

She lives like there's no tomorrow, party like an animal and drink like a fish then she would laugh like she got no problems in the world but everything crumbled down when her spiritual gift decided to take over her fancy dreamy life. Will she ever accept her calling? Nomaswazi the forever happy girl, living in a fairy tale.

All the characters in this book have no existence outside the imagination of the author, and have no relation whatsoever to anyone bearing the same name and surname. They are not even distantly inspired by any individual known or unknown to the author, and all the incidents are pure invention.

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: CONSEQUENCES: BREAKING HER! HATING HIM!

: UBIZO - THE CALLING

## PROLOGUE

No matter how much I kept saying “I am not ready, it shouldn’t go down” it still went all the way down till I couldn’t see it. My cries and pleading fell on deaf ears. My pain was never considered; who I am left with was never anyone’s concern. No one cared about what will happen to me after she was buried six feet under, no one cared about who will take care of me after she was gone. The most painful part is I saw her death before it happened, I was shown her dying before her actual death; while she was too sick to eat or drink soft porridge I just watched her knowing very well she is already gone, knowing very well she is fighting a losing battle all is left is an empty shell of a body with no soul nor life. How does one heal from losing a parent? Someone who is supposed to be there for you all step of the way, how can I be okay after she left me to look after myself. They say it gets better with time and I say “Bullshit! Bullshit!” the pain I felt when I saw her coffin being lowered down slowly will never go away, knowing I will never see her again, I will never hear her voice or touch her even seeing her smile. She is gone.

Does after life exist? I wonder ...

Dear God!

Give me one chance, just one chance to check if she’s okay. A chance to tell her about all that I have accomplished, I may not be proud of most of the things I have done to get money but God you know me. You have seen me struggling, you have seen me going to bed with no food and you have always been there watching me raising myself. Now all I am asking for is to see her just once, I want to hug her tell her I have come a long way but I am happy, not at peace but I am happy. I have a lot to seek advice on, a lot I would like her to give me insight on; I feel so lost like I don’t even know who I am, I can’t find myself I am busy walking a journey with no direction, I wake up every morning with no purpose in life. I work, I drink, I dance, I entertain but not even once have I got a chance to sit still and search my soul, find myself. Not even once have I known who I was, what do I want, what is my journey. Let talk woman to man God what is my purpose, I don’t even have a dream, a profession that I would like to occupy one day. I feel so empty, nothing fulfils me, no matter how I drink dance and laugh I still feel empty. There’s this huge void within me that just won’t be filled. All I want to know is how to find myself?

December, 15 the day she decided to close her eyes forever, the day she stopped fighting and let nature took its cause, the day I lost my soul, the day my heart was broken beyond repair. Today it her death anniversary, six years a

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whole fucking six years since she was gone but still it feels so fresh like it happened yesterday, the memory of her lost it still stored right In my head and heart so fresh I could still feel the pain from deep down. My heart is still bleeding; will I ever get over the pain though? Does one get over the pain though?

ONE

NOMASWAZI

---

I was sleeping so peaceful when my phone started ringing disturbing my sleep and whoever is calling I am hoping she or he is aware that I hate mornings. It stops ringing only to ring again, I groan as I try to get it from a bed stand.

Me: What?

“Bitch come to the front gate right now”

My friend Lisa screamed through the phone speaker.

Me: For what

Lisa: Just come, hurry up Swazi

Me: No man I am tired.

Lisa: Swazi wake the fuck up! It a matter of death.

And I just knew shit was going down, whenever something is serious we use that phrase, I tossed the blanket aside as I grab my gown, wore my sleepers that I found first not even checking them then ran out.

Me: On my way.

I say on the phone as I grab the keys, opened the door then closed and locked it and ran towards an elevator that was closing.

Me: Hold the lift please.

I said hurrying in and a guy who lives here in the building held the elevator for me, he's new so I don't even know his name. He looked at me up and down. I am breathing heavy, I am half dressed as the gown is those silk short gowns and underneath I am only wearing a very short pyjama with a vest then two different sleepers one pink and one blue.

Me: It a swag

He laughed.

“I see, so you are the girl with loud music”

I laughed; the guy look like those office type of guys in a suit dressed well and formal. I am always playing loud music even the landlord got tired of telling me to lower my volume.

Me: Y'all should learn to live a little.

He chuckled.

"I once thought of coming to your room and crash the speakers with a hummer"

I laughed out loud.

Me: You are such a party pooper.

The doors opened on the ground floor, I spring out running towards the exit.

"Why are you running?"

He asked following behind me.

Me: It a matter of death.

I left him confused and ran out.

By the gate was an uber, Lisa poking her big head from the window.

Lisa: Hurry up

I ran past the security guy with just a wave, she opened the door from inside for me. I tried normalising my breathing as I settle down.

Lisa: Drive

She said to the driver.

Me: What going on?

I said as I have composed my breathing.

Lisa: Zoe's husband is cheating again

Me: Holly shit I knew it.

She took out her phone and made a call.

Lisa: Come out

She said through the phone then dropped it.

Lisa: He is fucking cheating on Zoe again, that ass has no dankie shame

Me: I told her, I told her but she didn't believe me.

The car stopped next to her house, she hurried and got in the passenger seat.

Zoe: Swazi don't say it

Me: Okay I won't say I told you so

She had a sjambok with her

Lisa: What you gonna do?

She asked the question that I was about to ask.

Zoe: I am going to whip his ass

She said angrily.

Me: Yes girl, he fucked you again and this time he should know you are not a playground.

Zoe: Exactly

You would swear we were all being cheated on the way we were so angry, the uber dropped us in front of Hilton hotel, we rushed inside and from the look of things people might think I am the one who is being cheated on as I am half-dressed showing I just woke up, these two are dressed in leggings and sneakers. We walked up to the receptionist but no one was there, Lisa being the brains of the group slid behind the counter and took keys to room 25 where the P.A said he would be.

Lisa: I got the keys.

We all hurried to the elevator, a woman in the hotel uniform came out looking at us weird. We got in as she got out then pressed the elevator to floor four. Zoe was so mad she kept tapping her foot on the floor.

The moment we got there we didn't knock Lisa just unlocked the doors and we busted in going straight to the bedroom, indeed the son of a bitch was there and we arrived in time as they were having a morning glory. Zoe wasted no time as she hit him. They both jump up, the lady held a blanket around her as she moved to the corner of the bed.

Zoe: What the fuck is this Mandla

Mandla: Zoe! Zoe wait!

Me: Fuseg you man hoe, whip his ass friend.

Zoe tried hitting him again but he held the sjambok and pushed her aside. Standing tall and naked his dick there on display. The moment Zoe fell on the ground Lisa and I were already on him, hitting him with anything we could find that include the night lamp as it breaks on his back. He yanks my hair so hard in a painful way buy Zoe was already up whipping his back with a sjambok.

Lisa: You son of a bitch!

Me: You fucking man hoe

Zoe: I fucking hate you! Is this you working late? Is she the office!

She said still hitting him, we also haven't stopped as we got on top of him slapping and giving him fist. He pushed me, I fell hitting my head on the wall I felt dizzy for a moment then from there I stood up with a heel I found beside the bed and started hitting him with it. He finally stopped fighting us as he could see we weren't letting go. He lay on the bed covering his face.

Mandla: Babe please stop! Please I am sorry. Babe wait, let me explain

Me: Explain my foot

An angry Zoe kept on whipping him. Securities came running as they got us off him, we still fought them cussing and wanting to finish what we started. The bitch he was fucking was standing on the far corner of the room. We were not going to touch her; the person who cheated is Mandla. The security guard took us out, people have gathered around watching as we are escorted outside the building still swearing and calling him names.

We got in our uber as it was still waiting for us then went straight to Zoe's house. While we walked inside, Zoe was left paying the uber guy. My gown was torn and I had few bruises showing I was in a fight, the moment we get inside we laughed our ass off.

Me: That was fucking crazy

Lisa: Dude tell me about it

Zoe walked in, still looking mad.

Me: We need wine.

I walked to her kitchen and got some wine and glasses.

Zoe: I am done with Mandla

Zoe and Mandla are high school sweetheart, they have been married for only two years yet Mandla has cheated over and over. I kind of feel sorry for her, just a little. I told her to not get married as yet since there was no hurry but no girl wanted family, girl loves Mandla and she was so sure they would grow old together. Unlike me and Lisa, Zoe comes from a very rich family while we had to do unbelievable things for money she never worries about any of that. Since from high school till now we still friends and we still look out for each other, while Lisa and I works in a night club as hostess Zoe works at her father's company as a receptionist. As for my own family, it a story for another day right now let drink and dance like there is no tomorrow.

TWO

NOMASWAZI

---

We were dancing and drinking Zoe's sorrows away well and my sorrows too but this is about Zoe not me, and we were fucking celebrating being single ladies. I never had luck with man so I was as single as they come, Lisa was just like me when it came to men; bad luck. We had taken a shower earlier on and we are dressed in Zoe's clothes as we are playing dress up, I have a pink wig on my head, with yellow silk pyjama pants, matching long sleeve top and four inch high heels with a scarf around my neck. Lisa is wearing short with a sport bra and cowboy boot with a blue wig. Zoe is wearing her white wedding dress. Music is busting and we are drinking straight from the bottle as we dance and sing along the music then would laugh at how much we suck. We were busy modelling and tweaking then laughing when the music suddenly stopped.

Me: TF!

Lisa: What?

Zoe's house keeper has switched off the music as two police men are standing by the door just looking at the drunk us.

Me: Ooh look I love man in uniform

Zoe: My type

Then we giggled

Lisa was so wasted she lay on the couch.

Me: Are you here to arrest us?

I asked then laughed, Zoe joined me.

Zoe: Please arrest me officer I have been a very bad girl

We drunk walk up to them.

Officer: Lisakhanya, Nomaswazi and Zoleka you are under arrest for the assault of Mr Mandla Shange and Miss Zikhona Mabuza.

We looked at each other and died of laughter. He went on and said.

Officer: Everything you say would be used against you in the court of law; you will be given a chance to call your lawyer if you don't have one the state will provide you with one.

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The other one started cuffing Zoe.

Zoe: What umm you naughty man. Yes cuff me I have been so bad.

Me: Officer if I say fuck me hard will you use it against me in the court.

I asked, Zoe and I laughed. The other guy started hand cuffing me while the other one walked up to Lisa.

Lisa: Let me go, I want to sleep

She couldn't even stand proper in high cowboy boot. They escorted us out side as we were busy singing to cardi B.

Us: Wet ass-pussy!

Yeah yeah you fucking with some wet ass-pussy

Beat it up nigga catch a charge

I don't cook; I don't clean but let me tell you I got his ring

We then laughed.

Zoe: I cook I clean but he still cheated

She said then we laughed, they had tossed us in a car.

Me: Where are you taking us?

Lisa: I don't want to go to jail

Zoe and I laughed at her.

Me: We are not going to jail bitch! We taking a ride

I said out so loud while giggling

Me: Ride slow

Yeah Yeah

I'm pulling up at 3; this car is just not the same without you here

Ride slow (ayy)

Ride slow, like a ghost.

I rapped so loud with Zoe rapping some inaudible shit.

Me: Woahoo we taking a ride with them officers.

Zoe: Oh yes! Woahoo

We were so wasted considering the fact that we just started drinking on an early morning without eating anything, Lisa started crying.

Lisa: I don't want a ride! I want to sleep

Me: Shut up, We taking a ride!

When we arrived at the police station they took us out of the car, we kept tripping on the shoes we were wearing; they had to lift Zoe's dress up since it a very big beautiful wedding dress. As for me I was walking with one shoe the other one was on my cuffed hand.

Lisa: Wait! ...wa-

She started throwing up and we laughed our ass off, the officers were so pissed in a way that they started shouting at us.

Officer 1: Move look at the fucking mess you have made

Officer 2: These bitches are drunk

Officer: Put them in a cell that where they should wake up.

Another one came towards us laughing; they took us inside the police station while we waited for the police to open the holding cell Zoe started singing.

Zoe: Phoyisa! Phoyisa

Samba nama Phoyisa! Eeeeh Samba nama phoyisa!

Me: Vula! Phoyisa! Phoyisa! Samba nama phoyisa.

They took the cuffs off our wrists. Then they threw us in, I almost fell face flat but I managed to balance myself, they locked us in and walked away. Zoe started crying.

Zoe: I am so stupid! I am so stupid he cheated again I am such a fool.

She stood up from the floor where she was siting balanced herself on the burgles then cried loud shouting.

Zoe: He cheated on me! On Me! God I loved him, I loved him so much, uMandla yinja, phoyisa! Phoyisa! uMandla yinja, yinja uMandla.

Lisa was just lying there on the floor and I was sitting down feeling my head dizzy.

Zoe: Swazi! Swazi! Wiyinja uMandla but you told me friend and I thought you were just jealous. Mina I love Mandla, I love him so much. Phoyisa uMandla yinja! Uyinja! Sengaze angishithele pho! Kanningi kangaka! Ngenzeni? What did I do? What must happen now? Phoyisa what must happen? Ngiyamzonda ... koda ngiyamthanda

Lisa: You making noise, shut up.

Me: He cheated on you, again. I knew this was going to happen

I said laughing.

Me: Phoyisa! Phoyisa! Can I have just one glass of Russian Bear?

I said laughing

Zoe: Phoyisa I want a whole bottle!

Me: Nasi I stock! Jonh vuli gate

Zoe: Phoyisa!

Me: Nasi I stock!

I lean on the wall and close my eyes, I saw her face and it all came back rushing. I always try to keep my thought and pain inside me so I won't bother my friends, so they won't be worried about me.

Me: Zoe you know what today's date is?

She ignored me as she kept on singing and crying over Mandla making me emotional too.

Me: December the 15

I answered not even caring if she is listening to me. Tears started making their way out as I feel the pain deep within me.

Me: The day she left me as an orphan!

I said crying holding my chest as the pain was too much.

Me: The pain always hit different when I am alone, it hurt so much.

I crawl down and started wailing loudly, my screams echoed through the jail halls. Zoe came and hugged me as she also cries for Mandla.

Zoe: I really do love him Swazi, my heart is so broken I don't know where to from now on.

I hold on to her as I also release my own pain.

Me: December the 15 is a curse in my life, I hate this day with passion. I miss her so much it hurt.

Zoe: He used to be so good to me, what changed? Where did we go wrong?

Me: How can I be okay knowing I would never see her again

Zoe: He would never hold me into his arms, how can I be okay?

Me: I am in so much pain

I cried out.

Zoe: It feels like my heart is torn apart.

We cried holding on to each other.

THREE

NOMASWAZI

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I slowly opened my eyes, only to feel a mother of headache. The room is a little bit too dark and creepy; I am sleeping on a cement kinda thing. I held my head as it pound even more, I woke up looking around, Zoe was sleeping on the floor on her white dress and Lisa was sleeping not so far from her. I didn't even know where we are, I couldn't even remember a thing from yesterday.

Me: Oh shit my head.

I said walking towards the burgle guard, I tried opening it but it was locked and not so far was a police.

Me: Sorry where are we?

The guy just stare at me then walked away, I turned to Zoe and kicked her butt.

Zoe: Uh Uh go away

Me: Wake up

I moved to Lisa and kicked her too

Me: Wake up

Lisa: Noo

Me: Wake up

I kicked them both again before they slowly opened their eyes waking up.

Lisa: Aah my head hurt

Zoe: Fuck my head

Me: We in jail

They both jump up, Zoe fall back because of the dress.

Zoe: I am wearing my wedding dress.

Lisa: What did we do?

Zoe: Oh God we didn't kill anyone did we?

Me: Could you just stop, we need to think.

They sat back down.

Lisa: Okay we came back from the hotel

Me: We started drinking at Zoe's house

Zoe: Then I wore my dress, my wedding dress

I looked at myself up and down.

Me: And I wore your pyjamas, Lisa wore short

Lisa: We got so wasted as we were drinking and dancing

Me: Yea then what?

Lisa: I don't remember much I was so wasted.

Me: Maybe we were then arrested.

Lisa: For what?

Me: I don't remember everything is just blur I only remember us playing dress up.

Zoe: Why are we here, my father is going to kill me.

We all went quiet for a while.

Zoe: Mandla did cheat, I wasn't dreaming. He cheated!

She said as tears stream down her eyes.

A police officer showed up. We all rushed towards him.

Officer: Oh good you are up and sober

Me: Did we kill someone?

He chuckled.

Officer: You don't remember why you here?

Lisa: No, did we drunk drive?

Officer: Umm they use to cook like their mothers now they drink like their fathers.

We all literally rolled our eyes.

Me: Will you tell us why we here, because as far as I am concern you can't keep us here unless you are charging us.

Lisa: Yes it against our right to keep us here without any reason or charging us

Officer: You are under arrest for the assault of Mandla, her husband and Zikhona his side chick

Us: What?

Zoe: We did not assault a Zikhona

Me: Who the fuck is that?

Lisa: We only assaulted Mandla

The officer laughed.

Officer: Zikhona has a broken arm because you assaulted her; your husband has bruises because you assaulted her. You better get your statement straight before submitting it.

He said and walked away leaving us confused; we did not touch the bitch why would she have a broken arm.

Zoe: Did anyone touch her?

Me: No we know the rule; we hit the man always not the girl

Lisa: Exactly why would we hit her she is not the one married to you?

Me: Exactly She didn't do shit to you

Zoe: Now I am confused

Me: Me too

Lisa: Me three

We just sat there staring into space, lost in our own thought.

Zoe: Swazi you need to call someone to get us out of here, I can't call dad he will literally kill me.

Me: Who to call?

We all went quiet again. Zoe's father is one of those super strict father, it doesn't matter if Zoe is married he would still throw a tantrum

Me: Oh I know.

I stood up and walked towards the exit as I call for the police officer who was busy guarding us.

Me: Sorry sir!

I said, and he walked towards me.

Officer: yes

Me: Can I make a call

Officer: Wait I will be back

It not like I was gonna go anywhere, he looked at me up and down before he walks away. I waited for about a whole thirty minutes before he returned. He opened for me; I slid in my shoes and walked out with him behind me. He led me to the phone then waited not so far. I dialled a number of the only person I knew could help us, he picked up when I was about to drop the phone.

Me: Boss

Boss: Swazi, where the fuck is you and Lisa? Do you have any idea how difficult last night, why didn't you say you weren't coming?

UBIZO THE CALLING

Our boss is cool but you just never wanna mess with him, he can end your life with a snap of a finger.

Me: Boss I am in jail

Boss: In jail?

Me: Yes we were arrested yesterday afternoon

Boss: For what?

Me: We assaulted someone, we need your help please get us out.

Boos: You know you will owe me right

Me: Yea I know just get us out, this place is creepy

Boss: okay then don't say a word to anyone, I will be there.

Officer: Yey time is up

I gave him a nasty look.

Me: okay hurry up

Boss: You owe me

Me: I know, just get here will you

I dropped the call as I return to the cell.

Me: The boss is coming to help us.

Lisa: You called him; oh shit you gave him control over us.

Me: it not like I had a choice.

We stayed there quiet; I knew our boss is not a fair man. He may laugh or joke around all the damn time but he has never been fair and he's not a good man or a type of man you would like to owe.

## FOUR

### NOMASWAZI

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We were about to be taken to the interrogation room when the Boss arrived, stopping the police like the fucking boss that he is and I wanted to shout “Phoyisa that my fucking boss”

Boss: Why handcuff them like they killed someone.

He said to a police officer who didn't even know what to say. A detective showed up.

Detective: Mabura, here to confess?

Boss: Not anytime soon detective, I am just here to get my girls

The detective looked from us then to the boss

Detective: On what grounds? We still need to take their statement?

Boss: Well you kept them all night here on what grounds? My lawyer will be in contact. Thank you detective, bye detective; let bounce ladies.

He said walking away leaving the detective mad as hell, I walk past him first in my fucking pyjamas and the damn heels, my head held high and I walked like a fucking bitch who don't give a shit.

Boss: What the fuck are you wearing?

He asked laughing.

Boss: I don't even wanna know, you are just full of drama.

Zoe: Please take me home, I just want to freshen up and sleep

Me: You and I both

Lisa: I am so hungry

We all got in the Boss's car; Zoe with her dress has to be helped in order to get in. The boss dropped Zoe first at her house, I took my keys and phone, Lisa was also dropped at her place then it was me. My flat is just opposite the club, the moment I got off his car I took off my shoes.

Boss: Don't forget you owe me Swazi

He shouts after me.

Me: Make the case disappear

I said turning to him.

Boss: I fucking knew you will play me like that

I laughed.

Me: You know me better boss, cio cio

I waved and left him there. One thing I love about my boss he may be a hardcore criminal known around but he is the damn coolest criminal I have ever met. Not kind but not too cruel either all I can say about him is he look out for those who look out for him. Lisa and I usually did as we pleased at the club; we pick our own sections to work at, and we choose how we going to entertain the guest but that will change as we now owe him. He will fucking make sure he use this to his advantage make us do shit he knows pretty well we wouldn't do given a chance. In all that I am hoping he is fair.

"Hey are you okay?"

The guy from yesterday asked as I step out of the elevator on our floor.

Me: I am fine

I was exhausted, looking ridiculous in pyjamas and heels in my hands as I walk or rather drag my feet.

"Yesterday you said something about death?"

I walked past him slowly, with my head pounding like shit.

Me: All sorted

"Do you think maybe you can tell me what happened over dinner?"

Me: You are not my type; I would rather go out with your father.

I said and opened my door then closed it on his face as I dropped everything on the floor, dragging myself to take a bath. I swear I am never drinking again; I will never ever touch alcohol again.

I finished my well-deserved bath then pre heated a pie I found in my fridge it probably really old, I don't usually cook since I hate cooking. I tried eating the pie once it was ready but I just couldn't stomach anything, I had no appetite at all so I settled with going to sleep. After taking three painkillers I lie on my bed and zoomed out. Only to be woken up by an alarm alerting me it was time to get ready for work, honestly I didn't feel like going in today but since I missed yesterday I guess I had no choice, I drag myself as I got ready for work. The club is just across the street so I don't even need to take a taxi there. It super dark but thanks to street light it wasn't that bad, I crossed the road, passed

few buildings then came in contact with the club. Most people were already standing in a line waiting to enter; this club is always full and have vibe. Wasting no time I went to change into my gold glittering dress, our uniform as hostess, it way shorter than anything I own on my wardrobe and I own short dresses, this one is tight, hanging my body pretty well, showing all the curves and my butt locks were showing, I wore high gold heels complementing the dress then I sat at my station and applied make up, other girls were her too applying their makeup and making too much noise as they spoke on their loudest voices. Lisa showed up a little later when the club was about to open, she looked like shit and I laughed my ass off because damn I was so glad I am not the only one. I had a weave on my head, the planted one and it cost me 3k; for your information I bought it myself, I do my own fucking hair even though I wouldn't mind a man doing it for me. I had put on a simple make up with a touch of gold and purple lipstick, as far as I am concern I am smoking hot.

Lisa: Swazi please do my makeup

She said defeated as she couldn't get the look she wanted, the boss should really consider hiring someone who will do our makeup.

Me: I am taking r100 from your payment

Lisa: Yoo sis forget I asked, Pinky please do my makeup

Me: Suit yourself

I left them at the changing rooms and went to the main club, the DJ has set up his shit and waiters and waitresses were ready as usual.

"Eh Swazi what popping dude it been a minutes"

I rolled my eyes before responding to the fuck man hoe DJ who happens to be Mandla's friend so with no doubt I knew Mandla would be here since his friend is playing today.

Me: Sup Wiz been good

Wiz: Heard you got cuffed

He said smirking showing his Kaizer teeth.

Me: Sort of, it was no biggie

Wiz: Yoo man that dope that dope shit

Wiz is your skrr skrr type of guy.

Me: Is Mandla gonna pop by

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Wiz: Yoo what up? You want to fist him again, you chicks got no chill my man got bruises man.

Me: Is he coming or not

Wiz: Yoo just don't cause trouble man he is coming with his bitch.

You say what, that bitch got the nerves to show up here after she lied saying we beat her, we should teach her a lesson.

Me: No trouble at all.

I said and kissed his lips gentle.

Me: See you Wiz

Wiz: Yoo wait babe, are we gonna hook up? You should stop giving me red flag man it ain't cool.

Wiz is cute and all just not my cup of tea. I brushed my hand on his smooth cheek then lean over and whispered on his ear.

Me: On a scale of one to ten how good is your D game?

"Yey! Swazi on your station man the doors are opening"

The boss shouts somewhere. I bit Wiz's earlobe gentle before walking away in a most seductive way leaving him stunned there.

I took Lisa by her arm the moment she walked in a club dressed exactly like me.

Me: Mandla and the cocksucker are coming

Lisa: Bitch! Is Wiz playing?

I nod my head.

Lisa: Okay what the plan

Me: I was hoping you will come with one

She smirks while biting on her lower lip.

Me: Oh! Oh

Lisa: I will call Zoe to come by, will let you know on the plan all in due time

We looked at each other smiling.

Me: You so bad

Lisa: And you love me

Me: So much

I leaned over and we shared a brief kiss before walking back to the club to start working.

## FIVE

### NOMASWAZI

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The night was going by very well, Lisa and I were working at the VIP section as always, the music was bursting out loud, and people were having fun of their lives as they dance to the music. Stripers were doing their own thing on the poles. I danced my way towards a group of rich men who were sitting alone no bitches and shit, I had our most expensive bottle of Champaign and brandy, deepen in a bowl of ice. Placing the bowl in the centre I turn to them. There were four of them, rich from the looks and those types that come in a club for their illegal business meeting, the type that would hardly take a woman home unless she is really lucky. They all had expensive watches on their wrist, watches that cost a fortune and they smelled like million bucks.

Me: Will there be anything gents

“No we will let you know”

Me: Okay enjoy

I sing-said as I walked away to another guys

Me: What up gents, needing more drinks?

These were just those snob rich guys from rich families; I am saying that because these type of guys love showing off, they are wearing expensive clothes, girls are busy throwing themselves at them.

“How about you join us babe”

One of them asked, if I were to join them they will tip really good but I wasn't in a mood to deal with bunch of immature boys so politely flashing my beautiful smile while rubbing his chest gentle and bending over just a little I say.

Me: Oh sweetie I would love too but I got more tables to serve

“Just one round of drinks and dance”

Me: When I am done I will sure come to you.

I said before walking away to another group of girls only, is it weird that I love it when girls come together and buy their own drinks then drink them like there's no tomorrow.

Me: Hey girls

“Hey”

They all said singing and dancing. I wasted no time as I joined them, we dance and laughed together. As much as I didn't know them I still had fun with them as we got on top of the table dancing and laughing. This reminded me of how Lisa and I got here. Lisa never met either of her parents, her mom died giving birth to her and her father was just never in the picture just like my father so she was raised by her grandmother. So after matric we left PMB coming here in Durban, we had nothing we would sometimes sleep on empty stomach but our girl Zoe always got our backs, she rented a place for us nothing fancy just a one room. We spent almost the whole year in search of jobs with no luck. As much as Zoe got our backs we had to understand she was just a student with rich parents and we were not her responsibility so asking her to buy us food sometimes was just difficult we had to hustle on our own. One day she was celebrating passing her first year so she said she was taking us to a club. We always talked about going to a club, getting drunk and dancing the night out. We were excited that night we came right here on this club, Zoe was paying for drinks she even went as far as borrowing us her dresses and that night we were smoking hot. The alcohol was getting in our system not to mention we have always loved dancing so Lisa and I started dancing like crazy, we got on top of the tables and dance like no body's business. More people started gathering around hyping for us and enjoying the free show that we were giving. They even forgot about the strippers dancing half naked on poles. Zoe can't dance like we can, my friend just suck at dancing so she kept cheering for us, people started throwing the money and we knew we just hit jack pot. The Boss offered us a job with a really good pay after that dance our lives changed forever, now here I am dancing with strangers and earning for it. I love my job, I am very happy with my job, it gives me life, and it let me live because at the end of the day we shouldn't forget that you live only once so why not make the most of it.

I was still enjoying myself when out of the suddenly Lisa took my arm dragging me away from the crowd.

Me: You such a party pooper, remember how we got here

I said moving my ass to her dancing.

Zoe: Oh Swazi will you stop

She said sparkling my ass.

Me: Zoe Zoe you here babe

I hugged her

Lisa: Okay Zoe did you bring them?

Me: Bring what?

I asked sitting on the chair as we were at the changing rooms.

Lisa: Pills for bile

Me: Euw who got the bile

Lisa: No one, we are sparkling Mandla's bitch

Me: Woah you say what?

Zoe: You for real Lisa

Lisa: That chick messed with us, lying to the police about us breaking her arm yet she is here today so we going to put the pill in her drink and she will party in the toilet.

We laughed as we jump up in excitement

Me: She messed with wrong bitches.

We did our ass bumping dance.

Lisa: Swazi you will need to talk with Tom because he is the only one who can help us.

Tom is the bartender.

Me: Where are they sitting?

Zoe: Ground floor on the bar counters.

I took the pills from Zoe.

Me: I got this

We all walked out and stood on the top floor watching everyone dancing and drinking.

Zoe: There they are by the centre of the dance floor dancing, bitch can't even dance.

Me: Good let me approach Tom; keep your eyes on them if they move you signal for me I will keep looking back.

Lisa: Okay be quick

I rushed down the staircase as fast as I could before approaching Tom I looked back at my girls and they raised a thump up for me to go on. I walked behind the bar. The bar had four different bartenders but I was gonna ask only one and I knew he wouldn't say no to me.

Me: Psss Tom

He turned to me.

Tom: What up Swazi need a drink personalised to you

Me: I need more than a drink, I need a huge favour

Tom: If it money you want, I am broke

I rolled my eyes at him and he laughed.

“Sure two beers please”

Someone shouted and Tom left me to attend the customer then he came back

Tom: Okay it busy today, what did you need Swazi

Tom is white and super cool him and I have a situationship, we have fucked once or twice just not sure how many exactly. It was a no strings attached type of shit so we so cool with each other.

Me: I need you to spark someone's drink for me

Tom: Woah what, who?

Because of the music I tried to lower my voice as much as I could, checking the crowd I saw her and Mandla making their way towards the bar.

Me: You see the girl with Mandla; they are coming towards the bar right now I need you to put four pills on her drink, please Tom.

I said as fast as I could then lowered down, hiding behind the bar counter so they wouldn't see me, Tom was a little stunned and luckily Mandla approached him for drinks. Since Mandla was or is married to Zoe he kind of knew about me and Tom because Tom once accompanied me to Zoe and Mandla's anniversary last year so that make it easy for him to approach Tom for drinks instead of the other bar tenders.

Mandla: Yoo Tom please gets us drinks man!

He shouts through the music. I slide the pills in Tom's pocket he slap my hand off him but the pills were already there.

Mandla: Yoo Tom bro hurry before my woman faint.

Tom chuckled.

Tom: A beer for you and what should I get for the lady.

“Cocktail please”

More like cocksucker bitch. Tom looked down on me shaking his head as he get the glass to mix the cocktail, I pleaded with my eyes. He sighs before secretly taking the pills out and just poured all of them in a glass mind you there were like six or more of them. I smirk to myself. He mixed everything nicely even put the umbrella on the drink then handed them their drinks.

Mandla: Thanks Tom bro

He said, I couldn't see them so I couldn't risk coming out. Tom left me hiding there and attended his other customers.

UBIZO THE CALLING

Tom: You can come out they are gone.

I slowly rose up again.

Tom: I hope I don't regret this and I did it because Mandla is a cow for leaving Zoe like that.

Me: Thank you Tom, you the best.

I kissed his cheek before running off back to the top floor where my friends were impatiently waiting

SIX

NOMASWAZI

---

As those great English and smart people would say; happiness doesn't come in a sliver plate delivered on your door step, you create your own happiness. Our happiness comes from letting our heart to be free and happy. Drink if it makes you happy, dance if it makes you happy, read if it makes you happy all I am saying is; be happy while you still have a chance. Zoe was hurt, she loves Mandla so much and we all knew that. But now here is Mandla with his bitch playing happy couples right in front of her eyes, I could see it right through her that she was heartbroken but I pretended not to see as she drinks her sorrows away. I really wished I could make her heart better or better yet I could understand the feeling she is going through. I have never been in love so I don't know how heart break feels. She sat on the small couch that overlooks the ground floor; her eyes were fixed on her husband and his mistress. She would take a long sip of the wine straight from the bottle; I think she kind of got fed up with having to pour the wine in the glass all the damn time so she settled to drinking from the bottle. Taking a deep sighs I raised my eyes and they met with Lisa's eyes who was just across me serving her customers. I know she was feeling like shit for not knowing how we could help Zoe. I shake my head sideways with sadness written over my face then took a deep breath and proceed to serving the customers.

Me: Hello! More drinks for you?

I asked the group of four who seems to be couples, the girls smiled sweetly at me.

"No we going home now, here is your bill"

She said handing me the already paid bill, opening it I realised they tip me real good and my smile widen. I love money, I love money so much. I live for money.

Me: Come back next time, we were so happy to have you.

"More like you were happy to have our money"

A guy with small eyes and a bead said and they all laughed me included.

Me: You got me there, come back and spend more.

The laughed standing up, the girls were wasted and the guys were just gentlemen as they helped them out.

"There is no way we coming back, look how my wife is wasted"

He said hooking his hand around her waist then scooped her up. I love couples who party together, no complications and drama.

Me: At least she got herself a very good bodyguard who even carry her.

The wife laughed and waved at me.

"Bye hope to see you soon"

I waved too as the husband say.

"Never"

The other couple followed behind them laughing, still smiling at their sweet love I found a waitress to clean the table with my eyes then walked to the till to give the money and proceeds with my work. The night was still young; people were not planning on going anywhere anytime soon unless you are a wife that came with her husband. I kept moving from table to table, dancing and delivering drinks. I would sometime chill with some of the customers entertaining and dancing with them, they loved that so much some would even offer me drinks but since I am on duty I can't get drunk. I was dancing with a group of guys and girls when Zoe took my hand dragging me away. I almost rolled my eyes or I did roll my eyes.

Zoe: It has kicked in

She said shouting through the music pointing at the ground floor as Mandla's bitch was busy rushing towards the toilet. I let out a loud laughter and high fived her.

Me: Let her party in a toilet.

We laughed and her eyes went to Mandla who was dancing with some friends we use to know but just not close with.

Zoe: Maybe I should go to him now that she is not around.

Me: No for what?

Zoe: Maybe he will apologise, he has never apologised not even once and look at him, he looks so happy.

Me: More reason you shouldn't go to him.

She sat there looking depressed then out of the suddenly tears streamed down her pretty face.

Zoe: I miss him Swazi

I hugged her as I sit on the arm of the couch beside her.

Zoe: I miss him so much

Me: It okay to miss him

I just didn't know what to say to her, so I kept brushing her back while trying to shush her; from a small table beside her she took the bottle and took a long sip then placed it back.

Zoe: I am going

She said standing up, she was drunk she wiped the tears of and I just thought to myself let her go maybe after confronting him she will find peace so I followed after her as she take the elevator down. Her eyes focused on him as the elevator went down; it was transparent so we could see everything.

Zoe: You think I am a fool, don't you?

I didn't respond because she knows how I feel about running after a man.

Zoe: One day Swazi, one day you will be in love and you would know how it likes loving someone with all your heart.

As much as I got a lot to say when it came to love I kept my mouth shut, I am not the type to fall in love because I hate heartbreaks and I don't want my heart to be broken over a fucking dick when I can get any dick I want. The moment the door opened she walked through the crowed towards Mandla with me following behind her, I stood a little bit far from them as she tap his shoulder he turned with a smile but when he realised it Zoe his face changed to piss or disgust I am not sure. They started talking I couldn't hear exactly what they were saying to each other, but they were arguing the bitch came back and stood behind Mandla with her hand on his shoulder. I would be damned if I stay here so I walked up to them in time to hear Mandla say.

Mandla: Just go Zoe I don't want you, you disgust me. What we had is over.

You got to be fucking kidding me, this man not so long ago he was declaring his undying love for Zoe now he don't want her; men are trash.

Zoe: Mandla you are doing this to me, to me Mandla?

She said with a trembling voice, I get her arm and hooked it on mine.

Me: Let go friend he is not worth it.

Mandla: Take your hoe friend and leave me the fuck alone Zoleka.

I wasn't gonna say anything to him but for him to call me a hoe as if I have fucked him, no man he's taking me for shit.

Me: You listen here Mandla, life will humble you. One day you will come crawling asking for this hoe's help and I will kick the horse while it down.

He chuckled.

Mandla: What could you possible help me with? One round of sex

He laughed.

Mandla: My woman satisfies me just fine and as for you Zoe my lawyer will be in contact regarding divorce papers.

Me: I have a feeling you putting yourself in deeper shit than you thought.

My eyes shifted to his skinny bitch; there was something about her something so heavy and just so dark. I could feel it right on my shoulder and when I looked deep in her eyes I saw nothing but evil. She gave me bad vibes, she smile at me a devilish smile and I felt my hair at the back raising. I turned my attention to Mandla.

Me: She is your downfall.

I took Zoe's hand and walked away from them still having bad vibes about her. She took off running outside the club and I followed after her, found her sitting on the pavement.

Me: Zoe! Zoe!

Zoe: It hurt Swazi, it hurt so much.

Me: I am sorry babe

Zoe: I don't know what to do; I don't know where to from now on seeing him happy with someone else hurt so much.

She said crying; I took off my shoes and settled next to her.

Me: It okay to be hurt, being hurt is proof that you loved him being hurt is good because then you can deal with it, just don't bottle the hurt you are feeling be hurt all you want let yourself feel the pain and then pick yourself up one step at a time I believe it will get better.

She laid her head on my shoulder.

Zoe: I wish I never got married.

Me: Just be glad you did, you had your happy times and just because they are over it doesn't mean there were not there and Zoe you are so damn pretty I mean girl have you seen yourself you smoking hot you can have any guy you want.

Zoe: My parents are going to be so disappointed

Me: You have to stop living for them, live for Zoe from now on. The Zoe who wanted to be on our screen acting and doing wonders the Zoe who loves reciting poems, the Zoe who has a most beautiful voice. It time you tell everyone to fuck off, it time you go for your dreams because babes you my darling have been living for other people for so long. What happened to the Zoe who wanted to take the world by storm?

She sighs.

Zoe: My parents will never allow that.

Me: Exactly my point, fuck your parents you are a 24 years old woman and you are capable of making your own decisions if they are not happy with those decisions then fuck them. Lisa and I got your back 24/7 whatever you decide we gonna support you.

She took another long sighs.

Me: I have to go back to work; I will get an uber to take you home.

Zoe: I will sit here till the uber arrives I don't feel like going inside.

Me: You sure

She nods her head and I wasn't comfortable with leaving her here all by herself so I stood up and walked to the bouncer.

Me: Yoo Bra g I need to get my friend home can you help.

Bra g: Ah Swazi you are always asking for favours.

Me: Come on please, I need to get back to work.

He walked away from the door and shortly he came back with the other bouncer.

Bra g: Zulu will drive her

I smile at them; my colleagues are all cool they look out for you as long as you look out for them.

Zulu: I will charge you Swazi you are always asking for favours

I laughed.

Me: Yoo you love money just come

Zulu: As if you don't.

Me: I am better, you are extra.

I walked up to Zoe and helped her up then wore my shoes.

Me: Babes Zulu will take you home is that okay with you?

She just nodded, I turned to Zulu.

Me: No funny business.

He laughed out loud.

Zulu: I am a man of principles, how do you take me.

I knew he wouldn't do anything stupid because I trusted him and he is a trustworthy man. I waved my goodbye as Zulu take her hand towards the parking. I took a deep sigh before walking back inside.

UBIZO THE CALLING

Me: Thanks Bra g

We fist bump then I walked in, back to life, back to work.

SEVEN

NOMASWAZI

---

I always come back from work dog tired, I only knock off in the early mornings then walked back to my flat and sleep. The moment I unlocked my door I threw myself on top of the couch and passed out right there and then only to be woken up by a knock on the door, some people just know how to piss me off. How the fuck can you knock on my door so early.

Me: Get lost!

I shout with my sleepy voice but the motherfucker wouldn't stop. I drag myself up and went to open.

Me: Lisa you such a fucking pain in the ass.

She walked in and threw herself on my couch, she's all dressed and looking fresh. I yawn stretching myself.

Me: Dude shouldn't you be sleeping.'

Lisa: I am attending and my class start in twenty minute I passed by to tell you to check your Facebook.

Lisa is studying towards her diploma in hospitality management.

Me: Seriously Lisa, you came to tell me that shit! Do you know how tired I am?

She rolled her eyes and snatch my bag from the coffee table then took out my phone, I collapsed beside her and just closed my eyes trying to go back to sleep.

Lisa: Check who is trending.

Me: Who?

I asked in my sleepy voice.

Lisa: Just fucking check

I slowly opened my eyes and watch the video on the phone as she held it up for me to watch. Mandla's bitch was on full display, in the ladies toilet at the club, shit was dripping down her legs. Toilet clubs are always full so if you want to use them you gotta stand in line and wait for your turn but it seems like she couldn't stand long. The video display her hitting a toilet door, shouting for whoever was inside to come out while she was busy pressing her legs together and other ladies were just laughing as she couldn't hold the shit anymore so it

dripped down messing her dress and she ended up being covered in shit. I couldn't help but laugh my ass off as we watch the video over and over.

Lisa: The bitch is trending everywhere, people have even created memes.

Me: There is no chill in mzansi

I said laughing so hard.

Lisa: I doubt she would be showing her face on the public anytime soon.

Me: Serves her right for messing with us.

Lisa: Fuck I got bounce or else I will be late.

She grabs her staff.

Lisa: Bye babes see you later

Me: bye.

The moment she closed the door I went back to sleep.

I woke during the day then went to take a cold shower before preparing myself something to eat; I made noodles and ordered some pizza. I hate cooking; I hate it so much so I hardly cook. While eating my noodles and sipping on my glass of wine I watched the video and read the comments. I was laughing my ass off as Mzansi people were having no mercy on her. They roasted her so hard and I was enjoying every moment of it. My pizza got delivered so while chowing on it I called Zoe to check how she is doing.

Zoe: Babes

Me: Did you see the video?

Zoe: More than once

She laughed.

Zoe: It the only thing that have been keeping insane here. My Dad is a fucking twart!

Me: You still at work?

Zoe: Yes I was waiting for this man to return, I am quitting.

Me: Woah you say what?

Zoe: Dad is so unbelievable; when I told him Mandla cheated and he's divorcing me. He my so called father embarrassed me in front of the whole staff saying he knew I am unfit for marriage and it good that Mandla is leaving me because as long as I am still hanging out with 'Hood rats' I am not good enough for anything.

Me: Whoa and we are the hood rats.

Zoe: Imagine the level of disrespect, I am walking towards his office to tell him I quit. Dad doesn't respect me as a human, an old enough person to make her own damn decision. It time I stand up for myself because he's pissing me off so much.

Me: Your father is toxic.

Zoe: And I don't need that in my life, will talk later I am outside his door.

Me: Tell me how it goes, good luck

Zoe: later bitch

Me: Laters babes.

I dropped the call feeling super proud of her for quitting her job; maybe just maybe she can put her focus on things that she loves. Maybe now she can live for herself instead of leaving for her parents; she deserves to be happy.

Later that day I prepared for work as usual, I wasn't feeling okay though I was so down and I didn't know why but I pushed myself got dressed on my sweat pants then walked to work. Lisa was already there I just sat on my station and prepared myself for the night. The boss walked in just when I was doing touch ups on my makeup.

Boss: Lisa, Swazi you are on private rooms today.

Lisa: No fuck way, private rooms are boring and draining not to mention they're usual occupied by those rude men with so much money and they treat us like trash.

Me: Exactly they treat us like hookers, no way we going there. Remember what happened last time.

Boss: Yea! Yea they almost rapped you bla! Bla! I don't care, you owe me, remember? So private rooms it is.

He said and walked away leaving us fuming with anger.

Lisa: I hate private rooms.

Me: Argh I hate owing him.

We got dressed in black back revealing dresses that were right under our ass with matching black three inch heels. Whenever you work at the private rooms you wear black then the club it gold. Lisa and I hugged each other before walking to separate rooms, it might happen we would work in one room depending on how busy the rooms we will occupy.

Lisa: Good luck

Me: I love you.

I walked into my own room, it was occupied by three men sitting on the blue couch by the middle of the room and enjoying a show presented by the stripper as she does her thing on the pole butt naked. By the door are two board guards. I took a deep sigh as I walked past the board guards, the room has a dark theme, and slow music is playing on the back ground. I shake my ass nicely and planted a huge smile on my face as I approach them.

Me: Gentlemen, can I get you something to drink?

These men are old, probably old enough to be my father. Their eyes roamed up and down my body and I had to maintain a good posture and pretend to be unbothered by their thirsty eyes.

“Brandy on rock”

“No rock”

“Make it two brandies on rock”

Me: As you wish

I bow a little and walked away. I got their drinks and went back to serve them, but heart skipped fast then started beating fast. I was only a metre away from them when my head became so dizzy and the whole room started spinning.

“Yey what wrong with you bitch”

I could hear their voices but they sounded do far; I had stop walking since everything was spinning and my heart is beating out of my chest. The tray with their drinks fell as I try to hold my spinning head with my hands. Their voices were fading away slowly but surely then I fainted. I tried opening my eyes but all I could see is darkness and trees then creepy birds making creepy sound.

Me: Where the fuck am i?

I was lying on the glass, trees were surrounding me and it was dark and scary. I quickly jump up standing on my two feet while looking around. I am wearing a red skirt with a brown rag wrapped around my boobs, both my wrist have red and white beads and I am barefooted. My heart is pounding out of my chest with fear. As I look around still freaked out I spotted a woman with a black rag covering her head, she was walking away while pushing a topless man.

Me: Hello! Hey help me! Sorry help

They kept moving as my call out for help fell on deaf ears, I followed after them but accidental stepped on a wood that cut my foot underneath shooting so much pain that went through right on my pounding heart.

Me: Oh shit

I screamed in pain and blood started gushing out. When I raised my head I realised the woman and the man were walking away so I limp following after them. They approached an old torn tent, there is fire outside the tent and another woman was sitting by the fire with a knife on her hand, the woman with the knife was old, so old that she had wrinkles. I hid by a tree as they talk, I couldn't hear what they were saying but the old woman didn't look pleased. I still couldn't see the face of the other woman as she has a cloth covering her and I couldn't see the man since he has his back on me. The woman pushed the man towards the old woman the man fall, his hands is tied together when he raise up I was so shocked to realised it was Mandla, fear was written all over his face, his lips were even trembling and his eyes were roaming around, his mouth ganged with a cloth.

Me: Mandla! psssh

I called out in a whisper; another man that was topless with so many scars on his body came out of the tent with a big bowl. They talk among each other. The woman finally removed the cloth covering her head then walked inside the tent, when she came out she was only wearing a very short rag wrapped on her lower body and her boobs were on display, when she fully came out I cussed.

Me: Holly shit

It her; Mandla's bitch and she had a very huge butcher knife on her hand. I was freaking out so much my heart was literally beating out of my chest. My eyes flicked back to Mandla who looked so scared, the old woman kept smiling at him in a most creepy way, my whole body shaking because of fear.

EIGHT

NOMASWAZI

---

My eyes shoot open; I jump up as I try to normalise my breathing. My heart is still beating so fast, I gasped for air as I try to breathe. I heard a beeping machine before I heard Lisa.

Lisa: Swazi calm down! Just breathe slowly.

Checking my surrounding I am in a very bright room, Zoe and Lisa are right beside me and I have tubes connected on me, the irritating beeping sounds didn't stop. When it finally sinks in that I am in hospital I calmed down.

Zoe: Are you okay?

I lay back on the bed and closed my eyes.

Zoe: Do you need anything?

She ask again as I don't respond.

Zoe: Water?

I slowly open my eyes, my friends were staring down at me with concern written all over their face.

Me: I am okay guys

I say slowly trying to assure them but the truth is; that was a biggest lie.

Lisa: Are you feeling any pain?

I shake my head no. not pain but fear.

Me: I want to leave this place

I say getting up.

Zoe: No Swazi you need to rest.

Me: I just wanna leave; why the fuck did you bring me here?

Zoe: Swazi you fainted what were we supposed to do?

Me: Pour me with water or something.

They gave each other looks before deciding not to argue with me.

Lisa: Let me get the doctor first.

As she walked away I got off the bed.

Zoe: Take it easy Swazi you over work yourself.

I took off the tubes connected on me then I stepped on the floor but a massive pain shot through my foot.

Me: Aaah! Oh shit! Shit!

I could feel tears burning my eyes.

Zoe: Swazi! Take it easy you hurt yourself under your feet

Me: How?

Zoe: I am not sure i think you stepped on the broken piece of glasses

Now it all becoming a reality in my head, I wasn't dreaming. It wasn't a nightmare. Lisa walked back in with a doctor following behind her.

Doctor: Nomaswazi

Me: Can I go home doctor?

He took a deep sigh.

Zoe: What wrong with her? Will she be okay? Is it safe to go home?

Doctor: We still running some more test but she fainted because of enervation. I will suggest you take it easy and don't over work yourself. If possible ask your boss to give you few days off work and be on rest bed.

Me: Okay can I go now?

Zoe: Doctor is there anything we could do to help her.

Doctor: Just make sure she gets enough rest, I have prescribe some sleeping pills, make sure you don't take them constantly as any drug can be addictive.

Lisa: Thank you doctor, will make sure she get some rest.

The doctor nods and walks away, Lisa helped me get dressed then we left the hospital. I was limping as we leave the hospital and all I could think about is what the heck happened to me.

It was a morning meaning I have been in hospital for the whole night when we got to my flat I sat on the couch watching TV while my friends were in my kitchen preparing food.

Zoe: Seriously Swazi no grocer, what do you eat?

I ignored her, my focus was on the TV but my mind wasn't there. It looked like I am watching the TV when the TV is actually the one watching me. My mind kept drifting back to the dream I had or rather where I went when I fainted. I could still see the old woman's wicked smile and Mandla's fear.

Me: Zoe where is Mandla?

I had to ask because I wasn't really sure what was happening with what I witness.

Zoe: His Instagram says they are leaving for vacation tomorrow and I am praying the plane crush.

She walked past me.

Zoe: I will be back in ten.

Vacation my foot! Could there be any truth in my dream? Argh I am being paranoid who on their right mind could live in such a creepy forest? It was just a stupid dream. I kept telling myself that but deep down it felt more than like a stupid dream. Maybe the doctor is right, I work too hard I need some rest.

Lisa: Swazi! Swazi! Dude

She taps my shoulder making me jump up.

Me: Jeez what the fuck Lisa

Lisa: I have been calling you?

I looked back to the tv.

Me: I am watching the TV

Lisa: Umm ...

She sits beside me on the couch.

Lisa: What going on Swazi?

Me: Nothing

Lisa: Swazi!

Me: I am fine okay, just exhausted I need to get some sleep.

I stood up and limped to my bedroom where I threw myself on top of the bed and just lay there thinking about Mandla; why the fuck am I thinking about that asshole. He could die I still wouldn't fucking care. Later my friends announce they were living, after walking them out I changed into my oversized pink t-shirt and went back to sleep.

All I could hear are screams the forest is so dark the more I tip toe towards; the screams kept getting louder. I tip toe walking slowly with my pounding heart. There it is the old torn tent. My heart is literally beating out of my chest; I couldn't see anyone all I could hear were screams.

"Help! Anyone help me please!"

I grab some wood from the ground and tip toed forward, my hands were sweating, and I kept taking deep breath as fear kept creeping in on me. I was

so closed to the tent when I suddenly heard voices, they were right behind me and I don't know where they came from. I had no way to hide I was so scared so I started running away yet it seems like they didn't even care I was there or wait I think I am invincible. I walked back towards them still holding the wood tight they just walked past me. It the old woman and other two half-dressed men with so many cut scars on their body, the old woman is wearing black rags, she even look like she hasn't bath in years. I followed after them as they walk past me, the screams were still there and they were coming from behind the tent. I followed after them all the way to where the screams were coming from. A young man I have never seen in my whole entire life was tied on the tree, besides him was fire with high flames, Mandla's bitch with other two ladies were sitting beside the fire.

"Is he ready?"

The old woman asked with her husky creepy voice.

"He's ready"

Mandla's bitch say then turned to the two ladies.

"Go get Mandla" then she turned to the two men as the old woman settles next to the fire. She signal something to them, they quickly went to get it and gave it to her right when the ladies came back with Mandla, the guy on the tree still tied there crying. I walked a little bit closer to the fire, still scared but hopeful they can't see me, they forced a cuffed Mandla to go on his knee next to the guy tied on the tree. They all started chanting something in tongues so I couldn't make out.

"Oh chichih raba! Raba! Chichih! Bara! Bara yeses!"

They said chanting.

"Lucifer our lord! I call upon your name; I have the greatest treasury with me. Allow me to use him for my own pressure first"

She took a plastic and from that plastic she took out our pictures. Me, Zoe and Lisa, still too shocked by that she prayed to her lord in tongues then burned our pictures on the flames of fire.

"One by one may he get them all, they will pay for what they did to me"

I wasn't ready for what happened next; one of the men took a hammer and smashed the guy tied on the tree's head. Blood split around and I screamed my lugs out as the rest of these creatures started laughing. I screamed so loud closing my eyes not even interested to see how it will turn out. When I opened my eyes I was in my room still screaming, sweat is dripping down my face and my heart is beating out of it rib cage, my whole body is shaking with so much fear. I jump of the bed and rushed to the bathroom where I washed my face on

UBIZO THE CALLING

the sink, after I felt calm I looked up on my reflation on the mirror and I looked like hell but that not what freaked me out as it catch my attention. My t-shirt has blood spot all over it I screamed taking it off, tears gushing out and my heart consumed with fear.

## NINE

### NOMASWAZI

---

After the whole nightmare thing I couldn't sleep, my head was all over the place. I was so scared it actually felt like someone was in my room. The only thing that is on my mind is wonder; I am busy trying to crack my skull so I would figure out what is happening. One thing I know for a fact these are not just nightmares there is more to it, for instance how do you explain the blood spot on my t-shirt if it was just a dream, not forgetting the wound under my foot. Something is happening; people are getting killed on my sleep. I had to find Mandla and his bitch to get to the bottom of this. Growing up I used to see people die in my dreams then few days down the line I would hear they have died, even with my mother I was shown her death before her actual death. I never really put much into it, I always thought it was just a coincident; but right now I am convince something is going to happen to Mandla and I am not sure if I want to witness whatever shit that is going to happen.

\*knock\*

The knock on the door freaked me out so much making my heart pound, the person knock again. After taking some few deep breathe I walked towards the door and open.

Me: Yes

It the guy from the other day; the one living on my floor

"Hi could you please assist me with just three spoon of sugar. It seems like I ran out and I need coffee"

He said smiling from ear to ear.

Me: You can always buy coffee on your way to wherever you work.

I wasn't in the mood for bullshit; there are other three tenants on this floor he should've asked them.

"I could but the thing is I don't function well without coffee, please I would make sure to return your sugar first thing when I come back"

I sigh and rolled my eyes before opening the door wide for him to enter.

Me: Next time make sure you store your grocer

I say taking his mug and walked to the kitchen leaving him standing by the door, I poured exactly the three spoons he asked for then returned to him. The

look on his face was priceless after I gave him the mug as he realised I had put a small amount of sugar, exactly what he asked for. He smiled not so genuine smile.

“Well thank you neighbour for your kindness and generous heart”

I held the door open for him to leave, he walked out but before I could close the door he turned to me.

“Pray about it, pray for him and yourself not forgetting your beloved friends”

Confusion sinks in; I looked at him completely shocked.

Me: uh ...

“You need to pray hard”

Then he walked away leaving me still stunned, my mouth half open. Who is he? What does he mean by pray hard? What the fuck is he on about? Could it be possible he knows about my dreams or maybe he heard me scream last night. Who is him? Could it be Mandla? I had so many questions and the only person who could answer them is right opposite me, I rushed through the whole way towards his room and knock only once the door opened.

“I figured it might be you”

He stepped out with his briefcase on his hand.

Me: What were you talking about? What do you mean I need to pray hard?

He locked his door and started walking towards the elevator.

Me: Hey I am talking to you.

I say following after him, after he had pressed the button for the elevator.

“You know exactly what I am talking about; she’s coming for all of you. Pray Nomaswazi”

The doors open and he entered and turned to me, our eyes locking I was still too stunned to say anything.

Me: who are you?

“Your guardian Angel”

He said and winks at me as the doors close. Creepy!

Staying indoors was driving me crazy, I had nothing better to do with my time so I decided tonight I would be going back to work I would rather work than stay here depressed. I am lucky to have friends like Zoe and Lisa, they sure are the best thing that ever happened in my life, in actual fact they’re more than just friends they are more like family. My soul sisters; Lisa had to attend her classes so she couldn’t come but Zoe did come to check up on me and she

brought home cooked meal with her. I must say she is a great destruction at least when I am with her I don't think about the shit that has been happening in my life lately. We were sitting on my couch devouring ice cream from it container.

Zoe: So yea they disowned me.

Me: Oh my God Zoe just like that, are you okay though?

Zoe: What hurt the most is how I just realised these people never loved me, oh and Mandla came by my house to deliver divorce papers and to pack his staff.

Me: Mandla was at your house?

Zoe: Yea and his bitch was waiting in the car, imagine the level of disrespect nx.

All I could think about is Mandla was at Zoe's house.

Zoe: My life is a fucking mess; my husband is divorcing me, my parents just disowned me and I don't have a job.

I feel for her really, some parents can be so toxic.

Zoe: Sooner or later I will have no place to stay as the house is under Mandla's name.

Me: Didn't you marry in community of property?

Zoe: Nop so it only a matter of time before he kick me out but I am not worried about that, I got some money under my name it enough to get me an small affordable place of my own then from there I don't know.

Me: It going to be alright you will see, and you got us we will do anything for you.

Zoe: I know and I feel so lucky to have you guys if it wasn't for you I doubt I would've coped with all the shit that has been happening.

Me: We need a night out! Just us having fun and drinking and dancing and just forget about all the shit that has been happening.

Zoe: Oh yes I could use some drinking

I hugged her.

Me: We going to be fine.

Zoe: I was also thinking, we should do something nice for Lisa her graduation is coming up soon.

Me: What you have in mind?

Zoe: I don't know, I am not sure as yet but I know she would love for her Gran to come down here and she has been complaining about not having money.

Me: Yea her school fee cost a leg and an arm. I can get Granny to come here

Zoe: That great and we could organise a quiet nice dinner after the graduation with Gran and us.

Me: Done deal

Zoe: Umm ... Swazi don't get mad, okay?

Me: Oh! Oh I am already mad.

She took a deep sigh and turned to look at me instead of the tv.

Zoe: You can't dance in a club and serves drinks your whole entire life. Look I know you said we shouldn't pressure you but come on Swazi time is ticking you need something stable.

Me: I will figure something out

I said not even interested in the topic, I don't know what I want with my life so dwelling on it just stresses me.

Zoe: You always say that, Lisa would soon be done with her studies after that it would be job hunting.

I rolled my eyes.

Me: I know

Zoe: Look I am ... I just want you to not depend on working on that club all your life; there's more to you than serving drinks.

Me: I said I will think of something jeez Zoe, you have a messed up life yourself fix it and stop trying to fix mine.

Zoe: I know I got a fucked up life right now but girl it far way better than the life you living, you need to get your life together. Serving drinks at that stinking place and having men touch your ass as they please is not a life, walking around half naked is not life.

