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## Chapter 1

Jean Vanier said "To love someone is to show them their beauty, worth and their importance" I long for someone I can show that but I have never felt any affection towards anyone both girls and

boys. I was never worried about it until I was 18 years old and my peers began to make fun of me. That's when I got a girlfriend one of the most beautiful girls in our school Simqobile Ngcobo. It was easy because every girl wanted me not only for the good looks but my family's status.

She was the first and last person I ever had sex with, I didn't enjoy it and neither did she. Even at the sight of her nakedness Mageba didn't rise. I had to pay her for her to

compliment my bed skills when talking to her friends. Not having a partner to share my life with gets

hard sometimes most of the time I feel empty. But I have my mother and sister my pillars of strength.

I look at my parents sitting on the couch across the one am sitting on. I'm still trying to process what my parents just told me. Could this Langa be the woman I've been dreaming of for the past past five years? It can't be, that woman doesn't exist her type if beauty doesn't exist.

"Msebe we are flying to Ghana tonight," Baba informs me. "You can come with us if you like."

"Baba we aren't even sure if she exists," I say.

He gives me a look. My parents especially my father is determined to find her.

"Well, am sure. I will not rest until I find her," he says.

I know he will once Mageba Zulu puts his mind into something he won't rest until he gets it.

Agvei Langa Tutu

Britain is remarkably different from Ghana

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especially the weather. It's a very nice country but way too cold for my liking and this is my first time out of the continent. I was born and bred in Ghana from a young age I never planned on leaving. Unlike me brother here who decided to learn in the UK. I miss him already but I wish I could disappear right now he wants us to go shopping in this type of weather. Since yesterday, getting out of bed wasn't part of my plans. He hasn't been here for long but he seems to be adjusting well.

"Princess Gysei most beautiful woman in the universe in fact beautiful is an

understatement- can we please go

shopping?" Ashanti says making this cute face the same face that softened our brother the mighty king into agreeing to let him study abroad.

"Can't we shop online?" | ask.

"No can't do, and you need to get used to this type of weather," he says.

"I don't have to. I won't be staying here for long am leaving tomorrow," I say.

He looks disappointed. "I was hoping that you'd stay for a month. Sister you need to live your life. Life is too short."

"I will visit you as much as I can but staying here, I don't know I will think about," I say. "To make it up to you I will go shopping with you even though my feet are freezing cold."

"Don't worry. Mawusi can carry you around," he laughs out loud. "You know he can do that right he's your bodyguard. And you wouldn't be the first Princess to be carried around."

2

Mageba Zulu

After their long flight they finally landed in Ghana around 3am. A white Range Rover was already waiting for them. It took them to their house in Accra. Mageba Zulu owned many properties around Africa, they came in really handy in times like these. He's not a fan of hotels. It wasn't his first time in Ghana he'd stayed his for a month while he was building a school in a village. He'd done business with the late King before and even though they weren't close friends they had a good relationship.

"Where are we going to begin looking for her?" Makhumalo asks.

She's been asking herself this question all day.

"I asked around and found out her mother married the King of Ashanti that's where we are going tomorrow. We will certainly find her there", he responds.

It's surprises her how he makes it sound so easy. Are they going to go there and demanded for her then drag her back to South Africa with them? She's pretty sure it doesn't work like that.

"Baba I think we should have told Muzi first. We can't just go there and claim her as our daughter-in-law."

"Mkami one way or the other we have to get her back her ancestors are the ones at fault here. They are the reason my son can't be without her."

They had to get this over and done with he has businesses to attend to. And this year during Christmas dinner he wants to buy his grandson gifts, the sooner they get her the better.

The next day, early in the morning after eating their breakfast they prepared for their journey. They didn't know what to expect but Mageba told himself that no

one and nothing will stop him from getting his son's bride. After the long drive from Accra to Kumasi they arrived at the King's Palace. Before they were let in they were asked many questions for safety reasons Mageba was irritated.

"Good morning Mr Tutu," Mageba greets.

They didn't expect the king to be a young man. He looks like his in his early thirties. After exchanging greetings and introductions they sat in the lounge.

"It truly is a good morning. It's not every day that I get visitors from across the country

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" he says before settling in his seat.

"Mr Tutu we are here in search of someone very important," Mageba says.

The King doesn't say anything they sit there for few minutes in silence.

Makhumalo stands but and goes to shake hands with the king and after some hesitation Mageba does the same.

"What are you search for?"he asks.

Couldn't he just ask for a handshake if that's what was keeping him from talking? Just a few minutes ago he was talking to them then he suddenly doesn't. If the late king was still alive this meeting would probably be done by now Mageba thought.

"We are searching for a young maiden named Langa she's the princess of this kingdom," Mageba replies.

What could they want from Agyei the King asks himself? What business does the Princess of the Ashanti kingdom have with these two South Africans?

"What do you want from her?"he inquires.



Mageba takes a deep breath, now that they are here he doesn't know how to break down the news to him.

"Long time ago the Zulu family and the Zungu family arranged a married between their children but when it was time for them to get married my brother eloped with his lover but it ended up with him dead. The Zungu ancestors were angered by my brothers act because it caused

them the life of their daughter, who was raised to marry him. She grew up with the knowledge that one day she would marry him so she loved him dearly, when she learned about his death she had a severe heart attack. My son was cursed that he may not fall in love another woman expect a Zungu woman and Langa this his chosen one."

But Langa is the the princess of this

kingdom or is she? The King was

surprised by this new revelation but if it's true it could work for his own benefit.

Langa is a beautiful and wise woman and if they are not blood related he could make her his queen he thought. He has always admired her.

3

Msebe

It's another day of being awake. Today is one of those days where I feel lonely. Last night I drew a picture of her the lady in my dreams. When am not at work that is what I do, draw pictures of her. If I wasn't brought up to be a business man I would have became an artist but unfortunately my father had already planned my future. I came at a time where my parents had lost all hope of getting a child. I was told my

father threw a huge party when he found out about my gender, he even invited the richest man in Africa whom I have never seen since I was born. But he was there when my gender was celebrated before I was born. When I was in primary school he paid attention to all my interests and made sure I got to participate in all the sports I was interested in but he never supported me in my dream of becoming an artist. I'm not athletic but I liked playing rugby even though I was the worst player

in the team my father made sure i was in the first team. Sometimes I wonder if he had a hand in me always being the top achiever in every grade.

