogo's family left with Mandy as their official daughter and she has not set foot there since.

Today Mandy is meeting with the wedding planner along with Betty and she is excited because her mind is bursting with ideas. This is their first meeting and Tebogo can't be there but he promised to be at the next one even though Mandy knows that he's lying. She knocks on the door and a heavily pregnant Betty opens the door.

"Sexy mama."

"Voetsek there is nothing sexy about me, I can't even tie my own damn bloody shoes." Betty goes off.

Mandy has come to learn that she has to allow Betty to go off and get everything off of her chest before she can even go in for a hug. She knows that the past few months have been hard on Betty and she tries her hardest to be there for her even though she tries to push her away.

“Would you like me to help you with your shoes?” Mandy asks.

“Argh I’ll just wear flip flops because my fucken feet are swollen and I can’t fit into my sneakers. Plus they sweat and they smell nasty. Argh.” she throws her hands up and disappears into the bedroom leaving Mandy chuckling.

She makes her way into the kitchen and pours herself a glass of champagne while waiting for Betty. Mandy appreciates the fact that Betty still keeps her fridge and cellar stocked up even though she can’t even sip. Betty finishes up and makes her way out. Despite of the fact that she doesn’t feel sexy or beautiful, she is. She is wearing her pregnancy really well and everyone around her acknowledges that.

“Okay let’s go.” Betty announces.

Mandy downs her drink and they make their way out.

“I have a doctor’s appointment in the afternoon.” Betty says accompanied by an eye roll.

Mandy chuckles because she knows that she is rolling her eyes because she has to see Malibongwe whom she doesn’t want anything to do with these days. She doesn’t want to let her in on exactly what is happening but she knows that it is deep.

“Then we’ll make sure that the first half of the day is filled with nothing but fun, yes?”

“Yes!”

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The ladies arrive at the officers and are met by Cindy who will be their planner.

“Hi ladies and welcome to Cindy Events. My name is Cindy.”

“Hi I’m Mandy and this is my maid of honour Betty.”

They shake hands before Cindy leads them into their showroom. They settle on the couch and the first thing that Betty reaches for is a bottle of water and downs it.

“Are you okay?” Mandy asks in concern.

“Yeah just a little thirsty but I’m fine.”

“Can I get you something to eat? Fruit salad maybe? Samosas?” Cindy asks Betty.

“Please.” She responds with her mouth salivating.

Cindy asks one of her assistants to bring some snacks and finger foods for them.

“Alright so Mandy when we spoke on the phone you didn’t know what style or even colours you wanted to go for.”

“Yeah, but I was thinking black and maybe with that rustic kind of feel. I’m not a girly girl so I don’t want it to be too weddingy if that even makes sense. Argh I don’t know what I want but I definitely want the black for my girls.”

The food arrives and Betty dives in immediately while Cindy and Mandy go back and forth sharing ideas.

“Okay we’ll get back to the colours. You mentioned rustic, so do you want a farm style kind of wedding, or do you want it kind of modern still but with the décor being rustic?”

“Yhooo would it be possible to see a mock of both?”

“Sure we can do that. And with regards to your dress, would you like elements in the dress to be incorporated in the décor?”

“No, because I don’t know what kind of dress I’m going for yet so it wouldn’t work.”

“Mandy is just a slow poke! How do you not have even the slightest of clues as to what kind of dress you want? A lost cause I tell you.” Betty says with a mouth.

Cindy chuckles while Mandy just rolls her eyes. Cindy takes the ladies on a tour of their facilities and shows them the different kinds of chairs, tables, vases and everything else they have on site. Mandy gushes over the Wimbledon chairs and they come to an agreement that those will be used for the matrimonial ceremony.

Once they’re done with everything the ladies make their way back home with Betty complaining about how hungry she is.

“What time is your appointment?”

“At three, so I have to leave at like two.”

“Okay then let’s go home and feed you before your baby daddy kills me.”

Betty rolls her eyes before turning and resting her eyes for a little bit.

Molemo is in the car with her father. They have been getting to know each other over the past couple of months and slowly but surely she is starting to warm up to him. Today they are going to try and talk to Molemo's mother because John wants to introduce her to his wife and children.

"Do you think that she will actually let you?" John asks.

Molemo shakes her head.

"No and you know that I can't meet your family if she doesn't give me her blessings. She might be a lot of things but she is still my mother. She is all that I have and I can't completely disregard her presence in my life."

"I understand but I'm here as well."

"Yeah but you just got here whereas she has been in my life all my life."

"Omolemo."

"I hate it when you try and disregard my mother John. She's an alcoholic yes but she is still my mother. She raised me."

"I didn't mean it like that. I'm sorry."

They drive the rest of the way in silence until they get to Molemo's house. Molemo says a little prayer before they head inside. The door is opened so they make their way inside where they find her sitting on the couch with a bottle of beer in her hand.

“Mama...” Molemo says softly.

She looks up and smiles when she sees Molemo but her smile is quickly replaced with a frown when she sees John behind Molemo.

“O batla eng mo?” She spits out.

“I know that I should’ve told you but I knew that you wouldn’t agree to it mama. John found me and he has a request.” Molemo says.

“Whatever it is that you two want, leave me out of it. Wena Molemo I have blatantly told you just how much I hate that man and how I want nothing to do with him and for you to bring him here is quite disrespectful. So please do me a favour, turn around and go back to whatever hole you came from.”

“Mama, I am trying here. One day you are going to die and I’m going to be left all alone with no one.”

“And you will survive.”

“I know that you hate me and I get it but to punish the child for my actions is ridiculous. Omolemo did nothing to deserve this kind of treatment. If you want anyone to feel your wrath then it should be me and not her. She didn’t even ask to be born.”

“Hmmm bonang father and daughter. Hehehe.” She chortles before taking a sip of her beer.

Molemo stands there feeling defeated not knowing what to do.

“Betty.”

“Malibongwe.”

“Should I fetch you?”

“No, I know how to get to the doctor.” She says before hanging up.

She heaves a sigh as she gets up and grabs her bag then heads out. The past few months have been tough on them with Malibongwe having a difficult time bonding with the baby. Each time Betty wanted him to feel the baby kicking he would come out with excuses as to why he can't feel the kicks.

It got to a point where Betty has doesn't even care anymore. As much as he makes sure that she has everything that she needs she doesn't have his full emotional support which breaks her heart. When she gets to the doctor she finds Malibongwe and Zobuhle waiting for her. She immediately feels annoyed because she wasn't informed that his mother would be joining them for the appointment.

“Dumelang.”

“Betty hi, how are you?”

“I'm okay and you?”

“Good.”

The relationship between Betty and Zobuhle is pretty much non-existent. They are never in the same space long enough to share a conversation. Betty just looks at Malibongwe before making her way inside. They follow suit and settle on the chairs while she lies on the bed. Each time she hears the baby's heartbeat she gets emotional.

"There we go, everything looks good and baby Moloji is healthy."

"Is there a chance that she might come early?" Zobuhle asks.

"No I doubt it. As long as Betty doesn't stress."

"I have this uncomfortable pain on my lower back, should I be concerned?" Betty asks.

"It is normal, it is what we call muscle separation, so there is no need to be concerned. I would suggest though that you treat yourself to a mommy massage once in a while."

"Got it. Thank you."

"Eight more weeks and you will be a mommy, are you excited?"

"More nervous than excited actually."

"Don't worry, the excitement will kick in once you hold her in your arms."

They finish up with the doctor then head out with silence still hovering between them.

"Betty, would you like to have dinner with us tonight?" Zobuhle asks.

“Thank you for the invite Mrs Mkhize but I already have plans for tonight.” Betty lies.

“Tomorrow maybe?”

“I’ll have to ask Thandeka if we’re still meeting then I’ll get back to you.”

“Okay then.”

“Thank you for coming.” Betty says softly.

She bids them goodbye and walks away. Malibongwe runs after her and stops her before she gets in the car.

“I miss you Betty.”

“Shame.”

“Betty...”

“I told you, if you’re not ready to open up and be truthful and actually let me in then stay away from me. You refuse to hold my stomach and feel your child kick then you come here and spew this nonsense? Oa hlanya. You heard when the next appointment is so I will see you then.”

“Betty you can’t leave me.”

“I am hungry, my child is hungry and restless so please let me go home.”

He steps back and opens the door for her.

“I love you and I will not give up on you.”

“Sharp Malibongwe.” She says before driving away.

SIXTY FOUR

Betty is excitedly counting down the weeks before her bundle makes an entrance in this world. She has already bought them a few matching outfits for their days out. The amount of excitement she is experiencing has doubled since her last doctor's appointment. She has finally come to terms that she is bringing another human into his world and she needs to give her, her all because at the end of the day the child did not ask to be born.

Her relationship with Malibongwe is still strained but it is in a slightly better place these days. Malibongwe has been opening up about how hard Siyanda's death hit him and how he cannot get rid of the guilt no matter how much he tries. He has let Betty in on how she was his first and how he thought she would be his last. After their conversation Betty understood him a little better but still didn't understand why he pursued her if he was not ready to let go of his dead ex. He offered no explanation for that except for the fact that he loves her now and wants to make things work with her.

She took his word but still kept her heart slightly closed because she wasn't ready for him to tear it to shreds again. Especially now with the baby a few weeks away and Malibongwe still refusing to bond with her. She has tried getting the reason for that out of him and has chosen to give her child all the love and attention that she requires herself.

Right now Betty is busy arranging the baby's nursery. She is packing all of her clothes into the wardrobe and the toys and toiletries into the drawers. The room has been painted grey and an African princess has been painted onto the wall wearing a pink ball gown. Betty wants her princess to grow up knowing that she is beautiful with her rich dark skin colour – she has already concluded that her princess is going to be dark skinned because both her and Malibongwe are.

Her phone rings disturbing her. She reaches for it and answers without even bothering to look at the caller ID.

“Hello?”

“Hey baby.” Malibongwe’s voice comes through on the other end of the line.

Betty heaves a sigh. She hasn’t spoken to him since yesterday morning and the fact that they hadn’t spoken didn’t bother her.

“Okae?”

“Ubuza ukuthi nginjani noma ungibuza ukuthi ngikuphi?”

Betty chuckles lightly while shaking her head. She almost forgot that he hates it when she speaks Sesotho.

“Ke botsa hore o hantle na.”

“Uyabona ke! Sowungilahlile manje.”

“Empa oena o batla nna ke tsebe hore o ntse oreng ka seZulu?”

“Betty uthini?”

“Kere... o founne fela ho tlo senya nako yaka or o tlo bua nto e otlwa halang?”

Malibongwe burst out into laughter. He has absolutely no idea what Betty is saying in this moment.

“Malibongwe hle can I help you? There I am speaking a language that we both can understand.” She says sounding completely annoyed.

Bongwe knows not to mess with an annoyed Betty because she holds no punches and he doesn't want to be on the receiving end of those punches.

"I just wanted to ask if you wanted anything specific to eat, or is pizza fine?"

He knows that food softens her up.

"Pizza is fine thank you."

"Alright. I'll see you in a little bit." He hangs up before she can even respond.

Betty sets her phone aside and continues with the task at hand while she mentally prepares herself to deal with Bongwe.

Mandy and Tebogo are lying in bed having their downtime when his phone rings. He looks at the number recognising it but not being able to think of a reason why the number could be calling him.