Me: Okay this is it, get the fuck out of my house Zoe

Zoe: I am not going anyway.

Me: Zoe gets the fuck out before I say something I would regret.

Zoe: Do not fuck with me Swazi, you have been working at the club for three years now don't you fucking think it enough, you can't work there for the rest of your life. Just yesterday you were telling me to go for my dreams, to go for what I want now I am asking you to do the same shit.

Me: I don't know what I want to do.

Zoe: That because you got too comfortable serving drinks to people who don't even respect you.

I stood up from the couch and walked away.

Zoe: Walk away all you like bitch but you know I am telling the truth.

I walk back to the couch and snatched the ice cream from her then walked away again.

Zoe: You have five days that one week to find a course you desire before I do it for you!

She shout as I disappear to my room.

Me: Fuck you!

I shout back

Zoe: If you fail to do so I am going to find it for you and next year you going to school Swazi. Fuck your bull shit! And fuck the damn club!

Me: and fuck you Zoe the perfectionist!

Zoe: Whatever bitch!

I slammed the bedroom door close behind me. Deep I know she is right, I can't work at the club for the rest of my life. I already know that but then I am not interested in anything, my life is just stuck I don't know what is happening.

TEN

NOMASWAZI

---

As I walked inside the club that night everyone was staring at me, I bet it because I “fainted”. I want just one person to start with me today, just one. They will know me too well. I will take out my frustrations on them I swear. I walked to changing rooms; Lisa was sitting by her station applying makeup.

Lisa: The fuck you doing here, you supposed to be on bed rest.

Me: I am fine

Lisa: You need to rest!

Me: I have rested, I am fine.

Lisa: I dare you to faint again I will fucking slap you I swear.

I just rolled my eyes and ignored her as I sit on my station and apply makeup, after I was done I got dressed on my work gold dress. Before we could walk to the club Lisa grabbed my hand.

Lisa: You sure you fine?

Me: I am fine no need to worry

Lisa: Heard you and Zoe were at it

Me: I don't wanna talk about that bitch

Lisa: She's right though

I groan.

Me: Not now Lisa.

I kissed her cheek and walked away, putting on my best smile. The club was already buzzing with people, as usual I serve the drinks with my best smile while dancing and entertaining the customers. The night was going by so well. I had forgotten about my problems. I am sitting with a group of guys who are celebrating their friend, whose song just went viral, we busy dancing and singing along to music. I am busy dancing on some guy's lap when I suddenly felt too hot and my head felt so dizzy, I just knew shit was happening, the whole room started spinning, I tried walking away from the group of guys, balancing myself with tables, my heart beating so fast. Music, noise and disco lights making everything worse; Lisa must have been keeping an eye on me because she was quick to come to my rescue. We stepped in the changing rooms and I sat down on the couch, still feeling dizzy.

Lisa: Are you alright?

I did some breathing technique and lay back on the couch.

Lisa: Let me get you water.

She ran off to get me some water; slowly I closed my eyes still aware of every sound around me then it became a mixture of birds making creepy sounds, slowly the music faded only birds' sound I could hear.

Me: I don't want to be here! I don't want to be here!

I kept repeating that with my eyes closed, I had pretty much idea of where I was and I honestly don't want to be here.

Me: I want to go back!

I kept pleading with my eyes closed but it pointless. Eventually I opened my eyes to a now familiar forest, seeing the now familiar torn tent and hearing screams then voices that sounded so scary and super creepy. I tip toed to where the noise is coming from, Mandla is tied on a tree, there are men surrounding the fire, Mandla's bitch and the old woman are standing in front of Mandla. It took me a while to realise that the woman is cutting him with a razor all over his body then the bitch would lick Mandla's blood while Mandla is busy screaming.

Me: No! No! Stop!

"Swazi! Swazi! Wake up, Swazi!"

Someone was busy shaking me violently.

"Swazi!"

I shoot open my eyes only to find Lisa staring down at me.

Lisa: Are you okay? You were screaming.

Me: I'm fine

Lisa: Here drink some water you are even sweating.

With my shaking hand I took the glass of water and took a sip, then lay back.

Me: Something weird is happening to me Lisa and I don't know what to do.

Lisa: You should not have come to work

Me: And there's this creepy guy living on my floor he knows something; I just need to talk to him. He knows something.

Lisa: I will request an uber to take you home, you need to rest.

Me: No, I am going back to work. I just need a moment.

Lisa: Nomaswazi you being stupid, you going back to sleep

Me: I said no, I am fine Lisa I just need a moment. Go back to work.

Lisa: Swaz-

Me: Lisa go before you got in trouble with the Boss.

She sighs furiously.

Lisa: Fine, I will come check on you in a minute.

She hugged me before walking out; I sat there taking well deserved breath before getting on my feet and going back to work like nothing ever happened. My night was going so well, I did drink two or more glasses of alcohol just to get myself back on track. The alcohol pumping on my blood and music with these lovely people who came here to party and forget about their problems made me forget about my problems.

The next morning I had set an alarm to wake me up early since I wanted to confront the guy next door, I switched the alarm off, put on a gown and sleepers then went straight to his room and knocked, again opening the door he is all dressed and ready to bounce with his brief case, he open the door and stepped out.

“Nomaswazi”

Me: I need to know what going on; I know you know something so you better tell me.

“Hi to you too, I am fine thanks for asking”

I rolled my eyes, he locked his door and I stood on his way.

Me: You better tell me what going on, I keep dreaming about creepy things, people dying and shit.

“You are standing on my way and I need to get to work”

He said with a straight face.

Me: Dude I am suffering here, I dream even when I am not sleeping.

“I am not your dude now can I please pass”

I took a deep breath realising that I gotta be nice for this guy to cooperate.

Me: Is your offer for dinner still stand, I would love to have dinner with you.

“You not my type I’d rather go out with your mother, now out of my way please.”

I was left stunned with my mouth half open, he gentle pushed me out of the way and walked past me.

Me: Asshole!

I said and furiously walked back to my room slamming the door at the process then played some music on maximum. I decided to take a cold shower; Lisa is taking us out after I was done bathing I got dressed in my black short dress with sneakers. Zoe called saying they're outside picking me up. I decided to leave my music playing and rushed towards the gate where I greet the security guard.

"Gegelegege ntombi zizala abantu ziye ebantwini, nongena bhaskidi uyangena estolo"

He whistles.

"Eh awusemhle Nkosazana ulibangisephi"

I laughed at him.

Me: Haa Baba Dube akusashelwa engathi usemfuleni manje.

He laughed.

"Ohye kids of today how I wish you could go back to your root, have a guy ask you out like back in the days it was so much fun back then, even the level of teenage pregnancy was very low"

Me: I am sure you had fun back in your days but things changed old man, you better let us live our lives sidle ubusha bethu.

He laughed.

"What more can we do sisanibukela nje you got rights now"

I smile politely at him as Zoe kept hooting outside the gate.

Me: Bye Baba Dube I will bring you something nice on my way back

"Uhambe kahle nkosazana"

He said waving at me while smiling, I love this old man he is so kind-hearted and funny.

Zoe: Jeez is baba Dube on duty?

She asked the moment I stepped in the car.

Lisa: I bet he is

Me: Well you know Baba Dube he never stop talking.

Zoe: You crushing on the old man.

She said as she start the car driving off and I laughed

Me: I doubt he can get it up anymore so crushing on him would be useless.

They laughed.

Lisa: Jeez Swazi he is old enough to be your fucking father don't talk like that about him.

I never had a father figure in my life; my Uncle was always too drunk to care so that kind of makes me appreciate every old nice man.

Me: Exactly my point, he's too old. I just like him he is a sweetheart.

Lisa: You like everyone Swazi

She said rolling her eyes.

Me: Umm not really

Zoe: You do

Me: Well I hate the guy living on my floor

Zoe: What did he do?

Me: He is an asshole that what he did

Lisa: Maybe you like him so much so you confusing it with hate.

Me: Mxm I wouldn't love him even if he was the last man on earth.

I increased the volume and started singing along to the music, my friends joined me we sang till we got to the mall even after we got off the car walking inside the mall we were still singing and laughing at how much we love singing yet we sucks at it so much.

Me: Shit I need to pee

Lisa: Okay babes you will find us at the boutiques apposite the shoe shop.

I kissed their cheek before walking towards the restrooms.

After I was done peeing I walked out towards the boutique, someone tap my shoulder.

"Sorry sis"

Thinking it those guys who just ask for your numbers I turned ready to tell him where to fuck off but my mouth dropped.

Me: You

It the guy I saw in my dreams, the one they smashed his head.

"You dropped your wallet"

He is dressed in a cleaner uniform, his Colgate smile planted on his face. So he works here at the mall as a cleaner.

Me: I ... hi

He handed me the wallet still smiling, he has a very beautiful warm smile.

Me: Please be careful

Before I could held myself I said it out loud.

“Sorry”

I take my wallet from him, and took a deep breath.

Me: Nothing ...thank you

“You welcome”

He said and walked away pushing a mopping bucket with a mop inside.

Me: Wait ...

He turned to me; I went through the wallet and came out with R20 note then handed it to him.

Me: Thank you so much for finding me my wallet

“No sis you don’t have too, enjoy your shopping”

Me: No come on I insist buy yourself a cold drink.

He just laughed at me.

“No I am buying you ice cream with it”

He said sweetly, making me laugh.

Me: You buying me ice cream with my own money.

He laughed.

“Technically it not yours since you gave it to me; I don’t want you paying me for finding what is yours”

My heart just warmed up to this total strange with a very beautiful heart and smile. Guilty eating me up though, I have to save his life if what I dreamt of will eventual happen.

Me: Can you promise me one thing though.

With his eyebrows brought together and curiosity all over his face he stares at me.

Me: Please be careful; just promise me you will be careful

“You are very weird Sis but I promise to be careful”

He said smiling then turned to walk away leaving me still standing there watching him disappear through the crowd.

ELEVEN

NOMASWAZI

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Bumping into that guy at the mall was proof enough that I either dreamt of something that never happened, might never happen or is yet to happen. Either way I wasn't sure if there's anything I could do to stop this, the last thing I want is people thinking I am a freak for coming up with such stories, the guy at the mall already called me weird imagine if I were to walk up to him and say "hey you going to die, someone will smash your head against a tree with a hummer". Yep that super creepy I can never do it but I can call Mandla and warn him, maybe if I warn him he might stay away from the bitch and everyone might be safe. I didn't think twice I took my phone and went through my phone book till I came across Mandla's number.

Mandla: What do you want Swazi

Me: Mandla we need to talk

Mandla: I am not interested

Me: Mandla come on your life might be in fucking danger

Mandla: Bitch stick your fat nose out of my business

"Who is that baby?"

Someone shout on the background.

Mandla: One of Zoe's hoe friends, what are we having for dinner?

He dropped the call on me leaving me pissed, at least I tried and I wish they give Mandla a slow painful death too bad it seems like some people would be harmed too but I really hope Mandla dies a slow painful death.

Screw him nx.

I was not about to crack my skull trying to help someone who don't want my help. I had a day off so I wasn't going to work; I spent my night watching movies too scared to sleep. Surprisingly the dreams never came I had a very peaceful night unbothered by anything, I let my gut down and lived my life exactly how I should be living my life not depressed by dreams I have no control over.

"Nomaswazi"

## UBIZO THE CALLING

The fucker who calls himself my guardian Angel called out for me as I'm about to walk down the stairs since the elevator is jammed. Taking a deep breath I slowly turned to him.

"Wait up"

Me: What am I your type now guardian angel?

"You know you are very rude"

Me: I am actually super nice you just happen to rub me the wrong way

He chuckled as he catches up with me.

"Ow so I am the problem"

Me: Finally you get it, oh and you haven't returned my sugar or should I fetch it?

"Eish I will bring it today afternoon"

Me: Sure

I wanted to give him attitude but considering the fact that he might actually be the only person who knows what going on with me I decided I should play nice. I stopped on my tracks before we reach the ground floor and turned to him, he also stopped. I take a very deep sigh.

Me: Look I think we started on a wrong slate, how about we try again.

He beams at me.

"Sure why not"

Me: I'm Nomaswazi but you already know that

I said stretching my hand for a hand shake while smiling at him.

"Busikhaya Mzimela"

He said taking my hand in his, his hand so warm and strong.

Me: Mind if I call you Khaya?

Khaya: Not at all

Me: Good

We climb down the stairs again.

Me: So what do you know about my dreams?

He half laughed.

Khaya: Well what I know is you got a calling.

Me: A what? A calling what?

I say stopping on my trucks.

Khaya: Well right now I have to rush somewhere will talk when I return

He said and just walks off leaving me standing there.

Me: You say a fucking call what?

Khaya: Bye Nomaswazi

Is it me or this guy is always walking away from me?

I stood there for a while looking at his back as it disappear, I am actually on my way to Lisa's place while my mind is still lost on the fucking shit that guy just told me my phone beeped indicating the uber is here. I took a deep sigh and walked out all the way to the uber waiting by the gate, I didn't even feel my ride as my mind is just too occupied. All I could think about is there is no way I have a calling, there is no way I am going to be a sangoma. All those red clothes and beads they wear would just crap my style not to mention the calamine they put all over their body, for fuck sake those people even walk barefooted, imagine! No way at all, not a fucking way in all ways. Not to mention they wear dead chicken feathers, argh I would never be that shit never!

"Miss we here"

The way my mind is so occupied I didn't even notice the car has stopped.

Me: Oh thanks

I got off and walked straight to Lisa's room, she also lives in a flat her room is on floor two; I knocked once before letting myself in. She came out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around her.

Lisa: Jeez couldn't you wait for me to open my door for you

I just rolled my eyes at her and walked towards her kitchen grabbing myself something to eat.

Me: Where the heck is chicken polony!

I shout after her as she walks to her bedroom.

Lisa: At your place in your fridge. Did you try checking there?

Me: Mxm, you eat Greek salad now?

Lisa: Yes

Me: For what?

I took her salad with a juice from the jug and went straight to her room.

Lisa: Don't tell me you will drink my juice from the jug Nomaswazi

Me: Umm

I took a long sip of the juice

Lisa: Bitch you so disgusting

Me: Where is Zoe?

The door slammed from the dining.

Zoe: Bitch!

Zoe's voice shouts from the dining room.

Me: Speaking of a devil

Lisa: You two should learn something called knocking and actually start practising it

Zoe barge in the bedroom and started screaming dramatically while throwing herself at me knocking the juice jug at the process and it poured all over Lisa's bed.

Me: Holly shit Zoe

Lisa: Bitch see what you just did!

She snap, Zoe and I look at each other before we burst into loud laughter while getting the wet covers off the bed.

Me: She didn't see I had a juice

Lisa: Now what must happen, I must sleep on a bed covered in juice?

Zoe: Sorry bethuna hau

Lisa: Sorry my foot, you washing those covers and wena Swazi my bed is not the fucking kitchen if you can't eat in the kitchen maybe you should stick to eating in your house.

Lisa is making a big deal out of nothing what the fuck! She is so mad even her face has turned red.

Zoe: What the heck Lisa I have already apologised.

Me: She's on her periods

Lisa: I am not PMsing and don't what the hack me you can see my bed is covered in juice so where must I sleep

Zoe: Only the covers are wet Lisa

Me: Mxm moody bitch

I stood up leaving the juice jug and her Greek salad right in her room and also slammed the door on my way out.

Lisa: You break it, you buy it bitch!

Me: Fuseg!

I chilled by the couch just channel hopping till Zoe had a talk with Lisa because I honestly not the too emotional type, I can't deal with a moody Lisa. After a while they came out with Lisa wiping her tears I just pretended to be minding the TV they both settled besides me on the couch. Zoe cleared her throat clearly trying to get my attention. I still ignored them.

Lisa: I don't have money for the graduation; I used all the money I had for the school fees and the rent for three month. I don't have a dress, shoes nor money to hire the graduation gown. It's so frustrating knowing after how much effort I put into my studies I won't get to go to the graduation and Gogo won't see me on my graduation gown.

Zoe: And I don't have money guys, Mandla came by the house to give me a week notice for me to collect my staff and leave his house.

Me: Why you didn't just tell us Lisa

Lisa: Because I didn't want to bother you guys, you got your fainting problems and Zoe is going through a really tough time with Mandla's shit

Me: What our motto Lisa?

She sigh rolling her eyes at me.

Lisa: We got each other's back always!

Zoe: No problem is too small for as long as it bothers one of us!

Understanding where bitchness comes from I calmed myself down and said the only thing any of them would've said to me if I was in Lisa's position.

Me: Exactly so I will pay for everything that you need for your graduation or you just tell me how much you need and I will transfer it now

Lisa: Thank you girls; I really don't know where I would be without the two of you.

I have something bothering me yet I can't tell them since what I am going through it kind of too much. Lisa needs to celebrate her graduation in peace without worrying about me and Zoe needs to heal, get used to living alone again, find her own two feet again, get through the pain of being disowned so the last thing they want is me adding more problems. I will tell them after Lisa's graduation.

Me: Well let celebrate, where is wine

Zoe: Umm what we celebrating?

Me: Being pretty, Lisa's graduation, you finally being your own woman.

Zoe: Oh and you going to school next year.

I straight up rolled my eyes.

Me: and that

Lisa: Let me get some booze

We all screamed booze!

We had spent the night at Lisa's house and my lucky stars were with me since I didn't have any nightmares. Last night we got super wasted, dance and slept now we all waking up with headaches and have to drink Lisa's bitter smooth made of onions, tomatoes, avocado, olives and her secret ingredient that she never shares. Trust me it very bitter but helpful with hangover. We chilled for a while before Zoe and I left for our places. I didn't even go to my room I went straight to Khaya's room. I need to confront whatever shit is happening to me, the sooner the better. After knocking for a while the door finally opened.

Me: I need answers

He opened the door wide for me to enter.

Khaya: You need to act fast Nomaswazi, your ancestors are already frustrated by you, your friend's husband is in danger and for as long as he is in danger you and your friends are also in danger.

I haven't even sat down but the guy is already attacking me with too much information. He walked further in the house and I followed after him still trying to process everything he just said.

Khaya: You're in deny, it a shame you will learn the hard way.

Me: Eeh? Who are you how do you know al-

Khaya: I am more like your guardian angel sent to guide you through your journey but I can never do that for as long as you still objecting.

Me: What journey?

Khaya: Your calling journey and Nomaswazi for as long as you objecting nothing will be clear, my visions when it comes to you will be blocked. You need to let me in, I am not your Gobela but in order for you to find your Gobela you have to let them guide you.

Me: Let who guide what?

Khaya: Sit down there's a lot you need to know, let start from the beginning.

My head is already feeling so dizzy not to mention how I am feeling so uneasy, I took a seat on the couch with my hand on my forehead, and I needed something stronger for this.

## TWELVE

### NOMASWAZI

---

Khaya walked back in the lounge where I have been waiting for him, he placed a glass of juice in front of me and settled opposite me with a glass of water.

Me: When I said I would like a drink I didn't mean juice, what am I a kid?

He took a sip of his water and placed the glass back on the table.

Me: I need something strong for whatever madness you are about to tell me.

Khaya: First thing you need to learn is respect.

I rolled my eyes.

Khaya: It is very important to respect your ancestors because if you don't you will rip what you sow.

Me: How can I respect creatures who want to take over my life and do whatever shit they want? That bullshit, this is my life and they need to know I will live it the way I want too.

Khaya: Secondly they're always with you, they hear your thought and everything you say.

Me: Then good if they can hear me; I am saying to them right now they should drive straight to hell because this girl right here won't be a sangoma not now not ever.

Khaya: Your mother had a calling; she knew she has it but kept rejecting it. Now the ancestors want you to take over and in case I didn't make myself clear it a must for you to be a sangoma.

Me: You didn't hear anything I just said did you?

Poor guy took a deep breath before addressing me again.

Khaya: Again Nomaswazi you don't have a choice, they sent me here to make things more clearly for you now it all up to you my work is done here. All you have to do is allow them to guide you, pray for guidance in that way things will be easier for you with no complications. They will lead you to your Gobela, someone who will train you and unite you with your ancestors.

Me: I want no training is there any way I can stop this Khaya?

Khaya: I am afraid not, rejecting your calling can result to you dying or losing your mind either way you must know that their wrath is the last thing you ever want to witness, it can be very cruel.

Me: I don't want this Khaya, I want my life I want to party I want to be with my friends I want to be happy.

Khaya: You don't have a choice.

Now that everything is sinking in on how real this could be I am scared so scared for my life but still determined I won't be doing it.

Me: Why is that? Why are they being so unfair? Why are they choosing a life for me that I don't want? Why are they controlling me? If you ask me I would say they're bunch of pathetic controlling freaks that never lived their lives now they want to live their lives through me, now I must bend hell over hills to accommodate them; hell no that not fair. I am not going to do that.

I snatch the glass of juice from the table and took a long sip as I feel anger building inside me.

Khaya: Noma-

Me: No Khaya they're just demons, yes demons exactly demons and I will go to church, get a pastor to pray for me and cast out all these demons trying to take over my life.

Khaya: Nomaswazi I warned you about disrespecting them.

Me: No! so it okay for them to just disrespect me, treat me like I am their object they just come detect whenever they feel like it. If they want me to live their life for them they should've came to my house, sat on my couch with a written contract detailing what I am getting for living their life because being a sangoma is not my life.

Khaya took a deep breath with his hands massaging his forehead.

Me: Exactly they can't just come in my life and turn it upside down.

Khaya: If you know the things they have protected you from; you would be willingly taking this precious gifts they're giving you and honestly if it wasn't for them you would be long dead by now.

I chuckled bitterly.

Me: You make it sound like I asked them to protect me perhaps if they let me die I would be peacefully in heaven next to my mom and happy with no one forcing me to do shit I don't want to do.

Khaya: Let talk about the dreams you have been having ...

Me: Point of correction they're nightmares not dreams

Khaya: Let me clarify them for you, the girl dating your friend's husband ...

Me: You mean the cocksucker that snatched my friend's husband.

I interrupt him again.

Khaya: Your friend's husband is not himself; he is under a spell a very powerful spell. You and your friends made a mistake of messing with that girl she was not out to get you or your friends. That girl is a root of evil and she wa-

Me: Aah the last time I checked root of evil was money not that cock sucker.

He breathes in and out.

Khaya: You frustrate me and if you were not my project I was gonna kick you out of my house right at this moment now would you shut up and let me talk.

I didn't respond I just sat there and stare at him.

Khaya: As I was saying before you rudely interrupted me, she's everything evil and they're using your friend's husband to get to your friend's parents.

Me: What friend's parents?

Khaya: The Khumalo family

I laughed bitterly

Me: You mean Zoe's parents then that fine with me if they want to kill them then they're more than welcome I just hope they have Zoe as a beneficial on their life insurance.

He hit the table hard with his hand making so much unnecessary noise.

Khaya: Didn't I say shut up!

He shouts then stood up pacing up and down.

Khaya: We don't have much time yet you can't close your mouth for a second, just few seconds. You're the most ungrateful human I have ever met. I don't know how to deal with you.

He walked towards the window and stood there facing outside the window, his tense back on me.

Me: Why should I believe all the crap you just saying right now? What if you one of them? Is this that bitch's plan to get to me; to get to my friends is it not enough that she already took my friend's husband?

I say standing up and walking towards him, he is way taller than me even a little bit buff well built with a bald head.

Khaya: Do you think I would willingly want to spend a second in your presence; you're rude, ungrateful, you wear clothes like hookers, you don't respect your body nor do you respect other people. Your presence makes me sick, I just want to deliver the message I am sent to deliver and leave. What you do with everything I just told you it up to you and quite frankly I don't care as long as you are out of my hair.

He said so calmly his words sting like a mosquito but I pretended not to care as I put on a face even though he can't see me as he still has his back on me.

Me: If I am so annoying and disgusting why don't you leave me the hell alone, leave this building too don't forget to take your demons with you because as far as I am concern I was fine with no nightmares before you rock up out of nowhere with your bullshit.

Khaya: I am a very impatience man Nomaswazi and ever since I met you, you've been pushing my each and every button and I am getting fed up.

Me: Actually who are you? What are you, a fake prophet? No you know what it has come to my attention that you are fake witch with demons I mean you didn't even throw bones like sangoma's do but already you know what wrong with me.

He turned fast and looked at me, his face fuming with anger, veins popping on his forehead I stare up at him unfazed by his mad face. He walked up to me and pointed a finger at me while biting hard on his lower lip, then he knocked me with his shoulder as he walks past me, opened the door and turned to me.

Khaya: Leave!

He said it once but it actually felt like millions of voices were saying it, that how strong the word coming out of his mouth is. With pride and my head held high I walked towards the door and stood there staring up at him.

Me: Next time go for weaker people, I am a not a puppet. Ooh and before I forget, fuck you!

I gave him my middle finger before walking out of his door feeling like there's a very heavy weight sitting on my shoulders making me so tired and uneasy. He slammed the door hard after me. I didn't go straight to my room I took the elevator to the ground floor and went straight to the landlord's room. The landlord lives on the ground floor with his family. I knocked once and a cute baby girl opened the door for me.

Me: Is your father around?

"Yes please come in"

She opened the door for me and called out for her Dad.

"He will be with you in a minute"

I nod my head and the girl disappeared somewhere in the house, her father showed up right after she left.

"Nomaswazi"

Me: I need to talk to you.

"Is everything okay? Please come to my office"

Me: No everything is not okay sir.

I say following him to his office after he has settled down.

"What seems to be the problem?"

I sat down and took a deep breath trying to ease my anger, I am actually so mad.

Me: The guy that just moved in few weeks back on my floor is the problem.

"You mean Mr Mzimela? What did he do, he seems like a great guy and I did background check on him he is a good man"

Me: There is nothing good about that good for nothing man, he has been making me live in fear ever since he moved here, he's making me so uncomfortable. He threatens to kill me and ever since he moved here I am suffering from nightmares where people die and if you must know he is the reason behind all those nightmares"

"I don't get it but he seems like a good man, I will have to ask the other tenants if they have a problem with him before I take any drastic decisions"

Me: So I must die first before you kick that piece of shit out?

"I understand you're angry but you have to understand that you are making serious accusations here and I can't just kick someone out because you said I should"

Me: I knew coming here was stupid, I am moving out and I want refund on the six months I have paid you in advance.

"Nomaswazi why don't you calm down-"

Me: I want my money by the end of tomorrow and if I don't get it you will be hearing from the police, I deserve safety and if you can't provide me with that I am gone as in packing my staff and leaving.

I say standing up and walk out leaving him shouting after me, I ignored him and slammed his door behind me too frustrated to care.

I am not gonna sit around and let people treat me like trash when I deserve royalty treatment, the Khaya guy can go to hell if he thinks he can just bewitch me and then act like my sever he has another thing coming I am not some stupid naïve girl from the rural areas I know a scam when I see one, and right there in that room lives a master of witchcraft, a fucking scum bag. I know exactly how this him trying to help me was gonna play out, eventually he was going to ask me money for cleansing and whatever shit these people do then take my money and never look back, fucking piece of shit.

THIRTEEN

NOMASWAZI

---

We all got our thing, things that we like doing and would like to be. We have our lives already planned mentally. I am the kind of girl who like all things glitter, I want to live a good fancy life that is all about drinking wines going to fine restaurants, going on vacations with my girls and talking about fine things in life not some sangoma weird shit. I ignored my alarm as it kept on ringing nonstop, it time for work but I am just too frustrated with everything. I took a long frustrated sigh and stood up to prepare for work, tonight I would need at least two shot to get work done it been a long day. The moment I got to work Lisa gave me a look, sure she would I mean like I feel like I am carrying the world's biggest problems right on my shoulders.

Lisa: Umm and then, you?

Me: Lisa do you believe in ancestors?

I asked settling on my spot and applying the makeup.

Lisa: Girl hell no, I mean like those people are even failing to sneak in my dreams and give me seven Powerball numbers only seven numbers how hard can that be?

I laughed.

Me: Yet they always demand people to do shit for them.

Lisa: You would swear when they left this world they left millions behind. Why the sudden interest though?

Me: Umm just asking.

Lisa: Umm ... how is my makeup?

Just like that she let it go but I know Lisa too well to know she just don't wanna push me, it pretty obvious something is bothering me and I'm glad she's not pushing.

After I was done applying the makeup and getting dressed on my gold glitter dress and shoes as high as the Paris tower I walked to the club to start my night. The club started packing up the moment the doors were opened, it a Saturday after all people want to have fun forget about their depressing lives

and jobs. I serve my customers with my best smile, pretending as if I am the happiest girl ever lived on earth when deep down I am just an empty lonely and stressed shell. A group of rich man ordered a whole bottle of Champaign, not just any bottle but the most expensive one on our shelves. As I am on my way to giving them the bottle it just slipped on my hands and fell breaking into pieces unfortunately for me the Boss saw me, before I could register what just happened, how the fuck the did the bottle slipped from my hands the boss was already dragging me with my arm towards his office as he get someone else to clean up the mess I made and replace the bottle for the gentlemen who ordered.

Me: I am so sorry Boss it just sl-

Boss: Save it Swazi, if you not fainting you breaking my staff do you have any idea how much that fucking bottle you just coasted me.

Me: I am really sorry you can take it from salary

Boss: You damn right I will. What the fuck is going on with, it like your mind isn't even here.

Me: Come on now it was just an honest mistake

Boss: You literally dropped the whole bottle

Me: It slipped

Boss: You dropped it.

I sigh wanting to roll my eyes but decided against it.

Boss: Look Swazi you are my girl and I like you, you're a go getter or at least you use too.

Me: What that supposed to mean?

Boss: It simple means you've reached your expiry date and you no longer any use to me so I suggest you pack your shit we won't be needing you.

Me: You got to be fucking kidding, you firing me for one mistake just one.

Boss: Swazi you no longer the fire girl you used too, there's something about you now. You're stuck up, go do something else.

Me: Come on boss ...

Boss: Leave Swazi

As much as I like my job I wasn't gonna stood as low as begging for it.

Me: Fine keep your stupid job

I pushed the chair and left his office went straight to the changing rooms and got my staff then left with his dress and shoes. Lisa kept calling my name

through the loud noise of the crowd mixed with music but I ignored her and walked all the way out, ignoring the bouncers at the door too.

Lisa: Swazi! Swazi wait up

Once I am outside the club I stood still with my eyes facing the dark sky.

Lisa: What the hack man?

She said catching up with me.

Me: I just got fired

I said and started walking away.

Lisa: What as in no job fired?

I rolled my eyes and kept walking.

Me: Yes

She ran after me.

Lisa: Oh my God how can the boss do that to you?

Me: I've reached my expiry date

Lisa: What?

Me: Jea

She stopped but I kept walking.

Lisa: I have to go back to work

Me: Just go Lisa

Lisa: Imma call you as soon as I knock off, will you be fine

I stop walking and walked back to her.

Me: I will be fine I promise.

We hug for a while.

Lisa: I will get the boss to give you your job back.

Me: Don't bother I no longer want it.

Lisa: Swa-

Me: Go back to work Lisa

She sighs before squeezing me in a hug one more time then walked back to work.

I took a very long deep breath before turning and walking back to my flat, I passed some few building, the club noise slowly but surely fading away. The street so quite few cars passing after a while, after all these streets are not that busy. My heels click on the ground, my bag stripped on my left shoulder, my

eyes on my steps as I walk, my heart so heavy and my mind just overthinking. There's a little bit chill air, not hot not too cold either just okay. I could hear the car hooter but didn't pay much attention.

"Sorry sis"

The person say, and I kept my head bow down looking at my steps ignoring whoever that is.

"Sorry!"

Finally I sigh and raised my eyes, a white polo is driving slowly besides me as I walk on the pavement, rolling my eyes and giving the guy a bored look I ask.

Me: What do you want?

"I was wondering if you okay."

Me: I'm fine

"I can give you a lift to wherever you're going"

Me: Do I look like I want a ride in a polo?

"Oh ...okay I was just trying to help"

Me: You can help by just driving off

"Well okay"

He gave me a once over look before shaking his head while chuckling.

"Eyi futhi omahhosha"

Me: Umahhosha unyoko

I say as he drives off leaving me fuming with anger.

I continue with my walk, crossed the street towards my building, I would pass few people here and there. I had just crossed the street when car tires scratch beside me startling me, a black window tainted jeep stopped right beside me before I could make out what is happening, the doors opened and I just knew shit about to hit the fan. I waited no more I started running with my heels, I heard footsteps running after me and dropped my bag, bend over and took off the heels then ran like I have never ran before.

"Stop right there bitch, if you don't stop I will blow your fucking brains out"

I just told myself that if he shoot I will die an easy death, there was no way I will let him catch me because what he would do to me if I stop is worse than dying. I know human trafficking, never been trafficked before but I live in Durban people and I have heard stories not to mention I work at a club. Funny thing is walk on these street every day not even once have I encountered such thing. The guy must have been realised I am not planning on stopping as I hear

more footsteps running after me. I am not the type that goes to the gym so I am already breathing heavy, my heart beat skipping so hard against my chest, fear threatening to take over my knees as I felt them shaking. I kept telling myself 'I'm few blocks away from my flat'. A loud roar of an engine sounded right behind me, the steps kept coming after me, the dress I'm wearing has went all the way up so I am basically running naked. I finally turned to the gate of our building, I tried opening the gate but couldn't as it locked; I held it and hit it with my hands as I shout.

Me: Please open up, please! Someone please help! Open the damn gate!

The car tires scratch beside me on the road as it stops; two guys stepped out as quickly as lighting. I kept screaming for the security to open as I saw a touch coming from the security guard's house. The two guys grabbed me but I held on to the gate really tight as I scream my lungs out.

"Yey let her go, yey!"

The voice I know very well, it Baba Dube the security guard shouted. The two guys kept trying to snatch me but I fought kicking them with my feet also biting them with my teeth and Baba Dube was also approaching which gave me more strength to fight.

"Let go"

Someone shout from the car. They let me go; one of them kicked me hard before spiting on my face and ran back to the car as the gate open.

Baba Dube: Nomaswazi! Nowaswazi are you alright?

The car drove off as Baba Dube reach me and help me up as I was now on the ground still crying.

Baba Dube: It okay now I got you, it okay my child.

I held on to him while crying my lungs out, he squeezed me into his arm and tried to shush me.

Baba Dube: It okay, you're safe now. It okay

He helped me up and pulled my dress down then wrapped his arm around my shoulders as he takes me inside locking the gate once we are in.

Baba Dube: You're alright now my girl, do not cry.

He takes me all the way inside to my room but I didn't have a key since my key was in my bag the one I dropped on my run.

Baba Dube: You wait here I will go get Dlamini to open for you.

He said referring to the landlord. I just sat beside my door butt flat as he leaves running down the steps. Shortly he came back with the landlord who couldn't stop asking whether I was alright. Once my door is open Baba Dube made sure

## UBIZO THE CALLING

he makes it his mission to unsure my safety before he left. I locked the door and went to look at my reflection on the mirror thanking my lucky stars I survived; I sure was close to death. The kind that is slow and painful. I even look like a mess not to mention I actually feel more than like a mess.

FOURTEEN

NOMASWAZI

---

You know you owe God your entire life after an almost death experience, I had made a promise to myself last night that now that God had saved my life I will attend church today to thank him for the second chance at life. I was all dressed up when someone knocked on my door. I walked towards the door and open.

Me: Baba Dube

Baba Dube: I wanted to check on you before I go home

Me: I am okay thank you so much Baba Dube, you saved my life

He smiles genuine at me.

Baba Dube: I was just doing what any man could've done.

Not those man who were after me yesterday. I just felt so emotional and so grateful to Baba Dube if it wasn't for him I would be somewhere probably crossing a boarder by now. I attacked Baba Dube with a warm hug.

Me: Ngiyabonga baba

I say as I feel tears burning my eyes. He rubbed my back gentle.

Baba Dube: It okay, my girl I am just glad you are all good.

This man has been good to me, I love him and I just wish he was my father but then I can only wish. We talk for a while with him teasing me about going to church.

After he left I finished off my look with a simple makeup, my knee length dress that hang every part of my body a little revealing on my chest as it shows my sexy cleavage then my four inch high heels, once I was sure I look perfectly hot fine for God I left the flat but then I didn't have a phone to request an uber since I kind of lost everything last night. I walked off to the street towards the main street; smith street where I took a public taxi to church, Christian church have never been there but have seen the church a million of time. The taxi dropped me right in front of the church. Okay truth is I was on two missions, firstly to thank God for the second chance at life and to ask the pastor to cast out all these demons I have. I arrived late the church had already started and

my heels clicking on the floor made everyone to turn to me, I walked with pride and my head held high as I walk forward, smiling here and there. I didn't want to sit at the back in case God doesn't see me, I wanted him to see me, I wanted God to smile down on me as he sees me in his holly house. I settled on the third raw next to an old lady who smiled at me then turned to the pastor who was busy preaching.

Honestly speaking I was so bored throughout the sermon; not to mention it was so hot inside, the old lady I am sitting next to put a scarf on my shoulder. As for the pastor the guy kept preaching about acceptance, hope and forgiveness I would be lying if I say I heard anything, I kept dozing off and the old lady beside me kept waking me up, finally it was done. People started leaving, I thank the old lady as I return her scarf then I sat there not moving I just sat there as everyone left one by one and the pastor has disappeared somewhere in those closed doors. Some two ladies were busy folding things on the pastors table so I approached them.

Me: Hi is it possible to talk to the pastor

They look at me up and down before turning to each other and completely ignoring me. Is being a bitch allowed in church?

Me: Nx Bitches

I say as I walk to the door I saw the pastor walking in after his sermon.

"What do you think you doing?"

I raised a middle finger at them not even bothering to turn and look at them.

"You can't go in there"

Watch me bitch, I reached the door and knock gentle the pastor's voice roar inside.

Pastor: Come in

I walked in and closed the door behind me to my freaking surprise it not the pastor who was giving a sermon. This right here is a piece of art, a very handsome gentleman with kissable lips.

Me: hi sorry I am looking for the pastor

"I am the pastor"

He says standing up, looking at him up and down he's wearing all black with those pastor collars but he is not the old pastor who was giving the sermon.

"You may sit miss, I must say you made such a brave entrance arriving late then choosing to seat on the front raw"

He says looking at me amused, I smile at him politely deciding I am only sitting because he is so damn all things hot source. After I had settled he also sat down.

Me: Well I wanted God to see me, to see that I actually came to church.

He laughed.

Pastor: God was going to see you even if you were at the back last raw

Me: I doubt God is only on the front rows.

The guy just laughed at me with his beautiful deep voice.

Me: Don't laugh God had to feel and see my presence

Pastor: Oh trust me not only God felt and saw your presence we all did, you came in here and walked down like a model in a runway with the click of your shoes all the way to the front then decided to fall asleep throughout the whole sermon.

Me: Aah I wasn't asleep I was praying.

I lied straight up.

Pastor: Umm I see

Me: By the way where is the pastor?

Pastor: You're looking at him

I chuckled.

Me: Not the hot pastor I want the old pastor

Pastor: Hot pastor?

Me: Yes you're a snack, all things handsome but you got this boring vibe about you which is a little bit of a turn off.

For a moment he was lost of words he just looked at me with his mouth open and shocked face.

Me: You might want to close your mouth pastor bae, we don't want flies flying in.

He chuckled shaking his head.

Pastor: I have never met someone like you, who just talk

Me: Oh you will get used to me I don't have a filter; I'm just way too straightforward.

Pastor: I see, so what can I do for you since the old pastor is not around?

Me: Can't you call him, my problem need a real pastor.

Pastor: Heeh just in case you haven't got the 'memo' I am a real pastor and no I can't call him it either I help or you come back some other time.

I sigh, time it what I don't have.

Me: I need someone to pray for me, I need serious prayer the kind of prayer that will reach God ASAP.

Pastor: You need to understand that God doesn't work the way we want or would like, even your own prayer alone can reach God as long as you believe, It all about faith.

Me: Woah pastor bae I am not here for a whole another sermon, I have demons and I need you to cast them out.

Pastor: Demons?

Me: Yes as in the underground gang

Pastor: Underground gang?

Me: Ancestors pastor bae! Ancestors, they're these demons trying to take over my life so pray for me, call even the bishop and everyone else because this is a matter of death if you don't pray for me I might die.

Pastor: Ma'am I am a Christian yes, I believe God exist and I am also a believer of ancestors. They exist, they are not demons and I have witness them doing wonders to people close to me.

Me: Another fucking fan of the underground gang, what happened to real Christians who knew the dead are demons?

Pastor: Right, I will suggest you put a filter on your mouth since you are under the lord's roof.

I sigh loudly leaning on the chair feeling defeated already.

Pastor: How about you go to real Christians who believe on what you believe in.

I just lay there ignoring him, feeling like shit. What happened to Christians of today, I'm pretty sure the old pastor who was preaching earlier on would've helped me not this amateur.

Pastor: Why don't you take your marks off?

Me: What?

Pastor: The marks you walk around wearing why don't you take it off

Me: You talking crap.

I said grabbing my bag and standing up to leave.

Pastor: For as long as you have that marks on you will never find inner peace, you need to take it off and have a deep conversation with yourself. All the answers you seeking for are within you.

I stopped on my tracks and turned to him.

Pastor: The church is always open if you want a peaceful place to talk to yourself, to pray and to find your soul because right now you're just pulling a face, the face you want people to see and I doubt you even know yourself well enough. self-introversion is very important you should try it.

Me: Good bye pastor bae

I left the church and took a public to the mall, yes he was right about one thing, the marks I always put on this happy sometimes rude face because I am scared of what I may find if I actually take time to do self-introversion. I want to live my life the way I think not the way my soul might want, I don't want to complicate things as I believe they're perfect the way they're. I don't know if going to church was a great idea I mean like it gave me more stress not like I wasn't stressed before thing is now I am stress like super stressed. Either way I still stand by my words, I am never going to be a sangoma, which is why next Sunday I will be going to another church, a church that can actually help me by praying for me. I am never giving up until the undergrounds gang are out of my hair for good

## FIFTEEN

### NOMASWAZI

---

The moment I got home I kicked off my too high shoes, they were already killing me. I had pass by the shops and got myself some junkies and a new phone. The sun is way too hot not to mention I'm frustrated by the church shit that happened earlier on. All I need right now is a long nice relaxing bath then devour myself with some junkies. I unpacked the food I bought then went to run a bath for myself, after taking off the dress I sink in the bath and let the water to smooth my itching body nicely. I had a glass of wine right next to me I kept taking a sip and place it back on the stand then lay back on the sink, slowly falling asleep as my eyes close. For a moment there I felt at peace but that was before someone started humming a song, not just any song the song sang at funerals. I quickly open my eyes only to be greeted by a very familiar place, home. It still exactly how I remember it, three roundval and a three room that I was never allowed to enter, I look around freaked out, people are still singing the funeral song when my eyes finally landed on the people singing everyone is there; Lisa, Zoe, Lisa's Gran, My aunts and her husband, my four cousin, and people from around. Woah and me, that fucking me standing in between Lisa and Zoe, I remember this day. It was my mother's funeral; as I near the grave with Lisa and Zoe holding me I saw my mother's picture on top of the coffin. Already tears are gushing out; my heart is in so much pain.

“Go see your Mother wena”

My aunt said pushing me, I remember exactly how that day played out I'm just so hurt it happening again. My aunt pushed me again to go see my mother, I didn't want to see her dead, I didn't want her last memory to be her lying on a coffin ready to be lowered on the ground.

Me: Mama!

I called out as I kneel next to her coffin.

Me: Mama wake up! Mama please, please if you don't wake up they will bury you.

I felt someone holding me back and I just cried letting my tears all out, my heart thrashing so painfully. I wailed so loudly looking at her picture which suddenly turned to Lisa's picture with her beautiful smile. I doubt I have screamed like this in my whole entire life.

Me: Lisa! Lisa! Nooo Lisa you can't leave.

They kept holding me back as I try to go straight to the coffin and take her out. My knees felt so weak I couldn't stand still all I kept doing is screaming her name. I could feel someone shaking me and calling my name but my focus is on the coffin with Lisa.

"Swazi! Swazi!"

I know that Zoe's voice.

Me: Zoe!

I tried calling out for her but I couldn't get my voice to shout as loud as I would want it too

Me: Zoe stop them, stop them Zoe!

I kept trying to scream but my voice couldn't come out and the coffin was slowly being lowered down.

Zoe: Swazi wake please wake up, Swazi please

I kept being shaken violently with Zoe's voice crying and pleading for me to wake up.

"Swazi! Open your eyes babe open your eyes"

Lisa, that Lisa

Me: Lisa! Lisa!

I tried calling for her but still couldn't get my voice out. I felt a hot slap across my face, I jump up with my eyes shooting open screaming Lisa's name. I am breathing so heavy.

Zoe: Oh Thank God! Thank you father.

I quickly look around me Lisa and Zoe are right next to me on top of my bed; they quickly attacked me with hugs.

Lisa: What the fuck were you thinking, how can you fucking try to kill yourself Swazi. We are here for you; your problems are our problems. Why the fuck would you do that?

She asked with tears gushing out, I am confused I never tried to kill myself.

Me: I ...

Zoe: You were so wrong Swazi, how could you do us like that

They kept screaming on my ears about how wrong I was for trying to commit suicide. I just lay back on the bed too exhausted to argue with them. Finally they stop screaming and calmed down and lay next to me taking deep breathes.

Lisa: Why Swazi?

She asked after a while of silence. I am covered in blanket so I tried taking the blanket off so I would get something to drink.

Me: Why the fuck am I naked.

Zoe: Can you just lie back down

She asked so calmly, I groaned frustrated and lay back down.

Zoe: We just want to know why?

Me: I didn't try to kill myself

Lisa: We ...we found you on your bathroom sinking under water not breathing.

Zoe: And you passed out.

Lisa: What do you call that?

Me: You wouldn't understand, I will never try to kill myself

Lisa: Your phone have been on voicemail since morning Swazi

Me: That because I lost my phone yesterday.

Zoe: Swazi just talk to us stop making up lies who ... who ... who knows what could've happened if we didn't show up.

Me: I didn't try to commit suicide, you have to believe me.

Lisa: Swazi come on dude

Zoe: Then what do you suggest happened, someone tried to drown you?

Me: Something like that

I say taking a deep breath

Lisa: Sw-

Me: No guys it a long complicated story that I don't even understand I swear I will tell you when I'm ready please don't make me tell you now since I don't even know what going on with me.

They sigh, I want to tell them just scared they will judge me I mean like we never discussed these sangoma things before, we don't even believe in them imagine if I were to tell them I will be a sangoma, that some fucked up shit.

Zoe: Fine just talk to us when you ready.

We held hands as we lay there on the bed saying nothing to each other for a while.

Me: Yoo but I can tell you what happened last night, if it wasn't for baba Dube I would be dead.

Then just like that I was back to being my bubbly self. I got off the bed

Zoe: What happened?

Me: We need something strong for this.

I walk to my closet and put on sweatpants.

Me: So I got fired, right? Let me get some booze ne

I walked to the kitchen got some wine with no glasses and some of the junkies I bought earlier on.

Me: I was at church by the way?

They laughed. We were drinking right from the bottle.

Lisa: Church? You and church

Me: I tell you, I had to go to church I had to thank God for saving my life.

We settled nicely on my bed as I narrate what happened last night.

Me: If it wasn't for Baba Dube I would be somewhere across the border being sold to some old man with a fat belly that is way bigger than our asses combined. Those people wanted me as in wanted me. I had to drop my bag with my phone and the shoes like yoo I almost died. I swear I saw heaven with my own two eyes as I ran for my life.

Lisa: That why you decided you owe God a visit

Me: You know when you're face to face with death shit get real, I didn't even know I can run like that you could've seen me

They were busy laughing throughout the whole story of me narrating to them.

Zoe: I am not laughing but yoo you can be so dramatic Swazi.

Lisa: Tell me about it she's too much

Me: I swear guys as I was running I kept begging God to give me wings so I would just fly straight up but bra G decided to give me speed instead, either way I am still grateful and there is no way in hell I will ever walk on these street at night alone.

Zoe: I had warned you a million of times but you too stubborn

Lisa: So what did Baba Dube do, he doesn't even own a gun they could have just shot the both of you.

Me: By the time Baba Dube reached me they were already running back to the car, I kicked their ass I got a little kungfu in me. So they tried to grab me I

kicked this one guy's mouth and he fell on the side of the road I am sure where ever he is, he's missing some teeth.

They couldn't stop their laughter no more.

Me: The other one came towards with a gun, and I did a spin kick like a ninja and he fell.

Lisa: Noo Swazi stop ... stop

She said laughing her ass off

Me: Hee Lisa I tell you after I kicked him I picked up his gun and pointed at them that when Baba Dube showed up and screamed for me not to shoot them as he opens the gate. Those morons stood up running back to the car and baba Dube was busy hugging me and crying "Oh my girl oh I'm glad you are okay" then I was like 'Don't worry Dubs they are small fish you should've let me kill them'

Zoe: Lisa stop with your lies you can't even hit a fly

Me: You guys should've seen me I kicked their ass they will never mess with this girl ever again

They laughed so hard

Lisa: You watch too much movies.

Me: Oh my God I swear, ask Baba Dubs

I tried so hard to make a joke out of my situation so they wouldn't feel sorry for me.

SIXTEEN

NOMASWAZI

---

When life gives you lemon make no fucking lemonade how the fuck can you make lemonade with no sugar, life only gave you lemon so fucking soldier on and devour the lemons. Right now I am at the post in my life where I'm like "Azilime ziye etsheni" like seriously I don't know what I am going to do with my life or these stupid dreams. I don't even know what they mean so fuck off! It an early morning yet I am already drinking and dancing to the music playing on the background. Someone knocked on my door as I am about to go open, the door open Zoe walked in with bags, as in luggage.

Me: And then you and bags

Zoe: I am moving in with you

She said wheeling her luggage all the way to my fucking room, leaving me surprised.

Me: You what?

I shout as I follow after.

Zoe: Moving in as in staying together with you

Me: I heard that but why, I don't want you crowding my space jeez Zoe

Zoe: I don't have a place to stay so we going to be roomies, so excited.

She got to be fucking kidding me, wtf!

Me: I don't need a roomie

Her phone rang she held up a finger for me to shut up as she takes her phone from the bag. I rolled my eyes; I know exactly what they're trying to do 'keeping an eye on me' fucking bitches.

Zoe: It Khumalo

Me: Huh what does he wants didn't he disown you?

Zoe: There's only one way to find out.

Me: Don't pick up he is bull shitting you.

Zoe: Maybe they changed their minds

Before I could even tell her that bull shit she had already picked up the call.

Zoe: Baba

I just rolled my eyes and raised my hands in surrender then left her in the bedroom talking to her so called father. I switched off the music that I was playing and threw myself on the couch, Zoe moving in with me is just one hell of a disaster, I like my own space. I don't want her here. After few minutes she walked towards me with a long face.

Zoe: He ... he just invited me to dinner tonight

Me: Why?

Zoe: I don't know he said it important I show up as it a family dinner.

Me: Oh so now you're family

Zoe: Tell me about it, I wonder what it about.

Me: I say don't go

Zoe: Maybe they realised they made a mistake.

I rolled my eyes.

Me: Yea right as if that possible, your parents are self-centred and I doubt they ever think they are wrong for anything.

Zoe: I should go; I will go to the dinner just to know what it about.

Me: Why the fuck would you go there; they made it clear you are no longer their kid.

Zoe: You won't understand

Me: Why because I don't have parents

Zoe: I didn't say that

Me: You didn't have to say that and for the record I would rather have no parents than to have toxic parents like yours.

Zoe: Wow Swazi just wow! Let me go unpack before you offend me even more.

Me: It true though, they're controlling and selfish and evil and assholes.

Zoe: They're still my parents so back off!

Me: Okay

I had a lot to say about her parents, about her going to that stupid family dinner after they disowned her and treated her like trash but I decided against it. I know she is hurt and I don't wanna rub it in, She probably knows her parents are assholes so telling her how much of assholes they're just breaking her already broken heart. The girl is going through the most the least I can do is shut up and support her.

I took a deep sigh before going after her.

Me: Zoe

I found her just holding her clothes crying, then I realised just how much Zoe is suffering inside. She quickly wiped the tears and pretended to be busy.

Zoe: I will have the right side and the left side will be yours. Our clothes won't fit on your closet though so I would keep some on the suitcase in that way the closet won't be too mess.

Me: Zoe

I call out for her again as I walked towards her and wrapped my hands around her. She took a deep breath and just held on to me.

Me: I am sorry

She just hugged me squeezing me to her, her tears rolled down on my shoulder.

Me: It going to be okay babes do not cry. They don't deserve your tears.

Zoe: I wish all this can go away already, I am tired Swazi.

Me: One day they will regret everything they ever put you through.

We hugged for a while till she felt calm enough to finish unpacking her clothes.

Zoe and I spent the whole day indoors eating junk food and watching different movies, before she got ready for dinner at her parent's house she cooked for me. That the only thing I would like about having Zoe around. I really hope her going to have dinner with her parents won't end in tears, shortly after Zoe left Lisa showed up.

Me: You got to be fucking kidding me, and then ain't you supposed to be getting ready for work

Lisa: Well I took a day off; I'm exhausted so I need rest

Me: What the fuck is going on with you and Zoe?

Lisa: What you on about, Umm did Zoe cook it smells heavenly in here

She said going straight to the kitchen, I went after her.

Me: Why are you here?

Lisa: To spend time with my friend is that so wrong?

Me: You here to baby sit me?

Lisa: What? Why would I baby sit you, are you a baby?

Me: Don't act smart with me

Lisa: I don't know what you talking about.

Me: Lisa!

She rolled her eyes and turned to me.

Lisa: Okay fine we are worried about you so we thought it would be better to keep an eye on you in case you decide to do something stupid again.

Me: Mxm

I left her in the kitchen and went to chill by the couch, I won't argue with them because they will never believe that I wasn't trying to kill myself. I had so many chances of killing myself after my mother's death but I never not even once did I try to kill myself; why would I do it now? When I had suffered a lot on my aunt's hand yet still I soldier on and never attempt suicide. I have thought of it more than I can count but I have never and would never do it, I just don't have the balls to do it.

Zoe has only been gone for less than thirty minutes yet there she is coming through the door with a smashed makeup walking like she just got hit by a moving train.

Lisa: Zoe

She walked slowly dragging her feet then she sat on the couch right between me and Lisa.

Me: What happened?

She just cried leaning on Lisa.

Me: Zoe

She started wailing so loudly and as far as I knew this wasn't my business nor my fight I still snatched her bag and took her car keys.

Lisa: Swazi ... Swazi don't ...Swazi!

I ignored her as I walk outside the door; I am sick and tired of people who think they can mess with my friends and get away with it. Enough is enough it time I give them a piece of my mind. I drove straight to Zoe's parent house at morning side, consumed by anger and so much hatred, my vision blurred by tears. After pressing the gate intercom repeatedly it finally opened. I drove in like a manic, didn't even wait for the car to fully go off as I climb off and ran straight to the house without knocking I burst open the door.

Me: Khumalo! You fucking fat pig

Their helper showed up running towards me.

"Au koda sis please leave"

Me: Uphi? Khumalo! Khumalo where is he?

He showed up rushing.

Me: Good let me tell you what I think about you.

"Swazi please go, you don't wanna do this"

The helper beg me to leave, it a shame she works for these people she's just a sweetheart and I have known here for a while now.

Me: No I need to do this.

I walked up to Khumalo who has his hands on his pocket looking at me like I am a piece of trash.

Me: You're a fucking asshole, how could hurt your own daughter. She has been nothing but a good girl, she did everything you asked of her, she didn't even pursue her own dreams because you didn't approve, she got married to impress you she may not say it but it was all for you. Everything she ever did was for you yet you keep treating her like fucking trash, what kind of a man are you? What must she do to get your love?

"Heey leave my house you trash! Coming here wearing like a hoe and talking to adult like they're your friends. Is my husband your age mate? What happened to your respect?"

Zoe's mother said walking in.

Me: I am a hoe like you bitch and for your information respect is earned not demanded. How do you expect respect from me when you can't respect me? I do not know what kind of a woman are you; you are as toxic as your husband and as stupid as him. One day, just one day you will rip what you sow.

Khumalo: Leave my house right now!

Me: The only thing she ever wants from you is love! Just love is that too much to ask for? Why are you not showing your only daughter the love she deserves? Loving your kid can't be th-

My eyes popped out as I notice the two people I happen to know very well behind the Khumalos. I wiped the tears thinking I might be seeing things but hell no its them; Mandla's bitch and the old witch woman in my dreams.

Me: Oh my God ... oh my God

I held my mouth with my trembling hands; Khaya's words came back. "She's everything evil and they're using your friend's husband to get to your friend's parents."

Me: Oh my God Khaya was right ...Khaya was right

I kept whispering to myself staring at them. I slowly backed away and they were all looking at me like I have just seen a ghost which is close to being true. I backed away till I was all out then I ran to the car and drove off in speed. Upon my arrival back at the flat I knocked on Khaya's door with no response, I knocked again and again still no response till I gave up and went straight to my room only to find Zoe pacing up and down.

Zoe: You had no right! You had no right to meddle in my businesses like that, who the fuck do you think you are Swazi?

Me: I ... I

Zoe: You what? You can't handle your own shit what makes you think you can handle mine.

Lisa: Zoe ...

Zoe: No Lisa Swazi is selfish just because she has no one now she wants me to have no one like her.

Lisa: She was just trying to help, calm down Zoe

Zoe: She was just sabotaging me Lisa don't you see what going on here Swazi is selfish always has been selfish, she always talk about how toxic my parents are and how I should cut ties with them. Now I see it was all jealous, you are jealous that I have parents who actually love me unlike you who is lonely with no one but us.

Lisa: Zoe shut up before you say something you will regret!

Zoe: Fuck that, Swazi must know how much I hate it when she calls my parents assholes, when she tells to cut ties with them. They're my fucking parents and I love them okay, and I am not you I don't just cut ties from people and never talk to them again and for that you will die alone sis.

She chuckled bitterly.

Zoe: My parents were right I should've stayed away from you from day one you such a bitch.

She said then walked out; I stood there in the middle of the lounge with tears gushing out and Lisa looking at me with her own tears falling down. What have I done, what have I done now? I had no words, no words at all. I was just so hurt, so fucking hurt.

Lisa: Swazi!

She said before running after Zoe.

## SEVENTEEN

### NOMASWAZI

---

I haven't heard from Lisa or Zoe since last night, none of them have contacted me and I haven't contacted either of them mainly because I don't know what I would say if I were to contact any of them. I have never been jealous of Zoe, I would never be jealous of her having parents. The only parent I ever had was my mother when she passed on I was hurt, broken but I never wished for any of my friends not to have parents like me. All I was trying to do is help her get on her feet and actually do something as her; as Zoe without trying to impress anyone now here I am sitting on my couch looking like shit for all the crying I did last night; her words sting and they found a place in my heart I doubt I will ever forget some of the words she said to me. The door opened Lisa walked in, we just stare at each other for a while.

Lisa: You were wrong for going to her parent's house.

Me: I was just trying to help Lisa

Lisa: I know but you had no right, this is not your problems it Zoe's problems and only she knows how deep they touch her heart. The only thing we are entitled to do is giving her advices and it would be up to her whether she takes them or not unless she asks us to do something. Swazi you don't see anyone trying to dig whatever you are hiding from us, we are giving you space to tell us whenever you are ready what made you think it okay to meddle in her business like that.

Me: I messed up!

Now I realise I was wrong, I was trying to do the right thing only to mess up.

Lisa: Yes you did Swazi and Zoe had no right to say all those things that she said to you but you have to understand Zoe's matter is way too close to heart you can't just go around telling people they should cut ties with their parents. It's wrong Swazi.