My phone rings.

Me:Baby sister. How are you?

Nandi: I am good. How are you?

Me: I'm alive. Nandi I hope you are calling for another reason not the usual reason you call for on Fridays.

Nandi: Bhuti I promise this is the last one, if it fails you never going on a date again.

I have been going on these dates every

Friday this year with her friends. It's been half a year and I haven't fallen in love with any of them but Nandi won't give up.

Me: Nandi not today I need some time alone.

Nandi:Please just do it for me. I promise you, it will work out this time. He..i mean she is your type. There's no need to hide anymore if baba and mama don't accept you, you have me. And you are baba's only son his golden boy he won't disown you.

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What does she mean?

Me: I will do it for you. Just promise you will never ask me to do this ever again.

Nandi: I promise. I have something to tell you.

Me: What is it?

She hesitates before she blurts out,

"Thomas proposed."

I just can't help it but bust into a fit laughter.

Me: Where did he get the money to buy  
the ring?

"You see why I didn't want you to tell him in the first place? Ehh  
Nandi," someone yells in the background.

Me: Wena leave my sister! Nandi  
congratulations but my father's money  
won't pay for a thing for the wedding  
preparations.

She hangs up. Imagine proposing but you don't have a job. I  
even offered him a job but he said he has a phobia for working  
not his direct words. He just doesn't like the job position I gave  
him. He's the first broke white guy I have met. It's so unusual  
sometimes I think he will tell us it's all a joke and he owns a  
farm somewhere.

Princess Agyei Tutu

I missed my morning flight because I overslept after staying up all night helping Ashanti finish decorating his apartment. And now the flight has been cancelled due to lack of passengers. Ashanti doesn't even try to disguise his happiness.

"Princess Agyei don't you think that this is sign that you should stay in London?" Ashanti asks.

"I really don't think so. I'm physically here but I'm mentally in Ghana."

"Sister you can't tell me you are planning on living in Kumasi forever, you should travel. See the world dad left you enough money."

"I have thought about relocating not out of the continent though."

His smile broadens. My little brother wouldn't make a good king.

"I am planning on moving to South Africa and finishing my degree in child psychology."

"That's a good start. Then you will get married, and have many children."

"Not really, I want to go around helping autistic children around the continent. I wouldn't be able to achieve that with a family," I say. I have always been passionate about child psychology but

the thought of doing it scares me. I'm I even good enough to be dealing with children who have special needs. I kick that thought out of my head. Patience is not one of my strongest traits but I've always wanted to do it from a young age. "Who knows I might just open a home for them?"

"I'm so proud of you, please follow your dreams."

Sigh.

"I will."

"Princess can't we book the entire flight," Mawusi my bodyguard asks.

"He is right," Ashanti says. I thought he didn't want me to leave.

"That would be too expensive and it's a waste of money," I tell them.

"Mawusi are you in a rush?" Ashanti asks.

"Not really, I got a call saying my mother is sick

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" Mawusi says.

"Let me try the King maybe he can get his private jet to come get us."

"We both know that's not happening he doesn't trust junior Kwame with anyone."

Junior Kwame is his private jet he loves it more than life itself. He's the only one who travels with it.

"Trying won't hurt."

He responds after the second ring which is unusual.

"Princess Agyei," he says.

"Hey my king, my big brother do you mind sending your private jet to fetch us the plane to Ghana has been cancelled."

"Don't worry it's already on it's way there. It will land in an hour," he says.

I look at Ashanti, he's frowning I guess he's also surprised by his sudden kindness.

Mageba Zulu

Their journey to Ghana was useless they didn't find who they were looking for. But he wasn't giving up, if blood has to be shed to get this Langa it shall be shed. His son's happiness is more important than any other man's happiness in the world,



the King told them Ashanti was living in Greece with her husband. That's not what the private investigator told him, but why would the king lie? He didn't want to include Muzi Zungu in this matter but it seems like he has no choice. He doesn't have a problem with him he's just not umuntu wabantu, he doesn't ask for help from people so that they return the favour to him.

"I didn't picture our return to South Africa like this, I thought our daughter-in-law would be with us," says MaKhumalo. MaKhumalo was beyond hurt and disappointed, she didn't know how she was going to face her son after giving him false hope that soon his bride will be coming home.

"Don't stress yourself Nkami soon she will be with us," he said.

"How Baba didn't you hear her brother say she is married," MamKhumalo says.

"I didn't believe a word he said but even if that's the case they will get divorced."

His wife looked at him disappointed she couldn't believe that those words came out of her husband's mouth.

"We can't ruin their happiness to benefit our son, that's unfair."

"That boy is lying, Msebe and Langa's marriage was arranged before they were even born. The ancestors wouldn't let Langa marry anyone else."

"What are we going to do then?"

"We are going to ask for Zungu's assistance to find her?"

As they walk in the entrance of the airport a young lady bumps into MaKhumalo and spills her drink on MaKhumalo's lavender shirt. She tries to wipe the stain off while apologizing but it's permanent.

"Can't you watch where you are going?!" Mageba yells.

"Sorry Sir, I was distracted," Princess Agyei says.

"That would have been prevented if you were not busy on your phone," he says.

Today's young and technology. What is so interesting in these phones the only thing he does with his is call?

"Baba calm down," MaKhumalo says. "It's fine dear I needed to go shopping anyways," she says smiling to Langa.

4

Msebe

Nandi sends me the hundredth message reminding me to bring my date flowers specifically lilies. I call my assistant and ask her to buy them and have them delivered.

"Ncooh! Whose the lucky lady?" she asks.

"Miss Phakathi please get me the flowers," I say and hung up.

This girl is noisy. I thought I'd knock off early today like I usually do on Fridays but unfortunately there was a crisis I had to fix. At 7 p.m. I will head straight to....where I am having dinner with my last date, I doubt I will be able to go home first. A few minutes later, Sthembile my assistant enters holding a bunch of pink flowers. I can't help but frown as she hands them to me.

"What is this?" I ask. "I asked for lilies not these."

"Sir these are lilies," she says.

"Sthembile are you sure you know this is my last date I want it to go smoothly or else Nandi will arrange other one," I say giving her the flowers back.

"Mr Zulu I worked as a florist for 3 years and I had my own garden growing up. These here are lillies," she says.

She shows me a picture of them on her phone. Did she just...