"Aren't you going to answer?" Mandy asks.

Feeling as if though he would be hiding something if he didn't, Tebogo hesitantly answers the phone.

"Hello?"

“Hi, is this Tebogo?”

“Yes...” he says.

“Hey, it’s Pearl.” The voice says.

Tebogo heaves a sigh. He knows exactly who Pearl is because she is his ex. They dated briefly before he went back to pursue Mandy again. They had amazing chemistry and a great understanding of each other but Tebogo’s heart still belonged to Mandy and he couldn’t fully give himself to Pearl no matter how much he tried.

“Hey, how are you?”

“Ke sharp wena?”

“I’m also good...”

A minute of silence passes with neither of them saying anything. Mandy is now sitting up and looking at Tebogo with an expectant look on her face.

“Would it be possible for us to meet?” she eventually breaks the silence.

“Eeerrrm may I ask why?”

“I just really need to see you. Please Tebogo...”

Tebogo turns to look at Mandy who is looking at him with a look that he doesn’t quite understand.

“Erm, can I please get back to you on that?”

“Okay. Sharp ge.”

“Bye.”

When he hangs up he rubs his face before drawing up some courage to face Mandy. How does he tell his wife that his ex would like to meet with him and that it sounded rather urgent without it coming across otherwise?

“That was my ex- Pearl. She wants to meet up and I don’t know why.”

He has nothing to hide so lying would make it seem like he does.

“Hmmm. Do you want to go?” she asks him.

He shrugs his shoulders earning him a sarcastic chuckle from Mandy. That response from him to her meant that he actually was thinking about going to see her and that meant they still had some unfinished business. Mandy rolls out of bed and heads into the bathroom without saying anything. She has always been self-conscious when it comes to Tebogo and the fact that he is entertaining his ex girlfriend is a big deal to her.

Once she finishes brushing her teeth she takes a quick shower then goes to apply lotion all over her body and slips into a maxi dress and flops before heading out. When Tebogo realises that she is heading out he springs to his feet and pulls her into his arms.

“Baby.”

“I just need some air. Please let go.”

“No. We promised to talk about everything and that includes such emotions. I know you Mandy and I know what you’re thinking and you are completely wrong. I don’t want her and I never will. I love you and only you baby.”

“Okay but I would still like to go out so please leave me.”

Tebogo heaves a sigh defeated and lets her go. She grabs the car keys on the side table and walks out leaving Tebogo very confused.

When Maibongwe arrives at Betty’s her finds her sorting the nursery. He dives right into it and helps me with whatever she needs him to do.

“So have you thought about it?”

Betty heaves a sigh and shakes her head. A few days back Zobuhle offered to live with Betty for a few days after she gives birth to help her with the child but the way Betty is so uncomfortable around her she cannot see herself living with her.

“Thandeka is moving in soon so she’ll be around. I don’t think there will be a need for your mother to move in as well. She can however as the grandmother of the child come and visit whenever she wants to.”

“Come on baby, she’s trying.”

“So o batla ke reng? You want me to jump into her arms and play happy mother and girlfriend?”

“That’s not what I’m saying Betty.”

“Then shut up and not say anything. You were ready to throw away your relationship with your family after that first encounter with your mother and now you’re advocating for her forgetting just how ridiculous she made me feel?”

Malibongwe heaves a sigh.

“I’m sorry. I’m just trying. I don’t want our princess to grow up in a toxic and tense environment.”

Betty knows that Malibongwe means well but she just can’t forget everything that has taken place between her and his mother. As much as she is trying they just need to be patient with her.

“Have you thought of a name for your daughter?” Betty tries to stir the conversation in a different direction.

Malibongwe shakes his head and focuses on what he is saying.

“Well ntate wants to name her Motheo.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means foundation. For him and I it means that she will be the foundation to our relationship. We are trying to form a bond and a relationship and I believe that I wasn’t pregnant with angel we wouldn’t even have had that conversation.”

“I’m so happy my Betty that you and your father are trying to work on things. You deserve it. I hope that it works out.”

Betty turns to look at him and her heart breaks a little when she catches tears in his eyes. They might not be in the best space but she does love the man and she hates it when he is low. She finds herself in his arms clinging onto him for dear life hoping that whatever he is feeling will pass soon and will be replaced with joy.

“We’re going to be okay right?” he says softly.

Betty heaves a sigh. She doesn’t know the answer to that so she opts to keep mum while comforting him.

SIXTY FIVE

Molemo is on her way to see Betty who happens to be with Mandy which is good because she needs to have a conversation with the both of them. She also needs Mandy there to calm Betty down because she knows that she is going to lose it. The past few months have been an interesting time in her life as she has been getting to know her father and form a bond and build a relationship with him.

After the last time that they went to go see her mother and she chased them away, Molemo hasn't gone back since and although she sometimes does feel guilty she knows that she has to be selfish and put herself first. All her life she had been living for her mother and taking care of her and neglecting herself. The therapist that Betty arranged for her to see also touched on how she is at a critical stage in her life where if she chooses herself then she chooses life but if she chooses to be led by the guilt which says she needs to take care of her mother as she has been and not form a relationship with her father then she is choosing to let go on life.

She has chosen to live which is why she needs to have this conversation with Betty as well as Mandy. When she arrives she finds the ladies relaxing on the couch with Mandy massaging Betty's feet.

"Mandy kere le ha o dutse le the heavily pregnant B you still have a glass next to you." Molemo teases Mandy.

She settles next to Betty whose face came alive when she walked into the room. The relationship that Molemo and Betty have is still a close one even though they don't see each other as often as they would like but they understand that life happens.

"I didn't ask her to fall pregnant nna so whoooah leave me and my drink alone! I drink because my stomach is filled with junk and not a baby." Mandy says as she takes a sip of her champagne.

Molemo and Betty chortle while shaking their heads. They understand that Mandy will never change.

“So how have you been baby?” Betty asks Molemo.

“I’ve been doing well. I’m acing my modules and my relationship with my father is slowly growing.”

“That’s amazing baby. I’m so happy for you. If anyone deserves this it is you. I hope that you will continue on this tract akere?”

“If it wasn’t for you and Mandy I wouldn’t be here. I’m so grateful to the both of you for everything that you have done for me. You two literally became the family that I never had and for that I will love you forever. I promise to work hard and achieve the impossible just for you guys.”

“Hayi Molemo, preggy here always tells you that you should do it for yourself before you do it for anyone else.” Mandy interrupts her.

Molemo smiles widely before nodding her head. She remembers how Betty always emphasises on putting herself first. She always says that the only way to win is by making sure that you look out for you. when she says that she is grateful for Betty she means it which is why this decision is such a difficult one for her more especially because Betty is so close to giving birth.

“You look distracted.” Betty says to Molemo.

She looks up and heaves a sigh.

“I love you guys so much.”

“And we love you too baby.”

“Yes we love you too.” Mandy adds in.

Molemo heaves a sigh. This is it. it is now or never.

“My father asked me to move with him and I’m considering it.” she says so quickly that the ladies almost miss it.

Betty slowly sits up and looks at her while Mandy just downs her drink before going in for a refill.

“Molemo.” Betty says softly.

“I know Betty that you probably don’t want me to go but please understand where I am coming from. All my life I yearned for belonging and finally I have the chance to belong somewhere. Don’t get me wrong, you two are my home but I need to know who I am. I need to find my roots.”

“We understand that baby. It’s just that we’re shocked. Right Betty?” Mandy says looking at Betty who looks like she has just been dealt a heavy blow.

Betty heaves a sigh before getting up and making her way out of the room leaving Molemo feeling like crap.

“Hormones and she’s shocked. Don’t worry about her, she’ll be fine. Wena just focus on this journey you’re about to embark on. I’m so proud of you, you know that?”

“Mandy...”

“You have been through so much but you have come out victorious each time. The world threw a few obstacles in your path but you jumped over them so effortlessly. You are brave and courageous not forgetting strong. You’re going to go far in life and I can’t wait to see your rise baby.”

Mandy words stir something in Molemo that she finds herself in tears. Looking back on everything she didn’t think that she would make it and the fact that she made it this far is overwhelming.

Betty is lying on the bed hugging her teddy bear. The news that Molemo gave them shocked her and as much as she knows that this is not about her, she just can’t let her baby go. Molemo climbs onto the bed and lies on her side facing Betty. They stare at each other for a little bit before Molemo breaks the silence.

“You’ve held my hand through it all and I appreciate you so much for that. You didn’t have to do all the things that you have done for me but you did which is a true testament of your character. You housed me, you took me to school, you fed me and all you asked from me was that I make something of my life. I promised to do that and I plan on seeing my promise through. My leaving doesn’t mean that I’m forgetting about you. How could I when you mean so much to me?

I’m just going to find myself but I will still be here Betty. I need to shower my niece with gifts and love phela so I am not going anywhere. I love you and I will always be here.”

All Betty does is nod lightly before allowing her tears to flow which in turn trigger Molemo’s tears as well.

Mandy is at home making dinner when Tebogo walks in with a bouquet of roses in his hands. Things have been a bit rocky since that phone call that he received from Pearl. Although he told her that he can't see her she still insists on calling which is putting a strain on his relationship with Mandy.

"Baby."

She turns to look at him.

"Hi."

Tebogo puts the flowers on the kitchen counter before walking up to her and putting his hands on either sides of her waist. They share a moment just gazing deep into each other's eyes.

"I love you." Tebogo eventually says.

He can tell that she wants to say it back but won't because of everything.

"I won't let an ex come between us like this Mandy. She means nothing. She doesn't even exist on my world and I don't get why she gets to make us unhappy. You said you trust me so please trust me. Know that she is nothing and I don't want to see her. I married you and not her for a reason. I love you and only you woman!"

Mandy finds herself pouncing on him and he reciprocates the kiss without question.

"I'm just scared of losing you." Mandy murmurs against his lips.

They pull apart and he cups her face looking deeply into her eyes.

“I choose you. I love you. I’ve loved you even when I was with her. You are all that I think about all day every day. Mandy you are the woman of my dreams. You don’t ever have to worry about losing me because I am not going anywhere. You and I are bound for life. You hear me?”

All Mandy can do is nod while attempting to push back the tears that are trying to spill out of her eyes.

SIXTY SIX

Mandy and Tebogo are in bed cuddling while catching up on their favourite series. It's been a slow yet slightly rough week for the couple with Pearl calling Tebogo still insisting on seeing him. At one point Mandy suggested that he go and see her just to get it over and done with but Tebogo refused stating that he did not want to disrespect her like that. He told Pearl to respect his wife and stop calling him and since that call he hasn't heard from her.

"So baby with Molemo moving out are you still going to keep the flat or?"

Mandy and Betty were each paying half of the required amount for rent. Even when she moved in with Tebogo, Mandy continued paying rent because Molemo was still staying there. But now that she is moving out, they would need to cancel the lease.

"I'll have a chat with the landlord but I don't think we should have a problem with getting out of our lease."

"Okay but if you need any help please do let me know."

"You know I will. Thanks baby... so have you given any thought to where you want to go honeymooning?" Mandy asks.

They had a conversation about their honeymoon and Mandy suggested that Tebogo pick a place because in everything that they do he considers her needs first so she wanted to return the favour. The suggestion had Tebogo falling deeper in love with Mandy. The fact that she would easily let him decide on their honeymoon destination when he knows just how much it means to her tells him that she does care about his happiness.