I sigh and lean on the couch with my eyes closed.

Me: Do you think she will ever forgive you?

Lisa: She loves you Swazi, she's at my place if you want to apologise.

I nod my head and stood up.

Me: Let me get dressed.

After freshening up I got dressed then we left, Lisa is driving Zoe's car she drove us straight to her flat. We found Zoe sitting on the couch eating snack with tears streaming down her eyes, the sight of her made me feel more of an asshole. She looked from me to Lisa with the most disgust look I have never seen on her pretty face.

Zoe: What is she doing here?

Lisa: Zoe you need to talk this through.

Zoe: No there's nothing to talk, it clearly you have picked your side Lisa so I will be leaving your place.

She says standing up.

Lisa: This is not about fucking sides, I can never pick sides yes Swazi was wrong but her heart was in a good place and you were also wrong so sit your ass down and talk this through or rather hear what Swazi got to say.

For the first time in my life I feel so speechless.

Zoe: I don't want to see her; I don't want to talk to her. The only thing I want right now is her to stay the fuck away from me.

So now I am her, just her with no name.

Lisa: Zoe ...

Zoe: Either she leaves or I leave.

Lisa sigh defeated, Zoe is putting her in a very complicated awkward position having to choose between us.

Me: It okay Lisa I will go

I look at Zoe, our eyes locked for a moment before she looks away.

Me: I'm sorry Zoe, I am so sorry.

I say blinking back tears then turned to the door and left. My heart felt like it was being ripped apart; the last time I ever felt like this was when my mother died. The pain I was feeling was just too much, I slowly walked to the alleviator and pressed the button as I let the tears fall.

Lisa: Swazi!

She calls after me.

Lisa: I'm sorry give her time.

I just nod my head

Lisa: I have requested an uber for you.

Me: Thanks I will wait in the lobby.

I say as the doors opened. Lisa looked drained herself and I actually feel bad for her, having to be dragged in this.

Lisa: She will come around, give her time

She kept saying as the doors slowly closed, I lean on the wall slowly slide down and let them all out. The moment I got to my place I threw myself on top of the couch and just cried this feeling is sure worse than heartbreak. I just wish I could go back and change everything; I wish I didn't drive to Zoe's house. I should've sat here and hugged her and told her everything is going to be alright had I done that we wouldn't be here.

It been a whole week Zoe is still not talking to me, Lisa hardly comes by or even call. Just yesterday Lisa posted a picture of them looking smoking hot with a caption "Off to the mall, 2hot 2handle" and I replied with "Can I join my hot buddies" she just blue ticked me. To this day she never replied. Her graduation is coming up this weekend. Zoe and I had planned to get her Gran here I am not sure if Zoe is still down with it hell I am not even sure if I am still welcome to the graduation. Our friendship has taken a toll it never took before. I am so lonely and heartbroken; I don't even remember the last time I left the house. Every day is a drag; it takes so long to get over and done with it. There's nothing to do it all me and my thought alone. I am slowly sinking to depression. That why I decided tonight I am going to the club to have some fun and get drunk and forget all about my problems for few minutes just few minutes. I got dressed in my red dress with high heels then applied makeup and requested an uber. There's no way I will walk on these street ever again. The moment I arrived at the club it was already buzzing. I joked with the bouncers before handing in. Most of the girls were happy to see me. I walked up to the bar; my eyes kept roaming around hoping I will see her at her station.

Tom: Swazi

Me: Hey Tom look at you, all handsome and glowing things might be going well for you or is it new love.

He laughed.

Tom: Love I doubt that word even exist

Me: Umm yet you glowing or is it money

Tom: Dude stop messing with me, have you seen yourself lately you sure doesn't look like someone who just lost her job.

Me: Listen my beauty will never fade even when I am old with no teeth I will still be this hot even on my dying bed I would still be smoking hot

He laughed.

Tom: I missed you around here with your craziness; Let me get you a drink

Me: It on you make it a cocktail my dear.

He winks and walk off to make my drink, looking around I still couldn't see her, my station the VIP area I used to perfectly occupy is now occupied by some ugly looking chick with a flat ass. Tom gave me my drink and I took a long sip.

Me: This is so good thank you

Tom: I would love to chill and chit chat with you but duty calls

He says as people wave for him to make drinks for them.

Me: It all cool I am handing to the VIP anyway.

Tom: See you

I blow a kiss for him and walked off; upon my arrival at the VIP area I spotted some guys I used to serve and decided to join them.

"Girl we don't see you around here no more whats up?

The guys asked as soon as I reach them

Me: I no longer work here boys so let drink the night out, I am so thirsty I need to let lose.

They screamed for me, some girls joined us then we started drinking and dancing no lie I was having fun. I wasn't thinking about all the shit that has been happening in my life lately. I was busy tweaking my ass on one of the guys when someone suddenly held my arm and turned me.

Me: Oh look who is it, my own best friend who just blue ticked me.

Lisa: What are you doing Swazi?

Me: Dancing ... it called dancing my darling and you ...you and your friend Zoe deserve each other ... because you are soooo ungrateful.

I am wasted so wasted I could feel my head spin.

Lisa: You need to go home, you have had enough

Me: Who died and made you my mother ...all of the suddenly jiki jiki you care about me? Bitch please let me live my life

I say flipping my hair on her as I turn back to my drunken friends.

Me: Let get wasted motherfuckers!

They cheered on; we went back to dancing and drinking. I could hardly stand on my own two feet the way I am so drunk. I fumbled around trying to get away from the group I was in so I would get some fresh air and get to breath. I walked to a small couch and sat there feeling my head getting so dizzy. When I opened my eyes I saw them; Lisa and Zoe they were just staring at me like they don't know me at all, like I am a total stranger. With my drunken self I stood up and drunk walk towards them.

Me: Umm ...so this is what we are now ...strangers in a club

Zoe: I don't have time for this Lisa I'm going home

Me: Nywe! Nywe! Fuseg ...you see you ...you Zoe bitch ... you hurt me ...oh yes you did bitch and you were right ...you were right I have no one ... and without you I am all alone ...I am so lonely ...I got no body ...it okay though it okay

Tears were already gushing out.

Me: You even turned Lisa against me ...how could you ...Umm you just hurt me and leave me like this ...how could you? But it okay you will miss this girl one day ...I can take being lonely ... it the pain I can handle ...after all I am used to pain ...I mean like I have been living in so much pain for so long it okayo-yoo

I wiped my tears and walk away from them singing.

Me: I am so lonely; I am Miss lonely I got nobody! Nobody on my own!

All I remember is getting in an elevator then the elevator changed into a horse. The horse ride was so fun and peaceful I kept screaming with joy and laughing so loudly. Funny thing is I am not even controlling the horse, it knows where to go how fast to go it just so perfect like so perfect. I was enjoying my ride so much that I didn't even realise we were not getting to my flat somewhere along the horse I passed out.

EIGHTEEN

NOMASWAZI

---

My heart was thrashing so hard it felt like it was leaping out of my chest, their drums were too loud making my heart pound even more, the drums felt like they were inside my heart. I tried talking but I just felt so tired and drained so I settled on the mat, suddenly I felt an eager to cry. The more I try to calm myself so I won't cry, the louder their drums get, the faster my heartbeat then I cried. I screamed crying my lugs out and to be honest I don't know why I am crying, the drums stop.

"Ungubani?" (Who are you?) A voice I didn't even recognised asked, it not like I recognise any of these people who were busy dancing to the drum.

"Ngithe ungubani?" (I said who are you?) She asked again, but I just kept screaming crying; "Talk". She said hitting my shoulders with flywhisk that made it worse the crying got so worse that I even had hiccups mucus running down my nose.

Me: Nomaswazi, ngingu Nomaswazi Gogo

I screamed my name as I kneel before her.

"Why are you here?"

Me: I don't know! I don't know!

I said still screaming and crying.

Me: Awe ngaze ngafa (I am dying)

I just felt the eager to say that but I didn't know why.

"Why are you here?"

Me: Help me! Help me! I am dying

"Ufunani lapha ekhaya?"

Me: Angazi! (I don't know)

The drums started again, getting louder with their singing. I lay down and cried so hard. Begging them to stop but they heard none they just kept on singing while beating the drums.

Me: Please stop! Please make them stop I don't want this, my heart is so sore They kept singing completely ignoring me, after a moment of me screaming my lugs out they stopped.

Me: My heart is so painful, it so painful. Please I need water! I am dying! I am dying!

"Why are you here?"

Me: Water please! Water please awe! Awe! Mama I am dying please, I am thirsty!

“Why are you here?”

Me: I don’t know, I don’t know Gogo help me!

“What should I help you with?”

Me: I don’t know! Make it stop, it so painful please! Please

I kept on begging and honestly I didn’t know what was so painful and I didn’t know why I needed help so badly. I just felt like saying it.

Me: Please! Water!

“Sukuma Nomaswazi!” (Stand up)

I tried but my knees just felt too frail, someone helped me up, the old woman I have been calling Gogo started hitting me with the flywhisk on my shoulders while the others started beating the drum, singing and dancing.

Me: It so painful! Please stop, please!

She placed her hands on my shoulders and started beating me, I went on my knees and just stayed like that crying, begging her to help me.

“Take her outside”

She ordered and someone came and lifted me up going outside, I was still screaming my lugs out. They made me kneel outside. I wasn’t ready for the water they poured on me from my head to toe, it was a whole twenty litre bucket, I kept gasping for air as I try to stand up but they forced me down as they pour another bucket of water on me. I couldn’t move, I tried fighting them but they were just so strong. They poured another bucket of water on me again. Making me shiver and gasp for air.

Me: Thank you! Thank you so much!

I said as I felt an eager to thank them, and I stopped fighting them I just kneeled there as they pour me with another bucket of water. I actually lost count on the forth bucket of water so I am not sure exactly how many bucket was I poured with. I had stopped crying, the heavy weight on my shoulder has been lifted and my heart has stopped pounding I was only left with hiccups as they help me up to go back inside the house. The drums never stopped, they kept beating them while singing and dancing. Once we were inside they stopped.

I went on my knees as I felt a certain voice in my head telling me to do so then the voice ordered me to say thank you.

Me: Ngiyabonga (Thank you)

I bow before the old woman while thanking her.

Me: I bow before you, thank you! Thank you so much Gogo

The voice kept insisting that I say thank you.

Me: Ngiyabonga nje (I am thankful)

“Why are you here?”

Me: I don’t know, I swear I don’t know.

“Zodwa! Get her change of clothes and get some blanket for her so she would sleep”

“Thokoza Gogo”

A sweet voice said behind me.

“Come with me sis”

She said taking my hand, helping me stand up.

Me: Ngiyabonga, ngibonga kakhulu.

I kept thanking her as I walked out with a lady.

My whole body hurt, my head was pounding with headache, with my eyes closed I tried to get my phone from the bed stand so would check the time but all I could touch was the floor I couldn’t feel anything soft as my bed. I quickly opened my eyes as I jump up. I am sleeping on a floor, in a round house, and it a little bit dark and all I could think is; Oh god I have been kidnap. I quickly ran to the door and tried to pull it open, it just easily open without any struggle.

Okay maybe this is a set-up, maybe the moment I step my feet outside they will shoot me dead. I slowly opened door and peeked all I could see is a dusty yard with kids running after each other and laughing.

“Where the fuck am i?”

I open the door wild and stepped outside only to be greeted by several round houses, a green field opposite me, and a very big tree right in front of this round hut. Some girl in red clothes came towards me smiling.

“You are up Sis”

Sis? This is the sweetest voice in my dreams, wait am I still dreaming. I hope I am because this shit is weird.

Me: Do not come anywhere near me I swear to God I will take your teeth out with just one fist, trust me I have done it to more stronger men before so stay where you are if you value your teeth.

The girl stopped on her tracks looking freaked out for a moment.

“Sorry sis I just wanted to check on you”

Me: Am I dreaming? Lisa! Zoe! Somebody wake me up!

I shouted so loudly other people came out of the house. They just stood there watching me.

Me: I need to wake up! I need to wake up!

I kept closing and opening my eyes.

The girl with a sweet voice is just standing there smiling sweetly at me.

"You not dreaming Sis, you arrived here last night. Your ancestors led you to Gogo"

Me: Eeh? My fucking what

She giggled.

"Amadlozi akho sis, they guided all the way to here"

I looked at myself up and down, I am wearing a very hideous dress and nothing is making sense. I remember having a dream, being poured with water. I am probably still dreaming.

Me: What am I wearing?

"Oh that Sis Babhekile's dress she borrowed you last night"

Me: Argh dress is hideous, look at this thing.

The dress is green long and just plain ugly.

Me: Where are my clothes? It doesn't matter I need to wake up, this is a nightmare.

I say screaming and slapping my cheeks.

"I washed your clothes Sis, they would be dry really soon"

Me: This is a dream, this is a dream, and I will wake up. It only a matter of time, I will wake up.

I say pacing up and down.

Me: I want to wake up, I have to wake up!

I screamed so loudly.

Me: Somebody wake me!

"Stop making noise and come with me"

An old lady said walking past me.

Me: No I am not going anywhere with you witch

The sweet girl gasp

Me: You people stay away from me before I take off your teeth with this fist.

The old lady gave me an authorising look.

"I said come with me right now"

I swallowed hard because quite frankly she scares me. She walked off and I slowly followed after her, walking barefooted, my feet hurting so badly. She got in another much smaller round hut, before getting in I took a very deep

breath then walked. The whole hut smells of incense, it covered with some creepy smelly herbs, bones, it way darker than it need to be.

“Sit”

She ordered as I am still standing looking around this house, she pointed a hand made mat for me to sit. The mat looks too dirty for me to sit on.

Me: No thank you I will stand

“Sit down”

There's something about this woman's voice, the way she ordered you. You actually feel it instead of hearing it.

Me: Why am I here?

“I said sit down Nomaswazi”

I groan a little while rolling my eyes.

Me: The mat is dirty Gogo

“I won't repeat myself”

I looked at the mat then back to her then decided this is not for me I need to wake up.

Me: It okay I will sit outside till I wake up.

I was about to walk out when her voiced road loudly.

“Now!”

I stopped on my tracks and slowly turned to her, she's sitting down on a cow's epidermis, her expression cold as winter weather. I slowly settled down making sure I sit with half of my ass at least who knows what kind of germs I could get from this mat.

Me: Why am I here?

Gogo: You know why, don't ask me questions you know and don't waste my time.

Me: Am I dreaming?

Gogo: Do you look like you are dreaming?

Me: Are you a witch?

Gogo: Do I look like a witch?

Me: Umm ...sort of

I whisper for my ears only.

Me: How did I get here if I am not dreaming which is stupid because I know I am dreaming. I mean like I have been having these weird dreams for a while now.

Gogo: Your ancestors brought you here; you are under a lot of danger.

Me: The ancestor shit again, what the fuck is it with you people and the underdogs.

I say rolling my eyes. The stare she gave me sent a cold shiver down my spine.

Gogo: Listen here young lady it either you stay here accept your calling, go through the initiation process or you leave my house. The last thing I wouldn't allow is your rotten mouth and I don't have time for games.

Me: Can I go home, if I am not dreaming I want to go home because as far as I am concern this is kidnapping and it illegal so you could get arrested for it.

Gogo: Okay go home

Me: Eeh

I didn't expect her to just easily say that

Gogo: You want to go home, go home. Ask Zodwa to give you your things.

Me: Wuuh thank God

I say getting off their stinking dirty mat.

Gogo: Nomaswazi if you turn your back on them right now just know there would be no turning back; you are on your own.

Me: I have been on my own for as long as I could remember

Gogo: That not true they have been there with you always. I can't force you to stay; all I could say right now is you are old enough to see right from wrong and old enough to know what is happening in your life right now is not a joke, it real and you know it real so I suggest you stop being stubborn and do right by you.

Me: I think I should get going Gogo, thank you

Gogo: Wait before you go, would you like to consult?

I gave it a thought for a while, consulting won't be so bad I got nothing to lose so why not.

NINETEEN

NOMASWAZI

---

I had to firstly fetch money from my bag for consultation, as much as I wasn't sure I still went through with it because at the end of the day I should leave this place knowing why on earth am I here for. I walked back to the consultation hut and settled on the mat.

Gogo: I charge R50 for consultation

Me: That day light robbery

She shakes her head sideways and chuckled. Gogo is your typical old lady with a sense of humour she is easy on the eye as much as she's so intimidating she also has an welcoming aura, as for age she's old I doubt she can even see properly, did I mention she's fat like so big fat oh yes she's a big mama.

Gogo: Okay I will charge you R1 just for light one day when you realised how deep spirituality goes you will pay me back my R49.

I chuckled as I put the R5 next to her mat.

Me: You can keep the change.

She took her small bones bag made of leopard skin and burned two candles red, blue and white then burned the incense. I wanted to ask a lot of questions regarding the candles to how she got the bones in the bag but decided against it; if I say my curiosity didn't get the better of me I would be lying, She started humming a song that didn't make any sense

Gogo: Please blow here.

She said handing me the small leopard bag with bones and I bent over and blow. She then started chanting and calling upon all kind of names I have never heard before, she yawn loudly as she tell or rather plead to her people to talk to her. I am watching each and every move she makes, trying to keep up with her chanting.

Gogo: Indlondlo ezinkulu, nina bangasenhla khulumani nami thongo lami nangu umtana wenu usefikile ngoba benimuthumile. Khulumani nami thongo lami khulumani nami.

Then she yawns so loudly then started chanting in tongues I couldn't really make out what she is saying.

Gogo: Yebo! Yebo kunjalo kunjalo zindlondlo zami nina bako bayende, ayiibo ye! Ayi umm ...umm

She put the bag on the ground and started clapping her hands while chanting creepy things.

Gogo: Zindlonldo enkulu, siyavuma! Emakhosini siyavuma! Thokaza Gogo! Siyavuma! Emakhosini siyavuma! Khuluma nami, Khuluma nami thongo lami! Khuluma nami macaphuna kusale!

She chanted one more time and called out all weird names then took the leopard bag and threw the bones on the floor.

Gogo: Umm ... did they ever done a cleansing ceremony for you after your mother's passing.

Me: No

She took a deep breath and took her flywhisk and started touching and separating each and every bone.

Gogo: Your mother lives in you; she can never find peace because of her doings on earth.

Me: Woah what does that supposed to mean?

Gogo: It simple means your parents wronged the ancestors in a worse possible way. You are the result of their shame.

Me: Hold it right there, you calling me a shame?

Gogo: Your Aunt knows everything regarding your father which is why you should go home and talk to her.

Me: There's no way I am going there, as far as I am concern that not my home.

Gogo: You have no choice all the answers you seeking for regarding your parents are there, your Aunt is sick she needs your forgiveness and to come clean to you.

Me: I don't understand

Gogo: Which is more of a reason you should go home after your Aunt has come clean there should be a cleansing ceremony, you need to be cleansed off you parent's shame and your parents passing then you and your family needs have cleansing.

Me: What shame?

She looked at me with sorrow

Gogo: If it wasn't for your great grandmother you would've died on birth, she has been protecting you went as far as blessing you with this special gift you have. You got the greatest gift of all gift; a gift of healing. The way you so powerful you can heal with just a touch but your gift is tainted which is why you need cleansing before it too late.

Me: Okay now my head is spinning I feel drunk

Gogo: There are people out there gunning for your gift which is why you need to go home have a talk with your aunt then the cleansing before you start your spiritual journey. Your family has lot of secret, secret that need to be laid out in the open in order for you to find your peace and have a peaceful journey.

If I say all this doesn't freak me out I would be lying.

Me: Gogo I don't want this gift, actually I don't want anything I am fine with my life.

Gogo: I am afraid you don't have a choice, this gift it what have kept you alive all these years.

Me: Then I won't accept it, if I die I die. We all going to die someday doesn't matter how or why it bound to happen.

Gogo: You making a very bad decision, need should I tell you you're walking on thin ice as it is it only a matter of time before your ancestors turns their back on you, make up your mind before it too late.

Me: I have made up my mind; I don't want to be told what to do by a bunch of people who are long dead.

Gogo: That not how we address them, respect is very important you should worship them.

Me: But why, I have been alone all my life I hustled for every little thing; money, food, sanitary pads everything Gogo do you know the pain of using a rag on your period days, the pain of going to bed hungry, the pain of having to wear a torn jersey or shoes to school. I have been through the worse and they were not there for me, they let my Aunt bully and abuse me, they didn't do anything for me, I prayed I called out their names they were never there when I desperately needed them now that I don't need them they want me it not fair.

Gogo: I understand your anger and ...

Me: No Gogo you don't understand they have no right, no right at all to tell me what I should be or what I should do, they lost that right a long time ago when they failed me. This is my life and I will live it the way I want to live it if they got problem with that then they should just take me.

Gogo: You need to understand that things not always work out the way we want them to be.

Me: If that the case then they also need to understand that things don't always work out the way they want them to be, I raised myself everything that I am today it because of me. They could've done something like giving me lotto numbers on my sleep or anything to take me out of my miserable life but they chose to ignore me, now that I have made something out of myself they're demanding me to change my own life, the life that I built on my own. No it not fair.

Gogo: They were there protecting and guiding you

Me: That the thing I didn't need them to protect me, I needed them to provide for me which they failed.

I could see defeat on Gogo's face, she will be alright I just happen to know how to speak for myself.

Gogo: Everything that has happened in your life happened for a reason, we can't always see what our ancestors do for us because quite frankly we can't see them. This is what you should know, they start your day before you start it, they're responsible for protecting you from danger that you were not even aware of, now with that foul mouth of yours don't you think many people would've harm you by now? Nomaswazi not all the great things in life can be witness some are just hidden for a reason. You know the life you're living, you work with drunken men, dangerous men, all sorts of men yet here you are alive and kicking. And just so you know they have plotted to have you kidnap, your rare dark beauty would've made them a fortune of money yet they have never succeeded, you know why?

Me: Wait how do you know about my job?

Gogo: You mean your previous job? I know and see everything Nomaswazi.

Me: Well I also know I can take care of myself; I didn't need their protection I needed them to provide for me. Thank you Gogo for all this I can tell you are the real deal but this is not the life I want and if there's a way you can communicate with them please do tell them I said azilime ziyetsheni.

I stood up from the mat.

Me: I will be leaving for home today.

She closes her already closed eyes and slowly says.

Gogo: Things can't be black and white, remember that.

I just walked out not understanding what she means.

Gogo: Safe travel my child Zodwa will get you your things

## UBIZO THE CALLING

I took a deep sigh before walking out and calling for whoever Zodwa is.

TWENTY

NOMASWAZI

---

The girl with a sweet voice's name is Zodwa; she has washed my dress and kept my purse and phone safe for me too bad there is no network in this hell whole so I couldn't request the uber. After I got dressed in my red short dress with my black heels exactly what I was wearing at the club last night. Zodwa said I can get taxis to Durban and the only thing I am hoping for right now is me having enough money on my purse since I don't keep my bank cards on my purse I just mostly like using cash for everything. Zodwa walked me to where I was going to take the taxi; people couldn't keep their eyes off me.

Zodwa: Sis I don't think you should go.

Me: Oh trust me sweetheart I have a far better life than this.

Zodwa: I understand we all had a life before this but because we had to accept our calling we left our lives.

Me: I am not you and I don't have a calling okay.

She sighs.

Zodwa: Okay Sis

She kept quiet for few minutes.

Zodwa: I will pray for you, I hope they will understand that you just lost and you need their help to realise the person you actually are.

Me: I was starting to like you Zodwa but I think I will take my like back you talk crap.

Zodwa: The day you finally accepted who you are please like me back Sis Nomaswazi

Me: Eh ayi-ke oZodwa will surprise you

Zodwa: Here is a taxi, safe travel Sis you will be on my prayers.

Me: Whatever, come give me some sugar

I open my arms for a hug but she just shakes her head as the taxi stops next to us.

Zodwa: Cha sis

Me: What, you people don't hug too?

Zodwa: Bye Sis Nomaswazi hope to see you soon.

Never darling! I waved goodbye to her and got in a taxi. The taxi kept going around in circles, there were only five of us in a taxi apparently during the week people don't usually go to Durban after all this is a deep rural area with hills and mountains. The lady I am sitting next to is busy chewing a gum like her life depends on it like bitch please chew like a damn lady. The time reads 17:30 when the driver finally decided to drive off straight to Durban since it was obvious no one else is coming. He passed by where taxi's rank and picked up some guy who got in the taxi and greeted everyone then sat next to me, he couldn't keep his thirsty eyes off me, I tried really hard to keep my cool but every time he looks at me you could tell he is undressing me with his eyes. The drive drove off; everyone seems to know each other in this taxi as they chit chat. The lady next to me said it would take the taxi four/five hours to get to Durban, a whole fucking hours already I am so hungry and my ass hurt so badly from all the sitting I did since morning. I was so fed up with this guy with his nasty looks.

Me: What?

I asked with a little bit of attitude and annoyance if he wasn't so creepy he could be a little bit of a handsome.

"Sorry sis is that a dress"

Me: No darling it a hut

He can see it a damn dress yet he is asking an obvious question, typical stupid farm man.

"I wonder when you left your house with that thing what did your mother say"  
I fumbled through my purse and came out with a pad.

Me: Here you need this; put it on your mouth you're on your period

I say throwing the pad on him, people laughed some gasp.

"Wes'febe uthini?"

Me: Ngithi faka I pad Bhuti you are menstruating and it disgusting we can't be watching your blood flowing out of your pussy mouth.

People gasped and started whispering among each other. The guy got so angry.

"Awibambe bafo, I have never been this disrespected by a harlot mina ngisho obaba omkhulu bangavuka emathuneni"

The guy with a pussy mouth said to the driver.

Me: Just drive driver

But who am I the driver stopped the taxi. People looked at us. We are in a middle of nowhere what the fuck is wrong with these people, what if some wild animals from the forest surrounding the street comes out and eat us.

“Phuma s’febe”

He said opening the door and getting off the taxi.

Me: is’febe unyoko

“Hee bafo ngiyalingwa yazi ngizoyiboqoza lenja”

I rolled my eyes.

Me: can you just drive driver please.

The driver just decided he is staying out of whatever is happening between me and the guy as he chuckled and address one of the ladies in the taxi.

Driver: Ngimchazele u my sister or nizomchazela weZama.

Zama: Muyeke uyadelela lona uyambona nje nawe.

The Zama lady responded from the backseat, I turned and gave her a disgust look.

Zama: Hee ayi ngoke ngizwe namhlanje.

She said with a laugh and I just knew I’m corned here these people knows each other and I am just a stranger on their territory.

“Phuma s’febe before I slap you so hard”

I gave him a once over look, the look that start from head to toe and from toe to head then rolled my eyes and took out my phone still no service. I was still looking at my phone when a hot slap landed on my face for a second there I was too shocked to do or say anything.

Me: What the fuck is wrong with you, you go around hitting woman. You’re a worthless fucking useless son of a bitch!

Words just rolled out of my mouth, he grabbed me with my hair and dragged me out with me screaming and cussing him. I almost fell with my high heels but managed to balance on the door with my other hand while the other one is holding his hand on my hair.

“Uthini wenokiloyi”

I managed to push him off me once I am out of the taxi, he let go of my hair. I spit right on his face.

Me: You disgust me, does beating a defenceless woman makes you feel better? Does it give you a boner?

He slapped me again and this time I feel back in a taxi twist my ankle at the process.

“Today I am going to teach you respect”

People in the taxi just sat there watching us and I guess I picked a wrong fight this time around.

Me: Try me!

There was no way I am backing down just like that, if hell should break lose then so be it. I stood up taking my shoes off, tears are already gushing out of my eyes and I’m fuming with anger. This man would know me to well I am so gonna get him arrested.

The guy chuckled shaking his head.

“Ngiyalungwa namhlanje”

Driver: Yabona mlungu wami shaya into yokushawa sihambe.

I tried slapping him but he just blocked my slap and held my hand with his strong hand twisting it painfully, I scratched his face with my nails. The guy got so angry he picked me up with my neck choking me then tossed me on the side of the road; I coughed and spit out blood mixed with saliva. He grabbed my hair and picked me up looking at me in the eyes and I just knew I messed with the wrong person today, why are people in a taxi just keeping quite. What if I die right in front of them, his grip on my hair is really painful.

Me: I’m sorry, I’m sorry please let me go. You are hurting me.

“See what you did? You going to pay for that”

He said pointing on his face where I scratched him.

Me: Have you seen my lip? It busted so that nothing compared to what you just did to me worse I didn’t do anything to you.

“Ngiyabona awushayiwe wena and mina I don’t beat woman with my hand”

My stupid my mouth will get me beaten again. He threw me back on the side and I fell face flat. He took off his belt from his pants, I just knew shit is about to go down.

Me: You touching a wrong woman, I swear to God I will make sure you rot in jail you piece of shit and perhaps you will find your perfect match in there.

He just chuckled, and I realised this guy doesn’t care about no damn police.

Me: Please I am sorry

I started pleading for my life as I realised I am on my own. The guy just fisted the belt on his hand and started wiping me, I mean like wiping me everywhere; all over my body and all I could think about are the bruises I am going to have,

the belt penetrated on my skin so painful. All I could do is screaming while pleading for him to forgive me.

“If abazali bakho bekuhlula mina ngizakulungisela bona”

He said while hitting me all over my body, I just lay there on the side of the road curled in a bow trying to protect my face at least.

“This should teach you respect and manners”

He said as he walk back to the taxi then he threw my purse including the phone and shoe at me before getting in the taxi then they drove off leaving me laying there in the middle of nowhere on the road that doesn't seem busy at all. I just lay there on the side of the road crying my lugs as I watch the taxi drives off.

God why me!

After laying there for quite some time I stood up, I had red bruises all over my thighs and arms, taking a mirror out of my purse I also had bruises on my face. I sat down beside the road and cried again.

‘Okay Swazi you got this, you got this girl. This is nothing compared to what aunt would do. This is nothing, it nothing at all’

I tried convincing myself otherwise but it was just straight up useless as the pain I am feeling is the same as the pain I used to feel when my Aunt beat me up. After composing myself and cleaning my face. I stood up, it getting dark and only few cars has passed here none of them were willing to help. My phone's battery has died. I didn't know if I should walk back or forward, the way back is long on its own maybe the way forward isn't that long. I wore my shoes, pulled down my dress and started limping since my ankle hurt. A car showed up, I waved and waved for it to stop but it just drove past me leaving me too pissed. It was getting super cold; I wrapped my arms around myself. I am scared so scared and it didn't help that the road is surrounded by a forest and there's those creepy sounds coming from the forest. After hours of me walking finally I saw car light coming behind me. I walked straight to the road and waved for the car to stop, it an old white van it stopped and a man came out of the car.

“What are you doing, standing in the middle of the road?”

Me: Please, please help me I am going to Durban I got money I will pay you.

“What are you doing here at this hour alone?”

I had to think of a sob story soon.

Me: My boyfriend ...we had a fight and he beat me up then left me here to die

I said already crying. The man sigh

"Some man don't deserve to be called man, they're just disgrace to the manhood"

I nod agreeing with him indeed they don't deserve to be called man.

"Come sis you will have to ride at the back"

I nod my head quickly.

"But I am not going to Durban I will take the north I'm going to highflat there is a garage ahead I will drop you there hopefully you will get help"

Me: No problem I will take anything thank you so much.

He walked to the back and opened.

Me: You want me to ride with goat?

"Sorry Sis the front seat is already occupied"

Me: But you are alone, I can't ride with goat.

"My chickens are at the front, it either you ride with the goat or you walk. Your choice"

I sigh; I'm hungry, thirsty, tired and so scared so riding with goat can't be that bad; right?

Me: I will take the ride with the goat, how far is the garage?

"About ten kilometres from here"

Do I have a choice, I doubt.

Me: Okay thank you.

I took off my high heels and got in the back; the goat started making noise, not to mention it smells like shit in here. All I could do is close my eyes and hope for the quickest ride.

## TWENTY ONE

NOMASWAZI

---

There comes a time in life where reality hit hard, when everything hit so hard you actually realise everything happen for a reason. I am sitting on a small bench just outside the garage thinking about how my life just got fucked up in a spare of a second. I had borrowed the petrol attendance's phone so I would call for help and there are only two people who can help me, the same two people who ain't talking to me. I don't have a choice though they are the only people I know their numbers by heart. I firstly dialled Lisa's number but her phone sent me straight to voicemail. She's probably at work so I had no choice but to call Zoe, it rang unanswered. Knowing Zoe she wouldn't pick up calls from numbers she doesn't know on the middle of the night. I sent her a simple text.

"Please pick up it Swazi"

She immediately called me back.

Zoe: Oh my God Swazi where have you been, we were so worried about you.

She sounded like she wasn't even sleeping, tears just gushed out.

Me: Please come and get me, please.

I heard some shuffling then falling.

Zoe: Where ar ...ouch fuck! Where are you? I am coming.

Me: I don't know Zoë I am so scared and cold and hungry and in so much pain both physical and emotional please come and get me.

Zoe: I am coming Swazi just send me your location, can you do that?

I nod my head repeatedly as if she can see me.

Me: I will send you my location.

I said wiping my tears, she then dropped the call. I sent her my location then called her back.

Me: Did you receive it?

Zoe: Yes I am coming; I will be there soon just hang in there Swazi.

I took a deep sigh and lean on a wall behind me.

Me: I'm sorry Zoe

Zoe: I am coming Swazi.

The airtime just depleted. Had to return the phone, the kind guy working at the garage borrowed me his jacket. As much as he wasn't so friendly or talkative he was still kind, I used the money I had to buy coffee and some snacks while I wait.

I sat on top of the bench just outside the garage curled in a bowl thinking about how fucked up my life is, I am not blind to the things that have been happening lately. I may be ignorant but not blind. Shit is happening and I don't know if I am strong enough to face such struggle. What happened to my simple peaceful life? How the fuck did I even get here? Okay maybe my life wasn't peaceful since I never actually felt at peace but I can assure you my life used to be drama free, no stress over any shit. I sigh, it so dark and cold Zoe is still nowhere to be found it been hours since our call but still she's not here.

Someone grabbed me hard squeezing me into a hug, I shoot open my eyes; Zoe is here. She hugged me hard; I hugged her back squeezing her to me while tears stream down. I might have fallen asleep during my mind racing thought.

Zoe: Swazi you freezing cold

She said grabbing my hands in hers, I wiped her tears.

Me: I am okay now that you here

Zoe: Where have you been? What are you doing here? Oh my god you have no idea how worried we were.

She said hugging me again.

Zoe: let me get you a coffee.

Me: You might as well give the guy his jacket; thank him for me I will wait in the car.

She nods her head as she took the jacket from me, poor Zoe she's wearing pyjama short with a sweater and sleepers. I chuckle a little as I walk to the car and settled at the passenger seat shortly she showed up with two mugs of coffee.

Zoe: Here, God it freezing cold.

She says as she settled down then threw a small blanket at me. We both kept quite as she drove off, things got a little awkward it like we didn't know what to say to each other considering how things ended the last time we spoke.

Zoe: I ...

Me: Zoe ...

We both said at the same time then laughed.

Me: Fuck this, I'm sorry Zoe you were right I was wrong to meddle in your business like that. I was just ...

Zoe: Swazi d-

Me: No let me finish. I was just looking out for you seeing you hurt just broke my heart, I love you so much you and Lisa are the only thing close to family that I have and the last thing I want is losing either of you. Just so you know I have no regret for what I did standing up for a sister just wish I did it differently

Zoe: I am the one who owe you an apology; I was just so hurt by my parents that I took it out on you. I thought blaming you for their mistakes would make me feel better; I didn't want to accept that my own parents think so less of me. They went as far as accepting Mandla's bitch with warm hands yet they can't even love me.

Me: What do you mean accepting her?

Zoe: Well apparently the bitch and I are related.

Me: How so?

Zoe: Long story short she's my cousin; my grandfather kicked my grandmother out of their house not knowing grandma was pregnant so grandma gave birth to my aunt who died giving birth to Mandla's bitch.

Me: What? Jeez that some fucked up shit

Zoe: So I was invited to dinner to be introduced to Zikhona the cocksucker and Grandma who seems really nice.

I scoff; nice my foot the fucking witch.

Me: Damn you got one hella fucked up life

She's hurt I could tell by just looking at her face, she firstly lost Mandla her soul mate then her parents disown her then the bitch who took Mandla happen to be related to her.

Zoe: Enough about my depressing problems, what happen to you? How on hell did you get here?

I took a deep sigh and decided to tell her everything.

Me: It a long story, one fucked up story apparently they say I have a calling

Zoe: Calling what?

Me: A spiritual gift Zoe, as in sangoma.

Zoe: Holly shit! ...wait am I allowed to say that? Isn't insulting  
I rolled my eyes

Me: Dude my life is fucked up

Zoe: So you are like those creepy people who smell like herbs everyday all day?

Me: I don't know, strange things have been happening I don't even know how I got here.

Zoe: You are serious Swazi? You didn't leave with some one night stand?

Me: Hell no, I am telling you shit happened my head hurt like shit. I am ... I am so scared Zoe, I am so scared.

I admitted to being scared, because God I am so scared.

Zoe: Swazi

Me: Remember the guy on my floor?

Zoe: The one you hate?

Me: Yep, he told me I have a calling ever since then strange things have been happening.

I started briefing her about everything that has been happening without leaving anything behind well expect the part that the witches on my dreams are actually her newly found family, by the time I finish everything felt real. It all clicks in this aren't dreams or a movie it happening in my life right on this moment and whether I want this or not it will still happen.

Zoe: Swazi! Oh my God why you never told us?

Me: I ... I don't know I thought I could handle whatever this thing is but now I am not sure. I wake up in strange places that I don't even know surrounded by people I don't even know, do you know how scary that is? What is next, where would I be next? Raped? Or dead in the middle of nowhere.

Zoe: We will find a way together, don't worry Swazi we will find a way I promise.

Me: I just don't want this life; I want my old life I want to be the Swazi I have always been is that too much to ask.

Zoe: We will figure this out together Swazi; just get some rest I will wake you up when we get home.

Me: I am so scared Zoe, I am so scared.

Zoe: We got you Swazi, we got you. You're not alone; we will get through this together. I am so sorry about the way I treated you. I was wrong you have always been an amazing friend and I love you so much.

She said holding my hand with her other hand. Her warm hand felt so good and gave me hope, not sure hope for what exactly but it gave me hope. I am just mostly glad she's here with me, holding my hand and giving me hope.

The bruises on my body were so painful, I adjusted the car seat and I closed my eyes, slowly drifted to sleep as the music on the car was slowly drifting away. The silence took over. I was still sleeping so peacefully when all of the suddenly the car started moving side by side then I heard Zoe's screams.

Zoe: Oh my God Swazi! Swazi!

I shoot open my eyes; we are in a middle of a very long bridge, and it an early morning. The bridge is so long Zoe has lost control of the car, she tries to drift it back to the middle of the road but it kept going on edges of the bridge. We both are screaming and crying.

Me: Zoe! Hit the brakes! Hit the brakes!

Zoe: They're not working dammit!

I also tried hitting them as well with no luck I even took over the starring wheel we both fumble with it and the brakes trying to drift back to the middle of the bridge but the car just lost control and took out in speed going straight on the edge to the huge open clear white water dam under the bridge. Our screams are the only thing I could hear as we try opening the doors that won't open with my heart literally beating out of my chest.

## TWENTY TWO

### NOMASWAZI

---

I was slowly drowning, I couldn't scream nor move. I tried swimming above the water but the force of water kept me down, Zoe was nowhere to be seen either way I only cared about getting myself out first, holding my breath was slowly becoming difficult. I tried one more time to swim but I couldn't move my diving seems to be in veil. I was so drained; I could feel water on every part of my body, preventing me from breathing or diving up, pulling me back down, my heart throbbing harder and louder than the sound of water. My tired hands slowly gave in. I stopped trying to dive up; I couldn't hold my breath no more. The water consumed me, taking my every part by force I was sure close to death when someone forcefully pulled me.

Zoe: What the fuck Swazi? You almost killed us, are you fucking nut? Jesus Christ!

I opened my eyes to Zoe's screaming voice.

Zoe: Oh fucking God, the fuck is wrong with you? How can you just jump on a steering wheel while I am driving? Do you want to die, is that what you want? If you have a death wish just don't include me!

I was still confused as I look around my surrounding too tired to even move a muscle of my body. The car door slammed hard, that when it clicked in we still in the car though it not moving but we in the car and Zoe just stepped out, she's pacing up and down outside. I suddenly felt an eager to throw up as my stomach felt so full, I quickly opened the door and tried to step out but my legs couldn't move. They felt stuck and numb before I could say anything I threw up right there in the car, on the door. I coughed loudly as water came out of my mouth even with my nose so painfully. Zoe was quickly to come and hold me as I throw up. The more I throw up the more it felt like my inside are actually coming out.

Zoe: Oh my God are you okay?

I couldn't respond to her as I kept throwing up pure white water, with my tears gushing out and my inside feeling like they coming out. I couldn't stop the cough that came with the throwing up.

Zoe: Get out of the car so you will get some fresh air.

I tried again to move but still my legs felt so numb, I couldn't move them. Instead of them moving my upper body moved and I fell right beside the car still coughing out water.

Zoe: Oh shit! Swazi!

She rushed to me and tried to help me up but I pushed her, she didn't back down though when she realised she can't help me up she drag me to the side so the door wouldn't slam me. After sometime of coughing out water it stopped, I felt even more drained and just lay back, right there on the side of the road with my eyes closed as I try to steady my breathing. Then I slowly opened my eyes Zoe is sitting right beside me with her hands on her head.

Zoe: Oh thank God, thank God.

She says with a sigh of relief.

Me: We not dead?

Are first words that came out of my mouth though I can tell we not death as we are on a side of the road, my dress is not completely wet only the part where I threw myself and looking at Zoe she doesn't look like someone who just drowned on a dam.

Zoe: How could you try to kill us Swazi? You should have told me to get out of the car so you kill yourself only.

She says so calmly yet mad, I tried thinking what must I have done. Letting out a sigh of relief at the fact that we still alive I tried getting up but I still couldn't move my legs, the panic took over as I realised I really can't move my legs.

Me: My legs Zoe, my legs!

I screamed for her, she just looked at me confused.

Me: I can't move them! I can't move my legs?

Zoe: Eeh ...

Me: Oh shit! fuck! I can't move my legs, God please don't do me like that, my legs!

I screamed loudly, Zoe quickly rushed to my legs and touched them. I couldn't even feel her touch.

Me: I can't feel your touch; I can't feel your hands on me.

I said panicking. She slaps them but still I couldn't feel it.

Me: I can't feel the slap, I can't feel it. Pinch me please pinch me.

She looked at me with fear, confusion and completely shock as she pinch and pinch me still I couldn't feel anything. I let out a loud cry.

Zoe: Do not panic we will figure this out, we are almost in the city I will rush you to the doctor.

Me: Oh no! Not my legs please, anything but not my legs.

I said still crying as I try to forcefully move them.

Zoe: Let get you back in the car, I will rush you to the doctor.

I tried I really tried breathing in and out so I would be calm.

Me: How far are we from the city?

Zoe: About fifteen minutes, come let get you back inside.

She open the door and took the small blanket I was using to wipe my vomit on the seat and the door, then she took another throw from the back seat and covered me before she tried helping me up. It was so frustrating as I couldn't move or balance myself, Zoe even struggled to help me on her own. After so much struggle and me cursing and snapping every now and then she finally managed to get me in the car. After she made sure I am well settled in she also got in and took a very deep breath before starting the car.

Zoe: Is it safe to drive with you beside me or should I tie your hands?

Me: What happened?

I asked with my head laid back and me still trying to move my legs.

Zoe: I should be asking you the same question, I mean like one minute you were sleeping the next thing I know you're wrestling me the steering wheel almost getting us killed as if that wasn't enough you busy screaming, and fighting even kicking; what the fuck?

Me: We didn't drive over the bridge?

Zoe: What do you mean?

I took a deep sigh.

Me: I mean you didn't lost control of the car?

Zoe: Well I almost did as you were wrestling me, you almost got us killed.

Me: Oh shit

Zoe: Was it a dream? You had your eyes closed during the whole thing.

I slowly nodded.

Me: It felt so real Zoe, like we were drowning. Now I can't move my legs, are you sure I am not dreaming? I so wish I am dreaming. Please tell me I am dreaming.

Zoe: Are you in pain?

I didn't know how to respond to that.

Zoe: Swazi what happened to your body, what are those bruises for? Who hit you Swazi?

Before I could tell her about my experience with the rude ass taxi man, Zoe jumped into conclusion.

Zoe: There's no sangoma spiritual thing, isn't? You were kidnapped and they hit you, didn't they? Was it one of the guys you were drinking with? They wanted sex in exchange?

Me: What?

Zoe: It all makes sense to me, those assholes you were drinking with took advantage of you and left you in the middle of nowhere, did ...did they ...you know?

Me: Oh fuck sake Zoe that not what happened.

I snap.

Zoe: You can tell me Swazi, I need to know the truth so I can help you. There's no need for you to come up with a cover story just tell me what happened I swear we will haunt them down and make them pay for touching you. There's nothing to be ashamed of, you know I won't laugh nor judge you.

Me: Zoe would just stop with your stupid theory; I told you what have been happening

Zoe: Oh my God, oh God no Swazi? The nightmare was the nightmare you just had about the traumatic experience, was it about them forcing themselves on you? Is that why were you fighting and kicking? Probably why you can't feel your legs it might be stress and fear whatever the traumatic things they put you through must have triggered the veins to your legs which might be the reason why you can't move them.

I didn't know what to say to her, she has already made up her sick story on her mind.

Zoe: They're going to pay Swazi I am telling you, they will pay.

She kept quiet for a while, my thought are on my legs that I can't move. All I could think about is, let it not be my legs; I cannot afford not to be able to walk.

Zoe: The sangoma story was almost good my friend, I almost believed you but then I thought to myself those things don't even exist they just demons and people waste lot of money slaughtering goat for them. The dead are dead they never come back as ancestors or whatever shit. You almost got me there, but you shouldn't lie to me Swazi or to Lisa for that matter. Remember we got each other's back no matter what.

She was still preaching as we reach the city, my mind wasn't on correcting her with anything. I am way too stressed to be trying to convince her otherwise.

Zoe: And Swazi you should never forget that no problem is too small as long as it bothers one of us. I know this is my fault had I not acted all bitch that day at the club this wouldn't have happened. I'm sorry Swazi I wish I could turn back the time and do things differently. Even Lisa is not talking to me she blamed me for you going missing which is fair I mean like I was so stupid. I will never forgive myself for this; I just hope you and Lisa would find it in your heart to forgive me.

I was so tired of hearing her talk; she needs to shut the fuck up before I snap. We should be focusing at the matter at hand right now my fucking legs.

Zoe: I know it might be difficult but would you report this? They can't get away with it Swazi we need to take some action, they deserve to rot in jail.

Me: When are reaching the hospital?

We are in town now and all I want is to just get my legs checked. I can't imagine my life as a cripple. I need my legs, imagine not being able to wear my shoes. No there's no life for me without my legs.

Zoe: I'm sorry we almost there. Look Swazi I understand if you can't talk about this for now but please talk to me. I need to know you are okay; I need to know they didn't crush your soul, and Swazi you need to speak out so they will be locked up. We can't have such people roaming around our street.

Me: Will you just fucking stop! Nothing of such happened.

Zoe: Swazi I ...

Me: Stop I can't walk that what matters now, just stop!

Zoe: Don't be that woman, women get abused and they just want to bury those things deep inside them instead of exposing perpetrators.

Me: Oh my God Zoe I am going to lose my mind I swear. I can't move my legs! I can't walk I need peace, I need to walk

UBIZO THE CALLING

I had to snap before she shut up.

TWENTY THREEE

NOMASWAZI

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Zoe had call Lisa along the way they both agreed we will meet at the hospital. She has been quiet since then which is great I can't have her talk. She is a destruction on its own, I just to put my focus on moving my legs that all I need right now. By the time we arrived at the hospital Lisa was already there waiting for us at the entrance where the car was going to drop me, she had a wheelchair with her. That made me so mad who fucking said I can't now walk, I have two fucking legs that are capable of walking why she bring a damn wheelchair as if I am a cripple.

Me: I am not going to sit on that thing.

I said forcefully opening the door and trying to step out with no luck

Lisa: Swazi ...

Me: Shut the fuck up, I can walk I just need to stand up

I tried a multiple times with no luck, Lisa and Zoe just stood there watching me struggling to stand on my own. I have never felt so vulnerable in my whole entire life.

Lisa: Let us help you Swazi

Me: Will you just stop; I need you to keep shut. I can walk on my own.

I lifted my right leg up using hands and got it out then the left followed, already tears were streaming down. I was so frustrated and mad at my stupid legs that wouldn't move. I used all the strength I had to balance myself on the car and stood up but I fall face flat beside the car, letting out a loud frustrated groan. Both my friends were ready to pick me up; I still wrestle them as they try to help me sit on the wheelchair.

Me: I said I don't want no fucking wheelchair.

I say pushing them and that only hurt me as I fell on the ground again. I let out another cry and this time it was from deep within me.

Zoe: Swazi come on dude the sooner you let us wheel you inside the sooner the doctor can help you.

After so much consideration I realised she is right, I need to see the doctor as in ASAP. They both walked up to me again and helped me sit on the

wheelchair; it was embarrassing as they struggled to get me up. When they have managed to help me sit, Lisa tried wheeling me in but I hit her hand frustrated.

Me: I have hands don't i? They are still working in case you haven't noticed.  
I said and tried wheeling myself in but the wheelchair just decided to go on its own direction, knocking me on the hospital wall and I fell again.

Lisa: Jesus Christ Swazi!

They rushed to me; I just lay there crying as I couldn't even get myself up. They both helped me up then wheeled me inside. I tried by all means to wipe the tears that kept on streaming down my eyes but the more I wipe them the more they stream down like water fall. The doctor rushed to us as Zoe walked in shouting for help.

Zoe: Help please! Help

Doctor: What wrong

He asked taking over the wheelchair, Lisa and Zoe rushed behind him both talking at the same time all I could do is just cry.

Lisa: She can't walk

Zoe: She can't feel her legs doctor please help

Me: My legs! My legs! Doctor please my legs. I need to walk please my legs!

I pleaded crying my lugs out as the doctor wheeled me into a ward preventing my friends from entering; a nurse who was busy preparing the bed helped me up together with the doctor as they made me lie on the bed still pleading him to help me with my legs.

Nurse: Sis you need to calm down, stop crying the doctor will help you.

I even had hiccups from all the crying I was doing.

Me: Pl ...please ...oh please ...my ...legs please

I couldn't stop crying, the pain of not feeling my legs hit me so hard all I could think about is I cannot afford not to walk; walking means everything to me.

Doctor: We will need to sedate her

He said as they started inserting different cubes on my body.

Me: My legs ... I can't feel my legs

I kept repeating the same thing as I cry my lungs out the nurse kept telling to calm down

Nurse: Calm down will you? The doctor will help you. You're in good hands.

The goods hands she's busy talking about is busy touching my legs but still I couldn't feel it. That made me cry even more, slowly everything became blur then my cries got lower and lower as I felt a little sleepy and drained.

Me: My le ... my ...legs ....my legs ...my

I slowly opened my eyes, the beeping machines were proof enough that I wasn't dreaming. I panicked a little as I try to move my legs again with no luck.

Me: Oh noo!

I let out a cry, a nurse came in running.

"Are you okay?"

She asked as she checks the tubes I'm connected on.

Me: My legs I still can't feel my legs

She rolled her eyes and started chewing on a gum, making so much unnecessary irritating noise with the chewing gum.

"You scream for the whole hospital to hear because you can't feel your legs, entitled spoiled brat"

Me: Please ...I need to walk

"Listen here I got far better things to do then your stupid legs, most people can't walk do they die? No so sit your ass down the doctor will see you in a moment"

Why is she being rude, this ugly bitch is so rude for no reason? She walked out I had no energy to give her a piece of my mind since my mind was just too occupied; Shortly after she left my friends showed up followed by a doctor.

Lisa: Hey how you feeling?

Me: I still can't feel my legs, what wrong with my legs doctor.

The doctor started pinching my legs still I couldn't feel anything.

Doctor: We did some test right now we can't specifically point out what might be wrong with your legs. It could be stress everything happening on your brain is connected to each and every part of your body if it happens you are under a lot of stress more often the stress might be affecting the veins to your legs causing your legs to be numb.

Zoe: What that supposed to mean? Could it happen if she has been through a traumatic experience her legs takes the strain causing her not to be able to walk.

Doctor: Anything that affect your brain can also affect you physical, some other things that affect us emotional can exceed to physical in most cases when a patient is suffering stress they get a stroke that effect a certain side of their bodies, it could be permanent depending on how bad the stroke is however on this case I could say your legs are the only thing affected, I can't tell if it would be a forever thing or just few days. I would suggest you stress less and eat healthy.

Me: Stress less and eat health like seriously is that all you gonna say?

Doctor: Look we will run more test and get back to you for now I got no reason to keep you here

Me: Noo! You will keep me here till I can walk on my own

Doctor: Accepting you can't walk it a stress on its own perhaps you should consider speaking with a psychologist.

It was clear the doctor was just useless; he didn't help me with anything. My legs are still useless I should consider something else.

My friends took me to my flat where I had a very nice bath with their help of course since I have become so dependent, I use a wheelchair it something I have to live with for the rest of my life. I spent the rest of the day crying under covers. Lisa and Zoe joined me on bed we cuddled each other; I could tell they were also sad on my behalf, feeling sorry for me which is exactly what I didn't want.

Me: Lisa ain't you supposed to be attending your graduation tonight

I almost forgot about her graduation.

Lisa: I am not going

Zoe: I have been telling her to go since morning but no she's just too stubborn

Lisa: With everything that has been happening I don't think it a good idea to go, we have more important issues to deal with. For one we should restore our broken friendship, we have to figure out what wrong with Swazi, and as for you Swazi you must make a decision if you are serious about this ancestor sangoma thing you have to make up your mind. I was raised by a granny who worships the ancestors who respect them, I may not have been the type that pays too much attention to those things but I remember granny burning

impepho, talking to her ancestors once or twice. I don't have full knowledge but if you are serious you are in it for a long hard complicated ride, so think before you make any rush stupid decisions that may cost you your life.

Zoe: Oh come on don't tell me you buy Swazi's story of spiritual thing

Lisa: It doesn't matter what I do or don't buy what matters is we have problems and in case you both have forgot we don't run away from our problems, we face them and deal with them the way we see fit.

Zoe and I kept quiet, Lisa got off the bed.

Lisa: My graduation don't matter right now, what matters is we need to talk. We shouldn't just move on after the whole thing that happened between us, after all the things you said to Swazi. They were not nice and you can never take words back that the painful part of life, the only thing Swazi was trying to do is look out for you but instead of being grateful you threw harsh words at her; apologising is not enough because one day you two would have the same argument and grudges would be bought so we must talk about this iron everything out and Swazi must address how your unnecessary outburst made her feel.

She walked away leaving me and Zoe tongue tied as we didn't know what to say to each other quite frankly I get what Lisa is trying to do.

Lisa: I was also wrong for picking up sides, it was never my intentions I just felt like Zoe need me more than Swazi needs me.

She said walking back in with snacks.

Me: Oh so you picked sides because Zoe is more important, because this whole thing only affected Zoe not me.

Lisa: No I decided to stay by Zoe's side because we both know Zoe is an emotional wreck, when hurt she get so hurt she shut down and if no one is there for her she might suffer a serious depression that might affect her for life. And she lost her parents not to death but they're the ones who said to them she's dead, you and I knows how it like to not have parents but Zoe doesn't, being told by people you adore with your life that you're as good as dead when you are alive and kicking is not easy, it not just pain that you might get over it in a spare of a second. I just wanted to make sure she's okay.

We all kept quiet for a while.

Zoe: I am sorry guys, I am sorry for making you choose between us. I am sorry I decided to be selfish mostly I am so sorry for the things I said to you Swazi. I can't take the words back but I just hope you know how sorry I am.

I took a deep sigh.

UBIZO THE CALLING

Me: Can we go to church tomorrow; I need some serious prayer for my legs to work

Lisa: okay

Zoe: I haven't been in church in like forever

We held each other's hands

Lisa: We will get through this together.

I took a deep sigh feeling better and thankful for the friends I have.

## TWENTY FOUR

### NOMASWAZI

---

Life! I doubt life has ever been fair to anyone, it always dishing bullshit. Life is way too complicated to understand or maybe we make it too complicated. I just wish everything we want and wish for always go the way we want, life would then be easy. Life require us to compromise, change the way you think your life should be because reality sucks. You can't live the life that you want without compromising. The question is am I willing to compromise? Not being able to use my legs has been more difficult than I had anticipated; for one I can't go to the loo on my own, if I want something from the fridge I have to ask someone to get it for me, when I wake up in the middle of the night and feel like I gotta I pee I have to wake Lisa or Zoe. I have basically became a toddler. It frustrating at times, like right now I want to have some ice cream and cry but I can't get the ice cream on my own, I want to curl myself on top of the couch while eating my ice cream crying and watching a movie. Is this what my life has turned too? I must be a nuisance in order for me to get what I want? I am going to church for peace, I need to feel the presence of the lord. It pains me so much being on the wheelchair that I can't even use.

Lisa: Oh hey you up

She says getting off the bed; the three of us share a bed. I just looked away since I didn't want her to see the tears streaming down my eyes. I can't help but cry.

Lisa: What would you like for breakfast?

She asked walking to the bathroom

Lisa: I will fresh up then make breakfast, wake Zoe up so she would bath and help you with bathing.

Oh I hate my life; I hate my life so much that I am hoping going to church will help me feel better. I couldn't wake Zoe up, how could I wake her to help me bath. I for one know how irritating it is to be woken up on an early morning, I hate it so much. Lisa shortly came back from the bathroom.

Lisa: Come on guys, Zoe!

Me: Just let her be

Lisa: Ain't we supposed to be going to church

Me: Please help me up

Uttering those words out felt like I was swallowing a ball of fire, I sit up and she neared the wheelchair than helped me sit. I could feel everything weighing on my shoulders, I have never felt this down I couldn't even fake something as simple as a smile. Whenever I am in pain I used to be a pro at faking my feelings, pretending to be happy, laughing and smiling while deep down I was dying but this time around I can't hide my feelings, It feels like the walls I have built all these years to protect my feeling are slowly collapsing, brick by brick and I'm scared of what might happen if I lose control of my feelings. I wanted to wheel myself to the bathroom but I kept on knocking on the wall, Lisa decided she wouldn't interfere but I finally managed to enter the bathroom door, preparing the bath was one of the most hardest things I have ever got to do. I ended up crying as I couldn't switch the water on.

My friends started tiptoeing around me, they didn't know how to act around me because I was so miserable and my miserable is worse than anything you have ever witness. Knowing my always happy personality you can only imagine how seeing me miserable is so depressing on its own. We all got ready for church, Lisa locked while Zoe wheeled me to the elevator.

Zoe: You know we love you Swazi babes and honestly I want what is best for you that why I think you should consider going to therapy.

Me: I don't want therapy

I say through my teeth.

Zoe: Have you seen yourself; you need therapy you need to talk to someone about everything that is bothering you.

I rolled my eyes.

Me: That the reason I am going to church, to talk with god

Zoe: You need a professional someone who can help you heal

Me: Let it go Zoe

Zoe: Clearly you like not being able to walk

She says and wheels me inside the elevator as it opens.

Lisa: Zoe!