"Sthembile are you trying to get yourself fired? You used the company wifi to Google these ugly flowers," I say.

"Sorry sir, you can take it from my salary. It will never happen again."

She looks frightened. I feel bad, I know am not a friendly employer but I don't want my employees to fear me.

"Sir it has never happened before and it won't happen ever again," she says blinking back tears.

"It's fine. Are you done with you work?"

"Yes sir."

"Get you stuff I will take you home."

She tries to hide her smile but I can see it.

"Thank you sir."

Just looking at these flowers I know I won't like my date who even likes these flowers. I don't have a good feeling about this date.

When I drop her off it's already 6:54 and she takes her sweet time leaning in to retrieve her laptop and handbag from the backseat. Yes, she put her stuff in the backseat while she sat in

the passenger seat. When I think I know how dramatic she is it's the more dramatic she becomes. She used to surprise me but not anymore. She's talkative and speaks without thinking

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it's surprising that she doesn't have scars from people beating her. I finally arrive at the restaurant and jog inside. I look at my wristwatch it's 10 minutes past 7 if I don't tread carefully for the rest of this date I will find myself in another date. I look around but I don't see anyone with a long weave, long nails and heavy make up. That's how all of Nandi's friends are I wonder how she's able to keep up with them. Someone at the back waves I look back and there is no one behind me, I guess that's my date. When I reach the table am a bit confused he smiles and says hello. Thomas is going to marry a compost

"You know how rude it is to keep a lady waiting," she says.

Nandi Zulu

Nandi met Thomas Ingram in high school they were close friends until they eventually started dating in matric. Nandi works as masseuse at her friends beauty spa. The beauty spa she was supposed to have a share in but after saving for years to open a beauty spa with a her friend Tswarelo she ended up using the money to pay for Thomas to study while giving him boyfriend allowance. Thomas studied to become a forensic scientist but he never completed studying.

He is naturally intelligent but drugs were

his weakness and they led him to his

downfall. But after going to rehab he quit drugs. Her parents never supported their relationship. They warned her several times to leave him and stop financially supporting him. And when she wouldn't they cut off her monthly allowance.

She works hard to make sure they live comfortable life.

"Thomas, baby please forgive me. I promise I will talk to him about this," Nandi says kneeling next to him.

Thomas has been sulky since the incident where he heard the comment Msebe made about their wedding. He normally assists Nandi with chores but after what he heard all he does is sleep, eat or play video games.

"Why does your brother enjoy making me feel like I'm less of a man?" Thomas yells.

"He was joking. He didn't mean it."

"So am a joke to him, you know the only time I've seen him laugh is when he makes fun of me."

"Thomas, please I said I will talk to him ok. He will stop."

"Maybe if he got a girlfriend and stopped calling a drawing his soulmate he would stop being such an ass."

Nandi gets up furious. She chuckles.

"It's like you seem to forget that he's the one who pays for the expensive apartment you live in. That has aircon."

"I bet that's all you talk about when you are with him. How incapable I am."

He tosses the remote control on the couch and rushes to the bedroom.

Nandi finds him packing his clothes neatly in a suitcase. She stands at the door watching him.

"Thomas, please stop what you are doing. Put that suitcase away."

"Nandi it's clear that your brother doesn't want me."

"Where are you going to go?"

He stops packing and goes to her. He

wraps his arms around her waist and pulls her closer to him so there is no space left between them and he whispers close to her ear, " I love you Nandi Zulu with all my heart. I promise I will get a job soon."

How are you going to get a job when you sit on the couch all day, Nandi thought.

"I love you too Thomas."



5

Langa

If someone told me my life would turn out like this, I would have used all the opportunities I got to study wisely. Saved money and perhaps not used all the money my 'father' left me in donations. Three months ago I found out I'm not Princess Gysei Tutu but Langa Zungu. A week after I got back from the UK my mother died, she was poisoned by Kwame's mother the King's first wife. I guess she was punishing her for making her husband raise another man's child without his knowledge. I know it's not a solid reason to murder someone but my mother never harmed her in any way so it can't be revenge. Even though I wanted to get justice for my mother I had to run away. After her burial I had suicidal thoughts but I knew my little brother needed me and my mother left a document with my biological father's information and a note that said "Stay strong, your journey on earth has not been fulfilled. Your ancestors blessed you with a good husband love him". Marriage has never been part of my plans I hope she was joking about the husband part I'd rather become a reverend sister.

I ran away with only R50 000 in my bank account. I lived in a hotel for a week but i was lucky enough to find a person looking for a flat mate. I'm slowly adjusting to my new life but Mbalenhle my roommate says i still have princess tendencies which i need to get rid of if i want to survive in the real world.

"Enhle how do I look?" I ask.

I don't if it's because I am used to receiving things on a silver platter but I didn't think finding a job was so difficult. We had and still have a high unemployment rate in Ghana but I didn't think it was that bad. After searching for a job and sending out my CVs almost every day I received a call last week informing me to come for an interview today. I can't mess this up, I have to look my best.

"Langa where are you going?"she asks the obvious, I have been telling her about the interview since I got the call. "Why didn't you tell me you found us a suitable church for us?"

"Mbalenhle am not going to church. I'm going to my interview, the one I've been telling you about every day."

She laughs out loud.

"Langa you can't be serious. My aunt goes to church every Sunday but she doesn't dress like that for a job interview. Musa nje, awikho emuthethweni lento oyenzayo."

"You know I don't understand Zulu, I only know the basics. And your friend said the owner of the company is a typical Zulu man so I want to look presentable."

"Langa you aren't going to audition to become his wife. Are you still a virgin?"

"Ahmm...yes."

"I'll take you to a place where you can audition to become a rich wife. If you want to impress the owner just call him baba, and don't look him in the eyes. Now go and change, call out my name if you need help."

She's right it's way too cold to wear a maxi dress and sandals but calling him daddy doesn't seem right to me.

I opt for a tie-neck bishop sleeve houndstooth dress with stockings, a white knee-length teddy coat

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and black

minimalist chunky heeled boots. I take my R50 000 Prada bag and catwalk to the sitting room.

"I'm jealous of the way, I said am jealous of the way you looking hot without me," she says in a sing-song voice. "In fact, I think I should accompany you to the interview so everyone can see that you are my best friend."

"Thanks but am going to have to refuse," | say doing a 90-degrees turn.