He turns to lie on his side, resting his head on his hand and smiles at her.

“You’re really beautiful you know that?” he compliments her.

“Yep I know. I mean look at me?” she responds dramatically before breaking into laughter.

Tebogo joins in while shaking his head. He knows that his woman gets dramatic at times.

“Ngiyadlala, ngiyabonga baby.”

She leans over and places a kiss on his cheek.

“Why not my lips?” he asks sulking.

Mandy rolls her eyes and leans in placing her lips on his. Their moment is interrupted by Tebogo’s phone ringing. He grunts as he reaches for it then checks the caller ID... it’s Pearl. Mandy takes it from him and draws in a deep breath before answering it.

“Tebogo’s phone hello.”

“Erm hi, o kae?”

“Ngiyaphila unjani wena?”

“Ke hantle. May I please speak to Tebogo?”

“He can’t come to the phone right now but you can leave a message and I will be sure to relay it.”

“Please I need to speak to him. It’s urgent.”

“Please leave a message and I will pass it on.” Mandy says sternly this time.

Tebogo is looking at her pleadingly but Mandy is not having that.

“Please just tell him to call me back.” she says before hanging up.

Mandy throws the phone on the bed and looks at Tebogo who has a defeated look on his face right now. He doesn’t know what more to say on this matter. He knows however that Mandy’s mind is already running.

“Go see her.” She says.

He looks up at her and shakes his head.

“Mandy we spoke about this. I will not go see Pearl.”

“Well clearly whatever it is that she has to say to you is important because she wouldn’t be calling like this for nothing. So go and see her.” Her voice is slightly raised.

Tebogo looks at her with an eyebrow raised.

“Excuse me?”

“I said go see your ex so that she can stop hounding us!”

She gets off of the bed and walks out of the room leaving Tebogo very frustrated. He knows that this will always be a thorn in their relationship until he shuts Pearl down face to face. So he sends her message saying that he will see her tomorrow hoping that this will put an end to all his problems.

Betty is in her apartment getting some work done. She has been feeling dizzy for the better part of the morning but she has been drinking water and taking breaks when necessary. She keeps telling herself that she will go to the hospital should things become worse. Thandeka is also on her way so that is another reason why she hasn't called anyone as yet. She picks up the baby's towels and slowly makes her way to the nursery where she packs them into the drawer.

The room is complete and all that is missing now is the little angel. Betty can't wait for her little one to make her grand entrance. She already has a few matching outfits for them and she can't wait for the photoshoots and cute fun dates that she has in store for them.

As she steps out of the room she feels her world begin to spin and before she can do anything about it, she is on the ground.

The Mkhize's as well as the Moloji's are pacing up and down the waiting room waiting on the doctors to come and update them on Betty's condition. Earlier today Thandeka found Betty passed out on the floor and immediately called an ambulance then alerted Malibongwe who made his way to the hospital. When they arrived Betty was whisked away and Malibongwe fought with the doctors and in the end he won because he was allowed to be by her side.

Molemo and Mandy along with Tebogo come rushing in and the second they spot Thandeka, Molemo runs to go throw herself in her arms.

“It’s okay baby. She’s fine. The baby is fine as well. Everyone is okay.” Thandeka says as she brushes Molemo’s back who is a shaking mess.

The thought of anything happening to Betty has Molemo so shaken that she doesn’t even hear as Thandeka attempts to comfort her. All she can think about is how difficult and different life would be without Betty. As much as she is moving closer to her father she knows that they can still meet up and they will talk every day on the phone.

“Let’s pray.” Mam’Zonke says.

They all bow their heads and pray softly, each of them praying for the safety and health of both mother and child. They spend a few minutes in prayer before settling back in their seats and wait on the doctor to come fill them in.

Malibongwe has Betty’s hand tightly in his ass the doctors work on her. Due to her condition they had to perform an emergency c-section as they feared for both mother and child. Her sweet cry fills the entire room and both Bongwe and Betty find themselves with tears glistening in their eyes.

“Congratulations, does she have a name yet?”

Bongwe looks at his baby girl who is in his mother’s arms. A wave of sadness washes over him but he quickly masks it.

“Liyana. Her name is Liyana.” He says before walking out of the room.

SIXTY SEVEN

After delivery Betty was cleaned up before being taken to her private room that Malibongwe requested. She has been ogling at her baby for some time now. The moment she was placed in her arms everything felt right. She felt complete and she felt a love like she had never before. She, in that moment made a vow to always protect her daughter with everything in her. She vowed to give her an upbringing that she wouldn't ever need to heal from. She vowed to shower her with so much love that she would never question what love was meant to feel like.

Thandeka, Zobuhle and mam'Zonke walk into the room.

"Hey baby." Mam'Zonke is the first to greet.

Betty looks up and gives them a faint smile before returning her gaze back to her child. The three grandmothers find themselves standing next to the bed surrounding her. She eventually stops ogling her and looks up to find all these eyes looking at her.

"Sorry." She says softly. "I just can't stop looking at her." She continues sounding a bit embarrassed.

The granny's all laugh softly.

"We know just what you mean. Congratulations." Zobuhle says with a smile on her face.

"So have you named her yet?" Thandeka asks.

Betty looks at her and nods lightly. She thought that Malibongwe had let them in but it's clear that he has not.

“Well nate and I agreed on Motheo but Malibongwe said her name is Liyana so...” she shrugs.

Mam’Zonke and Zobuhle look at each other in shock. Neither of them were expecting this. Bongwe had not mentioned to either of them that he would like to name the child Liyana. Thandeka sensing that there is a story behind the name decides to shift the focus on Betty and how she is feeling. She informs them that the doctor said that she should be able to come home in the next two days. Thandeka tells her that she will prepare everything for her arrival.

Zobuhle excuses herself and leaves the room on the hunt for her son who she wants to strangle more than anything in this moment.

With a bouquet of flowers in his hands, Malibongwe slowly squats next to Siyanda and Liyana’s tombstones. It has been a while since he came here and to some extent he feels guilty, like he has been neglecting them. He heaves a heavy sigh before sitting flat on his behind placing the flowers on the ground next to him.

“She gave birth and I named her Liyana. And no I’m not trying to replace you baby, but it just felt right. I swear in the moment I wasn’t even thinking of replacing our Liya. I love her Siyanda. I truly do love Betty and I know that she deserves more than I am offering right now but I can’t let her go. When I found out that she was your cousin I admit that threw me off a bit but then I figured that that was God’s way of, I don’t know maybe making sure that I end up with someone who loves me as much as you did, or maybe even more.

I feel so terrible for not being there for her during this pregnancy. I refused to bond with our daughter and her because I was so fearful that history was going to repeat itself. I thought that I was going to lose them both just like I lost the two of you and I just couldn’t handle the thought of that happening. So I stayed away and I know that did more damage to our

already strained relationship BUT I am hoping that she will give me a chance to redeem myself because I love her so much Siyanda.

I love Betty but I keep hurting her because I was holding onto this fear and pain. I'm going to give her my all, her and our daughter.

Thank you for being the perfect example of what true love is meant to feel like. Thank you for being the first to teach me how to do this love thing. I promise that from here on out I am going to be the perfect, well not perfect but I will try, embodiment of love. Wish me luck or whatever that Betty gives me the time of day and listens to what I have to say. I just hope that it's not too late for us..."

He picks up the flowers and takes out a single rose which he places on Liyana's tombstone before putting the rest of the bouquet on Siyanda's. He leaves there with tears blinding his vision but with his heart feeling slightly lighter.

Molemo and Mandy are gushing over baby Moloi who is also giving them a show. She turns around making baby noises making sure that she pulls at everyone's heartstrings.

"She is so gorgeous." Molemo comments.

"And she's dark like her daddy." Mandy adds in.

"Her melanin is golden." Betty says with love dripping all over her words.

She is looking at her daughter with eyes filled with nothing but love.

“You’re going to make a wonderful mama bear B.”

“You think?” she asks in a shaky voice.

“You’ve mothered me B and look at me now. I’m in school and I’m happy because you took a chance on me. You already are a great mama bear.”

“I agree with Molemo. I’ve also been on the receiving end of your mothering and bitch you’re younger than me so you’ve got this.” Mandy adds on.

Betty nods lightly before turning to look at her perfect little angel. She still cannot believe that she gave birth to such a perfect child. She can’t believe that she is a mother. She knows that her life is about to change drastically but she is ready for all these new developments.

Betty is getting some much needed rest while her angel sleeps. It’s been a tough first day with the baby waking up every two hours to feed. The nurse and everyone else who has given birth keeps saying that she will get used to the odd hours but at this point she doesn’t believe that.

Mam’Zonke and Zobuhle are in Betty’s room watching over the baby while she sleeps. They both haven’t heard from Malibongwe since yesterday however they do know that he did come back to check in on his family.

“I can’t believe that child.” Zobuhle says softly.

“I thought that he had made peace with their passing. I thought that he had moved on. I just don’t understand why he would name her after Liya. What was he thinking?” Mam’Zonke says sounding clearly frustrated.

“He wasn’t thinking that’s what. Malibongwe is spoilt and we have just let him get away with so much because always feared that he might attempt to take his life again but clearly even that didn’t help because here we are.”

“He needs to get it together now, if not for himself then for that child that never asked to be brought into this world. He is a father now. He needs to act as such.”

“Please talk to him. I have tried my best Zonke kodwa ngihlulekile. I’ve failed my son.”
Zobuhle says softly before tears trickle down her face.

Mam’Zonke pulls her into her arms and comforts her.

“He deserves to be truly happy Zonke and Betty makes him so happy. I know that I wasn’t so welcoming of their relationship but I’ve haven’t seen him like this since Siyanda and that makes me happy. He needs to get it together Zonke. He just needs to get it together...”

Betty lies there awake listening to the exchange between mam’Zonke and Zobuhle. She wasn’t expecting that. Her mind is suddenly running at 200km/h. She knows that he lied to her and all she wants right now is to know why. He needs to give her answers and fast.

Malibongwe walks in and attempts to place a kiss on Betty’s lips but to turns her head. It’s later on in the evening and everyone else has left. After she overheard the conversation between mam’Zonke and Zobuhle she forced herself to sleep and actually managed to get some rest before her angel woke up for her feed.

“Hawu ngiyenzi manje?” He asks in confusion.

“Did you have a daughter named Liyana? And please don’t lie to me. You’ve been lying to me for over a year. You’ve struggled with nightmares that just didn’t make sense. You’ve been closed off at some points. You even refused to bond with your daughter. I need to know why. If you want us to make this work, if you want us to survive, you have to be honest with me.” she says on the brink of tears.

He takes her hands in his and gives them a tight squeeze while gazing deep into her soul.

“I promise I’ll be honest about everything but only once you’re discharged. Right now I just need you to heal. I love you Betty.”

“Malibongwe.”

“I love you more than life itself and I mean that.”

“I love you too Bongwe.”

Hearing those words rolling off of her tongue puts him at ease a bit. Her saying she loves him makes him believe that they still have a chance.