Zoe: What happened to being straight forward with each other, Swazi needs to know the truth we also have lives of our own that we need to live we can't be babysitting her all day everyday

Me: Did I ask you to babysit me? Stop being a bitch if you don't want to be here then fuck off.

Zoe: You taking this too personal, my life is a mess on its own I don't want to be caught up in your mess in a way that I end up neglecting dealing with my own mess only to have my mess messing my life years later so please stop being selfish and take advices to make all our lives easier.

Lisa: Zoe that is so unnecessary why you can't shut up, let Swazi deal with this in her own way, her own pace.

The elevator doors opened to the ground, I had a lot I wanted to say to Zoe but then I don't want to end up saying something offensive.

Zoe: I just want Swazi to get back to her usual self; I want our friend back not this breathing ghost and she won't have her life back if we keep sugar-coating everything. She needs to get over feeling sorry for herself and face her demons so she will regain control over her life again.

"Nomaswazi what happened to you?"

I mentally thank my lucky stars for making Baba Dube show up I was so sick and tired of hearing Zoe talk shit.

Lisa: You are pushing her to just accept such change in her life while on the other hand you haven't accepted that your parents disowned you, If there is anyone who needs therapy here it's you.

Zoe: I am already dealing with my own demons and I did book myself for therapy which is why I am suggesting Swazi should do the same and stop pity party it doesn't suit her

Baba Dube and I just stare at each other as my friends argue.

Lisa: You only booking yourself now after what? Weeks ... stop forcing Swazi to do-

Me: Will you guys just stop!

I snap

Me: Jeez just stop, I can't stand you right now. I want space you are so suffocating yooo.

They both kept quiet for a while.

Zoe: You guys will find me in the car

She said then walked away.

Zoe: It good seeing you Baba Dube

She said walking past him, Baba Dube nods his head.

Lisa sighs

Lisa: Sorry about that, I will go talk to Zoe. Baba Dube could you please wheel Swazi to the parking?

Baba Dube: Of course

Lisa thanks him and walked off following Zoe.

Baba: Dube: Woah what was that?

I took a deep sigh.

Me: My life is a mess

Baba Dube: What happened to you my girl?

Me: I don't know what going on with my life, one moment I could walk the next moment I can't walk and it so depressing I don't even know what to do.

Baba Dube: What? You telling me your legs just stop walking

I nod my head.

Baba Dube: Just like that? First it was your job, then those guys running after you, then your friends coming here claiming you went missing now you can't walk. There has to be something behind all these things happening to you, have you considered consulting a traditional healer maybe you're being bewitch.

Me: The doctor said-

Baba Dube: Forget the doctor; you have neglected our ways of doing things not the western ways. Look some other things just need you to talk to amadlozi, they know best and they protect us. Those western doctors you love so much are as good as useless. When was the last time you went home?

I look down because I have never been home ever since after my matric.

Baba Dube: Exactly mtanami no matter what happened, you never neglect home because home is where your people are. It very important to them to know you haven't neglected them, you were working did you at least buy a chicken to thank them. ubanike nje is'thebe sabo.

I shake my head no, as much as I wanted to tell him I have nothing to be grateful for to them I kept my mouth shut because Baba Dube is the best thing to ever happen in my life and I respect his opinion more than anyone else.

Baba Dube: Ayi! Ayi! Nomaswazi that not how we do things, some families are toxic I understand that but you should know that neglecting home is never an option. What is happening to you could be their way of showing you they need you home. You must acknowledge your ancestors at all times because they can take away everything you have in a snap of a finger.

I wanted to tell him about the spiritual thing they think I have but I couldn't bring myself to say it out loud.

"Sorry to interrupt"

Two police officers say walking towards us.

"Nomaswazi you are under arrest ..."

Me: What? For what now

"For the assault of Mr Mandla on th-

Me: but we already got arrested for that, why yo-

"Ma'am everything you say can be used against you in court of law"

He said handcuffing my hands, he has no shame arresting a woman in a wheelchair no shame at all.

"Where can we get your other partners in crime?"

Before I could deny them they both walked in asking what is keeping me so long.

Zoe: What the fuck? ...

"Oh good you are all here, you are under arrest for the assault of Mandla ..."

Lisa: You say what??

Baba Dube just clap once as the cop started cuffing my friends while the other one wheeled me out. We were all just too defeated to say anything.

Baba Dube: Amen!

## TWENTY FIVE

### NOMASWAZI

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My world just crumbled down right on my feet, I am so terrified right now. I don't know what will be next; instead of things getting better they get worse. Is this what my life has become? All the bad things happening to me just because I have to be something I don't want to be, all these things happening are now more terrifying. All I want is my life back; these walls surrounding me are so suffocating not to mention it stinky in here.

Zoe: Why are bad things keep on happening to me?

She has been crying since yesterday, none of us slept a wink there was no sleep. My second time in jail still feels like the first time.

Zoe: Mandla left me, my parents disowned me, and my cousin is dating my ex-husband now I am arrested not for the first time. I can't take this anymore.

She's right both our lives have turned into a circus, what is next?

Lisa: Look girls we will get through this together okay, so do no panic everything is going to be fine.

She said but you could tell she's just trying to convince herself more than she's convincing us that everything is going to be alright. We all are so scared; Lisa is trying to be strong for me and Zoe so she's bottling everything to her so she would appear in control and strong. I don't want her to do that; I want her to be scared and vulnerable. I want her to show her fears.

Lisa: Swazi you okay?

I just stare at the dirty wall not saying anything, my life is a roller coaster and the most painful thing about it is I know what must be done yet I'm too scared to face the truth.

Lisa: Look we going to be fine, okay? We just gonna go through bail hearing and get the bail then from there we take everything one at a time.

Zoe: We might not get a bail so don't count much on it.

Lisa: Be positive Zoe, be positive love

Zoe: I am so tired of everything; I just want a peaceful happy life.

She said and started crying.

Zoe: I can't do this anymore; my heart can't take more pain. Swazi haven't even got back on her feet now this. I haven't got over my parents or Mandla for that matter, when are getting a break it enough now.

Lisa hugged her while shushing her.

Lisa: We will be okay Zoe let just get through this first then we will take everything one at a time, we all going to attend therapy.

Zoe: Everything hurt.

I know what Zoe is feeling, I am feeling it too. Everything hurt so much, once upon a time I was the one taking care of everyone now it all on Lisa I feel for her.

A police officer showed up and told us we have to get ready for bail hearing, we didn't have a lawyer so the state provided us with the lawyer. We went to fresh up and fix our faces before we were taken to the court room, the lawyer had told us to just plead guilty so we did exactly that. The judge gave us a bail of R6 000 each. We had to give the lawyer access to our account for him to withdraw the bail money, but Lisa didn't have that kind of cash. I also wasn't sure how much is on my account since my money is tied up on an investment I made, the investment that will pay out in three years, I had planned I will use the investment money to buy myself a nice big house, double story kind of thing with a swimming pool. There go my dreams of a good life going down the drain. We were then taken back to the holding cell as we wait for the bail to be settled before we leave this hell, I haven't said much to either of my friends the only time I spoke was during the court hours and giving the lawyer my account details. For what seems like forever he finally came back.

Lawyer: Unfortunately the bail money is not enough.

Me: What?

Lawyer: On your account I only found R4 000 then R7 000 from Zoleka's account only R2 000 from Lisakhanya's account, bail for two people is available.

Zoe: Swazi what happened to your money, you had nothing to spend your money on.'

Me: I invested all my money; I have never worried or even thought I would run out of cash since I was working.

Lisa: It okay you guys can go

Zoe: Nonsense we will leave here together, there must be something we can do.

Me: I will take a loan from the bank but in order to do that I will need my phone.

Lawyer: Okay I will get you your phone.

He said and stood up to get the phone, shortly he came back. I went through my bank app and tried to apply for the loan, best thing about technology these days you can get everything done right on the comfort of your home oh well prison on this case without having to go to the bank.

Me: Fuck

I say angrily

Zoe: What now

Me: I can't get a loan since I no longer have monthly income

Lisa: You got to be fucking kidding me.

Lawyer: Is there anyone you can call to bail you out?

We look at each other; quite frankly we had no one we could think of. Clearly we going stay here till Lisa get paid on Friday.

Lisa: I will take the loan

She said taking my phone and registering her personal details on the bank app so she would take the loan.

Lisa: The loan will only pay out tomorrow.

We spent another night in jail, being in jail is no fine it scary asf. I was so tired all I wanted was to take a nap and try to imagine my happy place where I still could use my legs. I just closed my eyes and tried so hard to imagine myself out of jail, walking down the beach and feeling the sea cold water on my feet. I was slowly starting to enjoy my wild beach imagination when suddenly I felt cold air blowing my face, the hair on my back raised and I felt cold chills down my spine then my heart started beating fast. I quickly opened my eyes, a full force pushed me over and I fell on my back with a wheel chair legs up, hitting my head on floor so painfully making me scream both in fear and pain.

Zoe: Jesus Swazi

She said hurrying to me, Lisa also hurried.

Lisa: What happened?

I was still under so much fear; I kept looking around with my eyes popped out. My friends helped me sit up.

Zoe: Did you just see a ghost?

As nothing ever happened the chills I was feeling were gone in a blink of an eye but the fear I was feeling was still there. Was it a ghost? I am not sure but something pushed me.

Me: Please don't leave my side, something pushed me over.

They look at each other with their own eyes popped out.

Zoe: I knew there were ghost here, oh God can it be morning already.

We had no choice but to stay up, I have had enough it was time I try to at least get on my feet again and there was only one way, just one way to do that.

Morning came, we made the bail then the lawyer was kind enough to take us back home upon our arrival at the lobby we bumped into Khaya, he walked past us as if he couldn't even see me.

Me: Khaya!

He still ignored me.

Me: Khaya!

I shout after him again. He turned to me.

Khaya: What?

Me: Can we talk please

Khaya: Oh now you want me here, didn't you get me kicked out.

Me: Please I need to talk to you

Khaya: Oh now that you can't walk you want to talk

Me: I need your help ...please

You could hear the desperation on my voice and I hated it. He just looked at me for a while.

Me: Please ...

He wants me to beg him then fine I will do exactly that because desperation time calls for desperation measures.

Khaya: I have to go, good luck with your life Nomaswazi these are consequences of your ignorant and stubbornness. I warned you but you never listen.

He said then walked away.

Me: Khaya!

UBIZO THE CALLING

He ignored me as he exits the doors of the lobby.

## TWENTY SIX

### NOMASWAZI

---

I wasn't expecting Khaya to just help me now because I need his help but I wasn't expecting him to be bitch either. There's nothing difficult about him hearing me out it not like I was asking an arm and a leg. I just needed his help so I would be able to get on my feet; I am officially broke with no job soon I will need money for rent where on earth will I get cash. I have no choice but to look at other options even those other options involve me putting a thought on the spiritual thing. The last thing I want is to go back home, broke with no cent on my name and endure my Aunt rejoicing on how useless and pathetic I am. This fancy life I am living and loving so much won't last long, since I used to pay my monthly rents in advance I am sorted for this month and the next month. Then from there how the fuck am I going to pay my rent with crippled legs, no job and not even much experience nor qualification nothing just me with an experience of working at the club. What am I going to eat, I can't expect Lisa to pay my bills, Zoe is also unemployed and broke the only money she has is on her savings and she's saving it for school as she's going back to school.

Lisa: Where your mind at?

She just came back from work; you could tell she's exhausted and drained. Working night and taking care of a grown ass woman during the day can't be easy, I need to make a plan about my life and I need to make it immediately.

Me: Long night?

Lisa: Yo you have no idea; I had to work two stations so I would get paid double and both stations were so busy; you wouldn't believe the fucking ass of a boss suggested if I want double pay so badly I should be a stripper. Me a whole stripper nx

Me: He's crazy I hope you told him to go to hell

Lisa: Oh yes I did

She finished taking off her clothes and got dressed in pyjamas. Both her and Zoe has been staying in my flat since the whole thing.

Lisa: So?

She got in bed, Zoe is fast asleep even snoring.

Lisa: Why are you up, the last time I check you love your sleep

Me: I'm just thinking ...

Lisa: Umm ...

We both kept quiet for a moment.

Lisa: Zoe was right about what she said the other day.

She says turning to look at me.

Me: Which is?

Lisa: This has to be the most difficult time of our lives, we are broke, I owe the bank money, you jobless, and Zoe is jobless she needs to find a job. I also need an honest paying job, a job that I could be proud to tell my granny about. Now that I have graduated I have to quit working at the club, at the same time I can't quit now since I am owing the bank then there's rent, then there's you who doesn't have a job.

She kept talking in riddles she should just get straight to the point; I am a fucking burden to them.

She took a deep sighs.

Lisa: All I am trying to say is, you need to get your life together try to deal with whatever is happening. You can't be staying here doing nothing allowing depression to take over all day, go out there and claim your life back.

I blink back the tears and stare into space avoiding eye contact with her.

Lisa: Swazi ...look i

Me: No I get it I am a burden and don't worry I will get my life together and get out of your hair.

Lisa: I didn't m-

Me: Just let it go, I get it just let it go.

I hate how I have become a burden to them all of the suddenly then there's this stupid guy who doesn't wanna come through for me. My life is officially ruined.

Zoe woke me up during the day as I have fallen asleep; she claimed I have a guest. She helps me sit on the wheelchair then wheeled me to the lounge where Khaya was standing by the couch with his hands on his pocket.

Khaya: Nomaswazi

Me: Hey

He walked next to me and sat on the couch, Zoe sat beside him.

Me: Thanks for coming; I really need your help.

Khaya: I am not doing this for you; I am doing it for my own peace.

I nod my head.

Me: Very good ...I don't know what to do. I am stuck on this wheelchair and the universe seems to be against me.

Khaya: Should I say I told you so?

I kept quiet for a moment then took a deep breathe feeling so drained. I told myself I am only doing this because there is no way I will go back home and live with my Aunt again.

Me: What ...

I took a sighs again.

Me: What do I need to do?

Khaya: It funny how life has humbled you, the last time we talked you called me a witch with demons

He said then chuckled.

Zoe: And she wasn't wrong, what is your deal?

Khaya gave Zoe a dead stare, i couldn't breathe properly I felt like there's this huge weight weighing on my heart preventing me from breathing so I had to take long dragged breathe every now and then.

Me: I apologise about that, look I just want to be able to walk again.

Zoe: You shouldn't apologise Swazi, this guy is fake he is giving me cold vibes I swear there's something not right about him.

Khaya: You know what I am done, if it not you insulting me it your friend. I am done here go ahead and stay on that wheelchair till you go insane, I won't stand being disrespected like this.

He said standing up to leave. I took that one deep breathe.

Me: Please don't go Zoe will you shut up. You told me to get my life together that what I am fucking doing.

Zoe: By signing your soul to demons, this is not how things are done.

Khaya: Listen here call me and my people demons one more time I swear to God I will make your life a living hell, your husband leaving you for a witch would be nothing compared to how I will turn your life upside down. Try me I shall show you what I am capable of.

Zoe: Are you threatening me? I am not s-

Me: Zoe shut the fuck up?

Zoe: So now I must shut up? You let this witch to threaten me and you saying I must shut.

Khaya: I am warning you for the last time keep on insulting me we shall see.

Zoe: As if I am sca-

Me: Will you just shut up, in fact give me space get out of my flat I want to have a private conversation that doesn't include you so please stop meddling.

Zoe: You so unbelievable, so fucking unbelievable

She said giving me a dead stare as she walk to the door. I took another deep sigh, she slammed the door leaving so much silence inside as both Khaya and I just kept quiet not saying anything to each other. He was angry I could tell by how he clench and unclench his fist. He sits back on the couch.

Khaya: I am not going to stand another insult either from you or those friends of yours. I am not here because I am desperate I am here because I am trying to help regardless of the way you insulted me I am giving you a second chance to right your wrongs but you must know if you blew this it over I won't be around for a third chance.

I nod my head understanding him.

Me: What do I ... I need to do? ...you know to get back on my feet.

Khaya: There's still a long way, I will help you

Me: Then what will happen with the cleansing thing

Khaya: Cleansing?

Me: Yes an old lady I was taken too said I need to be cleanse?

Khaya: They have shown you your Gobela?

I nod my head yes, he looks taken back for a moment.

Khaya: Oh ...okay then ...well I will cleanse you

Me: Will I need to go back home, she said something about me going home, secret about my parents, my aunt having to tell me

Khaya: No don't worry I will cleanse you, help you walk again then take you to your Gobela myself

Me: You will do that? After everything I said to you

Khaya: I'm just doing what is asked of me, once you in my position you will understand.

Me: Thank you Khaya, thank you so much.

Khaya: Don't thank me yet, there's still a long way to go before you could fully thank me.

I nod my head, as much as my head is here my heart is not.

Me: The sooner we start the better. I want to use my legs again.

Khaya: No rush, we don't rush these things. I will prepare for your process then get back to you as you will have to move in my house.

So I am really doing this, they will be no turning back after this. Will I even be able to do it? The door opened Lisa walked in.

Lisa: What happened between you and Zoe?

She asked the moment she walked in.

Lisa: Oh sorry Khaya right? I'm Lisa.

Khaya: Hi Lisa

Lisa: Let me not disturb you, before I go will you need anything to drink?

Me: No we good

Khaya: Actually I would love some water, thank you

Lisa: Of course

She disappeared to get the water.

Khaya: You look stressed, relax everything is going to be fine.

Me: easy for you to say

Lisa came back with a glass of water, Khaya thank her she then went to the bedroom giving us privacy. Khaya brief me on how things are going to work, apparently he says I won't need to go home nor will I need any of my family for the cleansing he will do everything his way then when I am able to walk he will take me to the old lady from the rural that where my journey will start.

Zoe came back shortly after Khaya has left.

Zoe: There is something up with that guy, while I was with Baba Dube I heard him talking on the phone saying something like 'We need to move fast she has met her' then he told whoever was on the phone to get everything ready by tomorrow they don't have time.

Me: Zoe I am not in the mood for your bullshit so please keep whatever thought you have to yourself.

Zoe: Fine don't say I didn't warn you though, something is fish about that guy.

Me: Argh

UBIZO THE CALLING

I said and wheeled myself back to the bedroom; I am slowly getting good at wheeling myself.

TWENTY SEVEN

NOMASWAZI

---

Zoe was a pain in an ass she kept saying there's something off with Khaya, me and her have been on each other's throat the whole week at least Khaya is coming to get me today for the whole cleansing thing that will happen during the weekend. I am so terrified of the unknown. I don't know how things will turn out will I be able to walk after the weekend. I cry myself to sleep every day because I am about to walk a journey I don't want and I never wanted. I hope the ancestors could see how unhappy I am with what they are forcing me to do and I hope they will be able to live with themselves knowing they forced me into something I never wanted.

Lisa: It going to be okay Swazi you will see

I swear if I hear Lisa say that one more time just one more time I am going to lose explode.

Lisa: When you are an official sangoma you will need to hook a girl up with a love portion.

Okay she got me there I found myself smiling a little.

Me: You definitely need a love portion, when was the last time you had a man.

Lisa: Girl who said I don't have a man?

Me: Lisa! ...are you dating?

Lisa: A lady doesn't kiss and tell my lady, what you need is to speed up your process hook a sister up with some love portion because I want to keep this one.

Me: Oh my God how the fuck did I not notice, you even glowing.

Lisa: Oh fuck off

Me: This is the best news ever you getting dickmitised, oh God I am so happy. I am so happy you are having sex. Dear lord thank you for borrowing Lisa a dick yoo she needed it.

She threw a cushion at me.

Lisa: Shut the fuck up you moron, when was the last time you got some?

Me: Ah Ah don't make this about me, when am I meeting him.

Lisa: Never you want to freak my man, hell no yoo you and Zoe will meet him on our wedding aah wait till the wedding day shame.

Me: Oh wow we are not that bad.

Lisa: Who? You and Zoe not that bad girl you two are worse. Get me the portion so he will marry me and you will then meet him

I laughed out very loud which is something I haven't done in a while.

Me: I never thought I will see this day, you love this guy?

Lisa: I know it still early for love but Swazi yoo i love him, he makes me happy, he makes me laugh everything about him is just perfect.

Me: Oh my sweet Jesus you are in love, look at you lighting up like charismas tree. Can I at least know the name?

Lisa: I can't help it my heart beat just for him, and his name is Sbusiso my Sbusiso

We both laughed

Me: Already claiming him.

Lisa: Girl that man is mine if I have to use a korobela to prove it so be it.

I am so happy for Lisa, we kept joking about her and Sbusiso even went as far as planning their wedding

Me: I will be a maid of honour.

Lisa: Wuuh I can only imagine me in a white wedding dress girl I will be hotter than hot.

Me: That my dear would be the wedding of the year who knows I might find me some muscle man of my own at your wedding.

She laughed hard.

Lisa: Stop flatting yourself no man will stand you Swazi in case you haven't noticed you have a lose screw

Me: Eeh ngokujola nje two seconds usuyi love guru

We both laughed and joke around.

Zoe had gone to the shops when she came back Lisa and I were cooking more like I was helping Lisa cook. As much as I am grateful to have them around I also need my space they can be so suffocating sometimes.

Zoe: Umm it smells good in here.

Me: Did you buy me everything I listed?

Zoe: Ya duuh though I still think you shouldn't leave with that man.

Me: Zoe please today is not the day.

She raised her hands in surrender

Zoe: At least I tried, what you guys cooking I am famished.

Honestly I just wanna do this and get over it, I am too drained I just want to claim my life back.

Khaya arrived to get me both Lisa and Zoe accompanied me to his house based at KwaMashu. Zoe had promised to behave and she did exactly that, she just chose not to talk at all because talking would've mean she will utter nothing but bullshit. Upon our arrival we were met by a long queue of people apparently they were there for consultation. The queue was so long, you can tell some have been here for so long some even look so sick. Khaya's house was okay, a big house not sure with how many rooms and a hut at the back for consultation. The people gave us diggers as we walk past them to the hut, they are probably thinking what am I not joining the queue forgetting everything here in mzansi has connections.

Khaya: Neliswa

He called out before we could enter the hut; a very beautiful lady came out. I was so amazed by her beauty and her flawless skin, a yellow bone with dimples and a simple doek covering her head, such natural beauty if very rare. She smiles politely at us.

Neliswa: Baba, Sanibonani

Her voice is just so angelic everything about this girl scream perfection.

Khaya: Did you prepare a room for our guest.

Neliswa: Yebo baba I did.

As she talks with Khaya she has bend a little not looking him in the eyes, I think we were all just amazed by everything about her from the looks, to the way she talks, her body structure that has curves in all right places, her respect for Khaya and not to mention how amazingly that long ankle dress feet her.

Khaya: Good.

He then turned to us.

Khaya: This is my wife Neliswa she will help you settle.

I just nod my head still looking at this beautiful woman, who still didn't look Khaya in the eyes.

Neliswa: Shall we please

She said leading the way; Lisa gave me a look while mouthing "Wow" then wheeled me following after her with Zoe following behind with my bags. She led the way all the way inside the big house; the interior of the house is breathtakingly, so spotlessly clean, the lounge have the touch of nature mixed with a little bit of tradition, pictures on the wall are of wild animal; lions, tiger and a zebra. The tiles on the floor are pure white and shiny, we all couldn't keep our eyes off the house as we look around, their huge grey couches on the middle of the room that had an leopard flew and cushions made of zebra clothing looked so comfortable, if I were to take a nap there I would wake up the next day.

Lisa: You have a beautiful house Neliwa.

Neliwa: Thank you, please follow me this way.

She led the way through a passage that had a picture of her and Khaya on their wedding gowns beside that picture was a picture of Khaya in traditional wear with a lion beside him looking like a Zulu super model. Neliwa opened a room then got in and let us in too.

Neliwa: This is where you going to sleep, I can help you with unpacking if you like.

Zoe: We have hands we will unpack her clothes.

Lisa and I gave her look like; and then what your problem. she just rolled her eyes.

Zoe: So what your role?

She said looking at Neliwa, someone please shut Zoe.

Neliwa: Sorry?

Lisa: She meant what you using for your skin, you have a very beautiful flawless skin.

Neliwa smiles her cute smile. Even a simply thing such as smile makes her so softly.

Neliwa: I use Vaseline; will there be anything you need?

I caught Zoe rolling her eyes.

Lisa: Oh my God you so beautiful

Me: We will let you know if we need anything.

Neliswa: Okay, see you

She said and walked out closing the door behind her that when we all finally let out a breath we have been holding as we say.

"Wow"

At the same time

Lisa: She is ...

Zoe: Controlled, can't you see her she looks like those little cute adorable puppies that are told when to seat, eat or run.

I rolled my eyes.

Me: She's beautiful

Lisa: I also think Zoe is right about the controlled part.

Zoe: Hallelujah

Me: Oh God can we just unpack my clothes

My room was neatly clean; pure white bedding covers and a small wardrobe with grey walls. My friend unpacked my clothes I even bought some goodies with me; we stashed the goodies inside the wardrobe in case they don't feed me enough. Lisa even bought a bottle of wine.

Lisa: In case you want to let lose a little and get drunk.

Those were her words as she hid the bottle inside my undies draw. Shortly after that they left but not before Zoe let Khaya know she's watching him. As I watch them drive off my heart sink I am all alone with strangers that I hardly know, both my pillar of strength just left me. Being here made me have anxiety as I realised how real this is. The perfect Neliswa wheeled me back inside the house, and then told me she's preparing dinner I should just shout if I need anything. As I wheel myself back to the room I will be sleeping in I felt so uneasy, my shoulders felt like I was carrying Hlengiwe Mhlaba as they were so heavy, it suddenly got too cold and too clean in a creepy way.

TWENTY EIGHT

NOMASWAZI

---

The kind beautiful Nelia took her precious time to give me the tour of the house but only showing me what I needed to know, which is the kitchen and the bathroom. She even went as far as helping me with bathing though I declined many times she still did; now I am all dressed and ready to take a nap since Khaya said the cleansing will be done in the early morning. I still wasn't sure about the whole cleansing thing or the spiritual thing but I had hope things will go well and I will regain my life back that included my legs.

Me: Thank you again Nelia, you are way too kind.

She smile politely, she has been way too kind to me.

Nelia: Don't worry I do not mind

Me: Khaya is so lucky to have you, how long have you too been married?

Nelia: It been seven years now

Me: Wow that a long time

Nelia: It is

She was busy fixing the covers for me to sleep.

Me: Any kids

She took some time to answer

Nelia: No ... no kids. Should I help with getting in bed?

I got a feeling she doesn't want to talk about her or her marriage or maybe she's just not the talking type.

Me: No don't worry I got this. Can I ask you something?

She nods her head

Nelia: Yes

Me: Do you also have the ... you know spiritual thing

She shakes her head no

Nelia: No I don't

Me: How it like being married to someone who does?

Nelia: it okay I guess

Me: Can he tell if you are gossiping about him?

She shrugged

Neliswa: I don't know Nomaswazi

Me: Besides being his wife what else do you do?

Neliswa: I help him with his work

Me: That all, what about you? What do you like doing?

Neliswa: Helping him

I chuckled

Me: Come on girl it got to be that one thing Neliswa likes, you know the Neliswa thing.

Neliswa: Umm ... cooking maybe

Me: Cooking is more like your duty I mean something that makes you, do you even have friends? People you go out with and have fun.

Neliswa: I don't have time for fun Nomaswazi

She said it like there is something wrong with having fun

Me: Girl please you so uptight you need to live a little you know, let loose get drunk and just relax you way too pretty for keeping yourself inside, the world deserves to see such beauty everyday any day.

Neliswa: Thanks but I am happy with being in doors

Me: Are you really happy? No offence intended but girl you look like Khaya's puppy following him wherever he goes, taking orders from him and obey like a good dog. You need a life of your own just because you are married it doesn't mean you should stop living your life.

Neliswa: Goodnight Nomaswazi

She said and walked towards the door, I mentally slapped my stupid self and this stupid big mouth of mine for always having something so stupid to say. Her marriage is none of my business for fuck sake.

Me: Neliswa look ... I'm sorry ... I just ... I just wanted to know you better

Neliswa: It okay I understand

She said standing by the door looking at me still smiling, how she can still maintain such a beautiful smile after all the offensive awful things I just said to her puzzle me.

Me: Night Neliswa

She walks out closing the door behind her, before getting in bed I decided to have some snack and a little sip of my bottle of wine. I had to pee so I wheel myself out all the way towards the bathroom but before I reach the bathroom I heard what seems to be an argument; a part of me wanted to walk away but well the nosy part of me couldn't walk off without hearing what behind the closed doors.

Khaya: I told you this is the last time

Neliswa: You said that the last but still there is another one, don't you get tired?

Khaya: You need to stay in your lane; this is the last time I promise.

Neliswa: You also promised the last time you said it the last time; why are you so greedy? You already have everything don't you think it enough?

Khaya: Neliswa I –

Neliswa: No I am tired of this life; I want a normal life, a normal home

Khaya: I gave you a home you wanted

Neliswa: You said us coming to Durban will be a start of new normal life for us but still you go back on your words.

Khaya: This time is different she's special

Neliswa: So was Mbali, Aphiwe, Liyana should I name more?

I decided then and there this was not my business so I should wheel myself back to my room.

Neliswa: What more do you want? We have already got enough; we don't need her stop being greedy is it not enough that I sleep with your snake?

Whoa that got me, a what?

Khaya: Keep your voice down woman

This keeps getting scarier and interesting, I had my hand on my heart as it pound so hard out of fear.

Neliswa: All I am saying is I am tired of this I am tired of everything, your greediness makes me so sick I can't even have kids

Khaya: Oh so this is about kids? Didn't you say you were fine with it, we had an agreement?

Neliswa: You said it was a once off thing but no it kept happening, over and over. You promised to fix it but no I still have to sleep with your damn snake and they still take my kids not to mention you have included innocent people on this thing.

Khaya: Take your words back woman, take them back right now or so help me god I won't be held responsible for what I will do to you.

It went quiet and I just knew shit is not what it seems to be; snakes, kids, innocent souls no seems like I am in a wrong place. I quickly tried to wheel myself back to the room as quietly as I could but not before I heard a loud clap and I just knew that a slap.

I quickly opened the door to my room and wheeled myself in then slowly closed the door making sure not to make any noise, my head was racing I didn't know what to do, I can't even walk how the fuck will I run. This is way too fucked up. After taking a very deep breath i rushed towards the bed to get my phone so I would call the girls to fetch me there was no way in hell I am spending a night here. God I knew this dlozi thing was bullshit; I should not have given in, it all bullshit. What have I gotten myself into? When I got neared the bed I got the shock of my life, my heart literally stopped beating for few seconds before I regain my consciousness; there is a snake a huge yellow with black spot snake right on top of the bed staring right at me. My heart started pounding fast and hard, my whole entire body shaking I let out a scream; a very loud scream that pierced through the whole house as I try to reverse the wheel chair I fell on my back still screaming my lungs out as I sit on my ass and try to go for the door, the snake slowly moved down from the bed coming straight towards me, every part of my body just felt numb, fear creeping in on every part of my body, I am still on my ass moving backward, for fuck sake I think I have peed myself. all of the suddenly there was thunder. I could hear it roaring so loudly then lightening striking inside through the window; I have never been this scared in my whole entire life. The thunder roar even more loudly and the lightening shined throughout the room you would swear I am some sort of a celebrity and the lightening is paparazzi with their cameras it was even blinding, the huge snake was still slowly getting off the bed every time the lightning strike the snake would raise it head, I was slowly getting by the door now still screaming even my poor hands that I was using to balance were slowly failing me, I couldn't even reach the door handle the snake was now by my fallen wheelchair and the lightening with thunder were playing house as they strike and roar so loudly roaming around the room. I kept praying and shouting for help.

Me: God please ... no please help! Help! Please Mama please help me please don't forsake me now. Please God I will do anything! Khaya you basted! Khaya! Nelia! Nelia please help me please Nelia!

UBIZO THE CALLING

My cries and screams fell on deaf ears none of them came to my rescue.

TWENTY NINE

NOMASWAZI

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The snake couldn't come near me as the lighting kept striking right in front of the snake, with every roar the thunder made outside it felt like it was roaring right inside me, making my heart beat faster than usually. I was still crying and screaming my lungs out when a certain voice in my head advised or rather told me to call upon my clan names, I wasted no time in between the cries I call upon all clan names I could remember from my surname.

Me: Mtungwa! Mawandla kaNdlela! Nina baseMandlovini! Siwela Mphazima kaLanga! Please do not forsake me now, please help me I need you! Please do not forsake me, please protect and guide me.

I pleaded still crying and banging the door loudly.

Me: Help me please! Help me!

The snake and the lightening kept playing paparazzi on each other as the lightening would strike and the snake would roll over the floor it was only few inches away from me. Looking as scary as ever, making my body shiver with fear and my heart pound out of its rib cage.

Me: Please Mphazima, I am sorry I am sorry for everything please help me! Neliswa help me please!

The snake and the lightening seemed to be on their own fight though it was very disturbing to witness I was so glad the lightening is preventing the snake from coming towards me. At some point the lightening strike real fire, flames went up but the snake survived as it rose up into a human size, I was sure as hell when it lies down like a snake it would reach me between my legs so much fear and being blinded by both tears and the lightening the door suddenly opened.

Neliswa: Oh God of mercy!

She said grabbing my arm and dragging me out, leaving the snake rolling on a human length. The snake's small eyes met with mine, I would never get that image out of my mind. It opened its mouth and what seems like water came out. Neliswa was still dragging me out when the room went on fire as the lightening started striking more fire. Is it weird that I am grateful to the

lightening for keeping the snake away from me, I don't even want to imagine what could've happened had it not. Neliswa dragged me all the way out, I couldn't even feel the coldness of tiles nor the pain of being dragged on the ground all I could feel was fear and all I wanted was to get out of there as soon as I could so as she drag me out I would help with making sure to use my ass and hands to follow her. She opened the door of a car and tried getting me inside but I ended up getting in myself as I grab on a passenger chair and lifted myself up till I was sited she rushed to the driver's sit and started driving off with her hands shaking. As we drove off the house went on fire, flames went up.

Neliswa: Lord have mercy

You could tell she was as scared as I am, her driving wasn't even straight yet I wasn't worried about her killing us I just wanted her to drive faster. I still hasn't said anything to her, I doubt I can even talk I just kept on crying. She drove in a very high speed; it was so late few cars were on the road. Funny enough she knew exactly where to go when we arrived in town, she knew where my flat is we approached the gate I was still too traumatised to say nor do anything luckily the security guy knows me so I didn't need to explain I live there, Neliswa drove in all the way to the parking lot after packing the car she carried me with her back I still did not object I was way too drained and traumatised. She took an elevator exactly to my floor and walk straight to my door where she started banging the door loudly, no one opened or said anything for a while she just kept on banging.

Zoe: What the fuck? You break this door you pay!

I could hear her from inside swearing, Neliswa kept banging the door.

Zoe: Fuck you!

She said still swearing from inside, the door finally opened.

Zoe: Yo-

Her eyes widen.

Zoe: Neliswa! What the fuck did you do to her? Swazi! Swazi

I just let out a cry, she let us come inside the moment Neliswa put me on the couch Zoe pushed her away and squeezed me to her then stopped to look at me.

Zoe: Oh no what happened to you? Swazi what happened to you babe, what happened.

She asked fear of the unknown and worry written all over her face and her eyes that are full of tears that are about to fall.

Lisa walks out of the bedroom running.

Lisa: What going on here

She came to me and hugged me.

Lisa: Swazi! Swazi are you okay

I wanted to talk, to say something but I couldn't find my voice when both my friends realised I was just too traumatised to talk they turned to Neliswa who was busy pacing up and down.

Zoe: What did you do to her?

She charged towards her and grabbed her by her granny night dress that she is wearing, she grabbed her roughly shaking her and shouting on her face.

Zoe: What did you do to her? I am talking to you bitch

She pushed her to a couch and sends a slap across her face, Neliswa tried to shield herself but Zoe got on top of her and gave her few slaps before Lisa pulled her away. She screamed for Lisa to let her go.

Zoe: let me go, I want to kill this bitch

Lisa: Zoe wait ...Zoe

Zoe: Look at Swazi! Do you see her! Do you see her! Does she look fine to you; I want to know what they did to her. They fuck with the wrong bitch!

She screamed still trying to get off Lisa whom she managed and got a chance to slap Neliswa again who was now standing by the couch, Lisa grabbed Zoe again.

Lisa: Zoe! Dammit would you stop

Neliswa: It wasn't supposed to be like this. It wasn't supposed to be like this.

She said pacing up and down with her hands wrapped around herself. Both Lisa and Zoe stopped and looked at her.

Neliswa: She was not supposed to see it as yet, she ... she

Lisa: What the hack you talking about bitch.

Zoe ran off somewhere, Neliswa kept pacing up and down while biting on her nails. Zoe shortly came back with the same sjambok we used to beat up Mandla; where the fuck was she keeping that, probably on her luggage.

Zoe: You better start talking bitch!

Lisa just walked towards me as I was still sitting on the couch just watching everything unfold with a half of my mind as the other half was bust seeing the

snake, re-playing everything that went down. Lisa hugged me to her, tears were just falling off. I wasn't screaming no more I was just too scared, my heart was beating so fast and I felt so cold. Neliwa didn't respond to Zoe she kept pacing up and down.

Zoe walked up to her and whipped her back; she jumped up rubbing where Zoe has hit her.

Zoe: You better start talking you fucking bitch.

Before she could even say anything she gave her another whipping.

Neliwa: Okay! Okay! I will talk please stop! Stop please

She whipped her a several times at some point Neliwa tried to run but she tripped and fell.

Zoe: Talk!

Zoe was so angry since she's light skinned you could tell that she has turned red.

Neliwa: It was baba it wasn't me! It wasn't me!

Zoe: Baba my foot! What the fuck did you do huh?

She asked and whipped her again, all Neliwa could do was hid her face.

Neliwa: Please stop I will tell you everything.

Zoe still whipped her for a while before stopping.

Neliwa: She was not supposed to see the snake as yet; it was going to be revealed to her once she was done with her initiation.

Zoe: What snake? What the fuck you talking about? Who the fucks are you people?

Neliwa: It was all Ba- Khaya! I swear I had nothing to do with it. He was going to help her! She was going to be able to walk again! The cleansing was a lie. He was going to tie her soul into a snake. Helping her would've come with a price.

She shouted all this crying, a confused Zoe just felt defeated as she sit on the arm of the couch.

Lisa: Swazi babes please say something.

She whispers while rubbing me gently and wiping my tears.

Neliwa: Nomaswazi's soul was going to be tied into a snake. She wouldn't have noticed the snake was going to resurface later when she's a full trained sangoma, Bab- Khaya! Khaya knew she has so much power and his snakes' feeds on power, the snake was going to be on her life using her powers and

helping her with her riches, and it was going to demand a lot of things she would've sacrificed a lot.

Zoe: What is going on here?

Now she is more confused than mad, I want to register what is happening here so I would also talk but I seem to can't, everything is just happening too fast. I feel like I am watching some dejavu Nigerian film.

Neliswa: It all Khaya

She kneel on the floor and unbutton her night dress, between her boos was an X marking.

Neliswa: He bounded my soul with a snake, I was his first sacrifice. He has been doing this for a while now. We have been moving around a lot. He uses gifted powerful people to grow and expand his snakes and that gives him greatest power, he is a very greedy man but he has a good side of him. He is not that bad I swear.

Lisa: No that bad? Not that bad? Bitch look at my friend, do you see her? Do you see how she looks like she just witnessed a ghost?

Neliswa: Baba was just trying to help

She said crying a plea; Lisa quickly got off the couch and snatched the sjambok from a Zoe who was just staring into space.

Lisa: After all the shit that he did, you still have the nerve to call him Baba

Neliswa: Sis please st-

Lisa: I am not your sis bitch

She started whipping her.

Lisa: You rotten piece of shit! How could you!

Lisa has always been a voice of reason, though she may have done some things but she is that person who always got us in place whenever we losing it. I have never seen her losing it like this; she beat Neliswa up regardless of her screams and plea.

Lisa: How dare you do my girl like this!

Zoe: Where the fuck is Khaya I will cut his balls I swear.

Neliswa: K- Khaya! The fire ...oh no!

She managed to get away from Lisa and ran for her life towards the door then ran out.

Zoe: Bitch we not done with you!

She said running after her.

UBIZO THE CALLING

"We trying to sleep what going on here?"

I hear some tenant on my floor asking irritated.

Zoe: Mind your fucking business

"I am calling the cops"

One of them says.

Zoe: fine! Fine no need for cops I am going back inside and there will be no more noise.

She said and shortly walked back in then slammed the door and started pacing up and down.

## THIRTY

### NOMASWAZI

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After Neliswa ran out Lisa made me sugar water, they looked scared as they didn't know how to deal with me. God I didn't even know how to deal with myself I was too shocked to do anything. One thing I knew for sure today I had a face on face look with death and that scared me a lot to a point of me being too scared to even fall asleep, I have a feeling I would never have a peaceful sleep. Both my friends helped me take a bath did I mention I peed on myself, oh yes I did and right now as they help me bath I am too embarrassed. After the bath I got under covers and lay there just staring into space, I had no tears left to cry.

Lisa: Swazi! ... Swazi

She shakes my arm; I look up at her as she's standing beside the bed.

Lisa: I was asking if I should get you painkillers

I shake my head no. She was about to leave the room when I found my voice.

Me: Please don't leave me alone.

My voice was so low and horse due to all the crying I did, she turned and look at me with so much sympathy.

Lisa: Okay

She said and came back to bed cuddling me. Her hands holding me made me feel a little better, Zoe also walked in and we all cuddle together no one saying anything to anyone. My mind kept replaying what went down tonight, I really tried to get it off my head but I just can't and whenever the memory of what happened resurface I find myself so scared with tears streaming down my eyes.

When I opened my eyes I was by a river, the place was so quiet; there was so much peace and beauty of nature, everything so green the trees had apples, some pears and some orange. I opened my arms and inhale the fresh air of nature. Smiling to myself I kept walking towards the sound of water from the river, I felt so much at peace. Oh yes I could walk and it felt so good to walk on my own two feet. When I got by the river a woman with most beautiful long afro hair was sitting by the river just watching the water flow with her back on me. I walked towards her so amazed by her hair.

Me: Sorry Ma

She ignored me

Me: Sorry Ma you have a very beautiful hair

She still ignored me.

I settled beside her and stare at what she's staring, she's not just a woman. She is an old woman probably someone's granny.

Me: It hot today isn't? and I love how there's peace here

She finally turned and looked at me; I was still smiling at her though she didn't look too pleased.

"What wrong with you? Why don't you listen?"

Me: Sorry

"You don't listen Nomaswazi, you don't listen."

Okay this woman is very angry and I don't know what I did to her.

Me: I am sorry I don't know wha-

"This is your last warning, go on and be stubborn you shall see what will happen to you"

Me: Who are you? What did I do?

"I am your grandmother and I am so disappointed in you in fact we are all disappointed in you. You're such a disappointment. How could you disappoint me like this?"

Her words hit hard, I do not want to disappoint her. She's my granny I want her to be proud of me.

Me: I am sorry ... I am so so sorry Gogo, what do you need me to do to make things right?

She just looks at me disappointment written all over her face, I was in a verge of tears as I so wanted her to not be disappointed in me.

Me: I will do anything, anything for you.

"You know what to do Nomaswazi"

I nod my head repeatedly without thinking twice, before I could tell her I would do it an old man came from behind us and took her hand.

"Let go Mampandlane she's not worth it"

I never met both my grandparents but I am sure as hell this is them and they both looked so angry at me.

Me: Wait please don't go, Gogo! Mkhulu please wait

They turned their backs on me and walked off.

Me: Please don't go, please wait. Don't turn your back on me Gogo please. I will do it I promise I will do it

I woke up panting and sweating still calling for them to wait, after I manage tp stabilise my breathing I stare up the ceiling having to make the decision I should've made a long time ago, it now long overdue. Both Lisa and Zoe were already up and about, Zoe came in the room.

Zoe: Oh hey babes I made breakfast, we will just wait for Lisa to come back so you would freshen up and eat.

As if speaking of a devil Lisa walked in wheeling a wheelchair.

Me: Where did you get that?

It not mine this one looks brand new.

Lisa: Well ...

She sat on the wheelchair and wheeled herself around the room.

Lisa: My man got it for me.

Zoe: The mysterious guy bought a wheelchair for you

Lisa: Nop he's a doctor so he borrowed me this wheelchair

I felt so emotional of the length my friends has to go to make sure I am fine in every way.

Me: Thank you so much guys for everything you have done for me, taking care of me, God being my legs when I couldn't walk, supporting me every day and any day without thinking twice. Throughout these difficult times you have been there for me even though sometimes I am just an ass but you never gave up on me, I really do appreciate you. Thank you so much and Zoe I am sorry I didn't listen to you about Khaya guy.

Lisa: We are sisters and we promised to be there for each other no matter what so chill before you make me so emotional.

Zoe: Oh no I won't take that I want a written certified apology with a bottle of wine.

We laugh at her silliness

Me: Truth is if it wasn't for you I would not have gotten this far, I owe you my life and I promise to make it up to.

Zoe: Just focus on getting your life back and worry about thanking us on our graves cause quite frankly that where people are most thankful.

Lisa: Exactly and you should remember that we can't take care of you for the rest of our lives, especially when I am about to get married to Sbusiso and live happily then die and you come and thank me not forgetting to hid some alcohol on my coffin I would need it to face God reading out my sins to me.

We laughed.

Zoe: Firstly mysterious man hasn't even proposed so hold your brakes sister and secondly no alcohol for you heaven has wine as rivers and tap water so you safe.

Lisa: On my long walk to heaven I might need it and for your own information I am giving my mysterious man two month if he doesn't propose by then I am leaving him.

Zoe: If I were you I wouldn't even wish to get married.

Me: Guys!

They stopped talking and paid attention to me.

Me: While we are on the topic of getting my life back I have made a decision I will go ahead with the spiritual thing.

Zoe: You say what? After what happened Swazi

I was expecting that from her.

Lisa: This time I am with Zoe I think you should forget about these things, they're not so genuine.

I didn't expect that from her so convincing them I need to try out this thing and see where it takes me would be quite challenging.

Me: I get you seriously and I am also scared and not sure about anything but I want you to trust me this time cause I am going to do it right

Zoe: Swazi the underground gang thing doesn't exist; they're just bunch of demons trying to consume your life.

Me: I am starting to think otherwise, look these things seem to happen as much as I really don't want to do this, it the only way I could claim my life back probably walk again.

Lisa: Which snake this time will your soul be tied to for you to be able to walk again?

I took a deep sigh.

Zoe: Exactly so forget about these things, all you need right now is just to accept you can't walk and nothing will help with your walking then try to get a job because I am also not working and Lisa can't support grown ass women you could even get disabled pension so not all hope is lost.

Me: Seriously! Jeez this is my life at the end of the day so whatever you say doesn't matter at this point. I am going to do this my way and I would appreciate it if my friends would stop being judgemental and support me as I need their support more than ever.

Lisa: Girl you know we love you but we're going to keep it 100% here, if you are going to take this journey just be fully invested and make it work no matter what because we can't be always running to your rescue whenever shit hit the fan.

Zoe: Exactly we also have to fix our lives, especially me I still got a lot to deal with and try to get my own life together so be sure of your decisions because we are all going through a lot and we need a breakthrough.

Though I would've preferred not to hear the truth, they're right if I am walking this journey I have to be fully invested to avoid being a burden to them as they also got their own lives to live and bags of money to secure.

Me: Okay ... I am going to be fully invested; I will do anything on my power to make this work to claim my life back and I promise to not hold you back

Zoe: Swazi are you sure about this? You have seen how these things could be like, are you sure this is what you want.

Me: All I know right now is this is what I have to do, not what I want just what I have to do

Lisa: Swazi! ...

She said sadly.

Me: Which is why I need to go back ...

I took a very deep breathe.

Me: Home

They look at each other with so much worry; they know this is the part of my life that we never joke about no matter what. This is the most sensitive part of my life that I never wanted to confront, my upbringing after my mother's death is a no go area. The thought of everything, of the way my Aunt treated me still manage to bring me down even to this day. How she uses to say I am pathetic and useless just like my mother. I didn't mind her insulting me but insulting my mom hurt more it made me see red; I adored my mother, she was my idol I couldn't stand someone talking ill of her yet my Aunt made it her mission to dish shit about my mother every chance she get. I last saw my Aunt three years ago right now I don't know how she would react to seeing me,

especially in a wheelchair! What a downgrade I always dreamt of her seeing me living my best life, driving the most expensive car and living on a mission in suburbs. I always told myself I would invite her just to rub it on her face yet here I am in a wheelchair with no cent on my name, talk about life humbling me.

## THIRTY ONE

### NOMASWAZI

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I do not know what would happen when I get home, one thing I know for sure I am not looking forward to it. Lisa and Zoe were also coming with me, we woke up on an early morning the following day and got ready, packed what we were going to need. Lisa called her Gran and she said we all can stay at her house then I would go to see my Aunt. I didn't trust that woman I feel like she would just poison me given a chance. So staying at Lisa's house is a better idea. We were using Zoe's car, Zoe was to stay behind with me while Lisa will return the following day. As for me I needed to have the cleansing that am required to do, I will have a talk with my Aunt then go to the sangoma woman so I would know what need to be done next after the talk. As we leave the city my heart sank, we leaving my whole future behind, the life I've ever wanted now I am leaving it behind I just hope it worth it.

Lisa: Once your Aunt start being an ass we will sort her out old or not you shouldn't allow her to terrorise you

Zoe: Exactly we got you friend, she better not start with us.

I love my friends like honestly I love them so much, regardless of how much we disagree on things sometimes or how much their honest can be so hurting sometimes I believe if they sugar-coated everything and felt sorry for me I would still be in bed crying and feeling sorry for myself. I really appreciate them so much and I am just hoping one day I would be able to do something nice for them as a way of showing my gratitude. Before I could say anything Zoe received a call since she's driving she connected the phone on Bluetooth.

"Hello Zoleka, hello"

Zoe: Yes who's this?

"It me Aunt Ana, Zoleka my baby you have to come home"

Zoe: Hey Aunt Ana the last tim I checked you were overseas when did you get back

"Oh my baby I had to come back, I am so angry at your father right now please come home there is something you need to know"

Zoe: With all due respect Aunt Ana I do not have a home nor more, didn't they tell you I am no longer part of their little perfect family.

"Nonsense come home so we will talk"

Zoe: I am not coming there; they made it clear they don't want me!

She snaps a little then took a deep breath.

Zoe: I am sorry Aunt but I really can't there's nothing for me there.

"Zo Zo my baby your mother passed on"

She swilled off the road almost losing the control of the car then pressed the brakes luckily we were not on a busy road; Lisa and I didn't even say anything as we were also too shocked.

"Zo Zo you still there baby?"

Zoe: She's dead?

"I'm sorry my baby they should've told you I just got here apparently she died on her sleep"

Zoe: Well good for her I hope she goes to hell, bye Aunt Ana thank you for letting me know

"Zo Z-

Zoe dropped the call then took a deep breath before proceeding with driving, we all just kept quiet but I couldn't nor more. I had to say something I can't keep quiet.

Me: So ...Zo Zo what you gonna do about ...you know

Zoe: My mom dying well I am not going to do anything

Lisa: Will you go to the funeral?

Zoe: For what? She said and I quote "Zoleka you're as good as death to us" haa now look who is dead

Me: Maybe you should go

Zoe: I am not going there and I am glad she's dead at least now I can feel better knowing my mother doesn't care about me because she's dead.

Me: Just go there for closure

Zoe: Let it go Swazi I am not going

Me: Zoe she's still your moth-

Zoe: She lost that right the moment she uttered the words I was good as dead to her, I hope she doesn't enter heaven may her soul roam around and come back to haunt her shitty husband.

Lisa: Zoe!

She just kept quiet and drove.

We got to Lisa's house on the afternoon; her gran had cooked a storm for us. She was so happy to see us. She wouldn't stop praising how much we have grown, though being around her made things a little better for me but I still felt like dying for having to confront my Aunt. I didn't even know where I am going to start with her; will I even be able to talk to her? To face her without freaking out?

Gran: Now girls tell me what have been happening.

Lisa: Oh nothing Gran our lives are as boring as yours, we just dealing with the sudden Swazi problem.

Gran: Oh I am sorry sweetheart, do not worry it God's plan he is preparing something big and good for you.

I wanted to roll my eyes but out of respect for Gran I didn't.

Gran: Zoleka where is that handsome husband of yours

Zoe: He ...him and I are now divorced

Gran: God of grace, you say what?

Zoe: He fell in love with another woman Gran.

Gran: Oh man and their greedy nature, it disgust me you did good by divorcing him my angel no woman should settle for an unsatisfied man who want every skirt passing his way.

Lisa: Amen to that sister.

Gran: Oh poor Zoleka you must be going a lot with your mother passing and being a divorcee.

We all look at each other.

Me: You also know about Zoe's mother.

Gran: Oh yes it so sad, I heard last week and I went there the funeral is this weekend. I'm glad you girls are here to support one another; Zoleka is really going through a lot. I am surprised the funeral will be held here I thought it would be down in Durban considering your parents were more on that side then here; shame your father is going through the most you could tell the poor man was on the verge of breaking down. Umm for her to die on her sleep, I clap once. You girls be careful while at the funeral this reek of witchcraft

Me: Witchcraft? Why do you think she's bewitch

Gran: That the only think that can kill a black person on their sleep, black magic my dear.

Zoe: Excuse me

She said and walked out.

Gran: Oh shame poor thing, she will be fine you just need to be there for her, okay

We nod our head though mine wasn't actually there, what if Zoe's mother was killed. What is the cocksucker and the witch grandma bewitched her or somehow killed her on her sleep. Yep it them I do not need to over think anything, they did it.

First thing in the morning Lisa drove me to my house, it only five houses away from her house but since I am a wheelchair and Sweetwater people happen to be gossipers we decided it best we drive there. I didn't sleep the whole night; I kept tossing and turning as I was so not looking forward to this day. As we drove there my heart was literally beating out of my chest with fear; oh yes there's only one person on this entire world who managed to install so much fear inside me, she scares the living shit out of me. I have scars to prove why I am so scared of her.

Lisa: Would you fine on your own.

This was on me I needed to face the she monster on my own. My friends had already done a lot for me.

Me: I will be fine.

Lisa: I will wait for you here.

I nod my head then took a deep breath before wheeling myself towards the door. My hands started sweating really bad even my whole body was burning up yet it wasn't even hot. After taking several breathe I finally knocked. A lady I didn't recognise opened the door. Her eyes popped out the moment she saw me.

"Nomaswazi, you still alive"

I gave her a strange look, I honestly do not know her. Aunt has one daughter and one son and the daughter could never be this cute.

Me: Hi

"You don't recognise me do you? Why am I asking of course you don't I mean I couldn't even see you down there"

Okay the bitch is coming for my life, I will serve.

Me: Of course how would you have seen me with a giraffe neck? Who are you again.

She rolled her eyes.

"You always managed to bring my self-esteem down; I can't believe you still get to me even today"

Okay just maybe I was too hush, but it not like she doesn't have a long and neck and she started it by mocking me being in a wheelchair.

"Amanda ...Amanda wasemagwinyenyi"

Me: Oh my God the fat Amanda! Girl what did you do to your body you look amazing.

"Well after how you, Lisa, Zoe and the others used to make fun of me I decided on changing the way I look"

Me: Oh man I am sorry we were young and stupid, you shouldn't change the way you look because of anyone.

"Oh well changing the way I look score me this"

She flashed her hand on me and there sit a rock on her finger.

"Jack and I are now married, got married early last year. We would've invited you but I think your invitation got lost in the mail"

Me: Hahah very funny, wow congratulations.

Jack happens to be my cousin who even though we lived under one roof we never shared so much words, for some reason Aunt made it her mission to make sure I stay far from her son as if I would eat and Jack happened to be the coolest mama's boy who was loved by all girls back then even Lisa once dated him.

"Where are my manners, please come in Ma would be so happy to see you."

Happy ha I doubt she would probably throw a shoe at me and tell to get the fuck out of her house.

I wheeled myself in following her, the house look great they have renovated it. Three kids were sitting on not so big couch watching the TV. I remember how I was so not allowed to sit on the couch even when I was as clean as spotless.

"Let me see if she will be able to come this side"

She said and disappeared towards my Aunt's room. I remember how I was always forced to clean this house till you couldn't spot any dusty, how I would work from morning till night just for some leftover food. The same house I would be told how much I useless and would end up like my hoe mother raising a fatherless kid.

"Nomaswazi, you will have to come this side she can't come to you"

I mentally slap my mind back to the now, I rubbed my sweaty hands on my skirt then took another deep breath before following after the fat not so fat Amanda, and she opened the door and let me in. I was so scared I could feel my heart beat pound inside me, my ears suddenly itches together with my armpit.

Aunt: Nomaswazi ...

I hardly recognised her voice; she's sleeping on her kingside bed, so tinny and fragile, looking so pale, and her mouth dry as a dessert.

Aunt: Thank you, thank you for coming.

She said as tears gushed out, I just didn't feel anything. There was too much hate inside me and all I wanted to do was to scream and let her know how much she damaged me.

Aunt: I ...I'm sorry, I am so-

Me: Save your sorries I am here because you have something to tell me regarding my parents.

Aunt: I'm sor-

Me: Coming here was a bad idea

I say as I wheel myself out.

Aunt: Wait ... Nomaswazi wait I will tell you everything you need to know.

I slowly wheeled myself backwards.

Me: I don't have the whole day.

Aunt: Your ...(cough) your father is ...another loud cough he's my brother

Me: Huuh my mother is your sister, what are you trying to say to me

Aunt: (cough! Cough!) and my brother was your ...(cough) mother's brother too

Me: Oh god I am a product of rape.

Aunt: No ...(cough) no no it wasn't like that ...they ...(cough! cough! cough!) loved each other.

Me: What?

She started coughing more loudly, confusion blinded me. Was my mother dating her own brother. That insane they can never do that, can they?

Aunt: Aah ... huuu (Cough!) your paren- (Cough! Cough! Cough!)

She couldn't speak no more as she kept on coughing loudly, she reached for under the pillow and came back with a latter as she hand it to me she kept on

UBIZO THE CALLING

coughing, blood started coming out, Amanda came in running. Everything was happening so fast and I just zoned out. My uncle is my father, how sick is that?

## THIRTY TWO

### NOMASWAZI

---

I felt like a zombie, I had so many questions that needed answers. The more I think about my mother and uncle father the more I get so disgust. What should I call him; father or uncle or perhaps uncle father? Where is he now? Is he still alive? Did they know they were siblings? Does he know I exist? Where to from now on?

Lisa: I will call you guys, I have to bounce and Swazi read the letter your Aunt gave you instead of trying to crack your skull it probably got all the answers to your questions.

I just stare at her as she was busy getting ready to leave. She took a deep sigh and sat beside me.

Lisa: You need to pull yourself together Zoe will also need you she's going through a lot and I can't stay I got work so please Swazi pull it together Zoe needs you.

I took a deep sigh.

Me: Who could've thought, me being a product of incest. It so disturbing Lisa I can't even bear the thought of it without feeling like throwing up.

Lisa: It happened Swazi it is what it is so pull yourself together please. I need to know you guys will be fine if I leave you here all by yourselves.

Me: We will be fine Lisa

Lisa: The sooner you confront this, the better so stop stressing yourself about things you can't change just look for the way forward.

She stood up and kissed my cheek.

Lisa: I love you and I will call you before I start with my shift tonight

Me: Love you and safe travel

She walked out of the bedroom; I just sat there on my wheelchair staring into space. I needed to read the later but wasn't sure if I am strong enough for whatever is written here.