"That's more like it honey but he will think that you are afraid of the cold and will be absent on rainy days."

"Thank you darling, but I can't change am already late."

"You better get that job. Remember we still owe the landlady last month's rent."

"How do I answer when they ask for my name?"

"Langa," she exclaims.

"I should just say Langa, not my name is Langa Mnisi?"

"Langa please don't tell me this your first interview."

"You know am a terrible liar."

"Baby just be yourself. You better get this job or else we are writing a book about your life."

That's a great idea only if it's going to be a overnight bestseller. I told her my life story and she assisted me in finding father. I didn't find him but I managed to find a man who claims to be

his son Maqhawe Zungu. This weekend he is taking me to meet the family. Honestly am nervous and am afraid of being rejected not having a family is not easy. It's been years now but I don't think my mother's family has forgiven her for how they parted.

Nandi

Three years ago when he come out of rehab Thomas promised me he would get a job but he hasn't done anything do get it. Luckily, there's a job opening at my brother's company. He didn't send out his CV even though I reminded him day and night to do so but his getting this job. I can't feed a grown man for the rest of my life.

"Tom could you please hurry up?!" I yell.

"Nandi I don't get why I have to go to an interview for a job am not interested in."

"Oh, which one are you interested in?"

It's too early for this. He doesn't respond, that's exactly what I thought.

"You need this job honey and you are going to get it."

"This job is not for man. Where have you seen a male receptionist?"

Mutho o unakana guri kisitlayena.(this person thinks am a fool)

"Baby then you will break the Guinness World Record and we will receive a lots of money. Think about it we will buy a house in Dubai and a yacht. My brother doesn't own a yacht in fact no one in my family owns a yacht you will be the first person I know who owns one..."

I stop blabbering and break down. I can't help it I sob out loudly. I've been strong for such a long time and I can't do it anymore, i drifted apart from my parents because of him but he's not contributing anything in this relationship. I throw everything in sight at him, I'm fed up with him. I take "I love you" as a promise and I don't break promises.

6

Langa

God, please help me get this job I only

have R400 in my bank account and it's for getting my nails done. They look awful, old habits die hard I should have stopped biting my nails when my 7th-grade teacher warned me. I walk inside the enormous building and take a lift to the third floor.

Everywhere I turn people keep staring at

me and now am nervous and my heart is beating fast. I should have worn flat

shoes. I hope Kwame is not looking for

me and posting my pictures all over the

internet.

When I get to the third floor the stares get worse. When I stare back the person

doesn't even bother looking away. It's a

staring competition but not a fair one it's 20 or more people against one. A

pregnant lady is standing at the reception desk. If you do well for your interview Langa will be her replacement. I greet her and she tells me I look more gorgeous in real life. I guess that's why I have been getting stares since I entered this building but it's not like I have a body or face to die for is just simply beautiful. Not the type that would win a beauty pageant without make-up. I thank her and she lets me in without asking any questions. I have a lot of problems and I dress nicely because I told myself that no matter what I refuse to look like my problems. I owe my landlady two months rent, the only food I have at home is noodles, my breakfast has been garri for three weeks, my phone's storage is almost full, I have a lot of Facebook notifications that I never get time to remove and these people are adding to my problems by staring at me. It's difficult to walk with my head held high.

A lady blocks my way.

"Mam, may I please pass?" I ask politely smiling at her.

"What are you doing here?" she inquires her voice is filled with hatred.



I don't even know her. Hating someone you just met doesn't make sense to me "I'm here for the interview for the receptionist opening."

"You are later," she says.

What's this one's problem? I look at the time on my phone am only like 5 minutes ok 30 minutes late.

"There were only three candidates chosen for the interview you were supposed to be the second candidate to be interviewed but you decided to be late. The third candidate just left now so you better leave before I can the security."

This doesn't make sense there's a certain order that people are interviewed. If she doesn't tell me she's joking am going to I cry.

"Sthembile what's going on here?" a handsome man asks.

"She's late for her interview and now she's forcing me to let her in," Sthembile says.

This biatch doesn't deserve such a

beautiful name. The guy turns his attention to me. The moment our eyes lock he freezes, he looks shocked. He briefly touches my hand as if to check if I'm real.

Msebe

As I'm busy with the HR discussing which candidate is suitable for the job the door of the boardroom opens and closes. I look up only to see the most beautiful woman in the universe. The woman of my dreams not figuratively but literally. The woman I've been dreaming of every day for five years is still in front of me looking breathtaking. My heart skips a beat, she looks like she wants to cry and I don't like seeing her like this. In my dreams, she's always happy and that's how I want to see her. For a moment I think am hallucinating.

"What is the meaning of this insolence?

Where you were not taught how to knock?" Lauren yells.

Good, that means am not daydreaming

but she has no right to take to her like  
that.

"Lauren calm down," I say. "Mam how can we help you?"

"I'm here for the interview," she says, her

voice is officially the most beautiful voice I've ever heard. I can  
spend the rest of my life in bed listening to her speak.

Because I'm a man in love and I want to

see this beautiful lady every day, I say

without thinking

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" You got the job."

Her face instantly lights up and she

screams with her hands over her mouth.

"What?" Lauren shouts in disbelief. "What are you doing Mr.  
Zulu?"

Honestly, Lauren, I don't know but this

feels right.

"Come back tomorrow at 10 a.m. to sign the contract."

I go to her and hand her my business card, our hands slightly touch.

"Sir you are serious?" she asks.

"Make sure you are on time tomorrow?" | say and she leaves. As soon as she shuts the door closed I miss her already.

"Mr. Zulu this is not a beauty pageant.

Everyone deserves a fair chance!"

"Lauren don't yell at me wena mfazi ndina. I won't tolerate any disrespect from you, my decision is final. Get out of my sight!"

Thomas Ingram

His childhood was not all cupcakes and

rainbows like Nandi's childhood was. He

was raised by a single mother who had to work two jobs to be able to provide for him. His father was a junkie who died along with his little sister who was five years old when he was ten. It was his father's fault that Simone died he went to buy drugs from his dealer with her and they were both shot by a drugdealer his father owed. Little Simone died on the spot and

his father died two days after being hospitalized. A part of him blames himself for her death. Simoné had chicken pox so she couldn't go to creche, his mother asked him to look after her and she would come back early from work. But he refused he had a important math paper to write which he wouldn't miss for anything. After his sister's death he couldn't cope at school. He made friends with bad company and he started smoking drugs. He didn't care about school anymore, it was the main cause his sister's death if he had just done what his mother asked him to do his sister would still be alive. He would bunk school for three days in a week and he quit playing sports.