SIXTY EIGHT

This is the fourth time Betty has woken up to feed baby Motheo. Right now she has tears cascading down her cheeks as she feeds her child who is sucking on her breast peacefully. She still hasn't gotten used to the feeling of having someone painfully suck on her nipples but as she has been told by everyone woman in her life that has breastfed, it will get better. Once Motheo is done feeding, Betty burps her before gently setting her back down on the bed.

She looks at her little peaceful angel who is sucking on her upper lip. It has been days but she still cannot believe that she gets to call this precious angel her own. She can't believe that she gets to hold her hand through it all and all she hopes to do is to be the best mother to her. She hopes that she will be able to give her the kind of love that she deserves and more.

Her phone pings distracting her from her moment.

"How are you guys doing?" the text from Malibongwe reads.

She smiles lightly shaking her head. Betty takes a picture of the princess and sends it to him.

"Peacefully sleeping after sucking mommy dry." she responds.

"LOL... why you being nasty Betty?"

"Lol hayi get your mind out the gutter sir!"

"I'm just saying. Anyway, you can't sleep?" he asks.

“Nope. It’s always difficult to go back to sleep after she feeds and when I finally do doze off, she wakes up...”

“Do you need help?”

“Thandeka helps out but at the end of the day I’m the one that has to feed her so ahhh.”

“I’m sorry there’s not much that I can do to help.” He responds.

“I just need your emotional support Bongwe.”

Betty finds herself getting emotional after sending that message. Things between the couple haven’t changed much although Malibongwe has been coming over to Betty’s apartment every day to see both mother and child. They haven’t had enough time to themselves due to the fact that Betty uses every second that she can get to nap before the princess wakes up.

“I’m trying Betty. I’m trying to be there for you but you’re keeping me at arm’s length.”

“Do you blame me?”

“No I don’t but I thought we were trying.”

“Until we can address the elephant in the room then no I don’t think that we can fully move on.”

“Are you allowed to leave the apartment? Just for a few minutes?”

“I don’t know I’ll have to ask Thandeka.”

“Okay you’ll get back to me. Go sleep Betty.”

“Okay o robale hantle.”

“Nawe ulale kahle.”

Tebogo is anxiously sitting in the seat at the restaurant waiting for Pearl to arrive. After going back and forth with Mandy he eventually decided to meet up with Pearl to find out what it is that she wants and to get her out of their lives for good. When he left the house to come here Mandy was sleeping due to the fact that she couldn’t bear to see him leave the house to go to her. He feels bad for even being here but he also knew that this issue would remain a thorn in their marriage unless addressed.

Pearl walks in and looks around before spotting Tebogo and making her way towards him. They haven’t seen each other since their breakup so this moment is slightly awkward.

“Hey, sit.” Tebogo says.

Pearl settles in her seat and puts her bag on the table before heaving a sigh.

“Hey.” She says softly.

“Hey okae?”

“Ke sharp wena?”

“I’m okay. You look good.”

“Thanks...” she responds before reaching for the jug of water and pouring a glass for herself which she downs in one go.

Tebogo looks at her and he notices the eye bags under her eyes. He remembers that she would look like this whenever she didn’t get enough sleep.

“What’s wrong?” he asks her in concern.

Pearl heaves a sigh and shakes her head.

“I’m sorry. I just want you to know that I’m sorry. “

“Ke eng Pearl?” he asks again.

“After we broke up I found out that I was pregnant and by the time I gathered the strength to come to you, you had already moved on.”

Tebogo looks at her with shock plastered across his face.

“What are you trying to say to me Pearl?” he says through gritted teeth.

“She’s four months now. I’m sorry Tebogo.”

“You hid my daughter from me?”

“I just... I... I thought that I could just keep it to myself. I-”

“It? That it is my daughter Pearl.” He cuts her off.

“I’m sorry.” She says crying.

Tebogo shakes his head and reaches for his wallet and keys. He takes out a few hundreds and throws them on the table before getting up and walking out of the restaurant leaving Pearl in tears.

Malibongwe is sitting in the nursery with his daughter in his arms. This is his highlight. He gets here and rocks his daughter to sleep before gently putting her down then going to join Betty in her room. As usual he finds her napping with a pillow in between her legs. He kicks his shoes off and climbs onto the bed then pulls her into his arms. She settles in them and he places a kiss on her forehead.

“Bua le nna Bongwe, what’s happening?” She says softly.

“Everything?”

“Everything...”

“I was engaged to Siyanda... and we were pregnant. I was so excited Betty and I was ready to be a father and a husband you know. Anyway after Siyanda and I got into that accident, we lost the baby. We’d chosen the name Liyana for her because we believed that she would

bring showers of blessings in our lives you know. Siyanda didn't take the death well in fact she sunk into a deep depression and she had to be admitted. It was hard losing my baby and her mother within a short space of time. One day Siyanda came back to us after weeks of not talking, she finally spoke and we were so hopeful only to learn that that was her way of saying goodbye.

I found her lifeless body hanging from the roof the following day. That image is one that haunts me every day. So after their death I shut down. I gave up on life and love and I used alcohol and weed to cope. My family, mainly my mom, encouraged me to focus on my studies because that was a promise that I'd made to Siyanda.

When I met you I wasn't looking for love. I was just looking for a good time at the club but then I found you. I fought it so much but you kept drawing me in until I gave in."

By the time he finishes speaking he has tears falling freely out of his eyes. Betty cups his face and wipes his tears away with her thumbs. The sight before her breaks her heart because she didn't expect the conversation to be this deep.

"Bongwe why didn't you tell me?" she says softly.

"I was scared Betty." He responds trying to keep it together.

"But I'm your woman, you're supposed to open up to me about such things."

"I just didn't want you to judge me."

"I'd never judge you baby I love you."

"I'm sorry..." he says faintly.

Unexpectedly a sob escapes his lips and Betty pulls him into her arms.

“Shhhhhh its okay... it’s okay. Shhhhh...” Betty tries to comfort him while trying to fight her own tears.

Tebogo gets home and the second he steps in Mandy can tell that something happened. She follows him into the bedroom where she finds him seated on the edge of the bed with his face in the palm of his hands.

“What’s wrong?” Mandy asks in a shaky voice fearing the words that are going to come out of his mouth.

He rubs his face before lifting his head and extending his hand out to her. She takes it and settles on his lap.

“I don’t know what to say.”

“What happened Tebogo?”

“She had a baby.” He blurts out.

Mandy’s heart sinks to the pit of her stomach and she can’t control the tears that find their way down her face.

“Tebogo...” she says barely audible.

“I’m so sorry Mandy.”

“She had your baby?” she asks.

He nods lightly and that has Mandy sobbing uncontrollably. He tightens his hold against his body and comforts her. This moment tells him that things are about to get difficult for them and he doesn’t know how he is going to handle it.

SIXTY NINE

“So why did you name my child Liyana?” Betty asks with her eyebrow arched.

After Malibongwe opened up to Betty earlier, they took a nap and only woke up when Motheo’s screeching came through the baby monitor. They headed into the nursery because that is where they spend their time during the day and they didn’t want to disrupt Motheo’s routine. Malibongwe looked on as Betty nurtured their daughter with nothing but patience and love. In that moment he realised just how blessed he was to have Betty in his life.

He understood that any other woman could have told him to fuck off after he had opened up to her but not Betty, instead she took him in her arms and comforted him until he calmed down.

They’re currently sitting on the bed having lunch while Motheo takes a nap. Thandeka is also out for the afternoon meaning it’s just the three of them in the apartment.

Malibongwe heaves a sigh and rubs his face in frustration. Betty’s question is one he doesn’t know how to answer honestly because he doesn’t have a worthy answer.

“It just felt right. I don’t know what else to say. In that moment everything in me said to name her Liyana but not to replace the Liyana that I lost. I understand now just how fucked up it is and I’m sorry. I should’ve spoken to you first. Dad can name her and she can keep Motheo as her first name.”

Betty looks at him and nods lightly.

“She can keep the name, just as long as you promise me that you won’t treat her like she was supposed to be Siyanda’s daughter. This is my child and I am not Siyanda.”

Malibongwe looks at her with his emotions clearly visible on his face. He can't believe how selfless Betty is being in this situation. According to him, she was supposed to leave him after everything that he has done but she is still here, loving him more than she did when they started dating.

"Betty..." he says faintly.

"Just promise me that from here on out we are going to have a transparent relationship. You're going to truthfully tell me how you're feeling every day. We're going to work on us and build a healthy relationship not only for Liyana but for us as well because we deserve to be happy. I deserve to be happy Malibongwe. I'm not with you because I'm scared of being alone, no, I'm with you because I truly do love you and as fucked up as you are you deserve love. I'm fucked up as well but that doesn't mean that I don't deserve love."

Malibongwe takes both of her hands into his and places a kiss on them. Her words touched the deepest parts of him. He knows that she is right in what she is saying – they both deserve love. They both deserve to be happy. As fucked up as they both are, they deserve happiness.

"I love you Betty and I promise you I am going to give you my all. I am going to be honest and I'm going to communicate with you even when it feels uncomfortable. I'm going to do better because you deserve better."

"I love you Bongwe."

"I love you too Betty. Thank you for not giving up on me."

He leans down and gently takes her lips in his. The kiss is slow and emotion filled, both of them bearing it all. They feel each other's fears and they promise themselves that they're going to word on themselves for themselves and each other.

Mandy is lying in bed with her eyes fixed on the white wall in front of her. The news of Tebogo having a child with someone else had her slipping into a familiar space which she would like to forget about. Tebogo walks into the bedroom and slides into the covers then pulls her into his arms. The tears that she had been keeping in find their way down her cheeks.

“Baby please don’t cry, you’re hurting me.” Tebogo whispers in a shaky voice.

“I’m so sad Tebogo.” she responds.

He tightens his grip around her body and allows her to cry without saying anything. She eventually manages to gather herself and pulls herself out of his embrace. Mandy sits up then wipes her face before heaving a sigh.

“I just wasn’t expecting this. I thought that I would carry your first child you know. I thought I would be the only woman to bare you children but that could never happen because she gave you your first child. I’m just really hurt Tebogo. I don’t blame you though because you didn’t know le wena but still I’m just... ya.” She says softly.

Her heart is in the pit of her stomach as she says this. It hurts... badly but she knows that she has no choice but to toughen up and get ready to deal with the situation at hand.

“I know baby and if I could I would turn back the hands of time but I can’t. The child is already here and I have to step up Mandy. I can’t allow my child to go through life yearning for my love whilst I’m still alive and able to give it to her.”

“I could never expect you to abandon your own child Tebogo. I was raised by just my mother and I know what it feels like growing up without a dad and I would never wish that upon anyone. I wouldn’t be able to live with myself knowing that I deprived a young child of her father’s love. I just want us to work on an agreement with Pearl.”

“What would the agreement entail?” he asks.

“If I come across as insecure then so be it but I don’t want you dealing with her directly. I’m your wife so I will deal with her. Your daughter is going to be mine as well so I hope that you will put that across to the mother. I will not be disrespected. You disrespect me I will leave and that is not a threat but rather a promise.

So let Pearl know that you will be there for your daughter. You will be there emotionally, financially, physically as well as spiritually. She will have a home here.”

“You’re amazing you know that?” he says pulling her closer.

He wasn’t expecting her to say everything that she has just said but he is glad that she is willing to be a mother to his daughter.