"It simple means your parents wronged the ancestors in a worse possible way. You are the result of their shame."

I remember the old woman whom is said to be my Gobela she said I was a result of their shame. I didn't choose to be born for heaven sake why the fuck am I a shame. Could this be the reason why my aunt hated me so much, but I didn't do anything why would she hate me. After taking several deep breathes I took the letter and ripped open the envelope; pictures fall off and scattered around I bend over and pick them. It just two pictures, my mother and some man I didn't know holding hands and smiling to each other; they look happy and in love. Another picture was of my pregnant Mom with the same man; his hand was wrapped around Mama's stomach while kissing her cheek you could tell they were happy in love. I looked at the pictures for quite some time. Before shifting to the letter, my shaking hands slowly opened the letter to read.

### Nomaswazi

I hope you find it your heart to forgive me for the way I treated you. What I am about to tell you is quite disturbing. You do know your Grandfather had two wives my mother then your mother's mother your grandmother. My mother had two kids Me and my younger brother Buyani then your grandmother had your mother only. We were not so close or tight, we had our ups and down like any other big family.

Buyani lived at the rural most of his times; he would come here to the township only for visit. I do not have much details or how it happened but after your grandmother's passing your mother and Buyani got close, really close. Buyani even came to live here in the township claiming he was looking for a job this side. Your mother and I didn't get along at all then I was so jealous of how close her and Buyani have gotten. They shared jokes that only they knew, my mother just like me didn't treat your mother so well but Buyani seemed to always defend her. Buyani got a job and moved out and started renting a backroom then your mother moved in with him.

I went down there to inform Buyani that our mother was sick and she wanted to see her but instead I found Buyani and your mother in bed together. That shocked me to the core, I ran to tell my mother they were then confronted and they didn't hide it. They admitted to sleeping together because apparently they love each other. My Mom disowned Buyani because of your mother, they were both disowned. It was a shame and so disgusting. I loved my little brother so I had a talk with him when he was finally prepared

## UBIZO THE CALLING

to do the right thing and leave your mother she got pregnant with you, he claimed he couldn't leave her. I for one have a feeling she trapped him with a child; how disgusting is that trapping your own brother anyway down the pregnancy Buyani got so sick. He couldn't come home so they were both on their own.

He got sick for few days the next thing we heard he has passed on; my parents didn't even attend his funeral because of your mother. She suffered a great deal after the funeral, she had no money and no one; father suggested she come home I was so angry he allowed her to come back after what she has done. I hated her so much; I hated her taking Buyani away from me. Every day I prayed for her to miscarry; I am so sorry Nomaswazi this was never your fault but I couldn't help but hate you.

Your mother is not as innocent as you see her.

You are a strong young lady reminds me of Buyani, I always knew you would grow and be something great. If it happens by the time you reading this I am no more just know I am so sorry and so proud of you.

Take care

Judith

I wiped the tears that couldn't stop gushing out and re-read the letter, all I could find throughout the whole letter is how she's blaming my mother for everything as if she was alone while committing this disgusting shame as they call it. The pain I was feeling deep inside couldn't be compared to any pain I have ever felt. I felt so disgust by myself, by how I was made out of shame. How could they comfortable sleep together knowing very well they are siblings; do they have no shame at all? I wish they were still alive so I would hear their part of the story, I wonder what they would've said for themselves.

Zoe walked in and threw herself on top of the bed, I quickly wiped my tears.

Zoe: What that on your hand

I just hand it to her because I didn't trust my voice to talk I would probably just break down and cry my lugs out. She scans through the letter.

Zoe: Oh my God what sick shit is this?

She read it again and this time out loud.

Zoe: Fuck hell so your father is also your uncle and your mother is also your Aunt and you're both their daughter and niece

That pretty much what it is

Zoe: Oh my God Swazi this is so fucked up. What kind of people are your parents? Euw could you imagine them together in bed knowing very well they're siblings.

Me: What disgust me the most is how my mother acted so innocent and loving while she's just so disgusting I am even ashamed to call her my mother; she's rotten.

Zoe: This is fucked up on another level but why your Aunt seem to be blaming your mother alone and not your father.

Me: Actually that confuses, she make it sounds like it was my mother's fault only.

Zoe: Exactly ...damn I wonder how they would feel after doing the deeds. What do you think they called each other; babe, my love, sister damn I wonder if they would scream each other's name when they were cuming.

Me: Jeez would you stop already I'm way to disgust you can't be planting such seeds in my head

Zoe: Sorry just curious

She said raising her hands in surrender.

Zoe: On a serious note your parents had a liver for years.

Me: Tell me about it

Zoe: So what next now?

Me: Honestly I don't know all I know is; I feel so much hate towards my mother.

Zoe: You not alone there

I sigh

Me: How are you feeling?

Zoe: I just wish she could wake up and die again and this time it should be slow and painful.

She said and a tear fall off.

Me: You don't mean that

Zoe: I don't know why I am so hurt, I am supposed not to care but I can't help it. It hurt a lot knowing she's gone.

Me: I'm sorry babes

Zoe: You know growing up we used to be so close I remember how we used to bake together then all of the suddenly that changed her and dad started travelling a lot and the more they travelled the more we drifted apart. Till then we have never recovered, we just grew apart and they only talked to me when ordering me around, I then had to sit and eat the certain way because father was running for PMB mayor it didn't stop there they suddenly cared who I hang out with, told me to stay away from you reason why I would always say we are going away for the weekend whenever you and Lisa would want to visit.

Me: And at that time I needed those visit because my Aunt was a pain in an ass.

Zoe: I know, I know and I always felt so bad but I had no choice they needed me to be perfect; from there I just did everything they wanted me to do. Then I started dating Mandla they were so proud of me for at least dating someone on my 'standards' the ward counsellor's son. Don't get me wrong I loved Mandla so much though I felt like sometimes him and I dating was more for our parents then it was for us.

Me: That why you feeling so much pain; she's your mother and you did everything in your power to please them and the moment you stopped trying to please them they didn't think you were good enough to be their daughter which is on them. You still love them just because they don't love you doesn't mean you don't, it actually a good thing that you care and love them it clearly shows you nothing like them; you kind, loving, caring and very loyal to the ones you love.

Zoe: You think?

Me: Babes you are so amazing and I admire you for caring and loving them after everything they put you through, they can disown you all they like but they can never taint your beautiful loving kind heart, do not let them fill it with hate I say we should go to that funeral in style.

Zoe: I don't know ... you think it a good idea.

Me: Girl it the best idea we will attend that funeral and you will see her coffin go down and you will make peace in your heart with everything she has ever said to you.

She kept quiet as if thinking about it.

Me: We won't even go inside the house, after the funeral we will come straight her.

Zoe: I am scared what if me being there would cause drama

Me: I doubt your father would want to start drama during you mother's funeral

Zoe: I'm scared Swazi

Me: No need to be, I will be there for you, holding your hand every step of the way. You doing this for closure. Okay?

She nods her head and took a sigh while wiping the tears that kept falling.

Zoe: We are one messed up human beings with a messed up life.

Me: Tell me about it

We just sat there lost on our own sorrows and pain. I had to help Zoe get through her mother's funeral first then face my own problems. It a lot to take in and I don't know if my heart can take it, I am even way too disgust to look myself on the mirror. I felt like knowing the truth shifted something inside me, I am not even sure if I can cope with knowing the truth

## THIRTY THREE

### NOMASWAZI

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Zoe and I got ready for her mother's funeral; she wore her shortest dress ever owed, if she bends over it showed her butt locks, it black in colour and so damn revealing as it showed her sexy cleavage, she topped up her look with a very high black heels then a well done make up with a short weave adding a ridiculous big black hat, damn that made her look like a super model on a runway; boy I was so jealous as I couldn't rock my own short dress and look fly but I did rock a black dress just above my knees, with a black hat similar to Zoe's hut. I couldn't be too much like I wanted too due to my condition and that made me super mad. Yesterday we ended up going shopping for the funeral I only shopped the hat since Zoe was using money for school I didn't want her to over spend. She even got someone to drive us, a guy living next door he didn't mind driving us there then wait for us.

Zoe: There you go! Damn girl you look hot

She said after finishing applying my make-up, indeed I look super fly. We put on our sunglasses and high fived each other.

Me: Let get them bitch

Zoe: Oh yes

She wheels me out all the way to the car; the guy driving us couldn't stop drooling over us. Ok fine over Zoe! He helped me settle in after complementing us, Zoe also got in we both sat at the back. As the car drove off Zoe got awfully quiet and I also didn't know what to say so I just let the silence be silence. Zoe's home is situated not far from town where all nice expensive houses for rich people are. Their massive gate opened after the driver had press the intercom, we drove in their long driveway surrounded by flowers. I find it hard to believe Zoe actually grew up in this house; if I was the one who grew up here I would be mean af! With double standard class. The car has stopped right in front of the house, it packed people are busy up and down in and out. We stayed in the car for a little while.

Zoe: I need something strong to get over this day

She said and climbed out, ran towards the back where their guest house is situated and where we used to chill whenever we visited her. Shortly she came back with a bottle of scotch.

Zoe: I just stole some scotch

She said cracking open the bottle and took a sip then made a face and handed me the bottle I did the same thing and made a face as the scotch burned it way down my throat.

Me: Wuuh nice times never last let have a blast.

We took another sip after another. Finally we were feeling a little tipsy as the alcohol was kicking in. she got off the car, helped me on my chair and hid the bottle on my wheelchair then wheeled me in. As we walk inside everyone turned to look at us, Zoe's heels clicked on the floor. She kept her head high and walked beside me while I wheel myself towards a couch. You could tell they were whispering as they look at us, Zoe's Aunt showed up out of nowhere. The house was decorated, waiters were moving up and down with snacks and drinks, people were well dressed you would swear they're attending some sort of all black fashion showcase.

"Zoleka you came, oh thank you my baby I was so worried when you stopped taking my calls"

Among these people in this house she seems to be the only one who only cares that Zoe came.

Zoe: Sorry Aunt Ana I just needed a moment.

"It okay my baby it okay I am just glad you came"

She them look down at me, i hate how people look down whenever they have to look at me.

"No way, you are one of Zoe's friends from high school. What your name again?"

Me: Nomaswazi

"Oh yes the melanin, look at you. You girls have grown a lot. Where is there other mosquito friend of yours?"

Lisa: I'm here Aunt

We all turned to her, what the fuck is she doing here.

Zoe: Lisa what the fuck! You supposed to be at work

She just rolled her eyes.

Me: Uyahlanya, you know we need that money more than anything right now

UBIZO THE CALLING

Lisa: I got fired ...hello Aunt it so nice to see you again.

Zoe and I just look at her with our mouth half open.

Us: What

Lisa: Not now

"Hello baby well thank you for coming, I will leave you girls to it then"

She said and kissed Zoe's cheek then walked away.

Me: Why

Lisa: Same reason as you

Me: Lisa!

Lisa: Okay fine I got in a fight ... but can we not do this now.

We all took a sigh, Zoe sat on the couch and snatch the bottle from the wheelchair and took a sip.

Zoe: Shit keeps getting worse

Lisa sat beside her.

Lisa: I will need that I am so drained.

We sat there defeated still exchanging a bottle of scotch as we takes sips directly from it, giving everyone here something to talk about even more. Some lousy band was playing violin jazz whatever it called, it was pretty much boring. Zoe almost dropped the bottle of our scotch luckily Lisa quickly catches it. Her eyes were fixed on her father who was walking down the stairs with Mandla and the cocksucker.

Me: Fucking bitch

Lisa: This day keeps getting worse

The cocksucker bitch was in the middle while Mandla and Zoe's father held her hands. She's wearing a long black dress with a side long slit and some heels. I could tell Zoe wanted to punch them so badly; she kept clenching and unclenching her fist.

Me: Don't do it, don't even share a tear.

Lisa: Here take a sip you need it.

She handed her the bottle she took a sip then took a deep breath. They walked past us like they don't even know Zoe; her father didn't even look her direction only the cocksucker looked at us and winks. It was time to go to the graves yard. We let everyone walk out first.

Lisa: Here drink this

She said handing Zoe a bottle of water which she gulp down in one go.

Lisa: We got this just be strong for one more few minutes.

She nods her head blinking back tears. I didn't know what to say as much as I wanted to say something nice and encouraging there was none in my mind all I was thinking about is; let go there cause some fucked drama beat up Mandla's bitch together with her this time then give Zoe's father a beating of a life time he damn needs it. So I chose to keep quiet, after she was clam enough she stood up and led the way to the car. Lisa wheeled me to the car.

The moment we arrived at the graves yard almost everyone was already there. We stood a little bit at the back, we were officially drunk from all the drinking we have been doing, even our driver managed to get us a bottle of Gin. So along the way of coming here we were just drinking our sorrows away. The pastor was busy talking and we were busy giggling, people would turn to look us every now and then. Finally it was time for her coffin to be laid to rest, this took me back to when my mother was buried how I prayed for her coffin to not go down, how I badly wanted her to wake up. When I checked up on Zoe tears were just screaming down, for fuck sake even my own tears were screaming down. I wasn't crying for Zoe's mother, I was crying for my mother who is gone, who I will never see again and I was also crying for my fucked up life. Damn my girl is strong; though she was drunk she could still walk in her too high heels as she walks forward to throw the soil.

"Nomaswazi"

I look up only to be met by an older version of my cousin Jack.

Me: Jack

Jack: What happened to you?

He's a fool for not knowing you don't ask people in a wheelchair what happened to them, you just don't ask them it offensive.

Me: Oh you know life

His attention turned from me to Lisa.

Jack: Lisa

Lisa: Jack

Jack: Still as beautiful as ever.

Lisa: Still as dam as ever.

Me: Aah actually I am glad I ran into you I need you to call an emergency family meeting with the elders for tomorrow at around 12

Jack: For what?

I rolled my eyes

Me: For me

Jack: Why wo-

Lisa: Jack will you just call the elders

He look at Lisa for a while, I have a feeling he still want Lisa back. Lisa broke up with him because his mother was an asshole so she broke his heart as a pay back.

Jack: Will that mean you and I will talk?

Lisa: Fine we will talk

Jack: Then consider it done.

He then walk away.

Me: Spill it

Lisa: He just wants love backs, have always wanted them.

Me: And you gonna give him, you do know he is married now right?

Lisa: Girl what do you take me for, I am not going back there and beside I have my own man that I love so hell no

Me: Good to know.

I actually applauded us for showing so much maturity at Zoe's mother funeral by having zero drama. We got through the funeral and got driven back to Lisa's house where we lay on bed and cried together because our lives were getting messed up day by day and there was nothing we could do about it. We had one sad emotional day that we were hoping by the next day we would be on our feet and fighting the whole world as it against us.

## THIRTY FOUR

### NOMASWAZI

---

Instead of things getting better they were getting worse, I have never felt so helpless and hopeless in my whole entire life. Though I was still breathing I actually felt so dead inside, no day go by without me trying to walk on my two feet with no luck. No day go by without me thinking what may be next on my fucked up depressing life. As Lisa drives me to my house for the meeting with the elders all i could think about is maybe just maybe death could end all my problems, I was busy making scenarios of how devastated my friends would be if I were to die, how depressing it would be for them to get over my death. How they would be forced to sit in front of my closet and decide what to do with my clothes; which ones would be for keeps and which ones would be for charity. I know for a fact they would hate me so much for ending my life, in fact if given the opportunity these two bitches would beat the shit out of me even on my death bed; so hell no I couldn't do them like that, I shoved the suicide thought at the far back of my head. Not now Satan!

Lisa: We here

After taking a very deep breath getting ready to face the truth that might break me even more

Me: Please come with me I won't cope on my own

Lisa: Of course I got you babes

She helped me on the wheelchair and wheeled me in. Jack was the one to open the door.

Jack: Hi ...come in

We walked in and indeed the elders were there, sitting on the couches sipping on coffee. It my mother's two uncle, their wives and the other uncle's elder son. To me they're basically my grandparents. They're now way too old from the last time I saw them. The other uncle who insists I call him pops growing up used to like me a lot but that was when my mother was still alive after her death everyone just kept their distance and left me in the care of my cruel evil monster Aunt.

Pops: Nomaswazi

I look down for some reason I was so ashamed of myself, mostly of my condition.

Pops: We are so happy to have you back home, how have you been mzukulu.

Trying so hard to blink back my tears I nod my head and lied.

Me: I have been good mkhulu, Jack can Aunt come this side please

We didn't even do formal greetings, I just wanted to do this and get over with it, Jack disappeared to his mother's room and came back shortly.

Jack: Sorry she can't '

Me: I guess then we will do this without her.

From my pocket I took out the letter she wrote me and handed it to jack.

Me: Aunt wrote me this letter which is the reason I have called this meeting.

"This is the family matter why is she here"

Before Jack could even open the letter, my grandpa's older son who is an uncle to me decided to ask bullshit. His question was directed to Lisa, I felt so much anger inside me though I tried to keep my anger in check I ended up failing.

Me: She is more family to me than you were ever be to me so with all due respect sit your ass down and shut up or just fuck off.

Everyone gasped while the two old women whispered among themselves; I forcefully wiped off the tears that wouldn't stop falling. I am way too drained I just wanna get this over and done with.

Me: Aunt revealed some shocking news about my mother, and apparently because of that I need cleansing. Jack please read the letter.

Jack opened the letter and read it out loud for everyone.

"uMzikayise never had a son"

One of the old women said.

"He never had a son to either of his wives"

Okay now I am more confused if my grandfather never had a son then what the hack is going on here. Why would Aunt Judith lie?

Pops: he was my son ...Buyani was my son

"What?"

Woah

Pops: MaGumede I couldn't tell you because I did not want to lose my family, while I was working this side I had a woman and that woman gave birth to a son. You couldn't have kids so I didn't want to bring another's woman's kid for you to take care so I kept it a secret.

MaGumede clap once.

"Au ngiyakwesaba, yazi ungamamulala umuntu Mzingelwa. Yoo imfihlo engaka yonke leminyaka"

MaGumede said in disbelief.

"Au bafo you didn't even tell me"

Pops: Everything happened too fast and after the damage with Nomaswazi's mother Mzikayise and I decided to keep it between the two of us.

He turned to me; I was still too stunned to say anything.

Pops: Your mother was heavy pregnant and your grandfather insist the man responsible for such shame of impregnating his daughter out of wedlock should come and face the consequences. Your grandfather asked me to be present to meet whoever impregnated your mother. I didn't know it would be my son, when he walked in that door I almost fainted. He was also shocked to see me there; unfortunately we couldn't allow them to be together as they were related and Buyani couldn't take it so he committed suicide.

Me: They didn't know they were related?

Pops nods his head and I felt some relief at least they didn't know.

Me: So you are practically the reason why my father is no more.

It went quiet everyone was just too shocked by the news.

Me: I will contact you regarding the cleansing, jack could you please tell your mother she will never find inner peace even death won't get to her she will suffer until she tells me what I have ever done to her for her to hate me this much.

Lisa drove us back to her house; I was so lost in my own thought wondering why Aunt Judith hates me so much. She could've chosen not to say anything instead of lying and trying to break me. and I must say she almost succeed in breaking me knowing they didn't know each other makes the matters a little bit bearable.

Lisa: So what is next now?

Me: Could you guys drive me somewhere, I also don't know how to go about the cleansing so I will need help from that village old woman.

Lisa: Okay we can drive there tomorrow.

Me: I can't wait for all of this to be over, I am so drained Lisa

Lisa: I could tell, you look awful Swazi let hope it would be over soon.

Me: I've never thought my life would be this fucked up

Lisa: At least you working on getting it together, I am very proud of you Swazi.

I don't even feel proud of myself I just feel super drained.

Me: So you never told us how you lost your job

She sighs.

Lisa: I got into a fight with one of the strippers; she was busy talking shit about me getting to work on two stations.

Me: You still double stations?

Lisa: Yep we needed the money and seeing that I was the only one working I had to do whatever it takes. So the bitch was busy saying I am sleeping with the boss, she just caught me on my bad mood so I gave her a beating then the boss fired both our asses.

Me: Damn how I wish I was there.

Lisa: You would've made matter worse. Now that I am officially unemployed I don't know how we going to survive really. I've been applying for jobs with no luck

Me: Don't worry babes things will work out on its own. Let just take everything one day at a time.

She chuckled because that usually her line.

By time we get home Zoe was back, she had went to meet up with her Aunt who was leaving for overseas. Her Aunt is married to some white guy from London.

Zoe: So how did it go?

We filled her in on what happed with my so called family.

Zoe: Still uncle father, my Aunt got us a job

Lisa: You lie

Zoe: Well she heard that we were financial struggling so she called her husband to pull some strings for us and he got us jobs at a hotel where he owns shares.

Lisa: Oh my god thank you, I was so worried.

Zoe: I am not sure exactly what we would be doing but with your diploma in hospitality I am sure you will get something worth. And we will start on Monday so Swazi better have her shit fixed by Monday.

Me: Probably, your Aunt is a life saver.

Lisa: Tell me about it.

After cooking we all had an early sleep since we were planning on driving down the village early. I wasn't sure about directions but Zoe still had a text I sent her from that petrol station then we will take it from there. I do not know what await me back to uGogo she would probably throw me out for being rude the other time, I just hope she will at least help me with what I need to do. And I am hoping for a safe journey, for the first time ever since I heard about the calling thing I am actually scared of being rejected by the ancestors for defying them so many times. They have probably given up on me and decided they will leave me on this chair so I would never be able to walk ever again as a lesson.

## THIRTY FIVE

### NOMASWAZI

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There comes a time in life when you can never run no more, when you have to face your problems head on. I was ready to face my own problems but scared of what my resistance could've done, I was worried about what if I am too late to surrender. What if I can never have my life back and I will die in this wheelchair? I am not ready to be a cripple for the rest of my life. By the time we reached the garage the sun was slowly coming up, we did wake up on the early hours when it was still so dark. We loaded petrol and got some snack then continue with our drive. When we reached exactly where the guy in a taxi left me to be eaten by wild animals I took a deep breath it only meant we were going in a right direction. Finally we were passing people's houses, we passed the taxi rank where they picked up that rude man who beaten me up. Zoe needed to pee so she stopped the car at the taxi rank and asked if she could use the loo. They kindly showed her though I didn't want her to stop you can never tell Zoe what to do. Lisa and I were just sitting there tired from all the long drive, my ass actually hurt only if I could stand on my feet and stretch. A taxi parked right in front of the car and the guy who beat me up got out from the driver's side. I never noticed he's that tall. He walked away towards some men who were sitting under the tree. If and only if I could I would strangle him to death right now.

Zoe: Jesus Christ their toilet is so disgusting.

Me: Serves you right, I told you to not stop.

Zoe: Dude from all the energy drinks I've been consuming it was either I stop or I pee myself.

Lisa: Can you just drive I am so tired.

She got in a driver's seat but due to the taxi in front of us she couldn't drive as it was blocking our way. Zoe being Zoe she look out the window and shout.

Zoe: Sorry whoever is the driver of the taxi can he get it off our way.

They just look at her then laughed, the only man who has put his filth hands on me and thought he got away with it stood up and walk towards us. I couldn't help but hate him so much.

"Sorry about that ladies"

His voice sounded polite not like the way he was so rude to me the other day, I was actually expecting him to be rude. He didn't even seem to recognise me. son of a hoe!

Zoe: It all good man! Damn he's fine as hell look at that tight damn ass  
She whispered that part.

Me: This is the man who beat me up  
I whisper to my friends.

Zoe: Bitch you say what? And you let me sbwl him knowing very well he is a piece of shit.

Me: Just drive off, these men don't respect women.

Lisa: Man I wish I could ripe his heart out of his chest.

He drove the taxi to the side to let us pass. As we drive off Zoe gave him the middle finger.

Me: Wtf! Zoe you do know we still have to drive by here on our way back.

Zoe: We will cross that bridge when we get there.

I just sigh and look out the window so I won't miss the small path Zodwa and I used when she was accompanying me to get the taxis.

Zoe: Gosh this is such a deep rural, I wouldn't survive a day here

Me: I feel you.

I directed exactly to the house, funny how I didn't even get lost a little. She drove into the yard then got off the moment she pressed brakes.

Zoe: Damn look at the mountains.

I could spot Zodwa and the other two man doing bead work under the tree. Lisa also got out, I tried keeping calm so I wouldn't panic before Lisa could help me out a man came towards us and greeted.

"Please step outside the yard and put on skirt or a dress; pants are not allowed"

We look at each other than the leggings we are wearing then back to the man

Zoe: Are you for real, this is-

Lisa: We apologise sir we didn't know, we will go change.

Zoe: With what? We don't have any skirt or dresses

Lisa: Just get in a car.

Zoe made a frustrated groan and got in the car then drove off the yard.

Zoe: What now?

Before we could respond to that someone knocked on the window, it was Zodwa Zoe rolled down the window.

Zoe: Let me guess we are also not allowed to park here.

Zodwa: No I just came here to give you this; I assumed you might need it.

She handed us three skirts.

Zodwa: It good to see you back sis Nomaswazi.

She said and walked back before I could find my voice to thank her.

Zoe: Another Neliswa.

I just didn't say anything, I was just too nervous to talk. After we put the skirt on top of the leggings we drove back inside. They help me on the wheelchair then wheeled me towards the tree where Zodwa, another girl and the two men were sitting.

"Woah the last time she was here she was walking on her two feet"

One of the guy made an obvious remark.

"And very rude, umm life!"

The other girl said giving me a once over look as she look down on me.

Zodwa: Don't mind them, come this side Gogo will be with you shortly.

We followed her to the small creepy hut. She instructed us to take off our shoes, and then we got in while I sat on my wheelchair the girls were struggling with sitting on the handmade mat.

Lisa: Can't we at least get chairs, this mat is dirty people.

Zoe: And this house is creepy.

Zodwa: You will be fine

She said and walked out.

Zoe: Oh my sweet Jesus I will sure have nightmares tonight.

The old woman walked in and look at us up and down, we all kept quiet because boy this woman is very scary you just never know with her. I am sure she could strike you with lighting if she wanted too.

Gogo: So you still alive

I didn't know if it was a question or an acknowledgement as she could see I was alive.

Gogo: You reek of death

We look at each other freaked out. Lisa being the most polite one decided she would talk.

Lisa: You have a beautiful home.

Gogo walked further in and sat on her mat. The smell of herbs was just too much I doubt I would survive long in this hut. Zoe looed freaked out more than I was, she kept looking around, it probably her first time in a sangoma's hut.

Gogo: Thank you young lady, so why are you here? I thought you said you will never accept this gift thing as you call it.

I looked down and swallowed my pride.

Me: I was wrong.

She scoffs

Me: I had a talk with my family ...and they told me everything I needed to know. I want to take on this journey I was wondering if you could help me? I have no one I am all I got and these two girls with me. I feel lost; I can't run to any elder for help because quite frankly from my family no one cares about me.

Tears started pouring down as my heart felt so heavy.

Me: Every day at night I lie awake thinking what I have ever done to this world, why am I alone with no guidance of an elder. I practically raised myself, worked my butt off so I would get out of my Aunt's life and make something out of myself. And I did Gogo, I made a living for me it was fine though I still felt so empty but at least I wasn't going to bed hungry, I wasn't told by a no body that I am a bastard and useless. I lived my life the way I wanted, I was happy not fulfilled happy but happy. I didn't have to beg anyone to buy me sanitary pads or to use socks when I am on my period. I was okay with my life; I did feel like I needed someone who could play an elder role in my life. Someone who would warn me about everything this world possesses that I would do anyway and realise later that it was actually wrong.

Lisa: Swazi

She said putting her arm around me.

Me: All my life I have longed for love, I even went as far as finding closure in a security guard who became so good to me and treated me like a daughter. Growing up under my Aunt's care I always told myself that once I am old enough to take care of myself I will never suck to anyone, I will always speak my mind off, I will tell people where to get off and I will live by own rules. To most it may have come out as being rude but to me it was more and it still is more like me protecting my already broken heart, it was more of me hiding my true feelings behind being rude. I wanted to feel in control of my own life, knowing that Aunt's cruelty won't get to me no more. I am rude because I don't want people thinking they can just come in my life and dish whatever bullshit they want to dish.

I took a deep sigh and wiped my tears.

Me: All I am asking of you is to help me get over this, I am still mad at the ancestors. I still have questions for them I still wonder why they let my Aunt treat me like trash when they could've done something and I am wondering why now are they turning my life upside down, I've just started making something out of myself. Why can't they let me live my life the way I want? Did they really have to make me suffer this much; they had no right especially when they know I am all I got in this world. it all questions I can't get answers too but because they're practically my God I have to do what they want and just forget anything else i ever wished for so here I am desperate and willing to do whatever they ask of me.

I heard more sniffs; my friends were also tearing up.

Me: I am a no body with no body of blood who cares about me and all I am asking you is to just help me get over with this.

The old woman took a long deep breathe.

Gogo: You are doing this for all the wrong reasons my child, you haven't accepted your calling you are just doing it because you hoping it will grant you the life you think you want but mark my words this is the first step, eventually you will be loving the whole journey, healing people will eventually make you happy and you will feel your heart being fulfilled for the first time.

I wanted to tell her I would never find joy in what I am being forced to do but then decided to keep my negative thought in my mind.

Gogo: I will make a list of things you will need for cleansing then we will take it from there but firstly you need to slaughter a chicken as an apology for defying your ancestors and letting them know that you have accepted their gift from there you are bound to walk again.

We stare at each other with my friends.

Zoe: After slaughtering a mare chicken she will walk, on her own two feet?

Gogo: Yes she needs to let them know that she acknowledges them and she's willing to do right by them.

Zoe: Just a chicken only? No soul bounding kind of thing.

The old woman shakes her heard.

Gogo: Nomaswazi only can't walk because she walked away from them and defied them all she needs is ukushweleza and let them know she will be starting with her journey after the cleansing.

All I could think about is I would be able to walk again.

Gogo: You will need to talk with any elder in your family to burn the incense for you and talk with the ancestors on your behalf. Since your family matter is complicated the incense must be burned on your mother's behalf. Calling upon your mother since your father was never introduced which is another problem your grandfather needs to fetch your fathers spirit and bring him home but that could be done after ukushweleza and before the cleansing.

It a lot to take in but I have hope, I just have to talk to Pops he is the only one I could think of for help. There was hope, a little hope for the future a future that is not known but a future where I can walk.

THIRTY SIX

NOMASWAZI

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I woke up feeling refreshed, with a smile planted on my face. Today might be a good day I could feel it in my bones. Today I will be able to walk again on my own two feet, can life get any better!

Lisa: I haven't seen that smile in a long time

My smile widen

Me: Good morning Lisakhanya

Lisa: Lucky you sleeping and smiling to yourself while some of us are busy chasing after the chicken.

I burst into loud laughter. Lisa's Granny was kind enough to give me the chicken, now Lisa and Zoe have to chase it before we go to Aunt's house for the chicken ritual.

Lisa: No like seriously I have fallen on my face more than twice, it not fair you should be running after this chicken on your own.

I couldn't stop laughing, imagining Lisa and Zoe chasing a chicken that is definitely hilarious.

Lisa: Mxm once you able to work you must serve us every meal in bed, we have busted our asses way too much for your crippled ass.

Me: Consider it done, I was actually getting used to the wheelchair.

Lisa: And I was getting used to wheeling you.

Zoe: Damn it was nice to wheel her around and have people feeling sorry for you like "Oh poor girl she has a cripple as a sister"

She said walking in.

Me: Hahah very funny

I said and threw a pillow at her; she catches it and threw it back at me before throwing herself on top of me.

Zoe: If this works out I promise to buy you lunch with my first payment.

Me: You better keep your promise

She lay on top of me like I am her fucking lover.

Zoe: Oh you bet I will

Me: I am not your fucking boyfriend stop staring at me like that.

Zoe: Oh come on babe give me some sugar.

She said pouting making me laugh hard.

Me: Get a man Zoleka

Zoe: Just a little, please

Me: Fuck off me

I say pushing her but she just started kissing me all over my face making me giggle

Me: Gosh ...stop you so annoying.

Zoe: Say you love me

She said tickling me, I couldn't stop laughing.

Zoe: Say you love me.

Me: Sto .... Zoe ...

Zoe: Do you love me baby?

My laughter was so loud and it actually felt so good to laugh.

Me: Z ...ye ...yes ...yes I lov ...you love you

She laughed and got off me to lie beside me, before I could catch my breath  
Lisa threw herself in between us crashing on top of us.

Us: Ouch!

We screamed.

Lisa: I wouldn't ask for any other friends you two stupid are the best.

Us: We know!

We said at a same time and laughed.

As we got ready for my Aunt's house we were busy singing and dancing, I felt alive and so good.

Lisa: You know God has been good beloved! He has been good in all ways.

Me: Preach sister preach!

Zoe: Oh yes sister, you know when I woke up today I heard his voice saying "My child I will never forsake you! Pray and you should be answered"

Me: Go deeper sister! Go deeper

Lisa: He the lord said "Call upon my name and I shall deliver"

Zoe: God has been good beloved!

Me: Satan is the liar!

We started singing out loud with our terrible voices.

Us: Though I walk! Through the valley shadow of death! I will fear no evil cause Jesus is my shelter!

On our way to my Aunt's place we were busy playing gospel and singing our lungs out, by the time we got there we were feeling so blessed, happy, laughing and just enjoying ourselves. They wheeled me inside the house; Pops was there with his wife and Aunt who was sitting on the couch, she still does look sick but not too pale. The moment my eyes landed on her my mood strikes down from hero to zero. I really didn't want her to get to me but I just couldn't help it.

Zoe: Morning

Only Pops greeted back the other two women didn't bother and all I could think is; could we just do this and get over and done with it.

Aunt: Nomaswazi there would be no incense burning my house

Bitch please, why she is tripping.

Me: Wha-

Aunt: I am a Christian therefore I want no such in my house.

Me: This was my Grandparents house passed to you and mother so technically it mine now, I own half of this house so you can't tell me that.

Aunt: nywe! Nywe! What do you know about this house? Who has bend head over hills for this house to be like this? Eeh, now you coming in my house claiming it like you have a right, you are a piss of trash just like your hoe mother so I suggest you get out right on this moment you disrespectful little hoe!

Yoo I swear if I wasn't on this wheelchair I would be punching her to her pulse right now.

Me: You don't get to tell me shit woman, I legally own half of this house just because you renovated it doesn't mean shit to me. The incense will be burned here whether you want too or not.

Aunt: Own half my foot, do you think I would let trash like you own any of this house! What do you think you are Nomaswazi? Where are papers claiming you own part of this house?

I couldn't believe my own ears, I could feel my heart literally pounding too hard suddenly it became too hot.

Me: Why? Aunt why

Aunt: Get out of my house

She then started coughing.

Aunt: I never want to see you again, leave my house!

Tears blinded my eyes. I look at Pops for help but he had his head between his legs.

Me: I always knew you hated me but this, this! What have I ever done to you? Why do you hate me?

Aunt: Leave!

Me: Just tell me what I have done so I would apologise, just tell me what you want from me.

Aunt: I want you to suffer to grave because you are trash nothing but a bastard exactly like your hoe mother.

Her words came as a knife going straight to my heart; I never thought this woman could still get to me even after all these years away from her.

Aunt: The sight of you makes me so sick, no day passed by without me thinking of ways I could just end your life.

Pops: Judith!

Aunt: What Baba Omncane it true I hate Nomaswazi exactly like I hated her mother. I just wish you will die on that wheelchair!

So much hate from one person, what she wants from me.

Lisa: Come on let go

Zoe: Ya we should leave.

Aunt: Vele hambani!

Zoe: Fuseg! Who the fuck do you think you are? I have been trying to keep my cool but woman you keep pushing my button. Look at you dying of aids yet you got a rotten mouth, grow up bitch! No body owe you any shit on this world. You fucking hoe what makes you think you breathe flavoured air? You even stink, your aids is stinking bitch! Argh even the lightening that would strike your evil ass is still doing push up in Limpopo.

Zoe was saying everything I wanted to say, she was being my voice though I don't know what would happen after all this but damn the girl was being my voice, had I got energy I was going to say that and more.

Zoe: Yoo! You makes me so sick, I wanna grab you and punch you so hard across the face but bitch you will just die with a slap. Karma will deal with you! Karma will deal with you so badly! Karma will deal with your stinking aids hoe! Argh! Argh! Yeses! Old people makes me so sick just because you are old you

think we can't tell you where to get off! Bitch please! I no longer care about anything. You are shit! My parents are shit! And you all deserve to die a very slow painful death!

She said and walked towards the door but turned.

Zoe: Uzoya esihogweni we Judith, along with my mother and father niya esihogweni zinja!

She open the door walks out returned again.

Zoe: Uzofa Judith! Uzofa!

This time she slammed the door behind her, the house went all quiet, and my heart was so heavy. I wanted to scream, to cry so loudly the pain was just too much. I could feel myself shaking. None of the elders was able to look at us in the eyes; they just kept their heads bowed down.

Me: Why ...why

I still asked with tears pouring down like waterfall.

Me: Why? ...

I doubt my heart could ever recover from this, it hurt so much.

Lisa: Come on let go Swazi

She said and wheeled me out, Zoe was busy pacing up and down beside the car, and she would stop and kick the car then pace and scream.

Zoe: People like her make me so sick! She makes me sick!

She screamed hitting the car then lean on it while she cries. Lisa help me in the car, I also wanted to scream, to hit something to kick something so I hit the chair as I sit down while screaming. I hit it hard and screamed. It too bad I could move my legs I needed to move them so much so I would kick and scream and let all this anger I am feeling out. Zoe slowly slid down and sat butt flat on the ground then cried. Lisa has to pull it together though she has tears streaming down her face she pulled it together and got Zoe inside the car then we drove off, my head was buried on the chair while I cry my lungs out.

Zoe: I am sorry Swazi

She says crying.

Zoe: I know I lost it in there ... I am sorry ... (Crying) I kind of meddled (Crying) I just couldn't stand it (Crying) I couldn't stand her Swazi (Crying) Some ... something snapped inside me (Crying) I couldn't hold it no more.

I wasn't mad at her not even a little I just wanted us to go back in there and unleash our anger on her by beating the cruelty out of her ass.

Zoe: Yoo my heart is in so much pain, I am going to die. Oh God I am going to die.

She cried loudly while holding onto her chest.

Zoe: I can't bre ... I can't bree I ...

She said trying to breathe, Lisa had to hit the brakes fast and rush to her.

Lisa: Come on get off the car

She help her out, still she was suffering from breathing.

Lisa: Breath slowly, slowly Zoe ... come on Zoe damned breath! ...Zoe please please.

I felt so useless as I couldn't help with anything, I grabbed a bottle of water and threw it to Lisa who was now on the ground holding a Zoe who struggled with her breathing.

Lisa: Drink some water, breathe slowly Zoe breath. Help! Zoe you can do this baby breath slowly in and out.

## THIRTY SEVEN

### NOMASWAZI

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I wasn't copying at all, my heart was so heavy. My eyes so painful from crying all night, I had a massive headache every part of my body hurt. Zoe slept soundless next to me. She has consumed sleeping pills and they knocked her off. Lisa walked in; I could tell this was too much for her too she looked so drained but yet she was a glue keeping everything together, Zoe's panic attack got us worried, it like Lisa is the only sane one taking care of us. That might be a drain on its own I feel for her.

Lisa: You have a guest

She said and when I didn't respond because I couldn't find my voice she let whoever the guest is in. It Pops how could he be here after failing to stand up for me, this man has no backbone. he didn't need to ask how I was doing he could tell by just looking at me, I was a mess and I am sure I looked worse.

Pops: Nomaswazi ... I'm sorry ...I can still do the ceremony for you in my house I think it won't be a problem since I am your father's brother and your ancestors are my ancestors but please ask your traditional healer.

I still didn't respond I didn't want to give myself any hope.

Pops: MaGumede agreed for the ritual to be done at our house but she said ...your other friend she must not be present.

That have to be Zoe, they don't want Zoe to be present. Lisa groans in frustration as she was trying to call someone. She tries and tries.

Lisa: Voicemail again. I can't get hold of the traditional healer.

She tries again.

Lisa: Oh thank god... hello Ma this is Lisakhanya I am Nomaswazi's friend.

She immediately put the call on loud speaker

Gogo: Yes is everything okay?

Lisa: We have a problem, Nomaswazi's Aunt won't let her burn the incense in her house but her other grandfather has offered to do it in his house. We wanted to know if it still going to be okay?

Gogo: If he is a blood grandfather it would be no problem and he must only call upon Nomaswazi's mother not the father. He cannot call upon the father while

the father was never even introduced and his spirit is still out there. After the ritual the grandfather must fetch Nomaswazi's father spirit then apologise and introduce him to his people then the cleansing must follow.

She took a deep sigh.

Gogo: That family need lot of cleansing but just focus on getting Nomaswazi cleanse first then Nomaswazi will fix everything after she has her own powers to do so.

Lisa: Oh okay, Thank you so much Mah

Gogo: Hang in there girls everything shall be fine, just hang in there.

She said before dropping the call.

Pops: I will make the preparations; you two should come this evening so we would do the ceremony.

Lisa: Thank you

Pops nods his head and walked out, Lisa took a very deep breathe.

Lisa: Let hope everything will be fine

I didn't even want to hope or even wish I tend to get very disappointed whenever I have wished and hoped for something so badly. We spent our day in bed being serve food by Lisa's grandmother who was so worried about us. I wasn't feeling like eating but she forced down a chicken soup on me and boy it tasted so good. She even prayed for us as she could see we were going through a lot.

Zoe: So I am not welcome at their house, wow! That backboneless old hang is some piece of shit.

Me: I can't argue with that, he is hypocrisy on another level. He failed my father now he is failing me fucking useless.

Zoe: The only reason he doesn't want me around it because truth hurt he knows very well I speak the truth and some people can't stand to hear the truth.

Lisa: I never thought your Aunt was that evil.

Me: Nx that two faced hoe has always been evil but I never thought she would be evil even on her death bed.

Zoe: I just hope this shit works out because I am so tired of these twofaced people.

Lisa's phone rang it was on my side so I had to pass it to her and the caller ID displayed My Love.

Me: My Love seriously

Lisa: Heey give me my phone!

Zoe and I started laughing.

Zoe: My Love god you are bewitched

Before she could managed to snatch her phone from my hand I answered it and put it on loud speaker.

Me: Hello ... Lisa's phone hello ...

She got on top of me trying to snatch it but I quickly threw it to Zoe

Zoe: Zoe speaking hello

"Hi Is Lisakhanya around?"

Lisa: Bish give me back my phone

Zoe: Are you Sbusiso?

"Yes are you Zoleka?"

His voice sounded familiar though I couldn't put a face on it.

Zoe: Oh so you know about me?

Lisa gave up on snatching the phone from Zoe we all lay there in bed and talk with Sbusiso.

Me: So when are we meeting you?

Sbusiso: Lisakhanya is scared you will freak me out so I am not sure

Lisa: Baby I told you these two are too much even now they forced to talk with you.

Sbusiso: I still will love to meet them

Lisa groan

Zoe: Do you think you are good enough for Lisa? ... Never mind I will ask that when we meet and I will be a judge of that.

Me: Oh and do us a favour start preparing to marry her she loves you

Lisa: Oh God ...

Sbusiso: That the plan Nomaswazi I also love her and I do see a future with her.

Me: Boy I think I'm gonna like you

Zoe: Not yet I still have to meet you

Sbusiso: Let hope that would be soon, can I talk with my woman now ladies?

Lisa couldn't stop blushing.

Me: Okay she's blushing over here.

Lisa takes the phone and got off the bed leaving Zoe and I smiling to each other.

Zoe: She seem to love this guy

Me: More reason for us not too freak this guy

Zoe: I think we should freak him a little as a test so we would see if he is really serious about her.

Me: Umm

Zoe: The last thing I want is Lisa being hurt by a man so we need to pull our socks and freak the dude out if he stays then he's the one but if he runs that would only mean he is not for her.

Me: What if we ruin it for her?

Zoe: We won't, if he loves her he will stay regardless our behaviour.

Me: Umm okay

Later that evening Lisa and I went to Pop's house. I was very nervous so we just drove in silence I could tell Lisa was also as nervous as I was. If this doesn't work out I doubt my friends and I will ever recover from it. She parked the car and got off to help me on my wheelchair then wheeled me towards the door.

Lisa: If this doesn't work out just know not all hope is lost. I love you and Zoe loves you too and most people survive with wheelchair we will be there for you all step of the way.

I just took a deep sigh and knocked. MaGumede opened the door.

MaGumede: Nomaswazi

I nod my head as a way of greeting back.

MaGumende: Come in.

Lisa wheeled me in; Pops and his brother were sitting on the couch sipping on tea. Pop's house is neither that big nor small, well cleaned, the interior just scream vintage you could tell it lives old people.

Pops: Nomaswazi ...and your friend

He greets us and we greet back well Lisa greets back.

Pops: Let do this shall we.

He stood up and went to get the chicken, he had set a plate of incense so he just kneeled there, and I was beside him staring at the incense as it burnt. He held the chicken and made it inhale the incense then started calling upon our clan names, he called my grandfather's name, my grandmother, my mother and a bunch of other names I didn't know. He apologised on my behalf and informed them that I would be accepting the gift and that they should grant me back my ability to walk again. After he was done I still couldn't walk, I still didn't feel my legs and I just knew everything was just bullshit, I wasn't going to walk because they slaughtered a chicken and talked with the dead. It was too good to be true; I couldn't believe I fall for that. Lisa and were to spend the night at Pop's house so we just went to the room we were to use and I tried walking again but still nothing Lisa on the other hand didn't even know what to say even when Zoe called to ask how it went we ignored her calls she finally got the hint after a sixth call and stopped calling. I lay in bed with Lisa's arms wrapped around me and my back on her. I was so hurt I just wanted to fall asleep and hopefully I would be walking by tomorrow not all hope was lost.

I woke with a need to pee; I was pressed and so sleepy at the same time. I got off the bed yawning and busy rubbing my eyes while dragging my feet. I was about to open the door when I felt the coldness of tiles against my feet, my sleepy eyes shoot open and I stare down at my barefooted feet that are standing on their own.

Me: God no! Aaaaaaaaa!

Scream loudly while jumping up and down.

Me: I better be not dreaming

Lisa: Jeez w- Aaaaaaaaa!

She quickly got off the bed and hugged and we both jump up and down together with tears of joy streaming down our eyes.

Me: I ...can ...I can walk ...oh thank you ...oh thank you so much ...oh my god I can walk ... I can walk.

I was crying and screaming on top of my voice, I have even kneeled on the floor as I didn't know what to do with myself Lisa held on me and we both sat there screaming, crying and laughing at the same time. The door opened Pops and his wife walked in.

Pops: Is everything okay?

I just stood up on my feet

Me: I can walk ...Pops I can walk

I couldn't believe it; I couldn't believe that I was really standing on my own two feet.

Me: Thank you ... thank you so much Pops thank you

I hugged him, squeezing him to me then moved to MaGumende.

Me: Thank you Granny thank you

I let out a loud cry.

Me: I can walk ....i can walk oh God I can walk.

I couldn't stop my tears from falling.

Me: Nkosi' Ndlangamandla Mtungwa' Mawandla KaNdlela Thank you, thank you so much Mphazima kaLanga ...oh thank you so much Mpangazitha Nkonjane yenkosi ...

The way I was so happy I was even shaking I couldn't believe it, I couldn't believe this was me feeling my legs, standing on my legs. Lisa came and hugged me we held on to each other.

Lisa: God is good!

She said letting out a breath of relief.

THIRTY EIGHT

NOMASWAZI

---

Lisa: Dear heavenly father we thank you for your good promises found in your word. We choose to be prisoners of hope. We choose to keep our eyes on you knowing that you are working behind the scenes and you will restore double in every area of our lives. In Jesus name Amen.

Me: Amen

Zoe: In Jesus name Amen.

We then opened our eyes smiling to each other.

Zoe: Lisa since when do you know how to pray?

Me: I was about to ask the same thing.

Lisa: "rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer" Sbusiso sent me this scripture yesterday I never understood what it meant but now I think I am getting it ...

Us: Uh-hh

Lisa: Let me call him

She got off the floor where we have been kneeling and took her phone then walked out.

Zoe: What was that?

Me: She's talking about scriptures

Zoe: She don't even go to church

Me: Tell me about it ...

Lisa was changing a lot, she prays more than she use too. I for one think it got something to do with her new man. Anyway none of my business, boy I am so happy I can walk I don't even sit down no more. I stand on my feet, walk around and dance. I am so happy even happy is an understatement I am just over the moon.

It a Friday Pops were to perform the cleansing ceremony for me, there were two goats that my friends bought using their last savings then Pops bought another one to fetch my father's spirit. It was a very emotional journey for me; I never got to know my father. I don't even know what kind of a person he was

more reasons I want to meet his mother's family so badly maybe try to get to know him from people who knew him. Pops, his brother and I were to go to my father's house to ask permission from them before taking his spirit. I had no idea what kind of people they were, I was driving Zoe's car so we drove there, their house is situated in the suburbs so obviously they were rich and rich people have a tendency of being rude, we parked the car by their massive gate and pressed the intercom after introducing ourselves the gate opened. The moment I pressed the brakes in front of the house both my grandfather's got off, after taking a deep breath I also followed behind them. Pops knocked on the door a lady opened, greeted us sweetly then let us in. Their house is a double story big and beautiful, the wall is surrounded by so many pictures but it didn't take me long to spot him, he looked exactly like in the pictures Aunt Judith gave me. On this particular picture he was smiling to the camera, wearing khaki pants with a black t-shirt and boot. I wondered how my life would've been like if he was still alive. I wondered if him and I would've been close; like have a father daughter relationship. I would've loved to be his little princess. I really wish I knew how it like to have a father, someone who loves you unconditional, someone who would show you so much love so when you finally meet a guy to love, you would know how a man is supposed to love you. After all they say a girl's first boyfriend is her father; I for one would never know that kind of love.

"You look like him"

I quickly blink back the tears but it was too late, one tear drop then followed another one. I wiped them and turned to the lady beside me who was also looking at the picture.

Me: I do?

Looking like him was the only thing I could hope for, it the only thing that could make me feel close to him. The lady nods her head.

"You got his eyes and nose"

I couldn't help but smile with tears streaming down.

Me: How was he like?

The lady chuckled; her own eyes were glassy with tears.

"He was the best brother to me, a happy soul always smiling and cracking jokes you would never be bored with Buyani around, he loved wholeheartedly and he cared wholeheartedly."

The lady who happens to be my father's sister which makes her my Aunt stopped trying to not cry, she just let the tears fall.

"He was amazing, so amazing and when he found out your mother was pregnant he was so happy we didn't hear the end of it. I remember he would walk around the house bragging that he is going to be a father, he would demand Mama to dish him two pieces of meat because he is about to be someone's father. (laughing) He literally forced everyone to call him Baba Smlindele. He was going to be the best father ever lived on earth"

That touched my heart really deeply, the fact that he was looking forward to being my father makes me so happy, and it fulfils my heart.

Me: I wish I met him ...

She opened her arms for me to hug her; I slowly crushed in her arms and embrace her.

"You sure were going to be a daddy's girl."

That really made me tear up, I really wish I had a chance with him. From the little I have heard about him I sure would've loved him so much.

"I am Busi your Aunt"

She said wiping my tears and I felt like a little girl, all I wanted was to crawl back in her arms and let her hold me forever.

Me: I am Nomaswazi I guess that makes me your niece.

We both laugh, she took my hand.

Busi: Come so you will meet the others

She took my hand and we walk through the large foyer leading to a very beautiful lounge everything about this house was exquisite. Two guys, a girl and an old lady in a wheelchair were all in the lounge. They all look up from their phones as we approach them.

Busi: Guys meet Nomaswazi your sister Uncle Buyani's daughter, Nomaswazi these are my kids Bonga, Bongani and Lindi.

The two boys were twins, and the girl must be a last born she looks like someone who is still in school.'

Lindi: Nice to meet you sis, I am so glad I have a big sister.

I couldn't help the smile on my face. They all stood up and came to hug me.

Bonga: Welcome to the family Sis

Bongani: It nice to meet you, we never met Uncle Buyani at least we got a chance to meet a part of him.

I felt at home, I just felt so at home with these strangers who are my family.

Me: I am so happy to meet you.

This was indeed my first time I have ever felt welcome by family members, my first time I felt loved by family. The kids who are my siblings walk away. Aunt took my hand and we sat on the couch in front of the old woman whom I have figured she might be my granny. She looks old and sick, she looked at me closely and tears just came out of her eyes.

Busi: Mama it Buyani's daughter.

The old lady nods her head a little.'

Busi: This is your grandmother, she suffered a stroke last year; her left side is not working.

I couldn't help my own tears from falling; I extended my hands and held her old shirked hands then wiped her tears.

Me: Sawubona Gogo

Saying that alone felt so good, she blinks a few times. You could see the smile through her eyes.

Busi: She can't talk but she can hear you.

She squeezed my hand.

Me: I am so happy to meet you, I am happy I got to meet you.

I said and hugged her.

I got to meet my Aunt's husband who seems really kind and nice. My grandfathers were granted permission to take Buyani's spirit home. So we all drove to where my father was buried. Before partying ways my Aunt made me promise I will come and visit them, we even exchanged numbers then me and my grandfathers drove back home. Along the way i was busy singing and humming a song while smiling to myself. I was so happy to meet them. When we got home Pops got off still carrying ihlahla which is a tree used to fetch dead people's spirit. He was busy talking with it as he walks inside the house.

Pops: Ndodana, Ndlangamandla sesikekhaya-ke manje. This is your home, hlangana no Babo mkhulu bakho nawo wonke umndeni wakini. Ilona ikhaya lakho leli Mphazima KaLanga.

He did everything exactly how the traditional healer instructed him. On the early hours they slaughtered the other two goat that were for cleansing, he burnt incense again and informed the ancestors how sorry he was for not introducing the kids.

Pops: It was my entire fault, had I introduced Buyani to the family none of this would've happened. Ngalembuzi ngithi shwele, ayidle izishiyele. uNomaswazi sizomgeza wonke lomhlola. Ngiyacela nimvikele nimamukele, nikhangise nazo zonke izinto zakhe. Konke nje kulunge umtwana aphumelele.

Then the goat was slaughtered, with the other goat. He also informed the ancestors especially my mother that he is cleansing me so my mom should leave me and go rest in her resting place.

Then I had to go bath with cold water mixed with a stinking goat's inside outside Pop's yard, mind you it was an early morning and cold. I almost threw up the way the water I was bathing with stink but other than that all went well. Now to do on my journey was to go back to the village lady, she said I have to come back she will then instruct me of what is next.

Zoe: Wow! I really never thought amadlozi are a thing

Me: I am still shocked

Zoe: I clap once shame, Wow! From not walking to walking.

Me: It a miracle, I am shocked. I even got to meet my father's mother and sister.

Zoe: Wow so speechless

Me: To think I suffered all these years when I had people who could've help me.

Zoe: Imagine

Lisa: I am out of words, wow!

Zoe: I take back everything I ever said about the underground.

We laughed.

Me: You and I both, they have earned my trust shame.

Zoe: So what next now?

Me: I have no idea; the sangoma said I must come down the village.

Lisa: Tjo are you scared?

Me: Very scared

Lisa: This whole thing does sound scary

Me: I hate how I will have to change my life to accommodate this.

Lisa: All will be fine

Me: You guys are amazing, all the money and time you've spent on me. If things ever work out I will sure command your ancestors to slide in your dreams and bless you with lotto numbers.

We laughed so hard. I could slowly feel myself being at my own happy place, getting my self-esteem back that was bruised by being in a wheelchair.

## THIRTY NINE

### LISAKHAYA

---

Blood doesn't make you family, we may have a same blood flowing on our veins but that doesn't make us family; love, support, trust, honesty, protection, acceptance, gratitude, respect and loyalty do. My Grandmother is the only family I have ever known, the only family member ever cared about me so much. She raised me well, taught me what I needed to know and one thing that old lady always preached about is love and loyalty. She always tells me to be loyal to those I love, tell me a strong foundation of love is loyalty.

Sbusiso: But babe you promised you will meet my parents today.

I got off the bed and walked towards the bathroom.

Me: Swazi needs me I have told you this, my friends come first no matter what. He sigh, I walked in the bathroom and washed my face then came out wiping it.

Me: So are you coming to meet them for breakfast.

Sbusiso: It better be only one hour I have to prepare for my sermon

He got off the bed and dragged his feet; he wasn't pleased with me choosing my friends over him again. It a Sunday Swazi is to go to the village to start her spiritual journey she's so mad she will have to live there, she thought she would still live here in the city, shame I wonder if she would survive a day in that place this I gotta see shame. I chuckled to myself with my amused face as I put on Sbusiso's t shirt.

Sbusiso: Lisakhanya do you love me?

I hate it when he calls me by my full name and where the fuck is that question coming from.

Me: What of course I do, you know I do

Sbusiso: Do i? Look I get that your friends are going through the most and you feel like you should be there for them and babe I am not against that. I admire you for your love and loyalty towards your friends but come on you have stood my parents up for the second time now.

I had to approach this with a very calm manner because the last thing I ever want is to choose between him and my friends.

Me: Babe please Swazi needs me we will drive her down the village today then tomorrow I am start with work then the next Sunday I will go to church with you after church we will go have dinner with your parents.

Sbusiso: Then what would happen if Swazi or Zoe needs you for something, you will cancel again right? You won't even bother to tell them you already got plans.

That is true I will drop him anytime whenever my friends needs my help with anything.

Sbusiso: I do not want you to choose between me and your friends; I just don't like how we are dropping my parents off. They were looking forward to meeting you and now I will have to tell them you can't make it because something came up again.

Sbusiso is the only man I have ever loved sometimes I think he's too good for me. The guy is a doctor and a pastor yet he fell in love with me when I am nothing but a hottest and a diploma graduate in hospitality; he's too perfect for me it scares me sometimes.

Me: Next Sunday no matter what I will meet your parents I promise.

He sighs and came closer.

Sbusiso: Come here

He opened his arms for me and we hug.

Sbusiso: You have a very beautiful heart. I am so blessed to have you, now let get ready and go have breakfast with your crazy friends.

I chuckled.

Me: Don't let them hear you say that

He smiled down at me and kissed me softly

## ZOLEKA

---

Swazi and I had prepared a feast for breakfast, Lisa's man is coming over and we wanted to impress him for Lisa's sake. Lisa has been way too good, she bent hell over hill for our asses, preparing a killer breakfast is the least we could do for now though I still stand by the fact that we should freak the boyfriend out a little just to see if he can handle us all together.

Swazi: Do you think he is a scotch guy or wine guy

Me: I don't know but one thing I know for a fact he drinks

Swazi: Damn yea he does

She took a deep breathe; she keeps rearranging everything on the table. I got no fucking idea why she's so nervous.

Swazi: What? ...

She asked as I watch her weirdly.

Swazi: I just want this to be perfect for our girl, she deserve some love and happiness in her life.

Me: Relax will you, have a glass of wine and just chill we got this.

She gave me a bitchy look and smirk.

Swazi: Mxm ...hell yea we do he should be the nervous one not us

She said and poured herself a glass of wine gulping it all together in one go then poured another one.

Swazi: What if he finds us too weird and dumps Lisa?

Before I could tell her if he does that we will drive to his house and cut his balls the door opened, Lisa walked in followed by a tall light skinned yet so freaking handsome man behind her. He wasn't too tall, Lisa could reach him on her high heels but barefooted I doubt she can. The guy is around his early 30's or perhaps late 20's just not sure. He's wearing a suit; a freaking suit for breakfast! Ain't we being too formal for just breakfast?