That same year he lost his bursary.

Many girls had a crush on him in high school because of his good looks and deep blue ocean eyes. Nandi is a very beautiful woman, she rarely went

unnoticed. She's naturally slender and has pretty skin- dark and clear. When they began dating it wasn't about love it was about what he could gain and achieve by being with her, but he eventually fell in love with her. There was a lot to love about her, apart from her physical features she had an amazing personality. Thomas's family didn't support interracial

relationships he was the first person in his family to date a black person. But they liked Nandi because they thought she was good for him since she came from a family that was well known for being wealthy.

Things have never been smooth in their relationship not with Nandi constantly

nagging him to get a job. But for the past few weeks her behavior towards him is always bitter. She's naturally a moody person but her mood swings have gotten worse. He just hopes she's not pregnant she can't afford to do another abortion, God will definitely not forgive them this time. The first abortion is one of the reasons her mother despises him.

Last week she threw him out, told him to take his trash and come back when he has a job. He begged for forgiveness but her mind was already made up. He took his clothes which were in a black disposal bag and walked around town confused not knowing where to go. His mother lives with his grandparent's farm in KwaZulu-Natal, their house was repossessed.

Luckily, he bumped into Musa his old

school friend who offered to let him stay in his house for a few days. Later in the evening Nandi called and accused him of cheating and demanded that he comes back home.

Back to the matter at hand Nandi has

been there for him through thick and thin the least he could do is get a job to make her happy, even if it means working with her brother who looks down on him every chance he gets. He's tired of arguing with her day and night. He holds her hands tightly and they look into each other's eyes.

"Nandi am sorry. I promise you I will get a job," he says.

"Tom that's what you always say. I'm tired of your empty promises."

"Let's go for the interview in your brother's company now."

He stands up and she looks up.

"Really."

"Yes."

"Tom are you sure about this."

"Yes, let's go before I change my mind."

He chuckles.

"You wouldn't dare."

She's happy but she tried to hide it. You never know with Thomas he could change his mind because she's happy. He pulls her into a tight hug.

"Thank you my love," Nandi says.

"Anything to make you happy my bokkie."

Really. This share a passionate kiss. He drags his lips over her jaw to kiss her along her neck. She moves away from him.

"No, we are already late. Let's save that for later."



7

Langa

If this is a dream please don't wake me up. This job is the best thing I've ever achieved without anyone's help. With the qualifications that I have my chances of getting that job were slim. Yes, I studied psychology for three years but I dropped out after failing the first semester of my fourth year. I also passed high school with a PHD, passed high school with difficulty. From a young age school was not for me. I remember in primary school I used every opportunity I got to skip school.

To celebrate my success I went to get my nails done. After going through the catalogue for 30 minutes I settled for nude nails thinking they were cheap. Because I am me I didn't even bother

checking the price I only found out they were exactly R400 when they were done. I was like perfect now I don't have money to go back home. When I came here I told myself I would be independent but I was stranded so I put my pride aside and asked Maqhawe to fetch me. I've been sitting here for about fifteen minutes now am sure the waiters are wandering wants my problem. For the first 10 minutes I read through the menu now am on Pinterest. I send him a text asking where he is now. The weather hasn't changed it has only gotten worse. When I get home am watching TV with a huge blanket wrapped around my body. I look for workout routines I can do in bed, I don't remember the last time I worked out.

Someone pulls the chair across mine and sits. I know he's a guy because of the smell of his cologne, Burberry Brit Rhythm. I resist the desire to look at him, I told myself that I won't look at him until he says something and that's exactly what I'm going to do. I can feel his eyes on me.

"Good afternoon mam," he says.

I finally raise my head. Yhoo go away!  
don't have enough money to become a  
sugar mama he doesn't look older than  
21. He's smiling like a retard showing his dimples.

"Hello," I respond faking a smile.

I don't want to seem rude maybe he's  
here for something else not what I think.

"How are you?"

"I'm good thanks and how are you?"

"I'm awesome, I thought Meagan Good  
was the most beautiful woman in the  
universe until I saw you. The moment I saw you I couldn't  
breathe"

"Thank you."

He bites on his lower lip still smiling. I  
keep a straight face and stare back at  
him.

"Can I help you with anything?" I enquire.

The sooner this conversation ends the better.

"Do you have a pen?"he enquires.

"Yeah," I say taking it out of my bag.

I hand it to him and he writes something on his hand.

"Oh.. It's out of ink."

"What? I bought that pen yesterday."

"It doesn't work! Well, you try it.. write your number here."

I can't help it but smile.

"Sorry boy, if you are looking for someone to accompany you to your matric farewell you came to the wrong person. I have a tight schedule."

He laughs.

"By the way my name is Hungani Khoza.

Do you mind telling me your beautiful name?"

Maqhawe walks in looking angry. He

finally sees me and comes to the table we are sitting in. I look up at Maqhawe he's shaking his head in disapproval.

"If I can't get your name, can I at least get your number?"  
Hungani says.

"Yey wena mfana go play with your age  
mates," Maqhawe says.

Hungani looks scared. If I was in his  
position I would also be scared Maqhawe looks scary even  
when he smiles he still looks scary.

"Always remember you can make a nigga drop dead and am  
down for you."

Little boy. He leaves. Maqhawe is  
annoying I didn't even get to tell him my  
name. I will keep this piece of paper to  
remember him with it.

I like Maqhawe he minds his own  
business. He doesn't ask me about  
Hungani. We buy take aways and head to my apartment.

"How is Joburg treating you?"he asks.

"It's good. I got a job today."

"Oh.. there's something I've been meaning to tell you."

Tell me then.

"I spoke with mama about you and we came to an agreement that you will move to KwaZulu-Natal."

I keep quiet because I don't know what to say.

"I can't move there."

"Is it because of that small boy. Langa your little brother is his age."

"This is not about Hungani. I want to be independent and am learning to survive on my own."

"Is that why you'd rather stay hungry and not ask for my help. You know your landlady could have harmed you for not paying on time."

Mbalenhle.

"Langa this is not negotiable. You are moving to KZN if you like you can drag Hunger or whatever his name is with you. I don't care as long as you are in KZN."