“I love you Mandy and I promise you that Pearl will never be a thorn in our marriage. I will let her know that she will only deal with you with regards to the baby.”

“Thank you.” Mandy says softly.

She knows that it is going to be a very tough journey but she is willing to walk it because she loves Tebogo.

“I’ll always put you first baby.” He says before gently pushing his lips against hers.

It has been two weeks since Malibongwe and Betty had the heart to heart and things between them have been steadily improving. They're communicating their feelings openly and in turn are getting to learn more about each other. They have both agreed to go for both individual as well as couple's therapy in an attempt to better themselves for their daughter. Betty has stressed just how important it is to her for her daughter to grow up in a loving and positive environment which is why she has asked to have a conversation with Zobuhle. She knows that she loves her granddaughter wholeheartedly and she doesn't want how she feels about her to get in the way of her relationship with Motheo.

"I asked to talk to you because I wanted us to clear the air. You are the mother of the man that I love and the grandmother of my daughter and I just want us to be civil." Betty says.

Zobuhle nods lightly before heaving a sigh.

"I want to apologise for the way in which we were introduced to each other and how I reacted. I'm not going to try and justify my reaction but I truly am sorry for the damage my words may have caused."

"I'm not going to lie and say it's okay because it isn't. You hurt me, yes I know that everything you said was the truth but the manner in which it was uttered was the issue. But thank you for your apology. I just want us to be around each other without things being awkward."

"I understand, thank you for initiating this. I hope we can try and get to know each other." Zobuhle says.

Betty nods lightly. She wasn't anticipating for the conversation to go this way. Just then Motheo's screech comes through the baby monitor and Betty gets up and rushes to her aid. Her only wish is for things to be peaceful so that her daughter can be raised in a healthy space.

SEVENTY

Betty and Mandy are sitting outside on the balcony while Liyana takes a nap. The girls haven't seen each other in a little bit with everything that is happening in their lives. The first thing Mandy did after greeting Motheo was head straight to Betty's cellar to grab a bottle of wine. Betty settled on her juice and they put together a quick meal then went to go sit outside.

"Don't you miss the way life used to be? You know, just striping, eating dick, counting money, buying clothes. Life was so much simpler..." Mandy says as she sips on her wine.

Betty heaves a sigh at that question. She gets where Mandy is coming from. Her life before she met Malibongwe was a breeze. She didn't have to worry about anything or anyone for that matter. She never had to worry about disappointing a man or even her parents but now that she has Malibongwe all that has changed. She needs to be more conscious of her behaviour and her actions because they might have an impact on the ones that she loves.

"I do. I miss just the simple living but I don't miss the prostituting. I don't miss having a hundred men grunt and groan on top of me. I do miss the freedom and independence but that's just about it."

"I miss the money!" Mandy says taking a sip of her drink.

Betty can't help but laugh. She knows her friend to be this dramatic.

"I hate having to ask Tebogo for money and now that he's discovered that he has a child out there I'm pretty certain I'm going to be cast aside."

Betty looks at Mandy in shock. She just blurted out that Tebogo has a child without even flinching. Betty is interested in knowing when they learnt of this and how. She can't help but

feel sad for Mandy because she knows that she had hoped to be the one to give Tebogo his first born.

“Babe...” Betty says softly.

“She called for weeks on end demanding to meet with him until I told him to go see her and even then I regretted saying it the minute it escaped my lips because I feared that he might decide to get it on with her you know. She’s a very beautiful girl and you know I’m not insecure but I couldn’t help but feel a pang of jealousy when I saw her pictures. And when he came back with the news that they shared a child together I was devastated. I knew that I we were stuck together and the possibility of them actually deciding to rekindle their love were high.

I am so scared B. I’m scared that he might just realise that he made a mistake marrying me and go to the mother of his child. We’re supposed to meet and talk about how things are going to be done but what if during that meeting he realises ukuthi the love of his life is the skinnier one? I know I might be fetching but I’m scared.”

Betty knows that this situation is difficult on Mandy because she isn’t insecure and the fact that she is thinking that Tebogo might leave her attests to how tough this is for her.

“That man lives for you. Yes, the situation is shitty for lack of a better word but that man would never choose some skinny girl over you. He loves you beyond comprehension Mandy and that is why he came back to you. You’re allowed to be scared, it’s normal. I mean you’re getting thrown into a situation you hadn’t been anticipating so you are allowed to be scared.”

Mandy heaves a sigh and nods lightly, feeling exhausted. When she agreed to be with Tebogo she didn’t think that things would get so difficult so quickly.

“Hayi B, I don’t even want to think about this anymore. Let’s talk about you and Mr Hunk! How are things?”

“We’re trying. I love him Mandy and not because of the issues that I’ve had but because I truly see myself with him for the rest of my life. Things aren’t very ideal but nothing worth having ever came easy right?”

“Just remember to always pick yourself when it comes to it. You love him yebo kodwa ungakohlwa ukuthi love isn’t always it.”

“In this case it’s all we have at this point but like I said we’re working on.”

Betty knows that things between Maibongwe and herself aren’t going to be smooth sailing but as she had said before, they’re both willing to put in the work and make their relationship work.

“As long as you’re happy B, that’s all that matters to me, you know that.”

“Ditto babe. Ditto.”

The girls spend the morning catching up until the screeching baby Moloji breaks up the party. Mandy rushes in to go and gush over her niece. Looking at Liyana, she can’t believe that she herself is about to step into the mother role though it isn’t in the way that she would have hoped it would come about but the fact is that the child is here and she has to put her big girl panties on and do what needs to be done.

“When are you getting her off the boob babe?”

“When she’s ten months. Bongwe is however trying to push me to nurse her until she doesn’t want to anymore but I’m not about that life. I’ve seen kids who are four and still crying for the boob in malls and I don’t want her to be one of those. I just can’t deal with that.”

“Imagine this one chasing you down crying for milk.” Mandy says while chuckling.

“Never going to happen! Ever!

Malibongwe walks into Melo’s house and finds her on the couch stuffing her face with ice cream. He settles next to her and rests his head on her lap. He has just come from his therapy session and today’s session was a heavy one. He opened up about how losing Siyanda actually damaged him. All along he had thought that he made peace and was healing from the ordeal only to realise that he had actually been pushing everything to the back of his mind.

“How was your session?” Melo asks.

He has been attending therapy sessions every day for the past two weeks and everyone around him, especially Betty can see just how much the sessions are actually helping. He opens himself up more now and he is more honest and transparent with her. In the past he used to think that he was giving his all to her but he realises now that he was giving her what he subconsciously allowed her to see.

“It was difficult but it was okay. I’m learning to let go and fully trust in God and his plans. I realise now that holding onto things does more damage than good. I’ve still got a long road ahead of me but I’m willing to walk it because my child and her mother deserve me to be at my optimum.”

“I’m so proud of you Wewe. I’m proud of you for finally taking charge of your life and deciding to finally facing things head on. I hope that this time you will not give up along the way. You deserve the happiness just as much as Betty and Motheo do.”

She brushes his head before kissing it. He knows that his sister had it hard when he was in a much darker place than he is now and he made a promise to himself to not give up on himself again. His family deserves to see him happy and healthy.

“I know Nqo and I promise.”

Sfiso walks in with Kuhle in his arms. Malibongwe jumps to his feet to receive his niece with a smile on his face.

“Come to your favourite uncle.” he says cheerfully.

Kuhle shows him her toothless smile which just warms his heart.

“Don’t let Bandile hear you say that.” Melo says chuckling.

The guys laugh lightly but the laughter soon fills the room when baby Kuhle joins in. Malibongwe looks at her with a broad smile on his face. He fell in love with her the second he laid his eyes on her and with each passing day the love grows deeper and deeper.

“Uright?” Sfiso asks him.

“Yeah... I actually wanted to get your opinion on something.”

“I guess that’s my cue. Anything specific for lunch?” Melo asks them.

“Anything is fine baby.” Sfiso says placing a kiss on her cheek.

“Yeah what he said baby.” Bongwe responds.

Melo smacks his head as she walks out the room leaving them in laughter.

They have settled on the floor with Kuhle making a lot of baby noise while playing with her toys.

“So what’s up?”

“I want to start afresh. With Betty and Liya.”

“Okay and you can do that.”

“Thing is I received a job offer... in Cape Town.”

Sfiso turn to look at Malibongwe with a huge warm smile on his face.

“That is amazing news man! I’m so proud of you.”

“Thanks bra but the thing is mom, Melo...”

“They’re both married, living with their husbands. Look we all know how rough things have been for you and Betty and I for one know how hard it is to grow in a place you got broken. This move might be good for your relationship.”

“What if she also says no?”

“Then she says no but you will not know until you ask. So ask her.”

Malibongwe heaves a sigh. He hopes that Betty will understand why he is even considering the move.

SEVENTY ONE

“It hurt when he didn’t even want to bond with our child during the pregnancy. It hurt that I practically had to walk the road by myself even though he was there. I’m scared that should things work out between us and we fall pregnant again he is going to act the same way. I’m afraid that I’m going to be all alone in this parenthood journey.” Betty says.

They’re currently having their weekly therapy session with their therapist and as usual they are encouraged to be honest about their feelings.

“Am I making you feel like you’re a single parent Betty?” Bongwe asks.

“No.” she responds softly.

She knows that she cannot take away the fact the he is an amazing dad to Motheo. He is an active father and he is a present partner to her as well.

“So why do you think all that will change?”

“You’ve switched up on me before.”

“I thought we had dealt with that Betty. Remember once we have spoken about it and gone though it we don’t go back to it because referring back to certain incidents that we have supposedly healed from defeats the purpose of these sessions. In your own words you said that you have forgiven him and we can move passed that so for it to be brought back up is counterproductive.” The therapist says.

Betty heaves a sigh and rubs her face in frustration.

“I know but I just... I still have fears.”

“But baby we’re working on rebuilding our trust. I know that it’s going to take a while before we get back to where we were but I’m trying B. I’m trying to be there for you, to show you that I love you and that I will never do you like that again.” Bongwe says taking her hand in his.

He can see the uncertainty in her eyes and all he wants to do in this moment is to take it away. His intentions are good and he plans on showing her that even if it is the last thing he does.

“Betty’s fears are valid Malibongwe.”

“And I am not disputing that. All I am asking for is a fair chance to prove myself. I’m asking her not to hold back from me.”

Betty heaves a sigh before giving him a smile. The truth is that the only thing holding her back is her fear but her heart is with him and only him. If she were to let her heart lead then things between them would go back to the way they used to be.

“Can I ask you something?” Betty asks Bongwe.

He nods his response.

“I was a prostitute. Do you have a problem with that?”

“I don’t. Betty I fell in love you knowing very well what you did. Knowing very well what you have done and I choose to love you knowing very well what your past is. I can never take back those words but I promise that it doesn’t matter to me. All I see in front of me is the

mother of my child, the love of my life and my future wife. Ngiyakuthanda Betty Moloji. I truly do.”

Betty blinks a few times in an attempt to push her tears back. She felt his heart as he said those words. The first butterflies she ever experienced around him came back. In this moment she got her answer and she hopes that it is the right one.

Pearl walks into the living room holding a sleeping baby. Mandy sits there unsure of how to react to this moment. Tebogo walks into the room carrying the baby bag, he sets it on the table before going to join Mandy on the couch. He kisses her head trying to reassure her that this changes nothing between them.