Swazi: Wait ... I know you! ....oh my God pastor bae

Oh! Oh! seems like we might have a love triangle here people, I could see the confused shock look from Lisa as she look at her man then her best friend like "Please tell me you ain't fucking"

Swazi: Oh my God I can't believe this

Sbusiso: Oh it you ...the lady who leaves the impressions. I take it you have cast your "demons"

He said quoting the word demons, Lisa and I are just standing there watching them talking like long lost befriends or maybe fucking buddies, I would also not mind to have Swazi's pastor bae to cast out my demons. "Oh yes pastor I have been so bad, so very bad please fuck out my demons" (Eyes rolling, wine sipping)

Swazi: Self introversion, remember? Oh your talk helped you are good, way too good.

She said and took a long sip of her wine, is it me or Swazi is actually flirting with this guy or better yet they're probably fucking taking each other into a very intimate world of self-introversion; very nasty Swazi very nasty.

Lisa: You ...guys know each other.

She had to ask these two were going on and on about how they made each other reach climax forgetting we are also in the room, like we are within have some respect you two nasty fuckers.

Sbusiso: I met your friend at church

Church! Like seriously is that the best he can do we all know Swazi never goes to church, unless that day God really did came back for his people.

Lisa: Church ...

The doubt in that voice was too audible if you ask me.

Swazi: Ya remember the day I got fired, and then got chased down the street by human traffickers, Baba Dube saving me and me going to church the next day.

Oh I think I remember that.

Me: You mean the day we found you drowning in your bath sink?

Swazi: I wasn't drowning I just fell asleep.

Me: Yea right and we thought you were committing suicide.

Lisa: Oh I think I remember that day I just never thought any of the things you said were true.

Swazi: Very true and that day I met this guy though he was a little judgmental but he did tell me some fact. Things I needed to know but didn't want to hear.

She then started telling us all about how she met pastor bae. Thank god they weren't fucking.

Me: A pastor ... I never thought of you Lisa as a Mamfundisi kinda vibe. No offence brother you are a snack and all but let get real church can be so boring.

Lisa: Will you behave ...jeez

Sbusiso: Thank you uh ....

Me: Zoe

I said extending my hand for handshake, he took it and shook my hand.

Sbusiso: Nice to put a face to the name ... ah as I was about to say I love your friend and I will never force her to go to church with me, if she found it boring she doesn't have to go if I wanted a church going woman I would've not had a problem getting one, trust me there are plenty of them.

I sip on my glass giving him a look; okay I think this god fearing man knows his business I don't see him being freaked out by anything. Which is also a bonus for Lisa if she ever cheat she would just lie and say she was possessed with demons and they would pray about it then the guy would forgive her; so I hope.

Swazi: So pastor bae, what are your intentions with Lisakhanya?

Lisa: You guys promised you won't do this.

Me: We lied, sorry.

Sbusiso: Could we perhaps sit down first?

Swazi: Of course, sorry about that.

Me: Please have a sit pastor bae, should I get you anything to drink, something strong maybe?

Sbusiso: Water would be fine, thank you

Me: Water ... tap or mineral or sparkle?

Sbusiso: Tap is fine

Me: You sure you want water? Like sure, sure?

Sbusiso: Yes

Me: You do know that we drink, right? And Lisa also drinks too.

Lisa rolled her eyes and just went to get water for her man.

Sbusiso: Yes I do

Me: You don't mind?

Sbusiso: No I do not mind

Me: Oh thank God

Swazi and I click glasses

Swazi: I thought he was about to preach to us about not drinking, how alcohol is the sin.

Me: Tell me about it, I was going to faint straight up. My body can't survive without a dose of alcohol in my system.

Swazi: Amen sister

We click our glasses again.

Swazi: We went all out for you, made all English breakfast.

Sbusiso: Thank you so much for your effort, to answer your question of earlier. My intentions with Lisa are simple my wishes, growing old with her.

Me: Please don't make us an Aunt yet.

Swazi: Oh yes please we too young to be anyone's Aunt, eww imagine.

Sbusiso: I think you don't have to worry about that for now.

Me: Lisa! I think I am going to like pastor bae he is for keeps.

I shout for Lisa somewhere in the kitchen still getting the water, (rolling my eyes) Imagine.

Me: Okay let get real

Swazi and I put our wine of glasses on the table and stare at him face on just to get a message across.

Swazi: Now you listen and listen very carefully.

Me: You have one job just one job only.

Swazi: Make Lisa happy.

Me: You fail to do that, you make her cry.

Swazi: We will cut your balls, feed them to you and to bobby our dog

Me: Trust me we have killed someone before

Swazi: And we not afraid to kill just one more person.

Me: Oh we so not afraid to get our hands all dirty.

Swazi: We hope we have an understanding there pastor bae.

Me: I think he heard us.

Sbusiso: Loud and clear ladies

We could tell the guy wanted to burst into a loud laughter but tried so hard to hold himself.

Lisa: How is the operation scare my boyfriend working?

She asked walking back in.

Swazi: Pretty well I think we have an understanding

Lisa: Good I hope you didn't leave out the part where we cut balls for a living and sell them at a black market.

Me: Oh trust me all covered.

The guy just smiled cutely at Lisa and made her sit on his lap then kissed her.

Sbusiso: Little weird but I love you

Swazi: get a room

Me: Please ...we are about to have breakfast you being nasty.

Lisa licked her man's face just to piss us even more

Us: Euw!

UBIZO THE CALLING

I threw a napkin at them. They were cute together, the guy is a little reserved but I think they will make it work together.

FORTY

NOMASWAZI

---

It strange spending lot of time wishing for something then having it be over, but then I am done complaining I just want to do this and get over and done with it. I want to live the life that I want; Gogo said that could be possible after my initiation she says I could ask them to give me time to study or do whatever I like I'm human after all I'm bound to do things that I desire without their interference. Lisa and Zoe dropped me here yesterday then they drove back to the city, this place is depressing af! I sleep on a floor, on a handmade mutt. It me, Zodwa and another girl who seems so not friendly her name is Babhekile we have hardly exchanged any words since I got here. When I was woken up this morning by Gogo my whole entire body hurt so much, Gogo summoned me into her hut.

Gogo: Nomaswazi

She says as I walked in and settles on the mutt.

Me: Do we really have to sleep on the floor and share a hut with Babhekile, the chick snore like a caged lion Gogo.

Gogo: What do you think this is? A hotel, are you on vacation?

No but if I will be paying you for my stay here it might as well be a hotel. I wanted to say that out loud but decided against it, I'm learning to keep my rude thought to myself when it comes to this woman.

Gogo: Exactly so let focus on the reason why you here.

She took my silence as me agreeing to her unanswered questions; as if I would.

Gogo: Firstly you need to know no one will serve you in this house; you all will take turns with house chores

Me: Excuse me

She got to be fucking kidding me, this witch got jokes I tell you.

Gogo: I told you this is not a hotel; you clean, cook, fetch water, go to the garden, do washing, clean the yard, and fetch woods from the forest.

Me: No way have you seen my nails

I had long white nails, they are not long as in long but I had my nails done before coming here.

Gogo: You nails are not my problems Nomaswazi, when it your turn to do house chores I am expecting you to get them done.

Me: So I am actually here to slave for you

Gogo: I gave you a place to sleep.

I didn't need a place to sleep I was fine with where I was sleeping.

Gogo: my new blankets, free food. Must I cook for you too?

Me: Yes, I am your guest

Gogo: heeh

She claps once

Gogo: Nomaswazi no one owes you anything here stop acting entitled. You will work out household chores with the others, now let get to the most important thing.

Now I feel like I am actually here to be slaved around.

Gogo: Every morning you will be waking up on the early hours to go to the river and bath

Me: Bath? At the river? With cold water in the morning. You got to be kidding.

Gogo: Nomaswazi I am not your friend, don't ever talk to me like I am your friend. When I talk you shut up and listen, are we clear?

That definitely sounded like an order and I wanted to tell her she can never order me around but I chose against it and nod my head because this woman really does scare me.

Me: Clear

Gogo: When you come back from the river you will have to do ukuphahla. It is very important to phahla as it connects you with your ancestors and shows your respect towards them, you will have to develop a sacred ritual using a white candle in order for you to connect with them; they will guide you towards everything and anything you pray about to them.

All this was happening, it starting to sink in, I am about to be a sangoma.

Gogo: Accepting a calling is not easy, and it's not for everyone. It requires you not to just live your life for yourself but for others too. It requires sacrifices and dedication. It is very important to do everything accordingly; in most cases some people go through the initiation process only for them to not be able to work after the whole process. That why it very important to pay attention to your dreams because as your initiator I might use impande that won't connect to your ancestors so they will mostly likely to communicate with you letting you know exactly what they want, never take your dreams lightly. Every

morning after your bath there would be ukhamba lobulawu after ukupahala you will drink ubulawu and vomit, it will cleanse you.

Vomiting, come one people like seriously.

Gogo: Here, these are clothes you are to be dressed in until instructed by your ancestors otherwise. This afternoon we will go to the river where I will cleanse you, put calamine all over your body then you can only change to these clothes for now take them and keep them. I am not sure about the beads you are supposed to be using as yet, they would be revealed to you on your dreams so pay attention, for now you will use these sea white beads they're known to bring light and luck. And Nomaswazi lose the shoes you will be bare footed always.

That can never be me; I can't be barefooted, imagine what that would do to my pretty feet.

Me: About that can I please keep my shoes on, I can't be barefooted Gogo. It's too much.

She took a sighs

Gogo: Fine but whenever you enter an sacred place you take off your shoes.

I nod my head, I can do that.

Gogo: Eventually all this will be easy you won't even be needing those shoes.

Haah yea right!

Gogo: One more important thing, you are not allowed to be with a man.

As if I would be with any man in this hell

We were sitting under the tree while eating umdoko; Zodwa is busy asking me about the city life. The girl has never been to the city before, when she discovered she had a calling she was in matric. She has been here for a year and four months that way too long. Babhekile kept sending evil eyes on me, I swear this woman will be a witch or better yet she is a witch. Then there is Sabela there's something doggy about this guy, he has red eyes and four beard around his face he doesn't say much just look at you and then there is Zango the most friendly one with not so fun jokes.

Zodwa: So you worked at a sheeben

I laughed

Me: Sort of

Zodwa: I can't stand drunken men, they're too much i wouldn't survive working at the sheeben

Zango: Ouch you just hurt my feelings MaZuma

Zodwa laugh, I am getting a vibe these two are either dating or has a crush on each other.

Zodwa: Okahle Bhuti Zango

Sabela started taking out weed and I just knew creepy or not me and him will get along perfectly, I left Zango and Zodwa blushing to each other as they laugh at their own not so fun jokes.

Me: What up with those two?

Sabela shrugged

Sabela: Don't know, don't care.

Me: Mind sharing

He smirks and rolled the weed then gave me to smoke. My smile widen as I take a first hit. Have never smoked a weed this strong, it got my head spinning same time.

## FORTY ONE

### NOMASWAZI

---

I was finally peaceful sleeping after being up the whole night, I couldn't sleep. I kept turning and tossing. It no fun sleeping on the floor, every part of my body hurt, you would swear I had been in a gym. I felt something cold and liquid coming in contact with my face making me jump up.

Me: What the fuck!

Gogo stood beside me with a mug of water; I felt so much anger building inside me as I wipe the water she just poured on my face.

Gogo: Zodwa woke you up but you are still sleeping.

Me: Does that mean you should pour cold water on my face!

She pointed a finger at me.

Gogo: Wake up Nomaswazi let this be the last time I wake you up, akulalwa ethongweni.

I groan loudly as I wake up, she walked out leaving me getting up. I was so angry; I woke up and got dressed in my red trainees' clothes with a white vest. It basically a red skirt, white vest and a red clothing that I had to put over my shoulders then crossed beads around my body, I had another beads red and white on both my wrist and ankles. I looked ridiculous if it was for me gosh I would've chose otherwise. I checked for my tekkies with no luck, even took out all my clothes on my luggage but still all my shoes just vanished; the old hang must have taken them. The fuck is wrong with these people, I can't walk barefooted. I took a bag with my toiletries and opened the door, for fucksakes it was still dark outside, I could hear Zodwa chit chatting with the others and laughing. I dragged my feet and walked out; they were all standing by the tree

Babhekile: Finally she decides to grace with her presence, Bayende Nkosi yethu wena weZulu.

She said giving me attitude, I haven't told this chick where to get off but I swear let her keep pressing my buttons I would show her flames. I just rolled my eyes and wrapped my hands around me, it was way too cold outside by the time I leave this hell whole I would be bone iced I swear.

Me: Who took my shoes?

No one responded they just looked at me.

Me: Are you going to stare at me or you will tell me where my damn shoes are?

Sabela: Yey ntombazana we don't have time for this, stay back and look for your shoes we are leaving.

They all followed each other going towards the river.

Zodwa: Let go sis you will search for your shoes when we come back.

She said following after the others, I sigh frustrated and followed after her. The path leading to the driver has these small stones that kept poking my feet underneath, I was really struggling. I had to tip toe and they were leaving me behind it didn't help that I kept hearing creepy sounds coming from the small trees by the path leading to the river. Zango was busy talking.

Zango: Swazi do you know there are ghost here?

He asked freaking me out even more.

Zango: So back in the days there was this woman who worked so hard, she had so many fields by the river which she used to plant vegies. Every morning she would come here to water her plants even on afternoon so after she died she still came by the river to water her plants every morning.

Me: Eeh!

Zango laughed

Zango: She's not the only ghost living by the river too many ghost here.

He said laughing as he sees my face; we parted ways as they went to the side of the river where men bath then me, Babhekile and Zodwa went on the other side.

Zango: Be careful Swazi one day while bathing someone grabbed my ankle from under water!

He shouts after me.

Me: Fuseg!

He laughed loudly; I stick by Zodwa's side making sure not to leave her side as we get to the river.

Me: Is anything Zango said true.

Babhekile: Boom!

She said right on my face freaking me out even more and making me scream  
She then laughed loudly.

Babhekile: All is true.'

Zodwa joined her as they laugh at me

Me: Bitch

We had a bath with coldest water I have ever bath with, making my whole body shiver in cold, my bones clashing together gosh I was so cold.

When we got back home I did ukupahala at my own sacred place exactly how Gogo intrusted me. I called upon my ancestors, asked for their guidance and to make my journey a success. I really wanted them to guide me and make my journey a success as fast as they took my ability to walk away from me. I couldn't stay here no more it only been few days but already feels like forever, after I was done I had to drink some herb that tasted so badly, I had to drink a whole jug of that herb before I could go and throw it all up. throwing up hurt so much, it felt like my inside were actually coming out, I hated it with all my being.

While Babhekile made porridge we had to help with other house chores like cleaning the yard, watering the plants and chopping of herbs. By the time click nine o'clock in the morning I was way too drained and hungry. I wasn't even talking to anyone the way I was so mad. Babhekile dished the porridge for everyone, I do not trust this woman yet I was too hungry to not eat her food. So I took my own dish of porridge and stayed out with the others under the tree. While they were talking and laughing among themselves I just sat there and ate the porridge that I didn't even like, I was hungry and I actually felt like eating something meaty. A car pulled over the yard, three kids came our running inside the house while shouting "Gogo!" then a lady came out from a passage seat, she looks at us and waves.

"Zodwa please come and help me with the bags"

While Zodwa went towards the car I caught Babhekile rolling her eyes then I knew it not just me she basically hate everyone. A guy tall and so damn handsome came out from the driver's seat, he's wearing casual and looks flying the type of guy I would go for in the club and have him fuck me senselessly.

Sabela: They're back

He said not sounding pleased at all after all I have never heard Sabela sounding pleased about anything.

Zango: It about to get down

He said with his own happy voice. I wondered who they are. Zodwa helped them with plastic and bags, the tall handsome guy waved Sabela over to help with more of plastic bags. He walked up to him and they fist bump before he takes the plastics inside the big house.

Me: So who are they?

I asked Babhekile as Zango walks towards them laughing and welcoming them back.

Babhekile: Gogo's spoiled brat Nobuhle and Zenzele.

I don't know why it never occurred to me that Gogo might have kids.

Me: Spoiled ne?

Babhekile: She has six kids, five girls and only one guy. Four of them are married only Nobuhle who is not married and trust me she will be getting married soon, then Zenzele he's your typically spoiled brat.

Tf! Too many kids. Damn this woman is a baby making machine.

Babhekile: They're all successful and by successful I mean it either they're doctors married to some rich great family or they're teachers married to mayor or stay home wives. I wish she was my mother this woman sure knows how to give her kids the best life.

Me: Wow

Babhekile: They live the best life.

Ever since I got here this so far is the longest conversation I had ever had with Babhekile and during the conversation the only thing I could pick up is how she envy their life. I tell you this girl right here is jealous

Sabela: Eeh Nomaswazi let go to the shops.

He said coming out of the big house with Mr handsome, I think me and Sabela have an understanding of some sort. He's creepy and all but I would pick to chill with him over the sweet Zodwa at any time. I left the bow of porridge right next to Babhekile and walked towards the car, with my best flattering smile I greeted Zenzele, for him I would break all the rules I swear.

Me: Heey I'm Swazi

I said leaning on the passage seat as I was about to open the door.

Zenzele: Get at the backseat sis, Sabela the front man.

My eyes widen but I did get in the back. He took out a savannah and handed it to Sabela then took another one and took a sip then started the car like I wasn't there; he fucking didn't even acknowledge me.

Me: Mind sharing a drink

I said with a little bit of attitude, the guy just look at me from the rear view mirror before saying so rudely.

Zenzele: Stay in your lane woman.

I have never, not even once been rejected by a guy.

Me: Then perhaps you shouldn't have invited me to tag along if you are going to be an asshole.

Zenzele: You should've told Zodwa to come with us not this, what is even this where did Mama get her Sabela. Nx

I literally felt anger brewing inside me, all of the suddenly I found him so fucking ugly. Sabela didn't respond he just took a sip of his savannah.

Me: Stop the damn the car

He didn't stop, he just kept driving.

Me: I said stop the damn car.

He stopped the car

Zenzele: nx what now?

Me: You are an asshole argh

I said and got off the car then slammed his door, same time as he start the car and drives off leaving dust behind him. I cussed after him as I walk back while so angry and talking to no one but myself.

“Why would someone as beautiful as you be talking alone?”

I look up only to be met by the man I hate with my all being.

Me: Not you again and definitely not today

“Hau what have I done now? Have we met before?”

Me: You beat me up, leave me in a middle of nowhere to be eaten by wild animals then have a nerve to ask me that question; the audacity men of this village have makes me wanna throw up.

“I’m sorry yo-

Me: Yoo fuseng save your stupid pathetic sorry for someone who actually cares

...

“Sis I ...

Me: I said funseg! Back off. I don’t know who died and made men of this village god with their Shaka Zulu faces.

I walked past him still mad as hell as I walk back home.

## FORTY TWO

### ZOLEKA

---

I feel so alone, been feeling so lonely ever since both my friends got things to do with their lives. Swazi is gone miles away fixing herself and living her life then Lisa is always not around, she's always with her man. I am all alone with my sickening thought and quite frankly I am not doing okay, my life is a mess. All I could think about every day is how Mandla left me for someone else, how my parents just chose not to care about me. It like I am cures one moment I have it all in a blink of an eye everything has been snatched from me. I have nothing and no one, it depressing. I can't even fall asleep without the help of sleeping pills that I have to fuck some married doctor in order to get; oh yes my life is so pathetic, I struggle to sleep. I can no longer function without the sleeping pills and pain killers for the headache that always kills me. This one day I found myself at a club drinking my sorrows away with a bunch of strangers that made me feel like a human, they even invited me to some few parties. I can't do this thing called life anymore, there's nothing for me in this world. I can't even afford therapy to probably help me with my problems without me being a nuisance to my friends who has life of their own.

A tear rolled down and fall on the paper, I wiped it and took a deep breath then started writing on the piece of paper with tears streaming down my eyes,

Nomaswazi, Lisakhanya

Some would say this was a coward way out of life. They would claim I wasn't strong enough to handle my shit face on but honestly having to take your life is never being spinelessness. It takes more courage than having to face your problems, just think about it. Think about how it would be like to hang yourself in a rope, think about how it would be like to have to swallow tons of pills down your throat knowing very well pills are so bitter. Hell think about slicing your wrist with a razor, do you think that would be nice? Do you think any spineless person can do that? Then why don't you take a razor and cut yourself.

I know you would definitely hate me for this and probably call me out on my bullshit, I mean like Swazi literally raised herself, she probably have been

## UBIZO THE CALLING

through more fuck up shit than me, she was alone and she made it. Forgetting Swazi had us, I feel like I have no one. You both are out there living your lives and I am just here going through how my perfect life turned out so shitty, my parents may not have showed me love but they did shower me with money. I could buy the things I wanted but right now I am suffering I can't even afford to treat myself into a nice meal then there's Mandla flashing his happy life with his fiancé on instagram. Did I mention I can't even afford to buy myself an instagram data? Life is shit! You guys are used to not having money, you are used to being poor (no offence intended) but hey that have not been my life, I would rather be unlove and have money than being unlove with no money. It sucks big time. The money I work at the hotel is not even enough to cover my day to day needs.

I know you two would be wondering why I didn't actually talk to you with my concerns and worries but the truth is; I am not used to asking you money and besides you two are broke. You have no cents and that my fault had you not got arrested you would have money. This may seem like my problems are with money but my problems are with my life as a whole, I am lonely, hurt and broke. I can't get through one day without some sort of a drug to get me through. The last thing I want is to be addicted on something.

(Sigh) I love you girls, I am grateful I had you in my life. You the best thing that ever happened and this is not a goodbye; we will meet again maybe on the other life, I will make sure to keep a spot for both of you right next to me in heaven (Or maybe we will go to hell) fuck I hope pretty people get a special place in hell because we deserve VVIP.

Please strive be great and do more with your lives.

Happy birthdays to all the birthdays I would miss.

Happy celebrations to all the grate achievements I would miss.

Hell well done in advance for completing your sangoma journey Swazi, come to think of it I hope I could slide in your dreams and visit you as an ancestor that would be great; summon me okay.

If you two ever get to have kids never forget to tell your kids about the best Aunt Zoe.

I am leaving the little I have on my name to your future kids!

I want you to wear my clothes, do not give it away or else I will haunt you! I swear.

Love

Zoleka ...

p.S I was here!!

I fold the peace of paper; tears wouldn't stop streaming down falling on the paper. I wiped it and walked towards the bed where I placed the paper then grabbed a bottle of wine and razor and walked to the bathroom, filled the bath with water. Slowly got inside, fully dressed in my sweatpants while swinging a bottle of wine right on my mouth and taking a long gulp letting tears and mucus run down nose. Once I have fully settled I took one long sip of my wine then place the bottle down, with my shaking hands I slowly cut my wrist screaming loudly at the agony. It more painfully then I have thought, my heart is literally thrashing out of my chest. Pain shot through every part of my body, my lips trembled and tears never stopped coming out as the blood gush out. it took everything in me to switch the razor so I would also cut my left wrist before letting go, putting both my wrist inside the water, feeling the cold and the itching of water coming in contact with the cuts.

## NOMASWAZI

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As much as my body hurt nothing hurt more than my feet, I had to put them in hot water just to smooth the ache. It didn't help that every afternoon we are required to do the Zangoma dance which is ukugida, I haven't get the hold of it but still Gogo is forcing me to do it. Not to mention today my body just feels way too numb, I am exhausted I have this huge weight over my shoulder that just too heavy and an unsettling feeling right on my heart. It like I am both physically and emotional sick; everything is so draining. I didn't even complain about anything today because I just couldn't bring myself to talk. Even when the fucking asshole himself came on me with how he likes his eggs and I should do them again I just gave him a look and walked away on other times I would make sure to give him a piece of my mind. Hell we didn't even eat porridge for breakfast today but I still didn't appreciate that. My heart seems to be in so much pain yet I have no idea why.

"Swazi"

Just when i was still smoothing my feet Nobuhle called out for me.

Me: Sure'

I said giving her a bored look showing how I am so not interested in anything.

## UBIZO THE CALLING

Nobuhle: From what I heard you have an awful mouth but I am starting to think they were just bad mouthing you.

She says smiling at me.

Me: umm

I was not interested in anything at all.

Nobuhle: You should come out we are making beads

I nod my head wanting her to leave already; I really needed to be alone.

Nobuhle: Hurry I will teach you how to make beads.

Again I nodded my head, she smiles and finally walked out.

I took a deep sigh and stare down at my feet inside the basin. My eyes popped out as the water have turned red like I am bleeding. I quickly checked my feet and they were not bleeding yet the water was so red as in blood red. That freaked me out so much. Before I could make out what was happening or even call out for Gogo I felt so dizzy, my head started spinning everything was upside down then it was light out for me. When I opened my eyes I was in a strange room, a girl was standing with her back on me wearing a long white dress and standing on top of a white fluffy mutt. Blood was busy gushing out from her hands all the way to the mutt by her barefooted legs.

Me: Hello Sorry

I slowly walked up to her with my still pounding heart.

Me: Sorry you are bleeding

I said touching her shoulder, she slowly turned to me.

Me: Zoe! Zoe! What on earth are you doing?

She has a sad smile on her face, a razor fall down from her hands and tears just gush out.

Me: What do you think you are doing, eeh? Zoe! What have you done! What have you done? Look at the mess you made?

I tried touching her but I couldn't touch her, it like there was a barrier preventing me from touching her. I started shouting at her asking her what has she done.

Me: Do you see the mess you made, Zoe Zoe! Why you being selfish. Zoe!

I was so angry while shouting at her and trying to reach her at the same time, still she just stare at me with a sad smile and tears.

UBIZO THE CALLING

Me: Are you in pain? What were you thinking? You can be so stupid  
She slowly nods her head. That still didn't stop me from shouting at her.

FORTY THREE

NOMASWAZI

---

I burst in Gogo's room running without even knocking, she's sitting with his son Zenzele. They both looked at me as if I am crazy as I try to normalise my breathing.

Zenzele: Where are your manners, leave and knock before you just burst in.  
I didn't even pay attention to him.

Me: Gogo I don't know what going on everything seem so real, my friend had cuts on her wrist and she was bleeding, so much blood. I was just soaking my feet to smooth the aching when the water suddenly turned blood red then before I could do anything I just blank out when I opened my eyes my friend was bleeding. I don't know what going on but whatever that was it felt so real and I don't know what to do, could it mean anything? Is my friend okay? is she in danger?

I was talking so fast clearly not making any sense, Gogo motion for her son to leave the room then stare back at me.

Gogo: Go through your vision again and this time slowly telling me every details.

I narrated everything to her exactly how I saw it happened.

Gogo: The white your friend was wearing only means one thing your ancestors are giving you a clear chance at saving your friend's life. She's in danger and you don't have much time run up the street and make a call. They're holding her breath for you make sure you call upon them to protect her while calling someone to help your friend. Another thing Nomaswazi it might be too late.

I was about to run out the door when I turned to Gogo.

Me: How would I know where she is? Or what is really going on?

Gogo: What are your instincts telling you; the blood on the basin with water could mean exactly that.

I was so confused as I ran to grab my phone then ran all the way by the street where I was going to get signal. I quickly dialled Zoe's number but it rang unanswered, I dropped the phone and called Lisa.

Me: Lisa! Oh thank God where are you.

I was panicking, breathing heavy due to running.

Lisa: Good thing you called I am m...

Me: Where are you?

Lisa: Aah...

Me: Where is Zoe?

Lisa: At the flat I am at Sbusiso's place we invited his parents over fo-

Me: You have to hurry back Zoe is in danger ...there's blood water, you have to hurry back and please call the ambulance on your way there.

She kept quiet for a moment.

Me: Lisa! Lisa can you hear me. You have to hurry there.

Lisa: I can't Sbusiso's parents are here

Me: it a matter of death

Lisa: Zoe is fine I was with her earlier on.

Me: Just go and ...

Lisa: I have to go they're here.

She dropped the call on me. I called her again but she didn't pick up. I called again and again still she didn't pick up. I felt my knees shaking, every part of my body felt so drained. I went on my knees, right now tears have found their way out. I tried calling Zoe but it rang unanswered again. I had no one else to call, my own mind just felt so dizzy. I dialled an ambulance number if she's not in danger if nothing is going on then they will have to forgive me I am following my instincts like Gogo said I should.

Me: Hello! ... hello please help it my friend she's bleeding to death.

"Please calm down and give me your address ma'am ...what is your name?"

Me: Smith street ... the lifetime flat the one opposite standard bank floor six room 221

The rain started pouring really hard

"Okay we ...

Me: Please hurry ...please!

I dropped the call and hid my phone from the rain then called upon my ancestors' right there on the street; they were my only hope at this moment.

Me: BoNkosi oNdlangamandla, please be there for Zoleka. Please protect her one more time. Ngiyanicela zinyanya zakithi ngikhuluma nani. Gogo Mampandlane please mkhulu ngiyacela ngiyanidingga ngicela nimvikela aze

athole usizo aludingayo. Maka Zoe you failed her while you were alive please don't forsake her now; she needs you more than she ever needed you. Please find your way to your only daughter and save her life. Ngiyacela Ma please save her she needs you.

A car stop beside me I didn't even bother looking at it, I just remained kneeled down.

"Are you okay?"

The voice I've come to recognise very well asked and I swear to God and my underground gang this guy chose a wrong day to mess with me. I kneeled there not even looking his direction; he got off the car and came towards me.

"Is everything okay, come wait for whatever you are waiting for inside the taxi" I still didn't move.

"You are shaking, damn woman I am about to pick you up don't make a scene" He said and grabbed me his hands so strong and his breath so warm against my neck as he bends to pick me up. I wanted to fight him off but honestly I really need shelter to hide from the rain so I would be able to make some calls and beside I had no fighting spirit left in me. He slide open the taxi door then placed me on the seat before chuckling then sitting on the seat right in front of me.

"There is nothing scares me like ithwasa"

I used the clothing on my shoulder to wipe myself then took out my phone from under my armpit where I have hid it from the rain.

"Ever since I met you, you have been so not nice to me"

I ignored him still as if he doesn't know why I was being rude to him. I had to call someone to check on Zoe since Lisa bailed out and chose a man over us. The only person I could think of was Mandla; crossing my fingers I called him.

Mandla: Mandla hello!

Me: Mandla it me ...Swazi please don't drop the call

You could hear the desperation in my voice.

Mandla: What do you want?

Me: It Zoe I think she's in danger ... please help me.

Mandla: Goodbye Nomaswazi

Me: Mandla wait please ...please I wouldn't call you if I wasn't desperate. I am not around Durban and Lisa is at her boyfriend's place, Zoe is all alone in my flat. I just need you to go there and check if she's okay, please.

Mandla: I am not go-

Me: Please Mandla please, she was once the lover of your life. You used to love her so much, remember how you always went nut when a guy looks her way, remember the good times you had. The dreams you both once had, remember how she has always loved you for you, how she always got your back. Please help her for the old time's sake.

He blew some air.

Mandla: Fine I am about to pass by your building anyway

Me: thank you ...thank you. Please do call me as soon as you get there.

Mandla: Whatever Swazi.

He dropped the call, I took a deep breath and lean on the seat with my eyes closed.

"Is everything okay?"

I slowly opened my eyes and stare at the guy I hate with my all being.

Me: I don't see that being any of your business.

"Well you are in my taxi that makes it my business"

Me: Did I ask to be in your taxi

"You seem to be comfortable making calls in my taxi"

Okay he had a point I needed to be in his taxi. I stare at him, now that I have a chance to actually look at him I realised he is not good looking. He is a better version of Shaka Zulu; strong, dark skinned, well-structured body, rough around the edges and he seemed strong enough to hold you in his arm and make you feel foreign feelings.

Me: It the least you can do for being less of a man.

I knew my mouth might get me being beaten again but I still couldn't help it.

"Angizwanga"

I know that tone very well, I have heard it before but before I could choose to respond or not to respond my phone rang. I quickly picked up.

Me: Mandla

Mandla: There's an ambulance and Zoe is being wheeled out to the ambulance, t-

UBIZO THE CALLING

Me: Oh my god, is she okay? will she be okay?

Mandla: I don't know I have to go

Me: Wait is Baba Dube around or any security.

Mandla: Sorry ...Sorry baba I have a call for you

He says apparently to someone besides him

"Hello!"

Me: Baba Dube, Baba Dube it me Swazi

Baba Dube: Swazi where are you? Your friend is being taken by an ambulance. The ambulance people received a call instructing them to your room and I am sorry my girl we found your friend floating in a pull of blood in the bathroom.

That literally broke my heart, I felt hot liquid stream down my face.

Me: is she ...is she okay?

Baba Dube: I don't know they're taking her but she had a faint pulse when we got to her. Her wrists were cut it like she was committing suicide I also found a letter on top of the bed and took it.

Mandla: I have to go ..

I hear Mandla say on the background.

Me: Baba Dube please take my number and contact me, keep the letter Lisa will come and get it. Thank you so much.

Baba Dube: Okay Ntombazane, bhayi bhayi

The call then came to an end.

I was angry as Lisa how dare she choose a man over us, where the fuck was she when Zoe cut her wrist. I immediately dialled her number. I was about to drop the call when she picked up.

Lisa: I can't talk right now the in laws are here.

Me: How dare you choose a dick over us? What happened to having each other's back no matter what? You can be so fucking selfish Lisa, a dick seriously is the pastor's dick that good for you to ditch us like trash. If Zoe dies just know it all on you, I will never forgive you. Actually I will never ever talk to you ever again; I just hope that dick is worth Zoe's life.

I said then dropped the call before she could get a chance to say anything.

"Are you always angry and rude?"

I didn't respond to him, I just got off his taxi, hid my phone and walked back home.

## FORTY FOUR

### LISAKHANYA

---

To say I am devastated is an understatement. I didn't even know what to do with myself, just when I decided to choose me first things go south. I am busy mentally praying she makes it, I failed her and for that I will never forgive myself so she has to make it, she must make it.

Sbusiso: Here is coffee and some doughnut you have to eat something.

I have been in hospital for hours now, the doctors told me to wait.

Me: I told you to leave

Sbusiso: I am not leaving you all alone here

Me: Just go Sbusiso, I don't want you here. If it wasn't for you complaining about me always choosing my friends I wouldn't be here, Zoe wouldn't be fighting for her life.

Sbusiso: I understand you are upset and I'm sorry, please eat something.

Me: I said fucking leave, go! I don't want you here; I don't want to see you leave!

Sbusiso: Lis-

Me: Hamba!

I snap and people turned to look at us, we were at the waiting area in hospital. He placed the coffee and doughnut besides me.

Sbusiso: Call if you need me

I rolled my eyes and faced the other way till he was gone, leaving me feeling like shit. I didn't have the appetite so I drink the coffee while I wait and the wait was killing me finally the doctor approached me.

Me: Doctor ...how is she? Will she be fine?

The doctor's face didn't give me hope, he looked way too drained.

Doctor: She ... she is stable for now, she lost lot of blood so we will need to do blood transfusion but for now she's stable

Me: Will she be okay?

Doctor: I am sorry I can't give you my word; she lost lot of blood therefore anything can happen. She is in a very critical condition, just go home and come back tomorrow.

A tear rolled down my eyes, I squeezed my bag closely to my heart as if it would erase the guilty and pain I am feeling.

Me: Thank you; please call me in case of any changes.

The doctor nods.

Doctor: Will do

He said then walked away, I took a deep sigh everything felt way too much. I felt so lost. How I wish I listened to Swazi maybe she wouldn't lose that much blood. I walked out the hospital with my head spinning, I felt like this was the end of life on its own. I stepped out and felt the cold breeze hitting my face giving me the fresh of breath I needed. I took out my phone and requested an uber then waited.

The moment I got to the flat I slammed the door then lean on it. Tears made their way out; this is way too fucked up. I messed up in a worse way possible. Taking a deep breath I got off the floor and walked to the bedroom, looking around don't know exactly for what. I couldn't help but blame myself had I was not too occupied with Sbusiso I would've noticed Zoe wasn't fine, I would've known something was wrong with her but no Swazi was right I got blinded by a dick. I walked to the bathroom, water is all over the floor, and the bath sink is full of blood water the sight was so disturbing that I felt everything inside me turning. I rushed to the toilet and threw up then flushed the toilet and wiped my tears. I got cleaning kit and started cleaning the bathroom, my heart felt like someone was ripping it apart, and tears just didn't stop gushing out. I kneel down washed the sink spotless clean then scrambled the floor. Everything was too much it didn't help that Swazi wasn't talking to me and her phone sent me straight to voicemail. I sat butt flat by the sin and lean on it while crying holding the razor that Zoe used to cut herself.

I walked to Gogo's hut she had summoned me to come. I settled on her dirty mutt.

Gogo: So how does it feel?

I looked at her confused.

Me: What does what feel?

Gogo: Saving a life, how does it feel?

I just stare at her with my eye brows brought together.

Gogo: You had a vision and you took it serious, you followed your instincts because you knew whatever was happening in your head was true and by just doing that you saved your friend's life.

Me: I ... I saved Zoe, oh my God

I couldn't believe it, I couldn't believe a mere blank out that I had saved Zoe. I mean she was in danger I did call the ambulance and hopefully she's recovering in hospital. i saved her life.

Gogo: How does it feel knowing you helped her?

I had no words for the way I was feeling.

Me: Fulfilling ... I feel like ...I don't know ...I feel good ...I feel

Gogo: Fulfilling is the fitting word, you feel fulfilled there is that void in your heart that you feel is being fulfilled. You're proud of yourself because you managed to save her, you feel good about yourself.

I nod my head I didn't notice I had saved someone's life. I didn't notice I was relevant I am a saver I save lives. I saved Zoe, it feels so good.

Gogo: Well done Nomaswazi, sooner or later the void you've always felt deep inside your heart will be fulfilled. You will feel the peace you have never felt in your whole entire life. It very important to pay attention to every message your ancestors gives you; it might save someone's life.

As I walk all the way up to the street so I would call Lisa and found out how Zoe is doing my head couldn't get over Gogo's words. I saved someone's life not just anyone but someone I love with all my heart and soul. There are no words to describe how does that feel, it the best feeling ever a feeling I will love to feel more often.

Lisa: Swazi

She says picking up.

Me: Ya backstabber, dicksucker

Lisa: What did you want me to do Swazi? Sbusiso's parents were already there. Did you want me to meet them by the door and tell them I am leaving after postponing meeting them for more than once?

Me: Yes exactly that what I expected you to do, you chose people you met for two seconds over us! For fuck sakes I even told you how important it was for you to go and check up on Zoe. You chose to please a man with a dick over us and that cost us Zoe's life.

Lisa: Some of us are not as rude as you are, we actually got what they call manners something you lack. I know I messed up and I already feel guilty so the last thing I would do is sit here and listen to you judging me. I have been nothing but supportive, to you and to Zoe. It not my fault she chose not to talk about whatever was bothering her and most definitely it not my fault I wasn't there when she decided to cut herself.

Me: You are so pathetic; do those lame excuses make you feel better? You are an ass.

Lisa: I won't let you guilty trip me, I was wrong yes and I admit and I feel like shit for what happened but you are as pathetic as I am. Just because I have manners, just because I couldn't walk out on people who were there specifically for me now you calling me a backstabber. Don't get on my nerves Swazi please, I don't want you bullshitting me.

Me: They haven't even paid a lousy chicken for you yet you so hung on them, you are nothing but a bitch dating their son not their fucking daughter in law maybe had you stopped acting like a wife to a boyfriend you would've actually notice Zoe wasn't coping.

Lisa: Fuck you Swazi, you hear me fuck you!

Me: Right back at you bitch you think that man will marry you when you are giving him free of charge whenever he wants to fuck you. Which man in his right mind will pay for milk he's already getting for free?

Lisa: At least I get to be fucked by a man who loves me and whom I love back unlike you who get fucked for the sake of being fucked.

Me: Fuck you Lisa

Lisa: Right back at you bitch.

She then dropped the call on me. I was so pissed I kept pacing up and down on the street while I call her back. She didn't pick up the first time so I called again and she picked up.

Lisa: What do you want?

Me: I am not done talking

Lisa: Well I am done, now fuck off.

You know when your body get too hot like you actually want to hit or scream at someone. That how I am feeling right at this moment, I feel like this huge anger boiling inside me and I actually want to hit or scream at someone. Lisa is telling me exactly where to get off and I want to tell her exactly where she should get off but I am just too mad like my head is exploding.

Me: You are a piece of shit just send me the hospital number where Zoe is admitted so I would check up on her without talking with a fucking pathetic dicksucker like you.

Lisa: At least I am getting fucked, what are you getting? The anger fermenting inside you it salt, you need to get laid and let loose of some steam. I am sure your pussy got spider webs by now and for the record bitch why don't you fly down here and go get the damn number you want yourself since you are a good friend nx.

Again after vomiting all that crab she dropped the phone leaving me fuming with anger.

FORTY FIVE

NOMASWAZI

---

I love my friends so dearly, I love them with all my heart and with no doubt in the world I would catch a bullet for them without thinking twice; they both mean the world to me and all I ever wanted was what is best for them, I want them to be happy because their happiness is my happiness.

Lisa: What? Calling to borrow my dildo since I no longer use it?

I rolled my eyes. I actually feel bad for lashing out on Lisa the other day, she has been nothing but the best and I know with no doubt she would literally do anything for me and Zoe just like we would do anything for her.

Me: I was wrong

Lisa: Oh took you long enough to realise

Me: Bitch please I am trying to apologise here so shut the fuck up before I take this apology back.

I know Lisa enough to know she's smiling wherever she is because Lisa of all people knows I don't admit when I am wrong unless I was really wrong and out of line.

Me: And if you don't wipe that smile on your face I will take this apologise back.

Lisa: What smile?

She says her voice betraying her by sounding amused.

Me: Mxm ...how was meeting the in-laws?

She groans

Lisa: Argh they're just too judgemental for Christians ...wait you haven't actually said you are sorry.

I rolled my eyes.

Me: Serves you right had you not acted life a wife to a boyfriend none of that would've happened. Your in-laws should only meet you on your wedding day meeting them ahead only brings bed luck.

Lisa: Fuck you!

I laughed loudly.

Me: How is Zoe?

She took a deep breathe

Lisa: I am at the hospital she still haven't woke up

Me: I am sorry you all alone there, I wish I can come but Gogo said I can't since I just started with inkamba.

Lisa: It sucks being here

Me: Being here sucks more, not knowing what is happening there or even being there by her side holding her hand and waiting for her to wake up.

Lisa: I don't know how I will face her after failing her like this.

Me: Don't worry she's the most selfless being I know she won't blame you like I do.

Lisa: Mxm ...you won't believe the shit she wrote on her suicide note.

Me: What does it say, take a shot and send it to me.

Lisa: She said she killed herself because she's poor, can you fucking imagine we have been poor all our lives yet yena she has been poor for two minutes already she want to kill herself.

Me: You say what, she's a bitch

Lisa: Tell me about it she wrote a lot of bullshit I will forward a picture for you.

Me: You do that

Lisa: Anyway how are things over there?

Me: Huuh you don't want to know, this place is not for me. Everything about it is boring and depressing and we work like slaves and whenever I have to make a call I must travels miles since there's no Telkom signal.

Lisa: Serves you right for being a bitch.

Me: Mxm ...whatever, I got to go send me the hospital number so I will call and check up on Zo Zo. I really wish I was there.

Lisa: Will forward you the number, love you Swazi and please be patient I believe everything will work out eventually. You, me and Zoe were destined for great things in life.

Me: How I hate to be patient but I guess I have no choice. I love you more Lisa and do me a favour do not be a wife to a boyfriend.

Lisa: Gosh not this again.

Me: I am serious Lisa I feel like you are getting too invested to this guy, just please take a step back and take things slow.

She took a deep sigh.

Lisa: I also think I am taking things too far and I wasn't ready to meet his parents to be honest. I just did it because it what he wanted and I didn't want to disappoint him, you have met Sbusiso you know how perfect he is, and I want to be perfect for him too.

Me: Bitch please the only person to be perfect for is your pretty self not a man, and honestly your guy is a decent guy I am sure if you talk to him about everything you are actually feeling he will understand.

Lisa: Ya probably, huuu I miss you so much.

Me: Not like I do everything here is just not for me.

Lisa: I still can't believe we are apart; we have never been miles away from each other.

Me: Tell me about it, life is a bitch.

Lisa: Let me love and leave you I am sure you got chickens to chase.

Me: You so forward.

Lisa: And you love me

I rolled my eyes and dropped the call.

Fetching water has been one of the hardest things I had to do. I hated it so much; the bucket is way too heavy for me. Did I mention I had to take off my nail, undo my hair now all I got it my natural hair that looks like steel wool. I look way horrible than a hobo it like I no longer love myself. I hate how I am changing to this ordinary girl with nothing that stands out. We at the river fetching water and men are busy passing by here since there is Ummemulo up the hill for some girl i don't know so the men are heading there, some would greet some would just walk away while singing.

“Makhosazana”

I swear to god this guy is everywhere I haven't even seen him just heard his voice already I feel like throwing up. Zodwa greeted back. I filled my bucket with water and turned to ask Zodwa to help me carry the bucket. I don't carry it with my head, there is no way I will place a bucket on my head.

Zodwa: I must say I really wish I could go to the Memmulo it seems like it would be fun.

She said talking with the Shaka Zulu guy; he was alone carrying a stick and ihawu.

Me: Zodwa can you take the bucket off the water

“Let me do it for you”

He said walking towards me

Me: Are you Zodwa perhaps?

Zodwa: Sis Swazi

She says more like a shock.

Me: I said Zodwa not you

“Is your friend always this rude Zodwa?”

Me: For your information we not friends and you should start minding your own business.

Zodwa: Forgive her Bhuti Africa she is just ... different

So he has a name, Africa suit him just fine a shitty name for a shitty person.

“Well I do hope you will teach her some manners, I really tried being nice to her but no I will not be disrespected by a woman kungavuka obaba emathuneni”

I had my hands around my waist as I look at his intimidating eyes, though there is something that command respect about his eyes, though I wanted to look away so badly I vow to my inner me not to give in.

Me: What you going to do beat me again?

Before he could respond more men loud voices came towards the river, I shifted my eyes from him not because I wanted to look at the other men coming towards the river but because I couldn't keep the eye contact no more. My eyes widen coming towards are three men but the other one looks as exactly as this one right in front of me. I looked from him and to the one next to me then back to the one coming towards us.

Me: Holly shit! ... it was him, not you him

I literally felt so stupid at that moment.

Me: Oh fuck

I said as they approach still talking among themselves, they really do look alike and the one talking loudly who just got here is the one who beat me up. I didn't wait a second to think about the next thing I did. I took the bucket and emptied it then left half a bucket water, carried it before anyone could realise what I was doing I poured the whole water at the guy I believe he beat me up.

“Obaba yini?”

The other men gasped looking at me, the guy I have been harassing who's name now I know looked at me with his mouth half open.

“Yewena sfebe wenzani”

He was ready to eat me alive so I tried running but he grabbed me with my arm really tight. He was so wet.

Me: Let me go you piss of shit; you going to beat me again and think that will make you a man.

Africa was already between us, separating his angry brother's grip from me. The brother looked at me you could see anger dancing in his eyes.

"Bafo odede ngibokoze lesifebe"

Africa: Bafo cha just go ... bafo

He pushed him off.

"Eyi eyi she's messing with the wrong person, eyi ngizaku domoroza yezwa"

Africa: Just back off Maqhawe, what wrong with you? You don't raise your hand at a woman.

"Oh shuthi uthi angimuyeke lonokiloyi angigibebe ekhanda?"

Africa: Do not call her that, vaya tjo. Hamba Maqhawe before I do something I will not regret.

They look at each other face on, Africa is a little taller than Maqhawe but other than that they look exactly alike. Maqhawe back off walking backwards while his eyes left his brother and stare at me. He didn't have to say it out loud his eyes said it all. "I will get you bitch" he back off and turned to the guys he came with and motion for them they should leave. Africa finally turned to him and this time around I didn't have courage to stare him in the eyes after the way I treated him thinking he was that asshole so I turned and grab my bucket so I would refill the water that when I noticed Zodwa was nowhere to be seen, she must have ran for her life.

Africa: What was that? Wait you know Maqhawe ...all along you were rude to me because you thought I was Maqhawe.

He chuckled.

Africa: Of course why didn't I think of that ... how do you know him? You just got here and he wasn't home all along. What happened between the two of you?

Me: Which question should I answer first or should I just automatically answer them all?

Africa: You will not give me that sticking attitude of yours and when I am talking with you turn and look at me in the eye like you used to.

His voice was not only commanding but it was deep with some anger. I composed myself, gathered some life time confident and turned to him.

Me: You have a very shitty brother he beat me up for nothing at all, he has no respect for women and for that I hate him. It not my faults you are twins with him so I just assumed you were him.

Africa: When did this happen?

Me: A while back I was here in the village then got a ride in a taxi on my way back to the city your brother tried talking some shit so I talked back he stopped the taxi hits me then left me in the bushes to die.

Africa: He hit you? Maqhawe laid his hands on you?

Me: Umm yes he did and I will never forgive him for what he did to me, he messed with a wrong girl.

He just looked at me not even blinking.

Africa: I am sorry.

He backed away, took his stick and ihawu then walked off. I looked at him crossing the river till he was on the other side of the river, he looked back and caught me staring he raised a hand and waved then walked off again.

FORTY SIX

NOMASWAZI

---

I am at a very strange unfamiliar place; there is a huge dam right in front of me with a breathtakingly beautiful waterfall surrounded by bushes. I am standing on the edge of the dam, cold breeze kept hitting me making me shiver, I stare the water of this huge clear white dam admiring how beautiful it is as I think of taking a swim regardless of the cold breeze but before I could even take off my clothes so I would swim the water turned dark, the wind got too chilly making me wrap my hands around me trying to protect myself from the cold. I am so angry at the wind for making the water so dirty.

“Help! Help!”

I heard a voice coming from the waterfall leading to the dam, and then it would drown again then rise again.

“Please help me, help”

Me: I am coming

I quickly took off a jacket and threw it aside then ran towards the river but a huge angry weave of water send me flying back to the edge of the river. The girl kept calling on me for help it took me a while to realise the girl drowning is Nelswa.

Me: Hang on I will get you help.

She is holding on a small tree that is in the middle of the dam.

“Help!”

She kept shouting for help.

Me: Someone please help, help please!

I shout but no one showed up, the water kept getting even dirtier. Water from the waterfall was filling the dam slowly Nelswa was drowning, so I tried one more time to get in the water but same thing happened again the water spilt me out, sending me flying outside the water and landing on the ground hurting my left side rib really painfully making me scream out in agony.

Zodwa woke me up shaking me.

Zodwa: Wake up Sis Swazi! Wake up.

I slowly opened my eyes, I'm wet with sweat.

Zodwa: It Sabela hurry

Me: Huuh

Zodwa: Come

She wraps her clothing's and ran out. I heard voices singing outside then drums. I quickly got dressed and ran out, Sabela was doing the dance, ukugida just on the yard and everyone else was busy singing while Gogo was hitting the drum. Sabela was acting really weird and scary.

“Ngihawukele thongo lam’ wethongo lami

Ngihawukele wethongo lami ngihawukele

Nami angizenzanga, ngenziwa abaphansi”

We kept on singing and clapping hands for Sabela. He eventually went on his knees and yawns loudly then called upon his people while acting so scary and shaking his head then hit on the floor with his hands.

Sabela: Uphi ugwayi wami, ngifuna ugwayi wami

Zodwa quickly handed him snuff. He took it put some on his nose and spit some on the floor then started dancing with his shoulders while groaning like he was in pain. Gogo walked up to him and hit his shoulder while the singing went on, he screamed loudly and groaned.

Sabela: Ayi ayi I shouldn't be here, this is not where I am supposed to be. I am leaving, I am leaving!

Gogo: Where are you going?

Sabela: Kwizinyanya zami where I am supposed to be, I am not supposed to be here.

Before any of us could make out what was happing or what exactly does he mean he got up and ran for his life towards the river.

Gogo: Mladenleni! Mlandeleni!

Zango was the first to run after him in a speed we all followed behind, I even forgot I am barefooted of how painful my feet were by the time we reach the river Sabela threw himself deep inside the driver then he disappeared like nothing ever happened. Babhekile hit the drum while Zodwa and Zango were busy singing, as for me I just stood there. Zenzele showed up with Gogo after a while. He had to drive her using the long drive way since Gogo isn't capable of

walking such distance. She kneeled down, burned impepho and started with ukuphahla calling upon all kinds of people and amathonga. Everything seemed weird af! I mean like it a middle of the night, the only light we getting is from the moon but here we are; if people don't call us witches then I don't know. I for one believe that this is a witch hour, the community better not burn us alive thinking we are witches or better yet they better not burn me, I can I assure them I got nothing to do with whatever happening here. All of the suddenly they burned candles.

Me: What happened to him?

I whispered to Zodwa.

Zodwa: He is with his ancestors

Me: He drown Zodwa

Zodwa: This is not the first time; he was once in there for three days.

Me: Holly shit!

Gogo gathered everything and instructed us to go back home, I am not sure exactly what time is it but I can assure you we were there for more than two hours. No one was asking any questions, everyone seems okay with whatever shedavu happening here and I wasn't I had questions to ask but Gogo doesn't look like someone who would be willing to answer any of my questions so I decided to keep them for now. We went back home and started with ukugida and singing again, I was tired all I wanted was to get some sleep. I suddenly had this strange feeling, a heavy weight on my shoulders and a heavy heart. I felt like I was going to cry and for why I don't even know, I remember this feeling from the first time I was here. I had been leaning on the wall clapping but not clapping hands when Gogo dragged me to the middle of the hut and forced me to do the dance, I honestly didn't want to do it but ended up doing it.

I could feel the drum sound within me like someone is beating the drum from inside me, making my heart skip. I don't know how or who but a force took over my body, making me dance like I have never danced before being in sync with the drum. My whole entire body just felt empowered, I felt Goosebumps sort of thing, my shoulders felt so very strange and I just let my body do what it being instructed to do, I would do the dance then jump up like a crazy person. I was aware of everything yet I didn't have control of my body, tears started falling off, the drums and music never stopped. I danced till I couldn't then I

went on my knees and started groaning exactly like how Sabela was groaning like a hurt lion.

Me: Sikhulekile emakhosini

I kneeled and started ukuphahla, I had no idea what was happening I wasn't talking but I was talking. My brain was functioning in a very strange way not to mention my body. It like all I could do is stand back and just let my body do everything without me controlling it.

"Makhosi!"

They all said.

Me: Siyakhuleka zindlondlo ezinkulu

"Makhosi, ndlondlo"

Me: Singaba Nkosi sikhuleka ngaphansi kwamathonga alekhaya, siyakhuleka ezindlondlwani

"Ndlondlo, sikhuleka kunina amasango alekhaya avuliwe"

Gogo said alone this time

Me: Makhosi, bayagula badinga usizo. Bakhathazekile kanti impilo yabo isesimeni esibucayi bathunyelwe lekhaya ngoba usizo bazolithola lekhaya"

"Emakhosini siyavuma ndlondlo"

Me: Siphinde sikhuleke Emakhosini.

"Makhosi"

Me: Beza nobungozi obukhulu, ukubasiza kuyingozi koda nizobasiza

"Siyavuma Makhosi, Ndlondlo nina bangasenhla"

Me: Emakhosini

"Makhosi"

The drum started again but I was so drained and tired I had no energy to do anything, so I crawl next to the wall and sat on a handmade mutt then leaned on the wall while watching the others singing and dancing.

We didn't sleep a wink on the early hours we all went to bath at the river, I kept checking hoping I will see Sabela but didn't even catch a glimpse of him.

Babhekile: He is not here you won't be seeing him

Me: For how long? He is going to die in there

Babhekile: He might come back and he might not, his people need him in the water so that where he will be inside the water.

I stare at her blankly as she walks past me back home. Is it weird I still remember exactly what happened to me last night but I don't want to talk about it and no one seems to ask me about it?

Me: Zodwa

Zodwa: Yebo sis

Me: Will Sabela come back

Zodwa: I also don't know sis, I have been meaning to ask what happened the other day with Maqhawe.

I rolled my eyes; Zodwa has proved to be not loyal to me. She ran when she could've stay and fought by my side. I for one know if she was in the same situation I wasn't gonna run for my life, though I wouldn't know what going on I would've still fought by her side because she's the person I share a hut with, a spoon, a plate and a lot of other things so that make me want to stand by her side. If it was Lisa or Zoe I know they would've fought hell by my side, I know they would stand by me fight with me even when they don't know why I am fighting.

Me: It was nothing that concerns you

Zodwa: You should stay away from Maqhawe he is bad news.

Me: You should stay away from my business.

Zodwa: I am serious sis Swazi he is not a nice man at least Africa is a good guy.

I rolled my eyes how many times should I tell this girl to not stick her nose in my business before she get it.

Me: I am capable of taking care of myself Zodwa; some of us are not cowards like you. We stand up for ourselves regardless of possible consequences.

Zodwa: I had to run; I know how mean and rude Maqhawe is. He would've beaten you and me together. I know you think you are better because you used to live in the city but this is not the city so be careful which toes you step on.

Me: I don't think I am better I know I am better and for your info for as long as someone step on my toes I will step back on their toes, don't care who they are their 'title' doesn't give them right to bullshit me.

Zodwa: Sis Swazi stop it things are different here

Me: No one is God on this earth Zodwa, I only fear God. A couple of muscles and balls don't scare me.

She shakes her head sideways.

Zodwa: You are so stubborn, why do you always want to learn things the hard way?

Me: I will not let people walk over me, have done that almost all my life not doing it again. I am not a walk over and they better get that right through their thick skull.

Zodwa: Sis Swazi!

Me: I was going to say grow some balls but you got no balls so grow some damn tits and don't be anyone's walk over.

I left her standing there with her mouth half open. The girl really needs to grow a pair

FORTY SEVEN

NOMASWAZI

---

I thought by now Gogo would've summoned me to talk about what happened last night but she still haven't. I do not know what happened, or what happened means and I do not want to talk about it because it so uncomfortable hence I haven't asked Gogo myself.

Zenzele: Where are you going?

I look back at him, giving him a once over look, from head to toe before rolling my eyes.

Me: None of your business

He started it, he was bitch to me first therefore him and I will never have a civil conversation

Zenzele: You have to cook

Me: What am I, your wife? Your maid? Jeez

I said rolling my eyes and walked off bumping to Nobuhle with the kids

Nobuhle: Hey Swazi uyaphi girl?

Me: To make a call, did you bring my snacks?

She handed me snacks.

Me: Cook for me, pretty please

She rolled her eyes.

Nobuhle: Ayi girl not happening.

She says and walks off. At least me and her have an understanding, neither we friends nor we are close but we get along just fine thing is the chick is as lazy as me.

Me: Hamba with your flat ass Zodwa will do the cooking.

She laughs and walked away, I also turned and walk up to the street this time I decided to walk while calling to check on Zoe.

Me: Hello Doc it Nomaswazi calling to check on Zoleka again

Doctor: Nomaswazi your friend seems to be responding well to the transfusion. She's breathing on her own now.

Me: Oh thank god, that means she's getting better right?

Doctor: Yes she will be fine

Me: Thank you Doc you my dear are a life saver.

Doctor: Just doing my Job, goodbye Nomaswazi

Before I could say good bye back he dropped the call.

I decided to call Lisa before I turn.

"You always up and down the street"

I raised my eyes only to be met with Africa with a busted lip.

Me: And then what happened to your lip?

I asked laughing.