\*\*\*\*\*

Maqhawe insisted on walking me in. We haven't spent lot of time together but this conversation is the best I've had with him even though he has lame jokes. I suspect there's something happening between him and Mbalenhle. He doesn't call or visit me often, where does he get the time to talk with Mbalenhle about my life? The moment I enter inside our apartment am met by the most traumatizing scene I've ever seen. I will never forget this in my enter life it will haunt me forever , you know how the nasty things you've seen always stay in your mind. Every time the word sex comes into my mind this is the first thing I will think about. Who does such in the sitting room? The Man is groaning

while pushing Mbalenhle's head closer to his manhood. The thing is in her mouth.

I try to stop Maqhawe from entering but he's already inside. He looks furious and disgusted, I think he's going to leave but no he goes to them. He pulls Mbalenhle away from the guy by her weave. It is so big. I'm stuck on the floor not sure what to do. I want to look away but curiosity gets the best of me I want to see the whole drama unfold.

"Yini ubufebe Mbalenhle! I do everything for you wena ubizi!.." Maqhawe yells.

The guy is not fighting back he will kill him.

"Maqhawe leave him! I'm sorry we didn't do anything," Mbalenhle says through her tears. "Langa don't just stand there do something."

"Maqhawe do you want to go to prison?!" | yell.



Now I have to go there. Remind me to drink sleeping pills tonight I won't be able to sleep at all. I try to push Maqhawe off the guy.

"Maqhawe how are you going to explain why you hit this guy to your wife?" | ask.

"You want to leave me brother less, I just found you I can't lose you. Please stop!"

I'm also crying now.

"Wena nja leave! I don't want to see you here again."

The guy grabs my black fleece blanket from the couch and rushes out. He better have left wallet so I can replace it, that's the only one I have.

Maqhawe slaps Enhle and she falls on the floor. This won't happen not in my presence.

"Maqhawe stop!"

"Mbalenhle don't I sastify you!"he yells pulling her hair.

"Doesn't your wife satisfy you Maqhawe?" Mbalenhle.

He slaps her again, pulling her hair harder and she screams louder.

"Maqhawe stop! You are hurting her."

"Langa stay out of this," Mbalenhle says.

Maqhawe looks at me like he had

forgotten that I was here. He gets up

takes his car keys and comes to me. I

don't want to near me. He wipes my tears with his hands. I don't want him near me | fear him right now. I don't trust man who are capable of beating woman.

"Ngiyaxolisa MaZungu, you weren't

supposed to see that," Maqhawe says.

\*\*\*\*\*

She's in her bedroom and I can hear her

crying. When she stops crying I knock and let myself in before she can give me permission.

"Are you good?" I know it's a stupid question but I don't know how to start the conversation.

"Should I call the police?"

"Really Mazungu, you'd arrest your brother for me. Don't you know blood is thicker than water."

"I'm against gender based violence. I don't care if he's my brother or not he shouldn't have hit you."

"I'm fine I will deal with him myself."

"Mbali you should leave him not because he hit you but he's married."

"Langa I love him. I won't leave him for anyone or anything. You know in my past relationships I didn't care what my partner thought about me but with Maqhawe I care. I do everything to impress him, he's the one I know it."

I'm not sure how to put this the phrase there are many fishes in the sea is for happy moments.

"Mbalenhle there are many men out, there are better..."

"Did you get the job?"

Great now she's changing the topic. I say a low yes. When I leave the room she starts crying again louder than before. It may have begun in tears but it surely won't end with happiness.

8

Thomas

"Nandi please stop pacing around, I'm trying to think."

She stops and gives him an intense stare, tears fall from her eyes. She settles on the couch next to him.

"Thomas, why does my family hate me so much? First it was my parents now it's my brother. He promised he'd be always there for me," Nandi sniffs.

"Nandi he loves you more than anything in this world. He pays for our rent, car

insurance and sends us money when we are in need. What do you mean he doesn't love you?"

She looks at him in disbelief. He should be on her side.

"That girl has been in his life for a few hours but he chose her over me. She's already replaced me in his life."

"Nandi there's no such thing, you are his sister and she's his soulmate. And he

gave me a job as a security, it might not be fancy but it pays the bills."

He was trying to convince himself that he would cope with being a security guard. He always told himself that he'd never stoop low to doing work that didn't require high qualifications but he had no choice he wanted to live in peace with Nandi. He told himself he'd be looking for a better job in the meantime and if he doesn't find

it he will do everything in his power to lose the job. What will his friends and former school mates say? Sbongiseni Mavuso the accountant at Mageba logistics was a boy he used to mock for getting low marks in pure Maths and encouraged him to quit it. He will have to work with the fear of Sbongiseni seeing him.

"What if you get hurt?"

"Nandi that's a really stupid reason for me not to take this job. Every job has it's own risks."

There was no use arguing with him his

mind was already made up. Her head was aching. She went to take her pills and went to take a nap. Thomas was glad their argument didn't end with Nandi throwing things at him and crying her eyes balls out.

He woke up at midnight, patted Nandi's bedside it was empty. He went to the bathroom to do his business. The lights were not on which made him wonder where Nandi was. It's unusual for her not to be in bed at this time, she normally sleeps until 9. He went to drink water in the kitchen and didn't see Nandi anywhere. The clock on the wall said it was 3 am. He switched the lights in every room in the house but there was no sign of Nandi. After looking in all the places he could think of he called Stephanie the lady that stays in the

apartment across theirs. She usually has snack parties with her while listening to Stephanie's boyfriend's songs whose a hopeless upcoming be artist. Stephanie tells him she hasn't seen her since Sunday and he apologizes for waking her up before he hangs up. He changes into his tracksuits and goes looking for her.

He calls Msebe who answers when he's about to cancel the call.

"Yini wena," Msebe replies irritated, he didn't even check the caller id.

"Sorry for waking you up. I know..."

Thomas says at the verge of tears.

"Thomas you wake up to apologize for waking me up and well I don't like you, you accuse me of being racist."

"I'm sorry brother Msebe. It's just that..."

"Get to the point!"

"Nandi...she is.. Nandi is missing."

"What do you mean she's missing?"

"I can't find her."

They have been looking for her around town. She left her phone, car keys and there's nothing missing from her belongings. She didn't leave a note or letter. When they contacted the police they were told to call after 24 hours.