“Baby, this is Pearl and Pearl this is my wife, Mandy.” He introduces them.

“Hi Mandy, it’s lovely meeting you.”

“Likewise.” Mandy responds softly.

Tebogo knows that this is going to be a very difficult transition, it is going to be however he has faith that it will all work out.

“Can I say something?” Pearl says.

Tebogo nods lightly taking Mandy’s hand into his.

“I’m sorry for this. It honestly was not and is not my intention to cause any problems between the two of you. If anything I thought staying away was what would be beneficial

for all of us but I was mistaken. All I want is for my daughter to have a relationship with her father. I know that when a man is married any and all communication about the child needs to be done through his wife and I plan on honouring that.

I'm sorry once more but I do hope that as time goes by we will all get comfortable with the situation and do what is best for Naledi." Pearl says to them.

Mandy's heart is beating out of her chest but she knows that she has to try her best and keep calm.

"The only important person in this situation is Naledi so we have to do what is best and right for her." Mandy says.

Tebogo smiles lightly and kisses his wife's hand. He knows just how much it took for her to say that and actually mean it and he is grateful for that.

"I agree. Thank you for opening up your home to me and my daughter."

"She is mine as well now so she will always be welcomed here."

Mandy heaves a sigh after saying that. She meant it even though it was difficult to say but she meant it and she hopes that they both believe it. She gets up and heads to the kitchen to finish off preparing lunch. Before getting started, she quickly texts Betty and updates her on what just happened and how she is feeling about it. She still can't believe that she is in this situation but she plans on making the best of it nonetheless.

“How about we ask either your mom or mine to babysit for the weekend? I would like to get reacquainted with your body and soul.” Malibongwe says softly in Betty’s ear, causing her to moan.

She tilts her head backwards as she sinks onto his manhood, allowing him to fill her up. It has been a while since they have been intimate and feeling his deep inside of her is foreign to Betty but at the same time she loves the feeling.

“HmMMMM.”

“Is that a yes?” he asks.

She shuts her eyes taking in the pleasure that he is offering before mumbling a yes. He chuckles lightly, grabs her waist and begins to rock her from underneath. Her moans fill the car but he doesn’t care, he continues to give it to her until he feels that she is near her end goal.

“Shiiiiit Bongwe... wait... I can’t... stoop... ohhhh shiiit.” She cries out as she reaches her high.

Malibongwe follows shortly after. They remain glued to each other until they get their breath back in check.

“I can’t believe we had sex in the parking lot.” Betty says shyly.

Malibongwe chuckles lightly.

“Baby the windows are tinted.”

“But it’s not soundproofed. Gosh!”

“My dick has you thinking with your pussy huh? Morals out the window.” He teases.

She rolls her eyes but quickly gasps when she feels him coming back to life. She wants to get off but she has missed him so much that she wants to milk every moment that she can steal with him. And beside even though she won't admit it, she is enjoying the thrill of this stolen car moment.

Being in his apartment after such a long time feels weird for Betty. She sets her bag on top of the table and walks around remembering all the memories that they created in this place. Her mind replays the first time that she came here, how he offered her his gown that had his scent all over, driving her crazy. She remembers how he kissed on her before he loved on her body. She chuckles lightly when she remembers that she didn't even know his name when he first pounded her.

A lot has happened since then but one thing that remains is how he makes her feel.

“Penny for your thoughts?” he says wrapping his arms around her.

She leans back and rests her head on his chest.

“Just thinking about the first time I came here and how you loved on my body.”

“I could love on you and your body every day until the end of time. I love you Betty.”

“I love you too Malibongwe.”

“I got a job offer in Cape Town, come with me.” he blurts out.

She attempts to turn around to face him but he tightens his grip around her body. He didn't mean to just say it but it happened.

“Let me look at you.” she says gently.

“I'm sorry.” He whispers.

“Bongwe...”

“I didn't mean to just blurt it out. I was planning to sitting you down and having a conversation about it.”

“I know baby. Okay tell you what, let me get settled then we can have a conversation about it.”

“Sounds good. You know where the bedroom is. I'll go make us something to nibble on.”

He hurries out of the room leaving Betty chuckling as she picks up her bag and makes her way to his bedroom.

SEVENTY TWO

Betty chuckles nervously as she watches Malibongwe stroke his hard rod up and down while making his way towards her. She is spread out on the bed with both her hands and feet tied up. She feels vulnerable, anxious, but she knows that she can trust him not to hurt her or take advantage of her. Malibongwe climbs onto the bed and locks eyes with Betty. Each of them gazing deep into the other's soul, having a conversation words can't even describe. They both agree that this is their final shot and that they will do everything in their power to ensure that they make it work.

"I love you." he mouths to her.

Butterflies swim around her stomach and she can't help but blush. She says it back earning her a smile from him. He lowers his head to place his lips on hers. The fact that she can't hold him or touch him is frustrating to her which is amusing to him. He pulls back and slowly traces softy, sensual kisses down from her neck until he reaches her pussy. He groans lowly before diving her causing her to scream softly. She cries out softly as he holds her down and continues to fuck her with his tongue. Betty tries to push him off but to no success. He knows that with patience he will get her to reach her destination and even though she is protesting, he is planning on getting her there

"Malibongweeee... waaaait..."

He continues to lick and suck and slurp. He slides a finger in and continues to work her.

"I don't... waaant... to cuummm." She moans.

"You're going to cum for me Betty." His command vibrates against her pussy.

He chuckles at how stubborn she is especially when it comes to sex because she never wants to cum. He continues drinking out of her well until she reaches her peak.

“Ohhhh shiiiiit.... Stooooop. Nooo... I can’tttttt.” She screams as she rides out her wave.

Malibongwe doesn’t even give her a chance to recover, he slides right in and makes himself comfortable in her pussy.

“The plan was to fuck your brains out but I want to make love to you now so I’m going to untie you and love on your body, okay?” he whispers in her ear.

She moans softly and nods her head. Betty’s weakness is being in his arms and they both acknowledge that so whether he takes her rough or slow, she will be satisfied. He frees her legs along with her legs before positioning himself at her entrance. She giggles sweetly, and tells him to stop teasing her. In one quick move he sinks himself in and settles in her warm cunt which is hugging onto him as if though this is their first dance.

“I love you Betty.”

She looks at him with love dancing in her eyes. They love each other and there is no running away from that fact.

“I love you too Bongwe.” She responds honestly.

He smiles before he begins to thrusts in and out of her at a controlled pace. There is nothing more that he would like to do than to fuck her brains out in this moment but he knows that she deserves this moment. The feel of his skin against hers is all that Betty has been yearning for for some time now and to be in his arms, with his hard rod pulsating deep inside of her, is everything and more. His lips on her lips feel right at home.

After everything that they have been through, this moment feels like the beginning of a brand new thing.

After resisting her orgasms yet having no choice but to allow them to ripple through her, Betty is lying on Malibongwe's chest with her fingers running up and down his stomach. A lot is going through her mind but the loudest thought being 'Cape Town' when he said it he knew that she was serious and that he meant it.

"About Cape Town." She says.

He sighs heavily and tightens his grip around her body.

"I received a pretty good offer from the science centre that side. They'll basically be playing me to study. It's a very good offer baby and I would be foolish to turn it down but at the same time I don't want to leave you and Motheo. I know that I won't be able to fly back to Joburg every weekend and even if I did it wouldn't be enough time to spend with the both of you. I know that I am asking a lot of you but please consider it.

I don't want to come off too strong but I'm desperate. I love you and I don't want to be without you but at the same time I have to work hard because I want you and Liya to have everything you need in life. I want you guys to be secure and comfortable even when I'm not around. This move will do wonders for my career and could possibly set me... I mean us, up for life.

All I ask is that you think about it."

"I'll do it. I'll move with you." she says without thinking.

Malibongwe, shocked by her response, pushes off and sits up. He hadn't anticipated her saying yes, well at least this quickly.

“Are you sure?” he says in almost a whisper.

“I am. I love you Bongwe. Our situation is a weird one but one thing that I know for certain is that I love you and that I want to build something with you. Before I met you I never anticipated having a child but look at me now. I never imagined myself as someone’s wife but you came along and changed all of that. You love me, flaws and all and I love you, flaws and all as well. It’s not going to be an easy journey but I am willing to sacrifice it all and walk this journey with you.

Now tell me more about this job offer.” She says beaming at him.

He excitedly cups her face and captures her lips in his. This is the best thing that could’ve ever happened to him and he appreciates her for granting him the opportunity to grab his dreams with both hands as well have his family by his side as he does that.

They get comfortable on the bed and he begins tell her about his job offer at the space agency. For a very long time he had dreamt of securing a job there even though things in his life were shaky. This happening affirms to him that he is on the right track and that life is moving at the correct pace.

Betty’s phone rings forcing them to wake up much earlier than they had planned to. She reaches for it while complaining causing Malibongwe to chuckle.

“Hello.”

“Betty.” The voice on the other end says.

She sits up and yawns, trying to bring herself to life before checking the caller ID. It's her father.

"Ntate, are you okay?" she asks him.

"Everything is a mess. I'm divorcing Elizabeth and I am working on building something with your mother and I am resigning from my position but both those decisions could see me being taken away from you." He confesses with his voice cracking.

Betty shakes her head with tears filling her eyes and her heart beating uncontrollably against her chest. The thought of her father going to jail makes her sick, especially now as they are trying to work on their relationship.

"Ntate, what do you mean?" she asks.

Malibongwe is sitting up looking at Betty with worry visible on his face.

"Elizabeth, she is threatening to make my life a living hell."

Betty chuckles lightly. She knows that her stepmother is capable of that. But she also knows that her father is resourceful and can figure this out.

"Empa ntate I'm sure that you can work on a plan to keep her from doing any damage."

"Maybe Betty but for now all I know is that she might use you to get to me so I need to organise some security for you and your mother." He says sounding scared.

"Hayi ntate nna I will be fine. Worry about Thandeka."

“Betty.”

“Ntate I’ll be fine. But if it makes you feel better then you can get one.” She says to put her father at ease.

They say their goodbyes after promising to see each other as soon as he can wrap everything up and come see them. Their relationship isn’t where he would like it to be but he is grateful that she is giving him the opportunity to try and be the father that he never was in the past.

“Konje when do we move to Cape Town?” Betty asks Bongwe after letting him in on what her father said.

He chuckles lightly before pulling her into his arms.

“The second I accept the offer, we can move.”

“Well then I suggest that you call or email or whatever it is that you need to do first thing Monday morning.”

“You sure?”

“Yes sir!” she says placing her lips on his.

SEVENTY THREE

It has been a few weeks since Naledi's first visit. Tebogo has been going over to see her however Mandy hasn't gone to see her because she doesn't feel comfortable going to Pearl's home. Thoughts of Tebogo possibly cheating on her have crossed her mind however she decided to have faith in her husband and trust that he will not do anything to compromise their relationship or break her trust. She has however been feeling a bit insecure as of late because Tebogo is spending every second he gets at Pearl's. She did voice out her concern and he did try to assure her that nothing is happening between them.

Her concern wasn't about him cheating on her but just the fact that he was neglecting her all together. All she wants is a bit of his attention more especially when she is not feeling well. She has been feeling under the weather over the past few days, even Betty is worried. So she suggested that she go see the doctor, which is where she is at the moment.