Africa: It nothing

He's wearing grey sweat pants with a black t-shirt and white tekkies, he's clean and look nice not stylish just nice and the fact that his sweat pants show his dick print is way too perfect.

Me: Doesn't look like nothing to me

Africa: Where are you going?

Me: Aah you know I'm just out here looking for you, come to think of it how come we always bump into each other.

Africa: I think the man above is trying to show us something.

I laughed even more loudly.

Me: I don't even want to know what on your mind. What do people do for fun here?

He looks around.

Africa: They hang out with me

I groan and rolled my eyes.

Me: You! There is nothing interesting even about you.

Before he could have a comeback on that a lady in nurse uniform walked up to us.

"So Maqhawe was right, you beat him up for isangoma? Isangoma babakhe"

I raised an eyebrow looking at Africa; he placed his hands on his waist and look at the lady with a bored look.

Africa: MaDuma ...

He says acknowledging her with an intense look.

"What wrong with you Africa, you haven't even bring money for Lwandle this month, what do you think he is eating?"

He rubbed his head roughly, then went on his pocket and took out few notes then threw them on the girl's face.

"Africa!"

Africa: I don't want to fight with you Sphesihle so take the damn money and leave.

She looks back at me then back to Africa; I am just standing there watching the drama unfold.

Sphesihle: I am sorry I am just worried about you Babakhe and you can fetch Lwandle from school today.

Africa: Okay now go

She picked the money and stood there not moving.

Africa: Go Sphesihle

She turned to me instead of leaving giving me a dead stare.

Sphesihle: He is mine; he always comes back to me.

I laughed like literally laughed.

Me: Are you sure? Take your time look at me; do you really think he's coming back?

She looks at me up and down.

Africa: I said leave Sphesihle!

She neared me and stood right on my face.

Sphesihle: You are just a fly that I can easily squash, have you seen yourself in the mirror lately (She looks at me up and down then laughed) you even stink, look at how dirty you look. You not on my league

She says looking at her white nurse uniform then back at my red initiation clothes before making a disgust face and walked away.

Me: Wow!

Her words got to me and left me speechless because I know I look like crap.

Africa: I ...so sorry about that

Me: No don't apologise; you see your brother and that chick have chosen to mess with a wrong girl. I am Nomaswazi kayi 1 the other one you will find on my ID.

Africa: What that supposed to mean

Me: Nothing they didn't ask for

I said and turned walking away, the bitch really got to me and for that I will snatch her man and prove it to her that he won't go back. She's starting something she won't end.

Africa: Nomaswazi!

I turned to him and walked backwards.

Me: I have to go Africa, let meet again same time same place tomorrow maybe you can show me around.

He smiles shaking his head, I wink while smiling back. Did I ever mention Africa wasn't handsome, like the kind of handsome I would go for. He was a man, a strong man with some attractive roughness which made it easy for me to not care about his looks. I am so going to use this guy to get back at the bitch, what makes her think she's better than me? She's just a nurse, cleans after people's shit. That white uniform is nothing compared to my red clothes. (Okay fine I am trying to make myself feel better, that white uniform is everything compared to these hideous clothes I am wearing) More reasons to snatch her man and make myself feel better.

When I got back home there was a car on the yard next to Zenzele's car. Zodwa came to me running.

Zodwa: Where have you been, everyone have been looking for you. Come'

Me: Come where

Zodwa: These people are here for you, it about your vision from last night.

Me: Uhh

Zodwa: Just come, hurry

We hurried towards Gogo's hut.

Me: Slowdown will you, I will walk on my own.

She let go of my hand and sigh, she's being dramatic. I walk in Gogo's hut. Two women and a man were sitting on the mutt, next to Gogo was another mutt and someone was laying on it. I kneeled down on a damn floor since there were no mutts left.

Me: Gogo you called for me

Gogo: Your people are here; get Zango to carry the lady so you and Babhekile will bath her with these herbs. Zodwa has prepared the hot water.

I stood up to take the herbs from uGogo, my eyes popped out.

Me: Neliwa!

She's the person lying on the mutt, so tiny her once pretty flawless skin was peeling off, she looked flashed.

"You know Neliwa?"

One of the ladies asked. When I knew her she was so beautiful with a flawless skin and a killer body not this skeleton.

Me: What happened to her? What going on with her skin, what wrong with her? Shouldn't she be at the doctor?

Gogo: Nomaswazi

Me: I am sorry Gogo ...the herbs ...aah I will get Zango

I walked away but not before these words kind of come out of my mouth  
"Damn Neliwa girl"

I made sure to get hand gloves before bathing her; I don't want to die of aids. Her eyes would open a little then she would close them again, she couldn't speak, nor walk or even move her arms. Her natural hair looked like a pam. The girl looked like death itself.

Me: What happened to you? She used to be a definition of natural beauty I tell you

Babhekile dint even respond she just kept bathing her with the herbs, now that we have taken her clothes off she looks even more tiny, her ass was nowhere to be seen. I couldn't help but stare at her with my eyes popped. When Babhekile was wiping her; her skin would peel off, it looks really disgusting. I help Babhekile dress her then she carried her back to the hut. I don't think I will be eating anytime soon, she's dying and disgusting. She's a walking death, well a breathing death. I poured water on a different basin and went to take a bath, I felt so dirty. Zodwa came looking for me saying Gogo said I should join them in the hut so I hurried with bathing, got dressed Zodwa helped with putting the calamine all over my body.

FORTY EIGHT

NOMASWAZI

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You know the feeling when you are asleep but awake? I mean you are not sleeping, you chilling with people but then you are sleeping while sitting with people; argh I don't know if this makes sense. I am not dreaming I know I am not; Nobuhle is still braiding my hair, Zodwa is making beads, Zango is drinking umqombothi and Babhekile is being Babhekile she's just sitting there hating on us. I had my head bowed down as Nobuhle braids me but I could feel someone entering the door, whoever is walked until they were right in front of me. Judging by their expensive shining shoes, with suit pants it someone with standards not someone from the village. I looked from his shoes slowly raising my head all the way to his upper body and then his face which made me jump from the seat to against the wall.

Me: Khaya!

I say more in fear and this time around, I am all alone with Khaya whom his face is burnt on the left side, looking so scary not to mention his burnt eye that turned all white. He walked up to me.

Khaya: See what you did to me?

He said nearing me.

Me: Stay away from me, stay away.

Khaya: See how I look

He is angry so angry green veins are popping all over his face and his other eye the working eye is burning with fire.

Khaya: You won't get away with this.

He said pointing at me with his burned hand.

Me: Stay away you freak! Stay away or I swear I will burn you again.

He groaned loudly in frustration saliva coming out of his mouth, I screamed closing my eyes shut because he was so near crowding my space right on my face.

Khaya: You will pay!

He said it once but multiple voices said it as they echo through the hut sounding so scary, I slowly opened my eyes only to be met with a snake's

mouth opened wide as it stare down at me, it weird looking teeth all out, I could even see the weird looking scary mouth of the snake. I screamed loudly while hiding myself with my hands too scared to move.

Zango: Swazi! Swazi

I jump up almost knocking him on the forehead.

Zango: It just me are you okay.

I look around it during the day I am still sitting on the floor where I have been sitting while Nobuhle did my hair. She's not around though but Babhekile and Zango are around.

Zango: Were you having a vision, look you are sweating.

Babhekile: She's lucky she get to have all these vision while I have been here longer than her but no visions.

Zango: You look really shaken, what was the vision about.

No lie I was so scared even my heart was pounding out of fear but before I could respond to him someone screamed real loud outside. Zango Jump up and ran outside, Babhekile followed after him. I also got off the floor and followed after them. Screaming is Zodwa while pointing on a tree.

Zodwa: I'm sorry it just a green snake.

Gogo was also already there.

Gogo: Quickly kill it Zango

Zodwa: But Gogo you said we shouldn't kill a green snake

Gogo: That snake is green with black spot, an ancestor snake is all green no spot.

Zango tried hitting the snake but it duck and ran towards the garden leaving me shaking like a leaf. What could be the coincident? That is his snake he is coming for me. Now I am questioning why Neliswa is here so I quickly ran to the hut Gogo has provided for Neliswa's family since they had to stay while Gogo works on helping a dying Neliswa. I burst in the hut without knocking her Aunt look up at me; her mother was busy putting a wet towel on her face.

Me: Why are you here, he sent you didn't he?

I asked walking towards Neliswa.

Me: You here to finish me off, you not sick.

Neliswa's mother: What going on? Move back.

Neliswa's Aunt: What are you doing?

I pushed Neliswa's mother aside and grabbed Neliswa with her clothes lifting her up and look at her deep on her closed eyes.

Me: What are you doing here? Why are you here? Is this his little plan to get to me?

Neliswa's mother and Aunt started screaming for help. I shake Neliswa roughly while asking her what Khaya's plan.

Gogo: Nomaswazi stop that!

Me: No Gogo she's here to spy on me, I saw it in my vision. He sent her to spy, wake up and tell them. Wake up and tell them why you are here.

Her mother tried pleading for me to let go of her daughter they would rather leave but I still didn't let go. At this point I am crying while shaking her.

Me: Tell them! Tell them Neliswa; tell them how that snake of a man asked you to do. Neliswa please tell them

Gogo: Nomaswazi that enough!

Zango held me back I let go of Neliswa her mother quickly grabbed her and lay her back where she had been laying. I crawl into Zango's arm and cried screaming how Neliswa is here to spy.

Me: You all don't want to listen to me! Gogo! Zodwa, you know me I wouldn't lie she is a snake she's here to spy. Khaya is coming for me.

I was screaming so loudly and helpless as no one believed me.

Zango: Nomaswazi come on!

I cried and kicked as he tried to take me out of the hut.

Me: Let me go Zango! I will get her to talk, let me go!

I fought Zango with everything in me.

Me: Wait, wait I will get her to talk please let me go!

I jump up and shoot open my eyes, I am in our hut; Zodwa and Babhekile are getting ready to go to the river. My heart is pounding really hard; sweat is dripping off my face.

Zodwa: Are you okay Sis Swazi

I look around in fear before looking back at a concern Zodwa.

Me: No ...I mean yes ...I just had a weird dream

Zodwa: Gogo said we should pay attention to our dreams; you should talk to her about your dream when we come back from the river.

I nod my head still freaked out

Me: Ya sure

Zodwa: Come on get up and get ready before we leave you behind.

Zodwa and I were coming back from the shops to buy bread since there were guests; being Neliswa's parents and Aunt. I haven't talk to Gogo about the dream I had because she has been way too occupied ever since we came back from the river.

Zodwa: Swazi! Swazi

I was just way too occupied with my own thought that I didn't even notice she's calling me.

Zodwa: Here comes Maqhawe

That got my attention a taxi was coming towards us.

Me: Oh shit!

The taxi quickly stopped, hitting us with dust. I was freaking out no lie. He was alone; he got off the taxi and marched towards us. I did think of running but I knew it pointless he will get me either way.

Maqhawe: Ya you hoe.

He said pointing at me as he comes near.

Maqhawe: You skak

He grabbed me by my throat then tightens his grip on my jaws, his hands so rough. I tried hitting his hand off me.

Maqhawe: I will not be disrespected by woman not now not ever.

He pushed me, I almost fall.

Me: If I were you i-

Before I could finish my sentence he gave me a back slap sending me flying to the ground. I scream only once then grabbed a handful of soil; he lifted me up by grabbing my arm really painfully.

Maqhawe: That should teach you to know your lane bitch.

This man has gone too far and this time he really won't get away with this. Once I was standing on my own two feet, I look up at his eyes, my own eyes fuming with too much anger. I could feel my entire body getting so hot, he look back at me hating that I am looking him in the eyes.

Maqhawe: Who do-

I threw the soil on my hand right on his eyes, his other hand quickly rubbed his eyes while he cussed at me and his other hand the one on my arm tightens

really hard I am sure I will be left with really painful dark spot as his nails dig on my skin. I looked at it realising I have a chance since he couldn't see so I opened my mouth and bite his hand really hard. He cursed again letting go of me and tried to slap me with his other hand and failed since I ducked. He was still struggling to see due to the soil on his eyes. I took that as a chance to run for my life but not before I kicked him hard on his dick; he screamed, cursed while he bend over going on his knees. Threatening how he will get me and kill me, I didn't wait to enjoy his pain. I ran like I have never ran before, I ran like the day I was chased by the human traffickers.

## FORTY NINE

### NOMASWAZI

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One thing I like about this life is that we all choose how we react to same situations. Maybe someone that wasn't me would've reacted differently when it came to Maqhawe, maybe they would've curved and apologised for two possible reasons; one being they are in a strange place, they don't know what the Maqhawe guy is actually capable of, they don't know how the community react to outsiders causing chaos and two being Maqhawe is a man and they might feel like as a woman they should respect him therefore instead of fighting back they might apologise. But that not me that can never and will never be me. One thing I will never do is allowing a man to walk over me not just a man; let me rephrase that I will never allow anyone to walk over me. Sometimes it very important to stand up for yourself and let people know exactly how you feel about certain things, face them head on and tell them bullshit is bullshit. They might not take kindly to you calling out their bullshit but it should make you feel better knowing you called out their bullshit, it will make you feel better knowing they know they're full of bullshit. I knew by standing up for myself against Maqhawe might cause more problems for me in this strange community but I still did it and I will do it over and over again if I have too.

Zodwa: Everyone has been talking about what you did to Maqhawe, waze wayihlokoloza inyoka isemgodini. (You poke a snake in a hole)

I look at her once then turned back to just staring into space.

Zodwa: I warned you to stay away from him, Sis Swazi he is not a nice man. Trust me I know, you shouldn't have did what you did.

I was sick and tired of hearing Zodwa go on and on about Maqhawe.

Me: So basically what you telling me is; it okay for him to beat up women and disrespect them the way he does then we must just sit back and bow to him.

Zodwa: ... No ... I mean if it going to save your life don't you think it worth letting him do as he please.

Me: He will never know he is wrong if you let him do as he pleases. What wrong with you? What must this Maqhawe guy do for all of you to realise he is

bad news, what worse must he do? Kill someone, will that make you see worshiping him is pathetic?

Zodwa: he has already killed more reason why we stay out of his lane.

She kind of whispered.

Me: You say what now?

Okay that too much, if this guy is believed to have killed what would he do to me.

Zodwa: No one knows for a fact that he did it. But there was this girl he was dating and the girl wanted to break up with him, so he would beat her like Maqhawe loved that girl so much. As a man he had so many girlfriends but everyone knew Thandi was his number one girl so Thandi couldn't take the cheating no more, she tried breaking up with him but no one break up with Maqhawe he would beat her and they will get back together eventually Thandi went missing, we looked for her everywhere even Maqhawe was among the search part. He made so believable that she ran away, he planted a letter in her room stating she's running away from Maqhawe but few weeks down the line Thandi's body was found inside the community jojo tank along with her clothes; dead and to think we were drinking the same water from that tank with her body inside.

She said looking so disgust.

Me: Was he arrested? They should've burned him alive.

Zodwa: No the police didn't even take him for questioning even though everyone knew it was him they still didn't do anything, Thandi died no one was blamed instead the police blamed it on suicide.

Me: That is fucked up, why Thandi's family didn't get him arrested.

Zodwa: And live where, Cele Maqhawe's father is exactly like Maqhawe rude and ruthless he doesn't live around here though. He lives ehostela in the city, every December he comes home in a taxi filled with scary men all caring guns. Had they reported Maqhawe it was going to be the end of them.

Me: Oh my God! What have I gotten myself into?

Zodwa: I tried telling you but you don't listen, the only good person from that family is their mother. Africa is as ruthless as all of them but he is way better, he respect people and he is very kind but you also don't want to mess with him because he can kill you in a blink of an eye.

Me: I am so dead! Oh shit I am so dead

I was regret every fucked I ever did to that guy.

Zodwa: I warned you so many times but you don't listen to anyone but yourself. You don't mess with taxi owners Sis Swazi not here not anywhere. All taxi owners are way too dangerous.

Me: Why you only telling me all of this now

Zodwa: I did but you said to me; "A couple of muscles and balls don't scare you"

Zango: What you two whispering about here?

He asked walking up to us.

Zodwa: Nothing

She quickly said and walked away leaving me still lost in thought and fear.

Me: What can you tell me about Maqhawe?

He chuckled not in a funny kind of way.

Zango: Maqhawe as in Cele's son I would say play far from him. That is a family of hit men do not go anywhere near them unless you are looking for inkabi.

Zango wasn't playing around like he used too, he had a straight face showing how serious this is.

I had been scared the whole day; I just told myself I am never leaving this house ever again. I will only go to the river on the early morning making sure I fetch the water at that early morning then be home all day. If he wants to kill me he would've to come here and do it in front of everyone. One thing I am sure of he will make an example of me for humiliating him in front of people.

Zodwa: Gogo wants to see you

She said walking in the hut where I have been sitting thinking of ways Maqhawe would kill me, for sure he would want to make it a slow painful death just so I would never think of standing up for myself even after life. I got off the mutt where I have been laying and walked to Gogo's hut; she's sitting alone mixing some horrible smelling herbs.

Me: Gogo

Gogo: You have been scarce.

Oh yes the dream I had even forgotten about the dream I had.

Gogo: You look troubled are you okay?

Me: There is a dream I had

Gogo: And you didn't see it fit to tell me?

Me: I am sorry Gogo you just have been so busy with helping Neliswa.

Gogo: Didn't I tell you all dreams are important Nomaswazi

Me: You did Gogo.

She took a sighs.

Gogo: Don't make me repeat one thing twice; you are very special you get to be shown things really easily and early for some it takes years to have clear visions.

Me: Actually in my dream Babhekile mentioned something about how lucky I was for having all these visions while she has been here longer.

Gogo: Babhekile's situation is complicated; her heart is full of envy she wants all the good things for herself because of that she can't reach her ancestors. I have tried really hard with her, hoping eventually she will put her heart in a right place but it not happening.

Me: Oh well she's the least of my problems; I dreamt of Khaya, Neliwa's husband.

I narrated the dream exactly as it is to Gogo without leaving anything behind.

Gogo: Ummh ... well the man is dead but he will still use everything in his power to get to you. He might make you fight with your friends if he could get access to them and use them or anyone it could be a total stranger but he is coming for you but not in his own form he will use someone.

Me: Could Neliwa be here to spy.

Gogo: No it not his wife, that girl is rotten inside. She the snake has serious damage on her, it laid its eggs inside her and they are now rotten. Her skin is peeling off because it was never her skin to begin with; that was a snake's skin; it has been living on her and now that she betrayed the snake she's going to suffer the consequences.

Me: yoo that too much, will she survive this?

Gogo: Don't you remember your vision, your people said we going to help therefore she will survive but it will take a lot. I have been showed the herbs I need to use; right now we must focus on getting her to wake after that we will have to clean her womb.

She shakes her head sideways.

Gogo: In my years of being a traditional healer I have never came such; She's more like an empty shell living with these rotten eggs inside her and her skin will peel off until she takes her last breath more reason to help her as fast as we could. Your ancestors feel indebted to her for what she did for you. Izandla ziyagezana that what they believe in. (You help me I help you)

I nod my head understanding Gogo very well.

Me: I hope she get better then, will you be needing anything from me?

Gogo: Yes I need you to be by my side with this one, and for the last time Nomaswazi your dreams are the most important part of your life.

Me: I hear you Gogo

I said looking at the horrible smelling herbs she's mixing.

Me: Gogo

She looks up at me

Me: There's something you know.

Gogo: I am listening.

I cleared my throat not knowing how to put this.

Me: So I kind of didn't see eye to eye with ...Maqhawe.

Gogo: I heard ...

Me: You did?

Gogo: This is a very small village, everyone knows everything. Honestly I don't know why you chose to mess with that boy; he is capable of bad things.

Me: I didn't know Gogo and he started it so I wasn't going to sit back and let him insult me.

Gogo: You need to understand every place has its own people who are bad, the type of people you don't associate yourself with and you don't even look their way. You can't be new in a place and start a fight with people you don't know what they are capable off.

I didn't say anything to that because for everyone to stress how dangerous Maqhawe is only means one thing; he is what they say he is.

Gogo: This is your mess; it should teach you a thing or two about reality. I do not know what he might do to you.

Me: Gogo ... can't we strike him with a lightening or something?

Gogo: Nomaswazi!

She said more like a warning.

Gogo: We don't do that, we don't use our gift for evil deeds

Me: But Gogo ...

Gogo: No, get out of here

I didn't wait to be told twice I stood up and ran out. It clear I am on my own, my death will be on me.

FIFTY

NOMASWAZI

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I am not usually spooked by anything but Maqhawe's reputation got me scared for my life I even changed my number from Telkom to MTN so I would be able to call my friends without having to go to the street.

Lisa: If it not safe for you there why don't you come back?

Me: How when I am not done, coming back right now is not an option. I will be fine but if I do die you all have to follow me a week after my death.

Lisa: Hell no if you die that all on you

Me: Mxm where is Zoe?

Lisa: In the bedroom sleeping, dude she's so weak.

Zoe was discharged this morning.

Me: I want to talk with her.

She started moving around as I hear feet being dragged.

Lisa: I am so angry at her I can't even look at her in the eye.

Me: I am also angry in actual fact she better be grateful I am not there.

Lisa: Here it Swazi (She says on the background) ...she's just a selfish bitch.

Me: Tell me about it, argh Zoe piss me off.

Zoe: It me

She says in a very weak voice.

Me: Ya Satan so you thought it was better to kill yourself and leave us on this cruel world all by ourselves, how could you be so selfish?

Zoe: I just came out of hospital.

Me: And whose fault is that? And the suicide note you left argh mani fuck you Zoe if you ever do that again I am going to do it too and when I find you in heaven or maybe hell I will kill you myself again. We are here for each other for a reason yet you don't appreciate us, how could you?

Lisa: I think that enough for now

She shouts on the background. I took a deep breath.

Me: I hope you will be attending therapy and I am not done with you.

Zoe: I know and yes I will be attending therapy with Lisa.

Me: Please don't do that ever again, I love you so much and I can't afford to lose you or Lisa I would never survive it.

Zoe: What I did was stupid and I am sorry I just over think. If you or Lisa did the same I was going to go crazy.

Me: Just please talk to us next time, hell we will even sell our bodies if money is that important to you.

Zoe: No it not lik-

Me: Just talk to us all the time, no problem is too small remember? We are in this together.

Zoe: I was stupid I am glad I didn't die though, I doubt heaven have anyone like you or Lisa.

I laughed.

Me: I know you would've been friends with Joseph from the bible. I love you babe please get better so you would drive down here to see me. I am going crazy without you guys.

Zoe: Don't worry we will be coming soon and Swazi I love you so much.

We talked for a while before I bid my goodbye to them. I had asked Lisa not to tell Zoe about Maqhawe. She's still too fragile.

I was busy cutting my nails and shaping them nicely when suddenly there was some commotion outside. I quickly got off the mutt and ran there. Zango, Zenzele, Maqhawe and three other guys I don't know were outside arguing. Maqhawe and his goons had come in a taxi; a whole fucking taxi. I felt my heart beating fast in fear, there was no running Maqhawe has spotted me and he was walking towards me really fast. I had nowhere to run too and checking around the yard it clean there's nothing I can use to hit him. My mind was already calculating the things I could do to get away from this monster; luckily Gogo and the others came out of the house.

Gogo: Maqhawe!

He ignored her and kept walking towards me; Gogo was busy limping towards me too with her walk stick. I decided I will meet Maqhawe half way, I doubt he will do anything to me in front of these people if he doesn't respect anyone he has to at least respect Gogo. Zenzele and Zango stood in front of me, Gogo

joined them too. Maqhawe's eyes were on me as he stood there with his jaws clench hard.

Gogo: What are doing Maqhawe? Is this how you have been raised? Is this what you have become, coming to my house breathing fire? Whose house is this?

His focus was still on me; his goons were right behind him looking like baboons.

Gogo: I am talking to you and if I talk to you; you pay attention.

He slowly removed his eyes from mine. I was backing down from the stare, his eyes turned to Gogo and soften a little, then I felt it the power of knowing he at least respect Gogo or rather his facial expression are showing that.

Gogo: I will not be disrespected by you.

Maqhawe: We are just here to get her and leave we want no trouble.

Gogo: So you decide to do that in my house, you bring your goons in my house to take a person under my watch.

He didn't say anything to that; instead he put his hands in his pocket. I had a lot I wanted to say I could feel it boiling inside me.

Gogo: You must not start with me, don't start battles you won't finish. This is ikhaya lamadlozi you don't just barge in as you please because when tragedy happens to you they will say I bewitched you.

Me: And keep coming after me I will show you flames, I will bewitch you; you will be picking up trash on the street.

Gogo: Nomaswazi shut up! Shut up

Maqhawe: I am going to kill you, that is a promise. I will cut you into pieces from your toe to your head.

Me: I dare you to touch me one more time; I dare you to lay your hand on me one more time. I will strike the lightening in day light you, your family and every pathetic goon that follow you around like a dog with a bone would be turned into ashes in a blink of an eye.

I was busy jumping up and down and hitting the ground with my foot while my other hand was on my waist then the other one was busy moving around while I talk.

Me: I can make your family disappear with no trace, keep provoking me we shall see what will happen.

Maqhawe: Are you threatening me you little skak witch?

Me: It not a threat it a promise, try me right now at this moment. You don't know what I am capable of; I will make worms come out of your mouth for every day of your life till I decide to end your pathetic excuse of a life.

We all turned to a car speeding, it stopped behind the taxi leaving dust going up. It a red polo, Africa got off and rushed towards us.

Africa: Mama I am so sorry on behalf of my brother this was a huge mistake, it will never happen again. I am so sorry for this whole mess.

He said addressing Gogo.

Maqhawe: I told you to stay out my business!

He roared loudly looking at his brother. Africa turned to him in a very slow motion giving him a dead stare that I was glad I am not in the receiving end. He grabbed him with his t-shirt and look at him straight in the eyes.

Africa: Get ... the ...fuck ...out ...of ...here

Maqhawe: Get your hands off me.

He tried hustling Africa to get his hands off him.

Africa: Didn't I tell you to stay away? Did I not tell you to stop your shit?

Maqhawe: You don't get to tell me what to do, let me go right now Africa.

The hustle the hands again fighting each other, no one said anything we just stood there watching them eventually Africa let go

Africa: This is not the place!

He roared.

Africa: If you don't move right now at this moment I am going to do you worse  
Maqhawe.

Maqhawe fixed his crinkled t shirt then walked back to his goons; they all got in the taxi, slammed the door and drive off almost knocking Africa's car. Africa sighed and looks back at Gogo.

Africa: I am really sorry for this; it will never happen again Mah.

Me: It better not, keep your dog on a tight leach.

Africa: You ... need ...to ...learn ...to ...shut ...your ...mouth

He spoke through his clench teeth.

Africa: If you knew how to do that we wouldn't be here right now.

Me: So it okay for your brother to insult me and I must not say anything back?  
Who is he? God perhaps?

He looked at me clenching and unclenching his jaws; looking scary af!

Africa: I don't go back and forth with a woman; know battles to fight and battles not to fight.

Me: He provoked me! This is my battle and I am going to fight it till the end. I could tell even that sounded stupid coming out of my mouth, this battle was way over me and I knew it a battle I shouldn't fight. Did he bother with responding, he just turned to Zenzele.

Africa: Zenzele bro, I am sorry man. Touch my blood.

He fist bump Zenzele, making me feel like a fool as he ignores me like I don't even exist.

Zenzele: Africa you the man, always keeping that psycho in check.

They chuckled.

Africa: Someone has too. Zango my man

He also fist bump Zango

Africa: Ladies

He bows a little showing his respect specifically to Zodwa, Babhekile and Nobuhle who kept looking at him with puppy eyes. He then walked away without another glace at me. I hadn't even notice Gogo was no longer around, I was so frustrated by being ignored, no one ignore me who does Africa think he is.

Zodwa: Swazi! Swazi Gogo is calling for you.

So now I am not Sis; bitch! I rolled my eyes and walked towards Gogo's hut taking a deep breath before walking in. By just looking at her face you could tell she wasn't happy with me at all.

Gogo: This is my house not your fighting battle ground, we respect this home.

Me: But he is the-

Gogo: Shut up I am talking!

I quickly bow my head down avoiding eye contact; I could feel that I messed up.

Gogo: You were here for one thing, one thing only initiation. Have you forgotten about that? Have you forgotten the purpose you are here? What just happened on my yard, how you could disrespect my home like that. This is a home of the ancestors, we do not cause chaos, and we do not raise our voices fighting. We respect it.

Me: I am s-

Gogo: I said shut up I am talking.

Oh boy I am in deep shit.

Gogo: Listen here young lady let that be the last time you ever disrespect this house like that because I will not be hold accountable for whatever the consequences. I want you to take this day to yourself and think about why you are here, if you don't want to be here I suggest by tomorrow morning you pack all your rags and leave by that same gate you came in with, are we clear.

I quickly nod my head.

Gogo: Get out!

## FIFTY ONE

### NOMASWAZI

---

I have always long for piece all my life, I have always felt like there is that something missing and I always assumed it was my mother but now that I think of it I was lonely and not at peace even when she was still alive. Growing up I have always been that kid who would rather stay indoors instead of playing outside, I met Lisa and Zoe and we became inseparable. Even though I had them I still felt lonely. There was a year where Lisa and I shared a small backroom in a township. I always struggled with living with her as much as I love her so much I had my days; days where I felt like I need to be alone and just cry for no reason. My point is ever since I arrived here, I feel something. I may mentally hate being here but deep down in my heart I am feeling something, something I have never felt before. I love the feeling I am feeling, it kind of a weird feeling but it a really nice feeling, the kind of feeling you get when you drunk or high. You feel like nothing matter in this world, you feel the temporal peace that come with being high, you found yourself not caring about anything for that moment the only different in this situation this feeling for me is not temporal, I feel it every day. I am officially high on idlozi; weird I know but I love being high on them. I had made a decision that I won't be leaving, trust me mentally leaving is all I could think about but the high I am feeling I am afraid I will lose it if I leave. I will be the old Nomaswazi living on the edge, drinking every chance she gets just to fill the void inside her. I don't want that no more. I want the peace, the high like I am on some sort of a drug.

Gogo: We are leaving, make sure you follow instruction. You are way too old for me to run after you let not waste each other's time.

I have learnt to respect Gogo with everything in me; I bow to her, she's my queen. I am a Queen bowing to another Queen

Me: Yebo Gogo

Gogo and Zodwa are going to Neliswa's house because they need to do an altar (usually set on the floor next to the wall; consist of fruit, sweet, traditional beer and candles not forgetting incense) for Neliswa's ancestors. I have never witnessed an altar before but because I chose to stand up for myself against Maqhawe and because he has a loose screw he came here disrespected Gogo's home I must suffer. It more like a punishment. What Gogo

doesn't know is I will still stand up for myself against anyone. I dare them to start with me. People keep doing fucked up shit because they think they are feared, they think it okay for them to shit other people because those people won't call them out of their shit. I am sorry I have been through worse in my life, defending myself comes naturally. Even when someone means well once I feel attacked I defend, that just me.

I watched as they put Neliwa in the car, the girl is dying honestly I don't see any hope for her. Her eyes are opened now all thanks to uGogo but still she's just too weak and fragile it like when you holding her she would just break. Zenzele, Gogo and Zodwa got in Zenzele's car then they left with Neliwa's family following behind on their own car.

Nobuhle: Well I guess it just us; home alone.

Zango: Aah I am told to make sure you don't get into any trouble especial the city girl.

I rolled my eyes.

Me: But we can get high and drunk come on we only live once let make the most of it especially for me I might not live long enough to see the next day with hit man hunting me like a deer

Zango started laughing out loud.

Zango: Speaking of that, you strike lightening now?

Nobuhle joined him laughing. Babhekile rolled her eyes and walked away with the kids.

Me: I had no choice; I had to come up with something.

We all laughed.

Nobuhle: Maqhawe looked terrified when you said you will turn his family into ashes.

Zango: My favourite part was when she said she will make worms come out of his mouth.

Me: From now on people must know I will deal with them traditional if they mess with me, being a healer was actually not a bad idea.

Nobuhle: You are my role model Swazi, when I grow up I want to be like you.

We joke around about how we can use our traditional powers to benefit ourselves.

Me: It a shame Sabela is not here with his weed.

Zango: Ya eish I hope he will come back

Me: Can't Gogo do something to bring him back it been a week

Zango: He will come back on his own.

Me: Yo I respect water.

Later that day we were all just chilling when Sphesihle the nurse showed up, this time she's wearing a hideous dress not her nurse clothes. I literally rolled my eyes as she walk towards us by the tree where we have been chilling.

Sphesihle: Nobuhle I am here girl please do my hair.

Me: Are we invisible perhaps? Why don't you greet us?

She gave me that attitude look she has.

Sphesihle: Girl please I am not here for you

Me: Bitch please you can never be here for me; I deal with people of class. Not the want to be's.

Nobuhle: Okay ladies let not fight ...how about you seat here I will get the comb.

Sphesihle: Nx (That clucking is obviously directed to me)...I got my own comb  
Nobuhle love

Nobuhle: Then you can sit.

Me: Babhekile are all girls of this village suck at putting makeup? Their eyebrows are worse exactly like shoprite cashiers

Babhekile: You haven't seen anything; the most disappointing part about their makeup is how they walk around the street thinking they are better than everyone displaying a shame of a makeup.

I smile widely so glad Babhekile is playing along; clearly she has some beef with Sphesihle.

Me: No! They can't do that, not knowing how to put a makeup should be a crime

Sphesihle: If you are going to talk about me you might as well face me.

She bites back, the bitch bites back.

Me: You know Babhekile people should choose who they pick a fight with because I will not be hold responsible if the unfortunate happen to them.

I decided to use Gogo's words.

Babhekile: Some people have gut to pick a fight with a sangoma, not to mention how powerful you are.

## UBIZO THE CALLING

Me: You know it pity because I can't control some other things, my underground gang don't want to see me upset so whenever I am upset they just take over and deal with whoever upset me then people will be going around saying I am a witch.

Did the Sphesihle girl had something to say again? Never cat got her tongue she just kept quiet till she was done doing her hair then thanks Nobuhle and left without turning back.

Nobuhle: That not cool guys, not cool at all.

I wink at her smiling happily enjoying victory. I got them where I want them. Villagers are so scared of being bewitched.

## LISAKHANYA

---

Zoe and I were just lying on the bed while watching a comedy movie on my personal computer, laughing our asses off because the movie is that hilarious. A sudden knock sounded on the door interrupting me specifically since I had to be the one to open.

Me: Did you order something?

We were not expecting any visitors

Zoe: No let ignore it, whoever it is will eventually leave.

We did exactly that and ignored whoever is knocking but the person was so persistent they kept on knocking. I groaned loudly and went to get the door. I opened the door with my bored expression.

Me: Sbusiso!

Sbusiso: Lisa

He walked in without me letting him in.

Sbusiso: What makes you think it okay for you to just ditch me like I am no one, like I never meant anything to you?

He's angry, I could see it in his eyes as he turn to look at me. I close the door and lean on it.

Me: It complicated

I say and walked towards the kitchen, he followed after me.

Sbusiso: These are my feelings; this is my life you are busy messing with. You said you love me but lately you been ignoring me, and I did give you the space you needed but for you to send me a message breaking up with me. What do you think I am; a high school boy?

Me: Look Sbusiso this was doomed even from the start, we are not meant to be even your parents don't approve of me.

Sbusiso: Are you dating my parents or me?

Me: You

Sbusiso: So why are you bothered by what my parents think?

Me: I ...

Sbusiso: I quit being a pastor for you, if my parents think because I am a pastor I should pick a church going woman then I would rather not be a pastor. I would rather be with you; I will choose you over anything. I chose you over a church that basically raised me, being a pastor have always been my dream. I wanted to talk the word of God and uplift people's life but I gave it all for you, because I love you.

Me: You ...you quit being a pastor ...for me?

Sbusiso: That what I just said, I understand you have people you care about deeply. I want to be part of those people; I want to care for those you care about. I want to be by your side whenever you or anyone else in your life needs anything. I want to be part of your circle, that all I ever wanted. You make me whole, you complete me it like you are a puzzle that have been mixing all my life. I love you. Which part of I want you in my life you don't understand?

Me: Say fuck you

Sbusiso: Huuh

Me: You quit church so go ahead and curse. Say fuck you!

Sbusiso: N-

Me: Say it

He looked at me, I was so amused I wanted him to say fuck you so badly yet I had to keep a straight face.

Sbusiso: Fuck you! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck you!

I have never been proud, I jump on him, and he held me with his hands grabbing my ass. I kissed him deeply.

Me: My bad, bad pastor

He kissed me one more time.

UBIZO THE CALLING

Sbusiso: You drive me so crazy, it not health

He buried his face on my neck, inhaling me.

Sbusiso: I missed you in my arms. Don't do that to me ever again.

Me: I am sorry. But Sbusiso my friends co-

Sbusiso: Your friends come first I know and I don't care, I know you also come first in their lives and that makes me happy. I am happy knowing there are people who would put anything on hold for you, it makes me happy knowing the kind of bond the three of you have is stronger and it a two way street and all I want is to be part of that bond. If your friends mean the world to you then they mean the universe to me. Allow me to care for you, to be a brother to your friends. A brother they can rely on and call whenever they need something just like they call on you when they need something.

Tears just came out of nowhere.

Me: What about your parents?

Sbusiso: Let me worry about that, you just focus on more important things and you must know I will always be here for you so call on me whenever you need anything.

Zoe: Does that apply to all of us brother

Sbusiso and I startled he almost dropped me. We turned to Zoe who was standing by the kitchen entrance smiling. Sbusiso put me down.

Me: How long have you been standing there?

Zoe: Long enough to know we now have a brother. So we need you this weekend brother. You said we can call on you right?

Me: He was talking about my needs dummy.

Sbusiso just laughed it off.

Sbusiso: Well if any of you need anything I am here.

Zoe: Heard that bitch. This weekend we are driving down the village to see Swazi. You are going to drive us.

Sbusiso: Done

Me: Babe you sure?

Sbusiso: I want to be part of your circle; I got your back pumpkin always. Where ever you need me I will drop anything for you.

Zoe: Pumpkin ...

She made kissing sounds while walking away laughing at me.

Me: Shut up suicide survivor

UBIZO THE CALLING

Zoe: That not funny.

Me: Whatever.

She raised a middle finger disappearing in the bedroom; I turned to a smiling Sbusiso. He grabbed me by my waist and squeezed me into a hug.

Sbusiso: You bring heaven to me!

Maybe the song “Good boys go to heaven and bad boys bring heaven to you also apply to ladies” like “Bad girls bring heaven to you and good girls go to heaven” I bring heaven to him, I am his heaven; roger that bitches he is mine I am his heaven, rest!

FIFTY TWO

NOMASWAZI

---

Can we all just applaud for me; take a moment and ditch whatever you doing and applaud for me. I am slowly getting the hang of this dancing thing. I am even enjoying it; not to mention the songs. I love the songs they have that deep meaning to them. Like this other one I was dancing too last night.

“Anginamuntu ngingedwa ‘ayi-bo mngoma  
Anginamuntu ngingedwa’ ayi-bo mngoma  
Ningithwasisela ukuth ngizokhishwa ubani?  
Ayi-bo mngoma musa ukululaza idlozi”

I love this song mostly because I can relate to it, I feel like it speaks with me directed; I have no one I am all I got what will happen after the initiation? Who will pay for necessity? The drum got loudly, I was really enjoying the dance though my feet never get used to walking barefooted. It still hurt, and I still have to soak them in hot water every afternoon. Gogo is back from Neliswa’s house she’s not even sharing how it went down there, I am learning to keep it to my lane when it comes to her as I am already trending on a thin line.

Gogo: Zenzele take Nomaswazi you will go buy a goat in town for MaZondi that would be used tonight.

I had no idea what is happening tonight or why Gogo would make me go with Zenzele knowing very well him and I don’t see eye to eye.

Zenzele: Why must I go with her, I will take Zango Ma

Gogo: I need Zango it Sabela’s last day and you know how he gets after water. Hurry MaZondi is waiting on you.

Zenzele mumbled something not audible, I decided for once let me shut up. He went inside the house, shortly came back wearing different clothes and just walked to his car without saying anything to me. I sat there under the tree where we usually chill.

Zenzele: I should wait for you now.

I gave him a bored look before rolling my eyes, then slowly got up and walked towards the car.

Zenzele: You are busy modelling did you miss the part where Mama said it was urgent.

I still walk as slowly as I could, he was so irritated and I was busy giving myself a pat on a shoulder; like well-done bitch you got him. I finally got in the back seat didn't want to be anywhere too close to him. He groaned and drove off. As he drives no one was saying anything to anyone, he put on a radio GagasiFM . My jam started playing I wasn't gonna sit here and not sing along; Dua Lipa IDGAF (I don't give a fuck) I love this song, it's my all time jam.

Me:

'You call me all friendly

Tellin' me how much you miss me

That's funny, I guess you've heard my songs

Well, I'm too busy for your business

Go find a girl who wants to listen

'Cause if you think I was born yesterday, you have got me wrong

So I cut you off

I don't need your love

'Cause I already cried enough

I've been gone

I've been moving on since we said goodbye

I don't need your love

I cut you off

Your time is up, I will tell you why

You say you're sorry, but it's too late now

So save it, get gone, shut up

'Cause if you think I care about you now

Well, boy, I don't give a FUCK!

I would sing and move to the music enjoying some good music.

Zenzele: You are a good singer.

He said eventual.

Me: I will take that as a compliment.

From there our journey was filled with us singing to every song comes through on the radio, we would even laugh at how we actually suck, I wasn't a great singer but I tried pretty well. When we got to the house were supposed to be we were actually enjoying each other's company we even got off the car laughing at how we struggled with a high note.

Zenzele: No, no you shouldn't say Aaaah with your deep voice say it softly and gentle like Aaaaah ....

I laughed.

Me: You so terrible you sounding exactly like a goat.

He laughed pushing me a little. Lot of people were outside this household, up and down.

"Zenzele how you doing, oh thank you for coming my son but I am already leaving with Africa he offered to take me"

A woman said approaching us

Zenzele: Oh sorry Ma we might have took long.

"No not at all, Africa was here delivering chairs so he offered to take me to town"

Zenzele: Okay Ma it no problem, is there anything we could do to help around.

I was mentally praying she say no.

"No my son thank your mother for me will you, tell her I will see her tonight. "

Before Zenzele could respond the lady was busy touching herself, checking her bag clearly looking for something.

"We Lindi" (She said walking away) "Lindi where is my phone?"

As she walked away Africa walked towards wearing overall jumpsuit, one arm hanging out and he was sweating. There's nothing as sexy as a black, strong man sweating. Don't get any ideas in your sick head I am just admiring a man, a strong man to be precise. I stare at him as he wiped the sweat off his face with his hand, the vest underneath the overall so wet with sweat. I felt my body longing at least a hug from a man, I don't remember the last time I had a man to hold me in his arm, and grab every part of my body with his strong hands. Imagine being squeezed on Africa's strong chest with his strong arm crushing in on me; that my dear would get every part of my body tickling with joy. Not to mention how I love being picked up by a strong man, there is something about tall dark, strong man that always get my clit itching. When it comes to a strong man, the Africa kind of man looks never met, what matter is what he

could do with those sexy strong arms, the comfort his rough body would give you.

Me: Damn

Zenzele: Nomaswazi he is just greeting you

Zenzele said poking me.

Me: Huuh what?

I blink really fast bringing myself back from wherever my mind went. Zenzele looked at me strangely.

Zenzele: Africa has been greeting you for like twenty times now.

Me: Aaah ... hi and bye.

I turned; let out the breath I have been holding and walked towards the car. I hit my head; the fuck is wrong with me. I really miss a touch of a man, come on I am human I have needs and right now I really feel like I need to get laid. The itch down there is too much; I want to be held, pressed, and fucked in all styles and angles. God I need vitamin D so badly, how Gogo could say I am not allowed to be with a man, I have needs people. Zenzele walked towards me after fist bumping Africa who looked back at me as I wait by the car looking at them. He raised his hand and waved, I wave back.

Zenzele: What was that?

It the first thing he asked as we both got in the car.

Me: What was what?

Zenzele: Were you checking Africa out? You busy imagining him naked sweating on top of you.

Me: Zenzele!

Zenzele: What I had to wipe some saliva from your mouth

Me: Stay out of my business.

He laughed.

Zenzele: You have a crush on Mr muscle man

Me: hell! No I haven't been with a man in a long time, so I have needs I do want a sweating man on top of me.

He was enjoying my miserable a lot.

Zenzele: Ma is so going to kill you this time

Me: What am I going to do with these feelings, hormones I need some fucking, some touching some ...

Zenzele: okay! I get you don't let your mind go wild you will cum on my seat.

I rolled my eyes and lay back on the seat.

Me: This is so frustrating.

Zenzele: Want some juicy gossip?

Me: Umm ...it better be good.

Zenzele: I am gay

Me: You say what now? Shut the front door you gay?

Zenzele: Ya

Me: Damn boy no wonder you were so bitchy to me the first time we met, you were not even attracted to me like boy who wouldn't be attracted on all of this.

He laughed.

Zenzele: I am crushing Sabela

Me: Fuck out of here!

Zenzele: Like I have a huge crush on him, I love how weird he is and those red eyes so sexy.

Me: He is creepy

Zenzele: Creepy sexy, at some point I thought you had a crush on him

Me: Tf! Hell no he is not my type no offence

Zenzele: No one knows I am gay so I would appreciate if we keep it between us.

Me: So Gogo doesn't know.

Zenzele: Are you kidding that woman hate gays, and if I were to come out people from this community will never accept me.

Me: That so not fair, you should be free. Live the life you want life is too short, these people you busy caring about don't contribute shit to your life.

He took a deep sigh.

Zenzele: I love how bold you are, I admire that about you.

Me: Listen to me you need to put yourself first, your happiness everyone else can fuck off.

Zenzele: It not that easy, I have tried so many times to come out but I couldn't do it.

Me: Yoo I feel for you.

Zenzele: I never realised I feel this free around you

Me: You should not have been bitchy to me we would've been best friends by now.

Zenzele: We could still make up for lost time

Me: Got it ...still can't believe you gay!

I am loving this, I am loving the gay Zenzele. He is more open and fun. I am loving him.

When we got home Gogo informed me that we all will be going to that house MaZondi's house tonight because she's going to finalise igobongo for MaZondi's daughter. So we will be there for the whole night.

Me: Umm Gogo what is igobongo exactly?

Gogo: Igobongo is a mixture of different herbs that you use for your ancestors; it brings you luck. There different type of amagobongo it could be umndiki, umndawu, umnguni and many more. Anyone chosen by their ancestors can eat igobongo it doesn't necessary mean if you eat igobongo you will be a healer. Some eat igobongo because they're chosen by their ancestors that most definitely don't mean they will be traditional healers. As for people like you it different you have a calling, you eat igobongo.

Me: Umm sounds interesting so the girl you were doing igobongo for could eat it at her house?

Gogo: Yes and now that she's done we are going there to finalise it and it will open lucks for her; could be getting jobs or umshado(Wedding) anything her heart wish for. I have invited some traditional healers from around.

Me: Igobongo sounds easier than the initiation itself.

Gogo: I could say it is there's not much needed from you it just igobongo only.

Ok I think if I had a choice to pick I would've picked igobongo with no calling.

The vibe was on we were all preparing ourselves for the igobongo party, though I would be wearing all red I still wanted to look fly. So I ironed my clothes nicely, Zodwa also did iron her clothes. I was really looking forward to this party.

FIFTY THREE

NOMASWAZI

---

Later that afternoon we all got dressed and left; MaZondi had hired a taxi to fetch us and luckily the driver was not any of the Cele twin brothers. Zenzele followed behind with his car. When we got there some of the healers were already there, introductions were made but I don't remember even a single person from these people. The ceremony started. Nothing made me happy than seeing the booze, I haven't got a taste of alcohol in a while. I was enjoying myself as we dance and sang. We were treated like royalty getting everything we needed. The ceremony is held in a round hut, at the middle of the night a goat was slaughtered though I was getting drunk I did see the girl drinking goat blood, like a Satanist. That spooked me no lie, I thought perhaps the shots of Smirnoff 1818 I have been drinking were doing the trick on me. Why on earth would she drink a goat blood? That is disgusting at its best. I needed fresh air before I throw up and damn I am so pressed I need to use the loo. I grabbed Zodwa by her hand and dragged her out.

Me: Am I drunk or that girl did drink blood.

She laugh sweetly.

Me: Oh the sweet Zodwa, I need to pee. I can feel my head getting dizzy.

There were lot of people outside up and down and some sitting around a fire; I made a mental note that when we come back from the loo we will go and sit by the fire with the others. Toilets in this neighbourhood are situated outside houses.

Me: I think I am so drunk, I can't even see where I am going.

Zodwa: Come on you not that drunk, did you see Zango

I laughed he was so wasted ended up sleeping on the floor. Before I could respond on how drunken Zango is someone pulled me by hair so painfully, I crushed on his hard chest. I did try fighting him off while screaming but he quickly put his hand on my mouth suffocating me. I instantly got sober same time. It was no one other than Maghawe I knew that before he talks. His other hand with a knife was around my neck.

Maghawe: Didn't I say I will get you bitch, who is having a last laugh now.

He said breathing through my ear and suffocating me even more as he covers both my mouth and nose, I couldn't breathe I tried kicking and scratching his arms and hands but it never worked he just pressed harder. I could feel my stomach getting faint, everything inside me feeling filled with the air I couldn't take out. I could see my life flashing right in front of my eyes. Someone forcefully snatched him from me. I suck in all the breathe I could and breath out, tears were already streaming down. Africa and Maqhawe were busy fighting each other, punches being thrown around as I was still trying to catch my breath. No one was aware of the fight happening; firstly it dark and all this is happening behind the house where toilet is situated. I bend over and put my hands on my knees watching them and breathing in and out at the same time. In a blink of an eye, a man was down. My eyes popped up. Maqhawe backed away slowly with a knife.

Maqhawe: Oh Shit! Africa! Oh shit!

He said backing off then ran off.

Me: Oh fuck

I rushed towards him; he was bleeding by his shoulder. His hand covering the wound probably stopping the blood from gushing out.

Me: Oh my God ...so much blood

Every part of my body was shaking; I didn't know what to do. I pressed on the wood he cried out in agony.

Africa: Fuck! Fuck!

Me: ...he ....help! help!

I screamed loudly on top of my voice for help while pressing on the wound.

Me: Help! Please help.

With the drums I was hoping they could hear me, at least let someone hear me.

Me: You going to be okay, I am going to get you help.

Africa: Move aside so I would stand up

He said so calmly like he doesn't have a wound gushing out blood. I didn't move I shake my head no and shout for help and with almighty's luck people did hear me. I heard them talking all at once asking what happened here. I couldn't talk, my voice was shaking. Sphesihle rushed and pushed me off.

Sphesihle: See what you have done you hoe.

I pushed her back wanting to be the one pressing on his wound.

"Let her be she's a nurse"

Someone shout from the crowd.

"I am going to get the car around here; we will rush him to the clinic."

I heard Zenzele say. Miss Nurse has taken off the doek on her head and pressed it on Africa.

Sphesihle: It going to be okay Babakhe, you going to be fine.

She kept saying. Once Zenzele came and said the car was ready Africa got off the ground on his own after pushing Sphesihle aside. He pressed the doek on his shoulder and walked towards the car. Elder people were busy praying out loud asking what happened but I wasn't responding anyone as I follow after him and the bitch nurse towards the car. They both got in a back seat.

Sphesihle: And where do you think you going? Don't you think you have done enough damage?

This girl chose a wrong day, I open the door to her side dragged her out of the car with her hair style, she screamed loudly while cursing I turned her to me and slapped her across the face, she tried fighting back but I pushed her against the car and sent another slap before someone pulled me away. The place was buzzing with noise as people all were talking at the same time. Sphesihle had fall on the ground; I broke free from the guy who was holding me and marched to the car, go in sitting at the back with Africa where the nurse was sitting.

Me: Let go Ze

I said addressing Zenzele, he didn't think twice. He just drove off in speed towards the local clinic. No one said anything to anyone; we all kept quiet till we got to the clinic. I got off the car thinking I will have to help Africa out but he just came out on his own.

Me: Are you okay

Africa: It just a fresh wound with some stitches I will be fine.

He said as we all walk inside the clinic. A Nurse quickly attended to him while we were told to wait on their small waiting area.

Zenzele and I sat there not saying anything to each other for hours, eventually Africa came towards us. He sat beside me; his shoulder was bandaged. He is topless his sexy body out there exposed. Zenzele quickly took off his jacket and borrowed him, helping him put it on; I just sat there not knowing what to do.

Africa: Sure boy

The nurse followed after him with his meds

Me: Are you okay? Is he okay nurse?

Nurse: Yes it was just a fresh wound he will be fine.

She handed me the meds then walked away. I let out a sigh of relief I want no man dying on my fault.

Zenzele: I will give you space.

He got off the chair and walked out leaving me and Africa not knowing what to say to each other.

Me: I am so sorry, it my fault you almost lost your life. I am reaaly s-

Africa: Will you just stop. It not your fault, it just that nut case I call a brother.

Me: But if you didn't try to help me he would not have stab you, I am really sorry

Africa: I said it not your fault now stop apologising you sound pathetic!

He snapped, I keep quiet and took a deep breathe. He sighs loudly.

Africa: Sorry ...I am just frustrated. Look it not your fault so stop blaming yourself.

Me: Perhaps if I stayed away from him this would not have happened no one would've been hurt.

He wrapped his hand the one that is not injured around me.

Africa: Relax will you, this is not your fault and you were standing up for yourself against him so you did nothing wrong. He is the one at fault ....

He kept quiet for a moment

Africa: And will pay dearly for it.

I lay on his shoulder enjoying the comfort I am getting.

Me: I don't want you and your blood killing each other because of me.

Africa: You not that special we won't kill each other for you.

I got off him and look at him in the eye.

Me: You say what now? Dude I am very special

He chuckled

Africa: Were you not about to cry just now.

I laughed and got up from the chair.

Me: Mxm ...he should've stabbed you in your heart.

I realised after saying it how bad it sounded.

Me: Sorry bad joke

I said giving him a nervous smile. He shakes his head while smiling widely at me.

Africa: You are something else.

As we walk out of the clinic the nurses were shooting daggers on us.

Maqhawe fighting his brother to a point of stabbing made me realise this beef between me and him had escalated. It was firstly just a mere beef to me but I can tell Maqhawe is out for my blood and he might not rest until he has my blood. Zenzele drove Africa to his house, they have a beautiful home; three round huts, a big house and two three rooms. Their yard is so big.

Africa: Well this is me, yizo boy

He said fist bumping Zenzele, I actually felt bad for Zenzele having to pretend to be something he is not might be hard.

Zenzele: Sure, sure

Africa turned to me; we were both sitting in the backseat again.

Africa: Well thanks for saving my life super hero.

He said and wink before climbing out of the car then slammed the door and walked away.

Zenzele: Umm...umm

Me: What? What?

Zenzele: Umm nothing super hero.

He say sounding so amused.

Me: Seriously?

Zenzele: Swazi and Africa sitting under the tree, kissing! Kissing!

Me: Shut the fuck up and drive

Zenzele: I think your crush is crushing on you back.

I laughed really loud.

Me: He is so not my crush, I am done with the Cele twins. If they come my way I walk the other way. I almost died today so no I am done.

Zenzele: Yea right I know you will be having wet dreams about the hot, sexy, sweaty and naked Africa.

I laughed rolling my eyes.'

Me: Mxm not gonna happen.

Zenzele: Yea right, should I drive back-

UBIZO THE CALLING

Me: No please no I want to go home get some sleep, I am tired and my head is killing me.

So we drove home while playing music, the time reads 3:44 boy I was dog exhausted and shaken a lot. I almost died!

## FIFTY FOUR

### NOMASWAZI

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I had kneeled down and did ukupahala, I had a talk with izinyanya zami. I asked them to guide me to the right direction and help me make better decision. I asked them what I must do; should I let people walk over me. Though I knew the answer to that question I still asked it to them. Ever since I got here I brought nothing but trouble not as my intention because all of this Maqhawe started it, he is the one who started everything and when I decided to retaliate he decided to use that empty head of his and did all these crazy things almost killing his own brother. How was he going to live with that? How was I going to live with myself knowing someone died because of me? It already the afternoon Gogo and the others just got home with all kinds of goodies in a basin and some meat. I was about to dish myself some meat and goodies when Babhekile told me Gogo were calling for me. I love food and when it came to food; I eat a lot especially some goodies I would never say no to food. I left everything I was doing and walked to her hut, settled on the mutt.

Me: G-

Gogo: I tried with you, I really tried but you kept on getting yourself into trouble and embarrassing me.

I have been shouted by Gogo enough to know when she's shouting you don't talk back. You make no excuse; you shut your mouth and listen to her doing the talking.

Gogo: When you are out there you are not just Nomawazi the city girl; you are also representing me. Whatever shame you get up to come back to me, you are the reflection of my image. Now everyone is talking about how the Cele twins almost killed each other for ithwasa, you are busy dragging my name into shame. What wrong with you? Can't you stay out of trouble just for one? Why must I tell you one thing over and over? On your first day of your journey did I not tell you to stay away from man?

Me: You did Gogo, but it not like that. They were not fighting for me. Maqhawe is the one who start-

Gogo: There we go again always shifting the blame. You never own up to anything, you never admit to your wrongs.

How the fuck am I wrong? He is the one who has been on my case for as long as I have met him. I didn't say that to Gogo though I wanted to say it so badly. I just chose to zip my mouth.

Gogo: I am tired of you dragging my reputation to the mud, you are nothing but trouble.

She didn't stop there she kept on shouting at me none stop, I just let her be as I mentally talk back at her.

Gogo: This is my first time getting such a trouble person even my own kids don't give me trouble like you do. You are always up to no good, a bad influence to others. Learn to respect yourself and the home that gave you a roof, respect me as your initiator, respect your ancestors. Respect goes a long way in someone's life.

Can this woman stop now, I mean like I get her point. Can she just stop already? lyoo

Gogo: You are trouble

She already said that, I mentally rolled my eyes.

Gogo: You will make me fight with my neighbours, my associate will lose the respect they have on me. I want you to pack your bags and leave my house with immediately effect, you have done enough damage.

Me: What? But Gogo-

Gogo: No but here, by tomorrow morning you must be gone, out of my house!

She was serious, she had a straight face as she tells me to pack and leave. I left her hut and went to our hut. How could she kick me out after all the sacrifice I had made, after dimming myself into getting used to sleep on the hard floor, not to mention to walk barefooted, how about my style that I have crapped, my life that I have gave up. I even went as far as going home after years of not being there, she opened all these old wounds inside me now she's telling me to leave. It not my fault people here would rather sweep things under the mutt and not address them. If she thinks I am leaving she got another thing coming, I have sacrificed a lot for this, I will not just pack up and leave. Hell no not after everything I went through to get here.

The following Morning I woke up with the others and went to bath, Sabela was back he looked sort of pale. I had lot of questions for him. I just needed the right time to ask them. After we came back from the river, I did ukuphahla then went to vomit and steamed which has become my daily routine of every day.

Gogo: Nomaswazi

I was passing by her hut on my way back from throwing up. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath and went inside.

Gogo: Didn't I tell you to leave?