Msebe has people looking for her every where. They doubt that she has made it of town since she's walking. One of their neighbors enters.

"She's on the roof," he tells them.



This must be some sick joke

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they have

looked for this person for hours now only to find out she's at the roof. They

hesitantly follow him. And they find her

sitting on the ledge with her legs hanging. She is just two inches away from falling her death.

"I tried telling her to get off but she

refused," the neighbour says but they are not paying attention to him.

Their eyes are focused on Nandi. Is she

trying to commit suicide?

"Nandi what are doing?" Msebe whispers walking slowly to her.

"Naartjie please get off."

He can't lose her she's the only sibling she has and their parents would be broken..They might pretend not to care about her but they love her. They are holding their breaths not sure what to do? What if he gets close to her and she decides to fall.

Nandi slowly gets off. They sigh in relief.

Msebe hugs her tightly.

"Naartjie what's wrong? Why do you want to commit suicide?"

"I wasn't committing suicide I was getting fresh air."

"Well, ngane ka Mageba your type of fresh air can lead you to the grave."

"Bhuti am serious it's not what it looks like?"

"I don't care. Let's go."

Msebe holds her hand firmly and takes her to his car. When they reach the first floor Nandi asks, "Where are you taking me."

"Somewhere safe. What if you decide to get "fresh air" again when your lousy boyfriend is asleep?"

Langa

I'm up at 3am looking for the perfect outfit to wear for my first day at work. I'm not up because am excited or something I'm just that way I wake up once or twice at midnight and sleep again, no matter how late I sleep I always wake up early. As am going through my wardrobe not really sure what am looking for a bag falls down. When I pick it up a book drops from the bag. I don't own any books I wouldn't waste my money on buying a book not in this lifetime, it's my mom's- Pride and Prejudice. This book is one of the books | took from the collection my mother had she had more than 800 but I was only able to take 10 that were her most favorite. A tear burns my cheeks I wipe it I don't want to cry because if I do I won't stop. I've been holding it all inside because I don't have a shoulder to cry on and in Ghana | had to stay strong for Ashanti. I haven't spoken to him in a while, am still gathering the strength to tell him about my true identity. I feel like a spy in a movie.

I'm woken up by my alarm at 7:30 am and I get ready for work. I look in the mirror and I can't help but feel proud of myself. I'm learning to be independent and getting a job was the first step. On my 21st birthday the day before she died my grandma said "Obughi onye obula churu zebra ka o jidere ya kama onye jidere ya" which means not everyone who chased the zebra caught it

but he who caught it chased it. Even though I got the job easily but I still sent my CV to them and went to the interview. I can't let Maqhawe force me into going to live in KZN. When I reach the sitting room I find Mbalenhle sitting with my legs crossed on the couch, she has a can of hunter's dry in her hands. It's her favourite alcohol when we go grocery shopping she always buys 2 packs.

"Have you eaten?" | ask.

Oh no...she has a blue eye.

"Mbalenhle did you see your face?" | half shout.

She looks at me with a wide smile and yells, "Lady Gaga!"

"Mbalenhle you really need to get him arrested."

"Langa you are dressed to kill honestly am proud of myself I taught you well."

Mbalenhle is like that she exaggerates everything thing am just wearing formal pants and a blazer with a t-shirt underneath nothing special.

"You look like the CEO girl. Stand there I want to take a picture and send them to your brother."

"Let's not talk about that one you two make me angry."

I want to ask how long they have been seeing each other but am not the type of person who likes meddling in people's businesses.

"Please don't hate him for what he did to me. He loves you, you should see the way he smiles when he talks about you. She's my only sister nkosazane yakwa Zungu," she says the last part mimicking my brother's voice.

I eat breakfast with her telling me about how a wonderful man my brother is.

"Mbalenhle may you please borrow me money for taxi fare."

"Give me your banking details," she says

taking her phone.

"Don't you have cash."

"Unfortunately I don't."

How am I going to get to work now?

"Why don't you ask Maqhawe to take you to work?"

"I'm angry at him."

"Why?"

Mxm.

"I think I should ask for a lift from my boss," I drop on the couch and laugh at my stupid idea.

"Yes call him."

I just knew she would support it. She's the queen of stupid ideas.

"What are you waiting for you going to be late?"

"I don't want to lose my job before I even start working."

"Isn't obvious to you that he likes you.

Who hires a person they know nothing about? You don't even have a 3 years

experience of washing dishes.

I'm not good at rolling my eyes but I roll

them anyway. Even though it's true am

offended. I hope he didn't hire me

because he likes me. But he's my only option so I take his

business card and call him.

After interrogating me his assistant gives me his personal

number. I dial it but fail to press to call button. We stare at each

other until she decides to take matters in her own hands and

presses the button. Great. I end the call before he answers it.

Mbalenhle gives me the what the fuck are you doing look. He

calls me back I wait for Doja to start singing before I reply. He

doesn't say anything I also don't say anything.

"Khuluma,"he says.

I guess he's telling me to talk because I

know when you greet you say sawubona.

"Hey," Mbalenhle gives me a look and

mouths like really. "Oh..I mean good

morning Sir."

He clears his throat.

"Miss Langa how are you?"

"I'm fine thanks and how are you Sir?"

"My morning started off on a bad note but hearing your voice changed everything."

I stop myself from hanging up. There's nothing special about my voice in fact it's kind of a bit hoarse.

"Thank you Sir."

Silence.

"Sir I was wondering if you could give me a lift to work. I don't have money for

transport, that's if you wouldn't mind."

"It's fine just send me your location and I will be there in a 20 minutes.'



9

Langa

He gets here 30 minutes late but I get it he lives in Alberton and I live in Pretoria

North. I sit in the backseat I don't want to seem forward. I greet him again I don't know what to say to him.

"Thank you again Sir."

"My pleasure Miss Langa."

After the long awkward silence he speaks.

"Miss Langa may you please tell me more about yourself?"

We are having the interview in his car.

"I like to think of myself as a hard-working person. I don't have any work experience but I will do my best in...'

This is harder than I thought all I can think of is I will do my best in answering the calls. I don't know much about what

receptionist's do. He laughs ,a nervous

laugh.

"My name is Msebe, Msebe Zulu. Please stop calling me Sir."

Thank goodness, imagine a whole former princess calling someone sir day in and day out.