"Yep, you have a little invader. Three weeks." The doctor says.

Mandy finds herself shocked because she didn't think that she could be carrying a child, especially not now. She quickly wipes her tears before fixing herself and going to join the doctor in the office. She quickly sends a text to Betty, who responds to the news in excitement.

"I'm going to be an aunty!" she screams happily.

Mandy chuckles lightly while listening to Betty go on and on and on. She wishes she was as excited as Betty was in this moment. She wishes that her nerves weren't shot and that she didn't feel uncertain. She knows that she has always wanted to have a child with Tebogo but with things being the way that they are at the moment and them getting used to co-parenting with Pearl, the timing just feels off.

"Why do I get the feeling that you're not excited?" Betty says.

“There’s just a lot happening at the moment B. Like I’m jobless and yes I have some saving and Tebogo is taking care of me but with Naledi in the picture and her being so young, I don’t know how he will be able to deal with everything. Right now Naledi is his number one priority and I just... I don’t know how he’s going to receive this.”

“Babe, that man loves you and I know for certain that he will be thrilled when you tell him about this. Mandy you need to stop living in your head. You need to stop anticipating the day he will leave you because he won’t. He married you babe. He loves you. Yes, we have Naledi now but that doesn’t change anything. It doesn’t change the fact that he is yours and yours alone. So go home, whoosaaa and tell the man.” Betty says trying to calm Mandy down.

She knows that once her friend has made up her mind about something she will stick with it even though she might be wrong. Betty knows that Mandy has a habit of concluding certain things in her mind before actually seeing how they play out.

“What would I be without you though?”

Betty laughs softly while shaking her head.

“You would be lost. Now go talk to that man! I love you.”

“I love you too boo.”

After the phone call Mandy drives home feeling a mix of emotions. But she knows that she needs to trust and believe that her husband will be excited. When she steps inside the house, she finds Tebogo in the kitchen cooking up a storm while humming a song. Mandy is shocked to see him home at this time because he is supposed to be at work. He turns around and finds her standing there looking at him.

“Hey baby.”

“Hey, aren’t you supposed to be at work?” she asks.

Tebogo pulls her into his arms and holds onto her tightly.

“I’m sorry. I realise that I haven’t really been the best husband over the past few weeks. I’m sorry for not spending as much time with you as I should have. I just got so excited, I’m sorry.” He whispers in her ear.

She tightens her hold against his body. Hearing him own up to his mistake makes her realise that he will always put her first no matter the situation which calms her raging thoughts.

“It’s okay.” She says faintly.

“No it’s not. I don’t want you to ever settle because you love me. I’m going to make it up to you I promise. I love you.”

She nods lightly against his chest before pulling back.

“O tswa kae?” he asks her.

She smiles excitedly before breaking the news to him. He looks at her puzzled for a second before it sinks in that she has just told him that she is expecting. He picks her up and spins her around before putting her down and placing kisses all over her face. Mandy giggles uncontrollably while he can’t contain his excitement.

“We’re having a baby?”

“Yes baby.” Mandy responds.

“Thank you so much for this gift. Thank you for making me the happiest man on earth.”

“I love you Tebogo.”

“I love you too Mandy.”

They both know that it is going to be a long journey to get to where they need to be but they know that it will be worth it in the end. Especially with their family growing.

SEVENTY FOUR

Betty slips her hand in Malibongwe's and holds onto hi tightly. He turns to look at her and smiles faintly before kissing the back of her hand. He can feel how nervous he is and her sweaty palms bear proof to just how nervous she is. Last night when they agreed to come here he emphasised the fact that she didn't have to but she wanted him to know that she would always have his back so she insisted.

They've been sitting in the car for a little over five minutes now with Betty trying to calm herself down. She takes a deep breath before realising it.

"Okay let's go." she says opening the car door.

Being back here brings back the memories of her first and last time here. She knows that things have changed and their issues have been cleared but she can't stop her mind from rushing. They step inside the house and Malibongwe tightens his hold on Betty's waist. He knows how she feels and just like the first time, he is ready to defend her with his all if need be.

"Look who is here." Lwandle says excitedly.

He gets up and greets both Betty and Bongwe with a hug. The rest of the family, Zobuhle, Melo and Sfiso. They settle on the couch, wih Bongwe not wanting to let go of Betty.

"So how's everyone?" Malibongwe asks.

"We're good, how are you?" Zobuhle responds.

"We're amazing."

“Where’s my grandbaby?” Zobuhle asks.

“Driving her other grandparents crazy.” Bongwe responds.

Everyone chuckles lightly. Malibongwe pulls Betty closer and kisses her cheek. He’s nervous about the news he is about to drop but he knows that even though they’ll be happy for him, they might resist it a bit.

“Melo where’s Kuhle?”

“Sleeping. Yhuyu umuntu didn’t want to sleep last night, at least yena uyak’wazi ukuthi shut eye nyana kodwa thina, nex.” Melo responds dramatically.

The entire room erupts in laughter. Malibongwe is glad that Melo just lightened the atmosphere before he breaks the news. He is also glad that Melo and her husband are here for this.

“I was about to dish up actually, Melo and Betty, do you mind joining me in the kitchen?” Zobuhle asks.

Bongwe looks at Betty and gives her a light nod, encouraging her to go. The ladies get up and make their way to the kitchen leaving the men to catch up.

“You and Betty look good.” Lwandle says, and Malibongwe can’t help but smile.

The thought of how far they have come makes him smile brightly. They fought to get to this point in their relationship.

“We are. I have found my happily ever after in her. I have something to live for and I don’t ever want to let her go again. I want to give her my all. I want to build something solid with her. Something like what you and mom have. A love that will stand the test of time.”

“I’m proud of the man that you have become. I remember when you were so broken and we didn’t know how to pull you out of that dark hole but seeing you now and seeing how happy you are with Betty and seeing how good of a father you are to Liya, I’m proud of you. I hope that this happiness will be long lived.” Lwandle says sounding emotional.

“Hayi dad, don’t get all emo on me. But thank you. Nawe Sfiso, thank you for the role that you have played in my life since you came in it. I appreciate your sound advice and those moments where you’d literally snap me back to reality. I don’t think I’d be standing here if it wasn’t for those moments, so thank you.”

Sfiso smiles widely and fist bumps with Bongwe. They share a relationship that not most can understand.

“So remember the offer from the centre? I accepted it and Betty and Liyana are moving with me.” He says proudly.

“What, congrats man! I know how hard you’ve been working to move your career forward.” Sfiso says.

“Yes, congrats son. I’m so proud of you.”

“Thank you. I just hope mom will understand. Remember how crazy she went when Bandile left for Switzerland?”

They all crack up in laughter thinking about how dramatic Zobuhle is at times.

“So how is motherhood?” Zobuhle asks Betty.

Betty sighs happily before smiling widely.

“It’s beautiful. I have never felt a love so genuine. I’m in love and I don’t think it can get better than this. Sure it’s challenging because sometimes I get so overwhelmed but I wouldn’t trade it for anything in this world.” Betty responds genuinely.

“Parenthood is a whole different kind of love. Enjoy it before they turn into monsters that you just can’t wait to get away from.” Melo says.

“And how would you know that Melo?” Zobuhle asks.

“It’s what you always said to me mom. You used to say that Bandile and I were monsters and Bongwe was your little sweet baby.”

They share a laugh.

“What was he like growing up?” Betty asks looking at Zobuhle.

Zobuhle smiles, thinking back to the days when her kids were just babies.

“Bongwe was so easy. He enjoyed being with both his father and. Out of all three he was always calm and reserved. Even as he grew into a teenager he remained calm and that’s what I loved the most about him. I remember even when he started smoking he was still reserved and shy. The Malibongwe you see today is almost the same as the little boy who

used to suck his thumb only this one has been shaped by circumstance and situations that life has thrown at him.” She says sounding sad.

“He is a better man now though with Betty in his life.” Melo says.

“He is. Thank you for loving my son Betty. I know we’ve had this conversation before but I’m truly sorry for the way things played out between us. I appreciate you for giving me a chance even though you didn’t have to, as well as for blessing us with Motheo.” Zobuhle says.

Betty looks at her and before she knows it she finds herself in her arms sharing an embrace with her. Now that she is a mother she understands just how Zobuhle felt when she was introduced to her. She finds herself unexpectedly sobbing in her arms alarming both Melo and Zobuhle but Zobuhle quickly recovers and comforts her.

“It’s okay baby, it’s okay.” She says softly.

After what feels like forever Betty manages to pull herself together.

“I’m so sorry. I don’t know what happened there.” she says wiping her tears.

“It’s okay baby. You did say that you were overwhelmed. You don’t ever need to apologise for cleansing your soul.” Zobuhle says while brushing Betty’s back.

Betty takes a deep breath before nodding lightly. She doesn’t know how to respond to that so she just nods. The ladies take the food into the dining area then alert the men that lunch is ready.

Malibongwe takes Betty’s hand and pulls her into his father’s office. The second the door closes he cups her face and looks into her eyes.

“Why were you crying Betty?” he asks softly, yet in a stern tone.

“I just had a moment with your mother. Nothing hectic.”

“She made you cry?”

Betty feeling that he is about to work himself up gets on her toes and places a kiss on his lips.

“She was comforting me, so relax.”

“She didn’t hurt you? She didn’t offend you?” he asks softly.

Betty cups his face and places a kiss on his lips.

“I love you.”

“I love you too Betty.”

Betty smiles warmly.

“Now let’s go before they think we’re having sex.”

He chuckles lightly, biting on his bottom lip.

“That wouldn’t be such a bad thing now would it?”

“Hayi Bongwe let’s go!” she says pulling him out of the room.

When they get back into the dining area they find everyone already seated and digging in. Lunch goes with conversation flowing and laughter all around.

“I have some news.” Malibongwe says.

Everyone sits up and looks at him in anticipation.

“I received a job offer in Cape Town and I took it. Betty and Liya will be moving with me.” he announces.

Lwandle reaches for his wife’s hand and gives it a tight squeeze, hoping that that will calm her down.

“That’s amazing. I’m so proud of you baby.” Zobuhle says.

“You don’t mind me leaving?” Bongwe asks.

“No, because I know that you’re in good hands and beside remember you left when you were twenty two and back then you were on your own. Now you have your own family.”

“Thank you mom. I appreciate it.”

“Just promise that you guys will visit often. Phela I need to see my grandchild.”

“We’ll get a house instead of an apartment, that way you can come visit, how does that sound?” Bongwe says.

“Deal!”

The rest of the afternoon is filled with love and laughs. Malibongwe couldn’t have asked for a better afternoon with her family.

SEVENTY FIVE

“So you’re just going to pack up your life and just move?” Thandeka asks Betty.

Since Betty and Malibongwe let their families in on the news of their move it has been difficult especially for Thandeka who refuses to accept Betty’s decision. She says she has just found her and now she is losing her all over again.

“Thandeka we spoke about this.”

“Hayi Betty, I don’t understand.”

“You don’t have to Thandeka empa I’ve made up my mind. Liyana and I are moving with her dad. Why would we stay here when we have nothing mo?”

“Kodwa Betty you have me.” Thandeka says sounding defeated.