Me: With all due respect Gogo I am not going anywhere, I have sacrificed a lot to be here, I have went against my words and everything else I believed in. Being here has helped me grow, see things different, it has healed all the scars I never even knew were there. I only came here because I had to, was forced but now I am here because I want to be here. I am here because being here for some weird reasons gives me peace. And I understand I am not anything like others, but the last thing I would do is let people think they can have their way with me and get away with it. I may not know how to fight for myself physical but I do know how to address people when they getting out of line. The truth always hurt whenever you are addressing the truth people tend to think you being disrespectful; If that the case then fine as long as they know how I feel about certain things.

I took a deep breath because I have been talking a lot.

Me: I am going to be here Gogo; I will be here till you tell me I am done with my journey. I am committed to see this through. I am sorry for dragging your name in a mud, so sorry for ruining your reputation and I am grateful for all that you have taught me, for your generosity. I am the kind of person who appreciates people who always come through for me, people who gives me hope for the future, people who inspire me to do better. Punish me if you have too because I am not going anywhere Gogo I still want to learn a lot from you the wise healer.

She looked at me for a while, perhaps searching if I what I was saying was anything close to the truth; if she looks deeper she would know I meant every word I said. I had sacrificed a lot to just give up before finishing my journey. I want to be here, I want to see myself through this whole thing. She took some herbs mixed them together and handed them to me.

Gogo: Go bath with this herb, use cold water from head to toe.

I look at her strangely as I take the herbs from her but didn't question her.

I put the herbs in the basin then filled it with cold water and went to bath. The basin is too small I think I prefer bathing at the river. I poured the water all over my body once, then again and again by the fourth time I felt my whole body aching, I scrub every part of me with a towel but it got even worse. My whole body was throbbing so painfully. I kept scrubbing myself, my skin turned

red with spot all over it. I was freaking out so much. This will ruin my skin; I hate anything that messes up with my skin. After I quickly got dressed I rushed to Gogo's hut and lucky me she was alone.

Me: Gogo! Gogo! I think I am allergic to whatever herbs you gave me.

I said scrubbing myself like a person craving for drugs even my face. Gogo just laughed her ass off, she bend over laughing clearly enjoying this.

Me: I am serious Gogo I have to see a doctor this will ruin my skin, I need allergies.

Gogo: Nomaswazi you not allergic to anything, I gave you ntangazibovana it supposed to be doing that to you.

Me: Huh ...what?

I asked defeated and confused.

Gogo: You say you want to stay right? So I want you to know from today onwards if you mess up I will make you bath with that herb; it makes your skin ache a lot might last the whole week.

She said and laughed.

Me: A whole week? Do you realise what this would do to my skin.

Gogo: This is a best punishment for you, untangazibovana is not harmful, it actually helpful with all witchcraft dark forces so it a win win for you.

She was clearly enjoying this, looking at my arms it like I got beaten by mosquitos.

Everyone was enjoying watching me scrubbing myself; this day goes to the worse days of my life. It didn't last even for a whole day by the time it was afternoon the aching had stop only the spot were left. We spent the whole afternoon next to Gogo showing us different herbs for different sickness and how they're used.

Gogo: In most cases your ancestors will show different herbs to get.

Me: Where do you get all these things?

Gogo: You can get the herbs from the forest, that forest across the river. That where we used to get everything we needed back in our days but now things have changed we no longer go to the forest we just purchase everything we need from the black pharmacy.

Me: But are you sure they're selling you the right herbs.

Gogo: You don't buy what you don't know, your ancestors show you each and every herb and what it for in your dreams or visions so by the time you go to the market you already know what you are looking for exactly. Things are done differently now, you have it easy. Back in our days you actually felt like giving up along the way, you felt like you were being abused while they were helping.

Me: Umm

I say while I was mentally thinking nothing is different I still feel abused.

Zango: Gogo I have this problem of forgetting my dreams lately I don't know what is happening.

Gogo: Forgetting your dreams it normal, it happens to everyone so what you need to do is get a blue and a white candle burn them before you sleep, talk to your ancestors, ask for their guidance then leave them burning and go to sleep.

Zango nods and thank Gogo.

Gogo: Another mistake Nomaswazi have been making

She says looking at me, why am I not surprised I never do anything right.

Gogo: You don't talk with anyone on the street as ithwasa, they must give you money before you talk with them. You walk as fast as you could whenever on the street.

I think I did talk with some people.

Gogo: The reason I keep your phones it because you are not allowed to have phones with you, you don't take pictures while uthwasa.

Gogo only allows us to have our phones only once in a while or if there's an emergency.

Gogo: When you address anyone you don't look them in the eyes Nomaswazi, you bow or even kneel not just when addressing me but anyone even on queues in shops you kneel you don't just stand tall. Tomorrow we will be starting with hide and seek, what I do is hide something usually money and you will have to find whatever I hid. One by one I will be having you in my consultation hut during the consultation.

Me: But how do we consult, how are we going to find that money?

Gogo: You consult Nomaswazi, you talk with your ancestors and they will show you exactly where to find it, you may not find it the first day on your first trial but you will eventually find it. All healers have their own different ways of consulting some use bone and some use abalozi.

It seemed like I am the only one who had no idea what Gogo was talking about so I hope she would explain before I ask.

Gogo: Abalozi is when your ancestors talk to you in a form of a whistler; they tell you exactly what you need to know. With bones they normally tells you what to collect for your bone collection, just like Zodwa. She has started with her bones collection; all bones are the same but not the same.

Me: Huh

Gogo: What I mean by that is, they all may look the same but they not the same or they may be the same but have different meanings. You don't use another healer's bones just because you lost your bones. It important to know how to read your bones and again in order to read your bones you need to be in connection with your ancestors. Sabela now wear ibhayi lenyoka (A snake bay) it reflect idlozi from the water and it very powerful. He mix it with ibhayi of a lion as you can see, which reflect great power this one belong to the person who actually gave him the calling.

Me: But how did he know what to wear.

Gogo: I like how you ask relevant questions, questions that needs to be ask. We all have witness how powerful Sabela is, he spent days in water which granted him ibhayi of a snake, again his ancestor the one who gave him the gift showed himself in Sabela's dream showing him exactly what he wanted which granted Sabela ibhayi of a lion. The question you all should be asking yourselves is what does it mean being Sabela now? Sabela has finished his journey, the only thing left is finalising everything, and they will fetch him with a cow and welcome him with a cow.

Did I not wish to be Sabela; boy he's so luck so soon he will be working on his own, doing his own thing. A very congratulation to him.

UBIZO THE CALLING

FIFTY FIVE

NOMASWAZI

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Gogo has been more strictly; we were no longer allowed to sit on chairs, we would seat on the floor even when eating then do the dance twice a day; every morning after finishing with the house chores and every afternoon. It was too much if you ask me. When she sent you to the shop she would give you time and when you came back after the time she has told you to come back she makes you bath with ntangazibovana herb. Honestly it no fun, I have signed myself to not go to the shops, I go to the river, clean, cook, makes beads and help with chopping of the herbs. Every day ends with me dog tired and complaining. I had my turn at consultation yesterday but failed, I couldn't see anything from the bones Gogo provided me. Even when she hid money I still didn't see anything. She assured me that it was fine I am still on my journey some other things I will get to be shown and some I won't. Today Sabela is finally going home as a fully trained healer. We all are so happy for him; I even invited my friends only to find out they were planning to come for a visit anyway. I was so excited and looking forward to seeing them.

Zenzele: I am going to miss seeing him; it was the only good thing about my day.

Me: Maybe you should just tell him how you feel.

Zenzele: Are you crazy? He's straight and I won't expose myself like that.

Me: Eventually you will have to come out of the closet.

Zenzele: Shh keep your voice down

I was busy washing dishes while he sat on the bench watching me. I rolled my eyes.

Me: Just come out and deal with consequences after.

Zenzele: Not happening, I will come out when the time is right.

I shrugged.

Me: Go ahead and live your double life.

As we were talking more kids came in running followed by a very classy woman, well dressed in a long peach dress with sandals and a long weave. She so beautiful no lie.

Zenzele: Sis you here finally.

"I am so tired had to start at work, where is mama?"

The kids hugged Zenzele greeting him then ran out again; Zodwa, Babhekile and Zango entered holding groceries.

Zenzele: She's somewhere around, where are your sisters?

"Zodwa love please put that bag in mama's room. They're coming will probably be here later you know how they are"

She walked out without even greeting me. The others were busy up and down fetching grocery from the car. I finished up washing the dishes and went to dispose water. The bitch is driving the beast, Mercedes Benz boy I so wanted to take it for a spin. She came back wearing a very long floral dress and flip flops.

"Hi do you need help with anything"

She greeted and I ignored her. Didn't Gogo say people must pay us to talk to them; she seems to know what up. She took out money from her pocket and placed it on the floor, I bow and picked it up.

Me: Only R5 you so stingy couldn't be notes

She laughed.

"It supposed to be coins not notes"

Me: Rules were meant to be broken.

She laughed again, she's sweet.

"Where did mama get this one, I like her"

She asked Zenzele who was busy on his phone.

Zenzele: That one is the too much one mama even once kicked her out.

We all laughed and started joking around. Her name is Nomandla the eldest among all Gogo's six kids. She's very kind and hardworking; I ended up sitting down while she worked; cleaning and doing the cooking.

When my friends arrived I was so excited I couldn't stop hugging them.

Zoe: Jesus you look ...eww are you okay babes

Lisa: Like seriously is everything okay?

I rolled my eyes at them.

Me: If you don't have anything nice to say just shut

Zoe: You need a makeover.

Me: Mxm ... did you bring anything nice.

Lisa: In the car

We all rushed to the car leaving Sbusiso standing there, he eventually made friends with Zango as we see them greeting each other and walking away. We sat in Sbusiso's car. A white range rover, they had bought me all kinds of my favourite goodies and some wine of course.

Me: Oh thank you, thank you I needed this.

Zoe: You need more than this.

Me: Will you stop being judgemental? You bore me.

They kept me updated on how things are in the city and how they have started with therapy and how it helping a lot. I was feeling so left out of their lives.

Me: And what up with Sbusiso.

They both look at each other without saying anything.

Me: Lisa?

Zoe: Lisa's man said he wants to be in our circle

Me: Huh

Lisa gave Zoe a look.

Lisa: Sbusiso just wants to be in my life and he's willing to be second best.

Zoe: You forgot to tell her about the part where he wants to be our brother.

Me: Our what?

Zoe: Exactly how I reacted when I found out like nigga don't you have your own people.

Lisa rolled her eyes at her.

Lisa: Seriously now? Look Swazi before you judge me, I love him and I have slow things down so I am not being a wife to a boyfriend.

I smile at her.

Me: If you love him then who am I to stand in your way.

They look at each other.

Zoe: Who are you?

Me: Look all I want is you to be happy, and if he makes you happy then all is good with me and please do let him know if he ever hurt you in any way I will deal with him traditionally.

Lisa: Oh wow I love this we dealing with them traditionally now.

Me: All the way honey they better not start.

Zoe: I love you girls and thanks for saving my life Swazi, Lisa told me all about it, and I really hope everything works out for you so we will flourish in style.

We hugged each other happily as we snack on some food and drinking the red wine from the bottle while I tell them all about what has been happening.

Zoe: Your life has been a whole drama, oh wow

Lisa: We should go to the Maqhawe guy's house and burn him alive for even looking your way.

I laughed.

Lisa: Burning is an easy death maybe we should tie him on the tree with his balls

I was really enjoying my friend's company till Babhekile came to get us. The rest of the family has arrived, all Gogo's daughters were here all looking so classy and smelling so expensively.

Zoe: What wrong with her?

She says pointing at Babhekile with her head.

Lisa: Is it us or she's like this.

I laughed.

Me: She's like this it like the world stinks for her, and today she is worse than other days.

They laughed while making ugly looks.

We handed to the house where all healers and some other people were sitting; Zodwa and the others were singing and dancing. Gogo has invited more people for this ceremony celebration. We were to go to Sabela's house that night. My friends and I were having fun being together, we laughed and sang and dance. Oh yes they were also doing the dance and they sucked big time, a complete joke. People were laughing their asses off. Gogo did everything that needed to be done, there was slaughtering of goat and a lot of other things I didn't pay attention too. During the night there were cars to take us to Sabela's house. It was on another village far from this one, we rode with Sbusiso and he followed behind the other cars. When we got there our people had to slaughter a cow, we were busy celebrating and dancing. It was a very beautiful ceremony. And having my friends to enjoy with was what made the ceremony even more beautiful and thee best for me.

Zoe: There's so much booze here and we treated like royalty.

Lisa: You only telling us about the worse part of being here forgetting the royalty treatment you be getting.

I laughed these two are stupid

Me: Let me get Sabela to roll us a joint his weed is the hit.

We were standing outside getting some fresh air; we tried looking for Sabela with no luck.

Me: Hey ...please find us Sabela

I said to a lady passing by us.

"He is still busy sis"

What a disappointment. We ended up sitting around the fire outside with some guys who were cooking the meat eventually we went to sleep in the car.

Allow me to highlight this specific day as the best day, with my girls. There was no drama though Zoe did try to hook up with some guy who looked like someone with money and class but that was drama free they just exchanged numbers and spent the whole night talking. I had so much fun though I woke up with a massive headache I still had fun and enjoyed myself so much. Everything went well for Sabela and he was so happy.

## FIFTY SIX

### ZOLEKA

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It been only few weeks since we came back from the village, seeing Swazi and being with both of my friends was really great reminded me of the good times we use to have, how we always got so wild. I am doing better myself both physical and emotional. Having Lisa around really helps and of course attending therapy has been the best in dealing with my situation. I regret trying to kill myself every day, it left me with scars that would take a while before they go away. I got caught in the moment and didn't think things through; the cut scars I have on my arm really do bother me though I have bought some really stupidly expensive lotion to get rid of them. Now that I am living on budget I pay more attention on prices something I never had to do. My phone rang in the bedroom interrupting my cooking I did think of ignoring it but then it could be Lisa or maybe Swazi. It could be urgent so i rushed there while wiping my hands on the apron.

Me: Hello Zoleka

"Hi Zoleka I am so glad it you, this is doctor Mthembu I am calling you from emshiyeni hospital we have your father here he has asked to see you"

Me: What father?

"Your father, could you please come to the hospital"

Me: What wrong with him? Why would he be in a public hospital in the first place

"Just come Zoleka it urgent so make it be today please"

She then ended the call leaving me confused af! I wasn't gonna go there alone, the last time my parents summoned me to their house I got the shock of my life not happening again. I will wait for Lisa till she returns from work. I literally spent the whole day going through the reasons why my father would be in a public hospital and came out with none. Then I mostly wondered why would he wants to see me when he has already replaced me then again I came with no reason at all.

Later that day Lisa got home from work, we were both so curios as to why my father called me so she called Sbusiso to drive us there since he was the

familiar one with that hospital. He once worked there and besides him being the familiar one with the hospital we were trying to save gas money. He didn't mind taking us there. So we all drove there no lie I am so nervous, my heart is literally pounding out of my chest. Whatever he is going to say might either break me more or leave me disappointed. When we got to the hospital we walked up to the front desk woman and asked for doctor Mthembu, she kindly called the doctor for us. We only waited a few minutes before the doctor showed up.

Doctor: Doctor Dladla

She said addressing Sbusiso.

Sbusiso: Mthembu, wow it so good to see you. This is you now.

She smiles sweetly at him, making me and Lisa to give each other looks like (Bitch!!!)

Doctor: This is me now, I just recently moved here Cape Town was becoming too much for me. I can't believe I am seeing you, how have you been.

She's a very beautiful chatty doctor before Sbusiso could even answer that she responded for him

Doctor: Why am I asking? you look great.

Lisa gave me another bitch look, I mouthed bitch to her.

Sbusiso: Well life have been good

Doctor: I can tell you look happy and i-

Me: Hey I am Zoleka you called me.

We were standing just behind Sbusiso yet she just didn't even bother to greet us, she just couldn't hold herself from flirting with my friend's man.

Doctor: Oh Zoleka I have been waiting for you, I am so sorry I just got caught seeing an old friend here.

She then turned back to Sbusiso

Doctor: Sorry man duty calls, we should meet up for drinks sometime. Just to catch up.

Lisa looked at me and mouth (Not on my watch) I gave her a yes girl bitch face.

Lisa: Excuse me doctor whose man are you going to be meeting up for drinks?

She asked so relaxed like she's asking for directions or better yet for prescription.

Doctor: Excuse me

Me: She's just politely asking whose man you will be meeting up for drinks.

She looked from us to Sbusiso then back to us.

Doctor: Wait you all are together? Oh my ...I am

Sbusiso: This is my girlfriend Lisa and Zoleka her friend

Lisa: I think it better if you go wait in the car Sbusiso, I just recently did manicure I don't want it to be ruined

Me: And as you can see I just recently did my hair so no please.

Sbusiso: Good idea ...well Mthembu it was nice seeing you

Lisa and I rolled eyes.

Doctor: I ...well

Me: Just go Sbusiso

He nods and kissed Lisa on the cheek before walking away.

Doctor: I am so sorry about that.

Me: Just tell me why I am here.

She cleared her throat, fixed herself.

Doctor: Please follow me

We followed after her towards a corridor; our heels were the only thing clicking on the floor. We all stop by the elevator she pressed the button and we waited. She really tried to compose herself and look so not embarrassed for fishing someone's man right in front of her. The elevator open and we all stepped in, and then it was silence again.

Doctor: I am really sorry about what happened back then.

We just ignored her as I look at my nails.

Doctor: I ...I just didn't think he was with any of you

She said nervous, we look at each other like wtf! She quickly said.

Doctor: The last time I saw him he didn't like girls with artificial or nails or too much revealing clothes he just liked simple girls with no makeup

Me: Like you?

Doctor: No ...well ... I guess a little ...no offence though I just didn't think he ...

Lisa: Will you just shut up before you get on my nerves

Me: Exactly you can just tell me why you called me here instead of sticking your nose where is doesn't belong.

She took a deep breathe, the elevator door opened.

Doctor: Right ...your father is here he was admitted yesterday

Me: Is he okay? Why am I here, why did he call me here? He made it clear that I was no longer his daughter

We were now walking through another corridor

Doctor: Well ...he was poisoned and the poison is slowly eating him up so he has not much days left we tried helping him but it was already too late when he got here. The poison had done so much damage on him.

She stood in front of a door. I was still shocked by the fact that he was poisoned, It strange how I still deeply care for him when he doesn't even care about me.

Doctor: I can only allow family members.

Me: Then I am leaving since I'm also not a family member.

Doctor: Zoleka he ...

Me: If Lisa is not coming with me then I am not going in there.

She sigh

Doctor: okay fine you both can come.

She then opened the door, in public hospital there's no such thing as a private room, there were about ten of them in one room. Some really looked disturbing, like they were going to die in any minutes from now. My father is the first by the door, I was shaking no idea why but there was that fear inside me.

Doctor: Mr Khumalo she's here.

He slowly opened his eyes then the doctor walked away leaving us with him, the man who disowned me.

Me: The mighty has fallen, you in a public hospital.

He slowly took off the oxygen mask.

Father: Zoleka

I just stare down at him, feeling all the pain he made me go through. Lisa wrapped her arms around me in a comforting manner. I did feel tears burning my eyes but I refuse to cry for this man.

Father: I ...I am sorry my baby I was blinded. They took everything.

Me: Well done to them at least someone can give you the taste of your own medicine

He closed his eyes as if my words are painful to bare.

Father: I am sorry

Me: So you only sorry now that you got nothing, do you realised the pain you made go through. You could've prevented me if you didn't want me or better yet you could've told your wife to abort.

Father: I wanted you; you are the best thing that ever happened in my life.

Me: Bullshit! Now that you on your death bed you see it fit to tell me you love me.

Father: I know I was hard on you; I am sorry, please forgive me.

Me: There's nothing more I want to say to you. I'm done allowing you to hurt me ever again. Not now not even when you are dead, you said to me I was good as dead to you so guess what father you are as good as dead to me too. Oh well except you are dying anyway.

The tears I have been trying to hold ended up making their way out, I pulled up my long sleeve shirt.

Me: See what you did to me? What you made me do, you are a monster and I hope hell has kept a special place for you right next to your wife.

I wanted to hurt him the same way he has hurt me yet the words I tell him hurt me back more. He closed his eyes, tears stream out of his eyes going straight to his ears.

Me: You kicked me while I was down; spit me out when I needed you the most. Then you here claiming to love me, do you know what love is? Is that how you treat the people you love?

Father: I am s-

Me: Will you just stop saying sorry because your sorry don't mean shit to me, it too late for it you have broken me more than Mandla did. You are my father, I expected more from you as my father. My heart will never heal from the pain you made me go through.

Father: I am sorry okay, I am dying I already lost everything Zikhona was working for me as my assistant she made me sign everything to her, my company, my houses even cars, money everything and I stupidly signed because I never checked any of the documents she ever gave me.

He took a dragged breathe and took out some papers under his pillow.

Father: You owe half of the company, the house in Morningside your mother had put it under your name that all you got I am sorry. I worked really hard, thinking I am working for you but everything I ever worked for was stolen from me. I am ready for death I just want to make sure you are well taken care of before I leave this earth. It not much or what I would've wanted to leave behind for you but it the start so please my baby take this even if you don't

forgive me now I am just hopping eventually you will. Be careful of Zikhona they're very dangerous I am here because they tried to get rid of me. Please be careful now I would like to rest please leave.

My father has always been a proud man, I could tell he was in so much pain but chose not to show it. I knew he is kicking me out now because he is not the same man he is used too, he has fallen and that doesn't sit well with him.

Father: do me proud my baby girl.

I felt for him so much and I wanted to hug him, maybe it this will be my last chance. I was still so angry at him but the man is already dying there's nothing much I could do. I had so much hate for him yet so much love. He's my blood all I ever wanted was his love that he never showed. I wiped my tears; he has put back his oxygen mask.

Me: I wish you gave me love instead.

I said and walked away, leaving the papers behind.

## FIFTY SEVEN

### NOMASWAZI

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There's something about peace that makes your skin find that hidden glow, peace makes you look at life differently and make you appreciate every little thing about your life. I do not have much, I do have family finally, and I have friends who would definitely kill for me without thinking twice. Then there's peace, I find myself seeing things for who they are. I find myself seeing beauty in things that no one pays much attention too. I find myself appreciating nature more lately. I would just stare at a certain flower and found beauty in it, the green glass, the calm that comes with the nature, the smell of coffee, the sound of water as it flow through the river, the coldness of water that we go through every day that I can never get used too even on rainy cold days we still required to go to the river. And I can proudly say I have been getting to less trouble lately, I keep to myself, I don't go out unless I am going to the river, I speak when spoken too, I take orders from Gogo and do exactly as told.

Zodwa just finished ironing Zenzele's clothes and I offered to pack them in his wardrobe, of course I wouldn't do it if it won't benefit me. I have been having hard time sleeping because there's this dream of a tiger that just won't leave me alone and sleeping on the floor is not nice. i took the his clothes and walk to his room, placed the basket with his clothes next to the wardrobe and threw myself on top of his bed. I have been doing this for a while now, I take a nap for few minutes and no one ever noticed since Zenzele is not around. He now works at the local school as a clerk. Sleeping on the bed has always been the most comfortable thing ever. Once I lay my head on the pillow I just doze off same time. I love my sleep people, reason I get so mad when someone wake me up.

Zenzele: You got to be fucking kidding me!

I jump up and sat with my butt on top of the bed startled by his voice.

Me: Argh it just you.

I say and lay back.

Zenzele: Why are you sleeping on my bed?

Me: Will you just stop shouting and let me go back to sleep.

Zenzele: To whose bed? Get out! get going, this is my bed and I don't share it with anyone.

I groaned rolling my eyes.

Me: Come on Ze

Zenzele: Just take your sorry ass off my bed; your feet are even dirty now I will have to change the covers.

Me: Argh izintabane ave zine drama (gays are so dramatic)

Zenzele: Ya so what, Just fuck off dude

Gogo: Zenzele

We both jump up startled; I quickly got off the bed.

Zenzele: Ma ...I ...you

He was literally shaking. I walked towards the door so I would leave and not be part of this conversation. I had to pass by Gogo who stood by the door with her hands on her waists probably waiting on Zenzele to explain the gay part.

Me: Excuse me Gogo ...I ...need to ...to iron ...to Iron the food I mean cook the clothes

I groaned as my lies weren't made up enough. I scratch my head and look down.

Me: Cooking ... I need to cook yes ...food

Gogo: What going on here?

Us: Nothing

We both said at a same time.

Gogo: Zenzele!

She half shouts

Zenzele: Ahh ...Nomaswazi ...She was sleeping on my bed and I caught her.

Son of a B... he's throwing me under the bus, getting me in trouble. I turned and look at him like rat I am about to rat you back. He pleaded with his eyes. If he can't cover for me then I am not covering for him.

Gogo: Makhosi Swazi how many times do I need to get you in line before you are in line?

I am already known as the trouble maker this will get me in so much shit, I am telling on him back.

Me: No Gogo he's lying, we were just arguing about him bein-

Zenzele: Nomaswazi!

I gave him a fuck you look then turned back to Gogo. I was not gonna be in trouble alone if he can rat I want him to know I can rat ten times worse.

Me: Zenzele is gay Gogo

He chuckled nervously.

Zenzele: She's lying Ma because I caught her lazing around now she wants to get me in trouble too.

Me: He told me Gogo he is gay, like man on man gay.

Gogo: Zenzele?

You could see the disappointment on her face and I just regretted selling him out.

Zenzele: I ...it ...let me explain

Gogo: You ... you love man? Oh father God why have you forsaken me, what kind of shame is this? Please intervene, not with my only son father. He's all I got.

Zenzele: Ma ...

Gogo looked at him rather up and down.

Gogo: How could you Zenzele, under my roof do such ...disgusting shame? You disgust me!

She said and spit on the floor before walking out busy shouting.

Gogo: What kind of a man have I raised, where did I go wrong with this child? My ancestors have forsaken me

Zenzele: I hope you happy

Me: I am so sorry; you threw me under the bus first.

Zenzele: Get the fuck out! Leave right now!

Me: Ze look we can fix this, we will talk-

Zenzele: Just go, go bitch. You are so frustrating when are you leaving we had peace before you; get the fuck out of my room.

I walked out with a tail between my legs; I really didn't mean to make things worse. Okay fine he threw me under the bus first and I for one already walking on thin ice who knows what Gogo could've done, I had to save myself too. I had no choice he should've kept his mouth shut and I would've done the same.

I decided I needed peace, I needed to be alone. So I took a bucket and handed to the river, instead of getting the water I just sat on a big stone with my feet inside the water. I had mess up things for Zenzele, I screwed his life, told his

secret when it wasn't my secret to tell. I don't like that about me, I don't like how I am sticking my nose in businesses that doesn't concern me; It not who I am. Most black parents are homophobic, and Gogo is homophobic with no doubt. I just ruined Zenzele's life she will never look at him the same. I could've just kept his secret even though he threw me under the bus and snitched.

"Are you turning the water to wine? ...you have been staring at them for a while now"

I silently groaned while rolling my eyes, if it not the Cele twin then who the fuck would it be.

Me: You are everywhere, it irritating.

Africa: Ouch you just hurt my feelings.

Again I rolled my eyes.

Me: Just leave, don't talk to me. Just go your way

I didn't even have energy to deal with him; I haven't seen either him or his brother ever since after the stabbing saga.

Africa: Are you okay.

Me: Now I am begging you and I am being polite; please leave. I don't want to talk to you or your brother or anyone else in this village, I just want to do what I came here to do and leave this place for good so please go.

The guy just stood there and watches me; I could feel my body hitting up. honestly small things get me worked up, especially if I tell you to do something and you don't do it something in me just get worked up but I have been learning to control my anger lately so I got of the stone I have been sitting on.

Me: Fine I will leave for my own peace of mind.

I took my empty bucket and walked away.

Africa: Nomaswazi

It his first time, his very own first time calling me by my name. My first time hearing my name sounds so deep; so rough and sexy. My very first time hearing my name vibrate inside me, making my stomach to be in knot and my face burning up. I stopped walking and slowly turned back; he stood still, chilled and looks at me deep in my eyes.

Africa: I am sorry for making your life difficult, I was drawn to you from the first day I lay my eyes on you. There's something about you I can't put my finger on. You're fire, fearless, strong and so beautiful. You are the kind of woman who is so rare yet so special, I like how you carry yourself, I like how you always say

exactly what you think, and I love your boldness it admirable. You make me worship you, it not every day i meet people who tell you exactly what they think without blinking a lash. I like you; you amuse me, makes me respect you and I need the kind of woman you are in my life, a fearless, strong and bold woman.

For a moment there I was so speechless, I had nothing to say or a comeback. Africa: I know with your journey and everything you are not allowed to be with a man, I am a cultural man and I respect culture so I will wait for you.

Me: Well ...I am not interested so don't wait ...oh and you're good with words so try poetry.

I wink and turned to walk away.

Africa: I want you. I will get you and I will find you wherever you go.

He said with so much confident, arrogance hell command. I like a man who can stand up to me, a man who can put me in my place without being rude or violent, a man who knows what he wants and definitely a man who "Doesn't argue with a woman" a man who walks in a room and command respect without saying anything.

I turn to look at him with a smile that I was trying to hide so badly.

Me: Bye Africa

I waved.

Mentally I was busy saying "My own Shaka Zulu warrior"

Upon my arrival back home with an empty bucket no one asked me anything; they just looked at me and went on with their business.

"Nomaswazi we need to talk"

Nobuhle said coming in our hut then walking away. I sigh and followed after her. We walked all the way towards the gate where she stood and look at me mad as hell.

Nobuhle: It was not your business to tell on Zenzele

Me: Tell me something I don't know

Nobuhle: You just always manage to ruin everyone's life

Me: Look I have heard all about how I am a trouble or how I am no longer wanted under this home because I am trouble. Just save your breathe and tell me no more, I was wrong for telling on Zenzele and I am sorry.

Nobuhle: It a little too late for that. You have already ruined Zenzele's life.

Zenzele and his sister were really angry at me. Apparently Gogo had a talk with Zenzele that afternoon and told him she will be gathering women to pray for him because he is possessed with demons even went as far saying Zenzele must get a woman to marry him or else Gogo will get the wife for him. Yep some fucked up ultimate he was given and it all my fault with my big mouth.

FITY EIGHT

NOMASWAZI

---

I am not an inspiration or a motivational speaker or even a good influencer. But what I can tell you is; there's nothing that feels good like belonging, finding something that gives your inner you peace. I fucked up some people along my way and I got fucked up back. Honestly it a two way street you get what give but sometimes that not the case for some other people, they give good and receive bullshit. It been weeks since the whole gay thing with Zenzele and people did arrive to pray for him, even went as far as steaming, vomiting and using some weird shedavu Gogo gave him. I was done feeling bad for him, my focus was totally on my journey and I have made lot of progress regarding that. The tiger chasing me on my dreams only meant the kind of power I have, when the tiger has reached me it will sit by my side, allowed me to touch it and I wouldn't even be scared of it. Gogo said I have abalozi meaning instead of bones my ancestors will communicate with me through a whistler but before that could even be possible I had to go back home so they would wash the calamine off me, I wasn't sure if that would even be possible. Gogo had talked with Pops and he agreed to do the calamine cleansing for me. We were handing there today with Zenzele driving us, still not talking with me, Zodwa was also with us. Going to Sweetwater always gave me Goosebumps. Gogo's phone rang; I didn't pay much attention to her as she talks with the phone. My mind was just too occupied with going to a place I call home.

Gogo: Nomaswazi it for you

She says handing me the phone; I took it looking at her strangely.

Me: Swazi Hello

"Swazi"

Me: Lisa is everything okay

Lisa: Zoe's father just passed on, we got a call just now.

Me: Oh my God how is she doing?

Lisa: She hasn't shed even a tear not even a little I am so worried about her.

Me: Please make sure she doesn't confront that witch bitch.

Lisa: I will make sure, I don't think we will be coming that side

Me: No, no it okay

Lisa and Zoe were coming down to be by my side. Though it was definitely not okay I still said it okay because it was the right thing to say.

Me: Just keep me on the loop, can we gossip?

Lisa: Yea I am outside.

Me: He did well by dying he was useless

Lisa: Tell me about it, I still wish he's still suffering

Me: Has Zoe signed the papers

Zoe had said she doesn't want anything that belong to her parents, though I think it foolish we talking about easy money here and a fucking big house. She can sell the damn house and make money then buy her dream house

Lisa: She says she doesn't want anything from them

Me: She got to be kidding me, that her money she deserve every cent.

Lisa: We will have to convince her into claiming everything that belongs to her.

Me: Yea but before she does that she has to come to Gogo and get some protection I don't trust that witch.

Lisa: Let give her time and talk to her after the funeral.

Me: Okay, I hate how I am not there for you guys.

Lisa: Just focus on making sure everything goes accordingly that side and don't let Judith get to you.

I sigh.

Me: Yea I will try, I love you. I will call Zoe later.

Lisa: Love you

She then dropped the call. I don't care about Zoe's father; but I can't expect Zoe to not care. He is her father, she's bound to care. I just feel for her, she's been through worse and doesn't seem to find peace.

When we arrived in Sweetwater the place I call home it was already the evening. I directed Zenzele to Pop's house, I was kak nervous. We got there Pops and his wife welcomed Gogo, my other grandpa and his wife and kids were there but Judith and her kids were not there not that I cared as long as I got to do what I actually came here to do, Gogo understood my situation when it came to paying her so she did mention that she normally charges money for these kind of things but I will pay her when I am working including the chickens she took from her house. As far as I am concerned everything went well, Gogo set everything on the altar had the talk with my ancestors, I went out to bath

since we have no rivers anywhere near then after that, I wore my red skirt with a tiger bhayi I loved ibhay more, it was so pretty. I wrapped another one around my head. We sang and dance then slept in the early morning Gogo informed my ancestors that we would be going back then the singing and dancing. Aunt Busi and her family arrived that morning with so much food; I helped with serving everyone who came including the neighbours. I was really grateful to Aunt Busi what she did for me showed me I could count on her.

Me: Aunt Busi

She turns she has been chatting with some people from around.

Busi: You! Little girl, I have been so worried about you, your phone no longer go through.

Me: Aah I am in the deep village of all villages there's no signal

Busi: I was so glad to receive a call from Mkhulu (pops)

Me: How is granny doing, I so wish I can visit.

My father's mother seem so much better, she was even talking.

Busi: She's doing so much better Swazi, she can talk now though we still can't hear her proper but she can talk and she hasn't stop asking about you.

Me: I can see she's doing much better; hearing her call me mzukulu was the best thing.

Yes my father's mother called me "Mzukulu wami" meaning my granddaughter. I did not have much time with her since they are all sitting in the lounge and we cooking in the kitchen but I am so happy she's here, I am so happy Aunt Busi is here.

Me: Thank you so much for coming.

Busi: You are family, no need to thank me just finish with your thing so you will come and visit us. We would love to spend time with you.

I was just smiling after the talk I had with Aunt Busi but Jack and Pops decided to ruin my mood.

Pops: Please Nomaswazi just go and see her.

Me: She hates me I have nothing to say to her.

Jack: Please I beg you, I know my mom wronged you but please she can't take this pain anymore forgive her.

Me: For what exactly

Jack: Look my wife is the one suffering here, Mom has this wound on her neck, worms are coming out, it stinks even ants are coming out yet she's not getting any better.

Me: And you think it got something to do with me?

Jack: I don't know I am just trying anything, she can't talk she's just there and my wife have to clean after her. She's my mom and I love her but this is too much she has to rest.

Me: Look I don't care what happens to Judith, it not my fault that worms are coming out of her so please let me enjoy the rest of my day.

Worms are coming out of her because she's rotten.

Gogo: She won't rest until you forgive her.

She said behind us.

Me: For what? I don't even know why she hates me so much. She ripped my heart apart, abused me, called me names, I would sleep hungry while you, your sister and mother had food. All I ever wanted is to know why.

Jack is crying by now and I don't why he's crying it not my fault that his mother has an evil heart.

Gogo: Just go see her

Me: but G

Gogo: Now

I bow down a little.

Me: Okay Gogo

I am only doing it for Gogo, other than that I hate that woman exactly like she hates me. So Jack Pops and I went to Aunt Judith's house.

Her room stinks, made me want to throw up. She's just lying on the same bed she was sleeping on when she gave me that letter that was full of bullshit. She looks at me with those lazy death eyes; she's so tiny you can hardly recognise her. A tear escape her eye, the wound by her neck looks so disgusting and I remember the last time I was in her house, how she said she hate me. My heart still hurt from the pain this woman put me through but she just look worse, she looked empty all she waited for was death.

Me: I don't know what I ever did to you for you to hate me so much. I really wished to know, I thought perhaps one of these days you will tell me but I guess that won't happen because you look like death already.

She blinked those weak eyelashes on me.

Me: I never did anything wrong to you but you had a nerve to hate me, you made my life so miserable, turned me into this broken young girl that I am today, you ruined my childhood for me. I am even scared of loving anyone because you ruined me so much, messed up with my life and I still don't know why? What did I ever do to you Judith? Why cause me so much pain?

She just closed her eyes and cried, I wasn't gonna share any tear because of her. I was done crying because of her.

Me: I forgive you; this is now between you and your God.

She let out a cry; blood mixed with worms came out of her neck. It wasn't a pleasing sight to watch.

Me: Good bye Judith

I said and walked out. Once I was outside where I could breathe the fresh air, I lean on the wall and cried. Jack and Pops were somewhere in the house. I cried letting all the tears and pain and anger and hurt I have inside me out.

FITY NINE

NOMASWAZI

---

It didn't matter how tired I was, I still had to wake up on the early morning and go to the river some other things would never change. Zango, Zodwa, Babhekile and I handed to the river. Zango was being his usual talkative self, telling us jokes that were not even funny, Zodwa was pretending to be interested as always and Babhekile just didn't care. She was just as grumpy as I was; I am only grumpy because I was hoping for some nice peaceful sleep but no not in this house. We did bath and went back home, while I sweep the yard, Zango was watering the veggies while Zodwa and Babhekile were cleaning the house. An old carsido car with tainted windows pulled up in the yard next to Zenzele's car. I had my hand on my waist as I look at it; they're probably here for Gogo so I walked close to the man coming out of the car; he's your typical Zulu man in brentwood pants, sandals, a lenda jacket black in colour, then he is chewing a toothpick. I silently scoffed. Before I could greet, Africa also came out of the car, followed by his brother whom I haven't seen ever since that day. I literally rolled my eyes and turned, though I was only few metres away from them I still turned.

"Makhosi, sorry"

I didn't turn back to look, I walked straight to the house and told Zodwa to attend to them but the girl was so scared. Apparently that is the famous Cele, for the sake of not wanting to get myself killed I decided to stay away, we poke our heads through the window and saw Zango attending to them which was so great because none of us wanted to deal with the Cele's. Zango led them to the big house, Gogo's house. We all went back to finishing out chores but we were still so curious, Zodwa was just scared Cele is here to finish what his son started, I won't sit here and lie I was also nervous but tried to keep myself busy though I could feel my heart ponding with fear.

Zango: Gogo is calling you

I bite on my lip really hard trying to keep it from trembling

Me: Are they here for me?

Zango: Yes who else dare to mess with the Celes

I took a deep sigh.

Me: If I die my friends will want to revenge me, tell them everything you know about the Celes.

I say walking away. I will die a heroin who was just standing up for herself.

Me: Tell them I died with pride.

I shout loud enough for him to hear me as I turn to him then back to walking towards the house. Before I entered I took another deep breathe, and gave myself some pep talk. Don't talk unless you asked too, don't say anything that might get you killed. I tell myself then walked in, since we not allowed sitting on the couch I settled on the floor right next to Gogo then bowed my head avoiding their eye contact at its best.

Gogo: We have guest who are here for you.

I swallowed the lamp on my throat, my mouth suddenly went dry.

"Nkosazana we here regarding your issue with Maqhawe"

His voice alone sounded so deep and scary and I was so glad I wasn't looking on his face, he has that "Don't mess with me voice" the voice that gives chills.

Me: With all due respect sir, if you here because you want me to apologise to your son. I am sorry I cannot do that.

My subconscious screamed at me for being stupid "Shut your damn mouth Swazi, you want to die" that what my head is busy screaming but it was already too late my mouth has already did the talking. It went dead quiet in the house, the only sound I could hear was my heart beating so fast. I kept my head down and told myself I wouldn't dare look up.

Someone cleared their throat.

"We are actually here because my son owe you and this family an apology"

My ears must have been deceiving me, I slowly raised my eyes and look at these three men sitting across me on the couch; Africa on the right, the father who look exactly like them in centre then the ass of a brother Maqhawe on the left.

Me: Excuse me

"My son disrespected this home and you; therefore he owes you an apology"

Me: So you not here to kill me or anything like that

Africa chuckled

Gogo: Nomaswazi

She said it more like a warning.

Me: I mean ...to make me apologise.

"No we just here to offer peace and to apologise for such disrespect"

Gogo: You did good Cele by bringing him to apologise, I am a healer people from other places come around here every day I don't want them to fear coming here because of your son. Kids of today are so much trouble, I am responsible for every person under my roof, it pained me seeing a boy whom I watched grow right under my nose coming in my house with intentions of hurting one of my kids; even worse a girl.

"I am really disappointed Ma, I don't know where he get such disrespect. Hitting a woman alone is inhuman"

Me: I would like to hear him say he is sorry, in fact Baba I would prefer if he goes on his knees and say he is sorry"

I say and this time staring at Maqhawe whose face turned stormy after hearing me say that, I saw Africa smiling while shaking his head with the corner of my eyes.

"You heard the lady, go on your knees and apologise now boy!"

He commanded and I couldn't love him more, I mean they were all wrong about Cele he's a powerful man who uses his power for a good cause or at least in this case he is. Maqhawe got off the couch, went on his one knee and look at me while chewing on his jaws.

Me: Excuse me baba; is Maqhawe sincerely apologising? He is on his one knee like he's asking me to marry me (I chuckled) no offence intended even if he were to ask me with a diamond ring I would still say no, so I would really prefer if he goes on his both knees.

As I say this Maqhawe and I were having a stare contest, if he thinks his cold eyes would scare me. He got another thing coming I ain't scared of that. Though I am looking at Maqhawe I didn't miss his father's smile behind him on the couch, clearly the father is amused too.

"You heard the lady Maqhawe, don't make her repeat herself. Even if it was a diamond ring she will still say no so on your knees"

Boy did I not smile like a kid in a candy shop, my eyes giving Maqhawe that "Hell yeah" this should teach him not to lay his hands on a woman ever again.

Maqhawe: I am sorry

Me: For what?

He gave me the death stare; I gave him the attitude stare like "Bring it on"

Maqhawe: I am sorry for laying my hand on you

Me: Much better but this time please say it with a smile

I sit butt flat, crossed my legs over each other and crossed my arms over my chest then lean on the couch behind me and watch him.

He groaned loud enough for everyone to hear.

"I can cut your balls off Maqhawe so don't dare me"

I was so glad this man is on my side, he scares me.

Maqhawe: I am sorry for laying my hand on you

He said with a fake smile.

Me: Thank you Mr Cele for bringing your son to apologise; you are man among men.

I took a second and applauded myself that was nice.

Me: I just hope he will now stay away from me; I am not here for trouble.

"I can assure you he will stay away, and if he doesn't I will deal with him personally."

I smile politely, happy to hear he is staying away.

Me: Well Mr Cele, Maqhawe and ...Africa it was nice having you, travel safe

I say rather looking at Africa who sat there and look at me as I get up from the floor. Africa's stare made me blush while smiling to myself; he is really getting under my skin

I would call this my lucky week firstly Maqhawe apologised for messing with me then I managed to consult with my ancestors. Gogo hid money and asked for me to find it, I consulted my ancestors communicated with me via the whistler and told me exactly where I will get the money. Since that day Gogo has been involving me in people's consultations. I was still struggling to keep up with the herbs though but was getting there.

Me: Well Gogo I am getting there, don't you think

She chuckled.

Gogo: Just stay out of trouble okay

I smile at her of course I am staying out of trouble if trouble is staying out of me.

Me: Gogo

I cleared my throat I am about to step some boundaries and I hope it worth it.

Me: When I came here I didn't even believe in ancestors, I didn't even want to hear a thing regarding them and you didn't force me to believe them. You didn't force me to even acknowledge them. You just let things happen the way they were supposed to happen and right now I can proudly say; I am who I am because of my ancestors.

She smiles at me.

Gogo: Well we come a long way.

Me: We do; I was also thinking why don't you let Zenzele show you the part of life he wants to live. I know it not my place but I only think it fair you let him show you the life he likes, you might not like it now because you have never been exposed to it. So instead of making him do what he doesn't approve of let him show you his life and if you still don't like it well then, I don't know. Things have changed now Gogo, we do things definitely we love certain life styles and old people like yourself would never understand so allow him to take you through his life.

Gogo: You were right to say it not your place, now get out.

Me: But Go-

Gogo: Get out or you want ntangazibovana?

I quickly get out, at least I tried Zenzele has to forgive me.

SIXTY

NOMASWAZI

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I have heard people saying happiness is the four letter word; L.O.V.E. I beg to differ I have never experienced the four letter word from anyone other than my friends. So for me I would say happiness is a five letter word; P.E.A.C.E. or perhaps I have never experienced happiness for me to know happiness. Ever since the void I have been feeling all my life felt like it has been filled. I felt happy, I had that happiness deep down my heart that I couldn't pin point. I hated everything about the calling I apparently had but my journey has been fulfilling, my journey gave me stability, made me love myself for who I am not because of materially things that I owned, I am appreciating me for me. I love knowing I can rely on my ancestors for everything. My journey wasn't over yet but already I could see the changes in my life, and I was grateful for the gift that worth appreciation.

We were busy singing as we come back from the river, while the others went inside the house I hang the clothes I had washed on the line then walk towards the house but before I could enter a very cute kitten lay beside the door not moving.

Mr: Pssh cat

It still didn't move I bend over and picked it up.

Me: Oh Kitty what happened to you.

I say brushing it gentle; it was dead not moving nor breathing. Zodwa came out of the hut humming a song.

Zodwa: Woah what is that Sis Swazi

Me: It a dead cat Zodwa what does it look like.

Zodwa: Where did you get it?

I was still brushing it as she asks. The kitten's stomach was swollen like it had eaten something that it wasn't supposed to eat, perhaps one of Gogo's herbs that are not meant to be eaten.

Me: Just beside the door.

Zodwa: There was no dead cat when we walk in.

I ignored her and walk away, feeling sorry for the cat.

Me: It okay kitty you in a better place now. Zango! Zango!

I shout for him, he came out of his hut tying clothes around his head.

Zango: What now

Me: Please dig a grave for this kitty and bury it before it stinks the whole place.

He groaned taking the kitten.

Zango: Where is it even coming from?

Me: Probably from next door, I think I have seen cats over there.

Zango: Ya maybe

He took it and walked away.

I walked back to the house to change the clothes I was wearing then walked out again to sweep the yard, among all the chores we are supposed to be doing I volunteered to be the one sweeping the yard every morning and afternoon it way better than cooking. Zenzele came out of the house all dressed and ready for work, since we not in speaking terms I ignored him and kept on sweeping the yard.

Zenzele: Hey

I stop sweeping and gave him a raised eyebrow.

Zenzele: Good morning

Me: Ummh

Zenzele: Well I wanted you to know whatever you said to Ma worked.

Me: Excuse me, come again.

Zenzele: Mama is willing to give me a chance to see what this shame gay thing is all about.

I laughed happily.

Me: You lie

Zenzele: I tell you, thank you for talking to her. You are really special to her I think

I laughed me special to that old woman.

Me: I doubt Gogo is always waiting for me to give her a reason to punish me

Zenzele: And perhaps that the reason she loves you, you keep her on her toes.

Me: Well I will fool myself and think she loves me.

He laughs

Zenzele: Thanks Swazi, have a lovely day.

Me: Bye Ze enjoy your day yourself.

I am glad Gogo did consider my suggestion. At least I won't be the reason for Zenzele's miserable life of marrying someone he doesn't even have feelings for. I am no aspect when it comes to love but I know I will never settle for someone I do not love

My day seemed to be going well; Zenzele and I were on good terms again. I could now make beads like the others, I even got creative in this bead making thing. Gogo sells the beads and the money she's getting there we never receive even a cent but what can I say if I were to ask where it goes she will just make a list of the things I use or eat that requires money. We were all sitting under the tree as the sun was blazing hot.

Me: I think I should consider making beaded neck pieces for a living, look at this.

Zodwa: You such a fast learner Sis Swazi.

Gogo: Well she has been working hard these days which is why I think her journey will be finalised sooner than expected.

Me: Serious Gogo?

I asked excitedly.

Babhekile: What, I have been here longer than she has.

Gogo: Makhosi Swazi is ready, she has proved to be ready therefore I cannot keep her here any longer if she can heal people, she needs to go out there and do what required of her.

Zodwa: Oh wow sis Swazi I am so happy for you, I just hope soon I will follow after you.

Me: Aah man my life is finally happening, I mean like wow. Had I known it was going to feel like this I would've accepted this calling thing a long time ago.

Gogo: You too hot-headed but I am happy with your progress.

Boy was I excited. I couldn't wait to leave this village and start my own life, heal people on my terms and make MONEY. Later that day Gogo and I had a talk, she said since she understand my situation of where I am coming from her ancestors has allowed her to help me finalise my journey then when I have started working and making money I will come back to pay her, and do the whole ceremony like Sabela. I couldn't be happier.

I had taken my phone from her so I would call Lisa and ask her about Zoe's father funeral. He hasn't been buried because they are waiting for Zoe's Aunt to fly down South Africa. And I also wanted to tell my friends the good news but before calling her I decided to go through my insta and see what happening out there on the world, just a little peek. Life seems to be happening for everyone, I got lost on social media that I even forgot I am supposed to be calling my friends. My phone rang startling me a little.

Me: Zo Zo it like you sensed I was about to call.

Instead of talking she just started crying.

Me: Zoe sweets are you okay?

She couldn't respond.

Me: Zoe talk to me please

I could feel my own tears burning my eyes, I am crying because she's crying and I don't know why she's crying.

Zoe: She ...Li ....Swa ...

Me: Zoe! Zoe I can't hear if you crying please calm down and talk.

She just wailed loudly. My tears find their way out as I also cry.

Me: Let me talk with Lisa at least, where is she

She wailed even more, I heard voiced on the background.

Me: Zoe please ... who is there? Where are you? Where is Lisa

Zoe: Swazi ...awe Mah ...awe ...I can't ...it hurt

"Sis please gets off the floor"

I hear someone say, by this time I am standing on my feet and crying.

Me: Hello, who is that? Hello Zoe hello.

I could hear Zoe crying so much from the background and more voices.

"Someone please sedate her"

Me: What? Hello what going on there? Hello!

"Hello"

Me: What going on there who are you?

The sound of Zoe screaming slowly faded away.

"Hi this is Karishma I am a paramedic, a girl by the name of ... what is the girl's name again?"

She asks someone from the background.

"Oh yes Lisa she was found dead by the other girl this afternoon"

Me: What?

I felt my head getting dizzy same time.

Me: What ...what ...are you talking about?

My body started getting hot, like burning up every part of me stops working even my heart stopped beating. I could hear her say "Hello!" but yet I couldn't hear her, the house started spinning, and my tummy started turning. My eyes became clouded with tears; my knees couldn't hold me no more. Then I collapsed on the floor and it was light out for me.

## EPILOGUE

Her death was written on the stars, the moon and the sun. She left so sudden when we still needed her the most, she will forever live in our heart. While Zoe was literally dying herself, I was numb the only thing I could feel is the tears streaming down my face like rainfall in the river. My heart was numb, clouded by so much vengeance and hate more than the pain itself. Lisa was apparently poisoned by no one other than Zikhona the bitch who snatched Mandla away from Zoe. Right after her death Zoe wasn't copying on her own and I couldn't go to the city. She came down here in the village and Gogo consulted for us, Zikhona didn't come in her human form she sent her zombie so poison her. She died on her sleep; her stomach was so big and swollen exactly like the kitten I got. I couldn't feel anything myself, nothing made sense.

On a Friday Zoe and I drove down to Sweetwater from the village where Zoe has been staying for the last four days, after she found Lisa in our flat not moving and cold as ice. She's not copying at all which is why Zenzele insist on driving us because we were both a whole mess. By the time we got to Sweetwater it was dark, we could hear people singing on top of their voices from a tent as we drove in the yard. I couldn't keep my tears from falling, I was so angry and in so much pain. The only thing kept me going is thinking of the ways I will get back to the Zikhona bitch, ways I will make her pay for every tear I have drop, for touching the wrong girl, for the fact that I will never see my friend again, and for making Zoe go through the traumatic experience of finding our beloved dead body of our friend. I will make her beg for death. I took Zoe's hand in mine, she's shaking and crying. Zenzele wrapped his arms around us and led us in the house. We walked in and few people I know to be Lisa's extended family were in the lounge sipping drinks and laughing like nothing happened. They look at us up and down as we walk past them towards Lisa's gran room, she sat on the mattress with a blanket over her, and the moment she spotted us she wailed loudly.

Gran: Oh nkulunkulu wami bantana bami. (Oh my God, my kids)

We didn't miss the opportunity to go and curl next to her while crying, all their tears and pain were falling on me, I could feel it more than I could feel my own pain. I was still waiting for someone to tell me this is a whole joke, Lisa cannot be dead. She can't die, my heart is in so much deny, I do not want to accept

her death, perhaps this is some kind of a joke. Gran kept her arms wrapped around us, rubbing us gentle as she cries, I wanted the ground to open up and swallow me because I couldn't stand the cries of Gogo and Zoe. Zoe started getting hiccups from all the crying. Someone got her water and helped her to drink; she then lay on the mattress, crying silently. I got behind her and cuddled her while I let out my own silent cry. Sleep never came my mind was busy racing thinking about all the things I could've done to save her, the people singing in the tent never stopped singing, when it was finally morning I wished the morning never came. While everyone else was busy up and down preparing to bath for the service, Zoe and I just lay there on the matress and cried, no one here accept Gran knew Lisa like we did, no one here cared for her like we do and no one here cares if we will ever see her again like we do. We went to the service that was held in church without bathing nor changing the clothes we were wearing, I was so grateful to have Zenzele by our side; he made sure we were well taken of the best he could.

Upon our arrival at the church we sat on the front, her coffin in front of us, and a picture of her looking back at us with a smile we will never see again. I wished she could come out of that coffin laughing her ass off and say "Got you bitches" the pastor was busy giving sermon that I couldn't even hear, speaking of pastor. I ran my eyes around the room and they landed on him, he looked like hell himself, he sat there looking at the picture of Lisa, his eyes swollen, my heart felt for him. I feel for everyone here who is crying because they cared about our Lisa. I wished I could take their pain away by waking up Lisa from the death, I feel like her death is on me. I once saw it, why couldn't I stop it? Why didn't I stop it? I could've saved her but I didn't try, I didn't even pay much attention to the dream even after knowing how important dreams are I still didn't do anything, I still didn't remember the dream I had so I would save her. I failed her; I failed everyone whoever cared about her. As everyone sang and preached and whatever other shit they were doing, I heard none of those things. I was into much pain.

Nothing hurt like seeing the coffin go down, knowing very well she's gone for ever. It all became real as I watch the coffin being lowered, I couldn't look, and I didn't want to look. I walked away with Zoe; we sat by a street and cried while holding on to each other.

Zoe: When I left that morning I thought she was still sleeping ...I should've ...i should've

I didn't even have energy to say at least one word. I just held her close to me, squeezing her to myself. My heart hurting like it would come right out of my mouth, every part of my body hurt, I wasn't sure which one hurt anymore, Zoe squeezed me to her back, and we cried so much that I doubt I have ever cried like that in my whole entire life. Zenzele joined us on the side of the road with bottle of water, he's also crying and I don't know why he's crying. We drink the water and just held each other, shortly Sbusiso joined us. He was a whole mess package; he kept his head bowed down as he sits beside us. No one said anything to anyone because no one had the energy too. People started leaving, Gran passed by us and said something about bring us safe home to Zenzele. I am not sure how long we stayed there, but it was slowly getting dark and we were at graveyards.

Zenzele: Should we pass by her grave before going home

That how he suggested it was time to lick our wounds and go home, we all stood up held hands and walked to her grave. We just stood there watching it not saying anything to anyone.

Zoe: I can't ...I can't do this ...she's not dead ...she can't die  
She said then turned and walks away, I followed after her.

Zoe: Swazi she can't ...she can't ...she can't Swazi she can't ...she can't leave us ...she promised she won't leave us.

Zenzele: take your time at the grave I will take her to the car.

He said taking Zoe from my arms and walking away with her, I turn back to the grave and kneeled before it while crying my lugs out. Sbusiso threw a stone he was holding on top of the grave and walked towards Zenzele's car.

Me: Ple ...please wake up ...you can't go you are not dead ...you can't die  
please please wake up Lisa ...Lisa I am sorry please

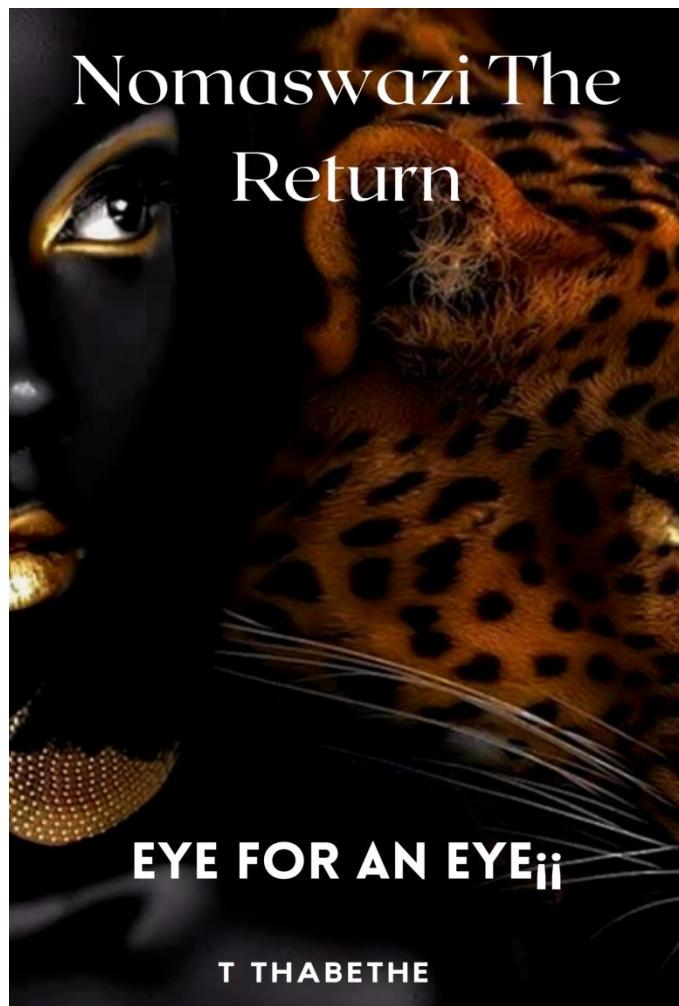
I cried kneeling and begging and having my heart being ripped apart. I tried composing myself, pulling myself together.

Me: Your death will not be in vain; whoever had a hand will pay. I swear on my life.

Those were the words I promised her as I turn and leave her grave, if I couldn't save her then I will revenge her. Then I will never rest until everyone who had a hand on her death is six feet under. Maybe then I could follow after her.

**The End**

Book two – romance and vengeance



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It not yet available, I will sure post on my page on Facebook once it available.

I would like to take this opportunity and thank everyone who paid for the PDf, I really appreciate the support you gave me even though the payments were a last minute, thank you so much may God bless you!!

UBIZO THE CALLING

Love and Light.