Betty shakes her head lightly as she continues to pack her bags. Before everything happened, she didn’t mind that she was all alone in the city because she had Omolemo and Mandy but now things have changed. Molemo moved away and Mandy is married so things aren’t the same anymore. She also need to consider her daughter in all of this. She wants Motheo to have a great relationship with her father and she knows that will the distance, things might be hard.

“But you and ntate are working on things meaning you won’t even have time for me. Don’t be selfish Thandeka. You will still see me. You can come visit and it’s not like I won’t come visit anymore so stop being dramatic. We’re just two hours away fela.” Betty says.

Thandeka heaves a sigh as continues to help Betty pack. The thought of not seeing her and Motheo when she wants is killing her but she knows Betty is right. They can see each other whenever they want. She just hopes that their relationship will continue to grow at a steady pace and won't just die out.

"You're right, I'm sorry. I'm just scared that you're going to forget about me and that I'm going to lose you once you move away from me. I've just found you Betty and I don't want to be without you."

Betty settles on the bed and asks Thandeka to join her. She takes her hand and gives it a tight squeeze.

"You won't lose me Thandeka. I'm not going anywhere, also I would've still moved away from you at some point in my life so it's still the same. Look I get your concerns but you don't have to worry, technology has made things so much easier for us so we will still be connected. Don't worry."

"Thank you baby, and thank you for giving me a chance."

"It's all good. Now can we please finish packing I don't want to be running around like a headless chicken tomorrow."

Betty and Motheo are leaving in two days time to join Malibongwe in Cape Town. He left a month ago and has been preparing for their move. His mother offered them a house in Hermanus which is where the centre is based. They're both excited at for this new chapter in their life and are looking forward to creating new memories.

"So what about this place? Are you selling it?"

"Nah, not yet. I'm just going to cover up the furniture and we'll see in the future what we decide to do with this place but for now I'm keeping it."

“Hmmm makes sense.” Thandeka says as she gets back to the task at hand.

She is worried that her daughter might be making a mistake with regards to the move but she has decided that she will keep it to herself and support her.

Betty and Mandy are having lunch at Mandy’s place. The news of Betty’s move hit Mandy really hard but after some time she pulled herself together and realised that her friend needed the new start. After everything that she has been through she needs this move.

“So this is it vele, my last lunch date with you.” Mandy says sadly.

Betty chuckles lightly at how dramatic Mandy is being.

“Stop being dramatic Mandy. I’m literally two hours away. We will still see each other and I will always be your sister. Now stop being sad.”

“Argh stop being so grown tu. Anyway are you sure about this? Are you ready?”

Betty takes a sip of her drink before sighing.

“I am friend. Like I’m so ready for this new phase of my life. I’m ready for the new start. I’m ready for it all. I’m excited to grow within myself but also with Malibongwe. It’s scary but I’m ready. I am so ready.”

“I’m so happy for you B. As long as you are certain then I’ve got your back. I can’t wait to visit you in foreign land.”

They share a laugh.

“I’m going to miss you so much.”

“I’m going to miss you too Mandy but I’ll be here as much as I can. I’ll definitely be here for the birth of my baby.” Betty says with excitement.

Mandy puts her hand over her stomach and smile. She still can’t believe that she is carrying precious cargo.

“You better be here. Argh enough of the sad stuff. Let’s drink to new beginnings.”

They raise their glasses.

“To new beginnings.”

SEVENTY SIX

It has been two months since Betty uprooted her life and followed the love of her life to a new city. She and Liyana have settled in well and are have adjusted to everything. The first week was a bit difficult for Betty because she couldn't call her mother to come through when she needed that extra five minutes of sleep after a difficult night. She knew that everything was on her including the running of the household.

By the third week though she was getting a hang of things and Malibongwe had arranged a car for her to make it easy for her to get around without depending on him or an uber.

Currently she is looking through a couple of prospectus' to see what she can do to further her studies. After her conversation with Malibongwe last night she realised that she needed to do something for herself even though she knows that he has her back and will always take care of them.

"I remember you once spoke about helping underprivileged kids, so how about you start an NGO, I'll give you a cash injection and we can take it from there. How does that sound?" Malibongwe asks.

Betty turns to look at him with tears threatening to spill from her eyes. Her heart is ready to burst and it is all because of this man.

"You would do that for me?" Betty asks.

Malibongwe smiles lightly and nods.

"I would give you the moon and the stars including the aliens. Now wipe your tears and get to researching what we need in order to get this off the ground. Also we need to identify and area where you can focus on."

“What did I do to deserve you mara?” she says.

He leans in and places a sweet kiss on her lips. This, for him, feels like the first time he kissed her. He was nervous however he couldn't let her see that. Just as the kiss is getting heated, Liyana's cries come through the monitor. Bongwe groans as he pulls out of the kiss.

“Your daughter Betty.”

“She is your princess Mkhize.”

“Not when she is standing in my way of getting some she isn't.”

He gets up and walks out leaving Betty laughing her ass off. It's like Liyana knows when to jump in and screech, she always does it whenever Bongwe tries to initiate sex which frustrates him to say the least. But there isn't much that he can do about things.

Betty puts Liyana to bed before quickly rushing to take a quick shower and slipping into a racy black number. She plans on showing her man a good time tonight. The wine is chilling on ice and the lights are dimmed and the music playing in the background softly. Betty makes her way to the kitchen to check on the food. Malibongwe walks in and cusses softly when he sees Betty's behind bent over staring at him. Her ass has always been his favourite part of her body.

He gives it a smack and she jumps up in shock turning around to face him. She giggles sweetly when her eyes land on him.

“You look fucken sexy.” He compliments her, his voice barely recognisable.

“And you ruined the surprise kodwa ke. Follow me.” she says strutting her way out of the kitchen.

When they get in the living room, Bongwe notices that there is a chair in the centre of the room. Betty instructs him to sit before she ties his hands behind the chair.

“Remember the first time that I danced for you?” she whispers in his ear.

He chuckles lightly thinking back to the first time she showed him her moves. He didn't think that she would get him excited but she did and he has been hooked ever since.

“I want to dance for you.” she continues.

She glides her hands along her body while keeping eye contact with him. The smirk on his face excites her because it means that he is enjoying it. She gives her breasts a squeeze before turning around and giving her a glimpse of her behind. She knows that it drives him crazy so she gives him a little twerk show which earns her a loud groan from him.

“Betty...”

She doesn't stop as she continues to twerk before deciding to go twerk on him. The second her ass comes in contact with his crotch she moans softly. All she wants to do is to sink herself on him and go on a ride. She knows that they don't have much time because Liyana might wake up at any moment so she unties his hands which she almost regrets because he takes charge of the situation.

He pushes her panties to the side and plays with her clit while he undoes his pants. Betty is moaning out loud enjoying the motion of his thumb over her clit. He helps her settle on his rod and grabs onto her waist while he goes to work pounding her from underneath. The

sound of their skin meeting fills the room. Betty looks into Bongwe's eyes and all she sees is deadly lust. She knows he is about to tear her apart.

He continues to pound her like it is the last time.

"Ahhh shiiiiit..." Betty cries out, feeling her orgasmy nearing.

"You are going to ride it out Betty." He says.

Betty cries out as her orgasm ripples through her. For the first time since they have been intimate she didn't try and stop it like she always does.

"Good girl." Bongwe says pulling her in for a kiss.

A few more thrusts and he reaches his peak, just in time because Liyana's screeching comes through the baby monitor.

They both break out into laughter.

"Well at least we both reached the end." Malibongwe says.

"Well I want more. Let me try putting her back to sleep. Meet you back in our room daddy." She says rushing out of the room to attend to their daughter.

Malibongwe sits there taking the moment in. He is with the love of his life and their daughter and he couldn't be any happier.

The backyard is filled with both Betty and Bongwe's loved ones. Today is the day of their housewarming and they couldn't be happier. Having everyone that they love and care about in one space, helping them settle in their new space means so much to them. Everyone can't stop gushing over how grown Liyana is. She is a beautiful carefree baby who enjoys laughing and receiving kisses from her dad.

Having everyone's attention is unleashing the inner diva in her much to her parents' surprise. They didn't know that she could get so extra but they're just glad that she isn't freaked out by everyone's presence.

"This house is beautiful." Mandy comments.

"It truly is." Melo seconds that.

"Thank you ladies. It was so much fun picking stuff out for it and putting it together."

"Ya'll killed it."

Malibongwe walks up to them and places a kiss on Betty's cheek.

"Ladies. Baby, I have a surprise for you."

Betty looks at him in anticipation.

"I need you to close your eyes though." He continues.

Betty does as instructed anxiously. A few minutes pass by with Betty getting more anxious by the second.

“Are you still making this surprise kanti?” Betty says causing everyone to chuckle.

“Okay. Open!” he says.

When Betty opens her eyes she finds Molemo standing in front of her with a bouquet of roses in her hands.

“Surpriseeeeeee!” Molemo says with a wide smile on her face.

Betty launches herself at Molemo and luckily she catches her. They share an embrace for what feels like a lifetime before pulling apart.

“Oh my gosh you look so good baby, you’ve grown so much.” Betty says, mumbling her words.

Molemo laughs softly while wiping her tears,

“I’ve missed you so much.”

“I’ve missed you too. Argh we need to catch up. Like nowwww!” Betty says.

“Before you guys do that, let’s welcome everyone quickly.” Malibongwe says.

Everyone gathers in the backyard.

“Nothing big really, we just wanted to thank each of you for taking time out and coming to break bread with us. You all mean so much to us and we appreciate you. I personally want to thank you Betty. You came into my life and literally changed me. I haven’t been this

happy in years. Thank you for loving me, for being patient with me and even uprooting your life to join me here.

Thank you for our daughter. She is the best thing that I could've ever asked for and I hope we will give her a few siblings in the years to come." Malibongwe says and everyone laughs.

He makes his way over to Betty and smiles before dropping to his knee earning him a few loud cheers.

"I love you. I appreciate you. My life would be empty without you in it. I don't ever want to do this life thing without you in it. So would you do me the honour of being my wife?"

She nods her head repeatedly while trying to catch her breath. She was not expecting this at all but she is extremely happy.

"I love you so much." she murmurs against his lips.

"I love you too."

"Who would've thought that we would be here one day?" Molemo says absentmindedly.

Mandy turns to look at her, brushing her stomach.

"I definitely didn't. I mean look at me pregnant. Betty has a baby and she's about to walk down the aisle with Mr Dance and you are studying towards your dreams."

“None of us were anticipating this. We were just bad girls, sliding on poles just trying to get through this life thing. No one could’ve ever thought that our lives would turn out so differently. Most had written us off as prostitutes and club workers for life but look at us, living, laughing and smiling.” Betty says.

“Goes to show that you should never ever expect the next person to remain in the same place forever.” Mandy chirps in.

Out of nowhere Molemo starts to laugh puzzling Betty and Mandy.

“I’m just thinking, who would’ve thought that we would ever see Mandy without a champagne glass in her hand.” Molemo says laughing.

“Voetsek wena.”

They all share a laugh.

“Wonders of this world I tell you. I love you guys so much.” Betty says.

“I love you guys.”

“I love you guys.”

The ladies spend the afternoon chatting up as well as going down memory lane. One thing they all agree on is that they had each other’s backs in the past and they will always have each other’s backs until the end.

*****THE END*****