"Thank you Msebe."

"I didn't get time to eat breakfast may I please pass by mugg and bean."

I feel guilty.

"Yes."

As expected he buys breakfast for me too. We chat while eating he's trying too hard to make me laugh which makes me think back to what Enhle said. He better not be interested in me. A man of his age is most definitely ready to settle down and I want to travel and live my life to make up for all the years I spent living in a palace doing nothing.

"Thank you for the lift Sir..sorry Msebe."

"You can call me anytime you need a lift."

We signed the contract I wanted to ask

why he gave me this job but I couldn't

infront of Mrs Morgan. The intense stare she was giving me at some point I thought she would jump on me and stab me with the pen she held tightly.

Being on my feet all day is harder than I

thought. I need to ask for a chair really my feet are burning I should have worn flat shoes. I didn't make any friends and

Msebe's assistant was making fun of me. I guess Mbalenhle was right about me looking like Lady Gaga and Sthembile or whatever her name is should be careful one of these days I will come looking like Beyonce. Even though I don't know why she hates me I don't care am not money.

"Honey I'm home!" | yell.

My stomach growls when I inhale the

smell of the food. Mbalenhle is a great

cook and compared to me she's a world

wide famous chef.

"Hey darling, you in a good mood. How

was your day?" Enhle.

"It was amazing. I can't believe I have haters on my first day at work."

"Chill baby. Haters gonna hate. Wena just buy him or her flowers every chance you get."

I laugh. This girl is crazy.

"What are you cooking? Where did you get money?"

"I'm cooking rice and mince meat and I have a man."

I roll my eyes.

"I envy you, am tired of sitting here all day doing nothing. I can't wait for the schools to reopen."

"And when thy do you will be complaining day in and day out how you never get a break."

"Maqhawe said I should quit working and he will give me girlfriend allowance."

I'm not going to entertain this one. I go

freshen up.

After eating I wash the dishes. I pick up a paper on the floor it's a pamphlet with

different shapes of noses. Enhle is on her phone like usual.

"Enhle what's this?" I ask.

"Oh..that is a pamphlet I got from a plastic surgeon. I'm getting a new nose."

I frown.

"What's wrong with your current nose?"

"I want a cute nose. Have you seen your sister-in-law's nose it's perfect, they say everyone has flaws but that girl doesn't?"

My poor sister-in-law not only is my

brother cheating on her she's now part of a beauty competition without her

knowledge.

"Mbalenhle don't change yourself if

Maqhawe truly loves you, he will love you just the way you are."

"Which one do you think suits me best?"

It may be unbelievable but she's a

qualified LO teacher. Before I say things | will regret later I go to bed.

"Langa! Langa!"

I turn to look at her.

"I'm not the only one whose changing baby girl. You can't be dating that gorgeous man and wear those bum shorts you call panties."

"I'm not dating him

" I defend myself but

she doesn't believe me. Even I would would believe myself am smiling widely.

Come to think of it Msebe and Langa doesn't sound nice.

"And I'm not fucking a married man."

\*\*\*\*\*

It's been only three days since I began working but things are already akward

between me and my boss. Quitting is not an option I love the feeling of waking up every day and going to make my own money. Yesterday I went to deliver a message to him, while admiring his office a beautiful drawing caught my attention, it's the only one in his office. When I got closer I realized it was a drawing of me on my 21st birthday.

"Where did you get this drawing?" I asked.

"I drew it myself."

"Where did you get my picture?"

"I dreamt about it," he replied hesitantly, "I have been dreaming about you for years now."

I thought he was messing with me. But

when he showed me all the other pictures he drew of me I was perplexed. I know it sounds absurd but he actually drew 30 or more pictures of me in that outfit. It can't be that he was there during my birthday it was a private celebration.

Things went south when he confessed his love for me, I walked out of his office. Every time I see

him that's all I think about. The feeling is

mutual but am indecisive. Letting him into my life could be the most life changing decision I have ever made, what if I wake up one day and regret rejecting him. Why did Romeo and Juliet have to start this love at first sight thing? Last night I barely slept tossing and turning all night thinking about him. He's all I want in a man he's tall, dark and cute in fact cute is an insult he's beautiful. But am sure girls throw themselves at him, considering how most man are I bet he knows all types of panties.



10

Msebe

Physically I'm at work but mentally I'm at home. I have spent hours doing research on bipolar disorder but I can't find what am looking for. Thomas makes my sister happy but he's useless couldn't he see the signs, if it wasn't for the incident on the roof she would probably have committed suicide by now it would not be her first

time but I can't bare living with the fear of my sister killing herself.

Nandi was diagnosed with bipolar disorder when she was in highschool. Our parents did their best to ensure that she got proper treatment and a good psychologist. As soon as she got better she quit the treatment going against the doctor's orders. I can't lose the only sibling I have when I was told my mother was expecting her by my aunt I was beyond angry, not only because it was the end of my days of being the only child but I was mad because I wasn't informed by the new addition to our little family. I mostly had white friends in pre-school and I

remember very well Andrew's parents bought him a cake with a baby picture to inform him about the baby. I couldn't get why my parents would hide the pregnancy from me. I loved her the moment I saw her and I promised to take care of her.

How many times must I tell her to stop barging into my office?

"Sthembile can't you..."

"Msebe, learn some respect. You can't speak like that to someone you owe a favour," David interrupts me.

I need to put a stop to his unannounced visits.

"David go to a vacation, it seems like every chance you get you come to my office," I say.

David is one of my childhood friends. He comes from a filthy rich family, I bet even his ancestors have never seen rainy days.

His grandparents died and they left him great inheritance so he doesn't work.

"Firstly you kept me waiting for hours at the reception because you don't want to be disturbed. You forget I own half of this company with you included."

All because he stopped Sthembile from chasing Langa away, now he believes he's the one who brought us together. We are meant to be one way or the other our paths were going to cross.

"Thank you. I appreciate your help. But you have everything you need."

"I want you to name your first son after me."

Very funny hilarious. Trevor Noah. If I wasn't feeling down I would be laughing my lungs out.

"That's not happening, not in a million years."

"Why not? I will be his godfather."

"I'm not going to have children," he knows am lying. He's the one whose never wanted to have a family of his own.

"Mfowethu are you fine?"he inquires with concern, of all my friends he knows me better.

I'm a talented liar but it's hard to lie

to him not only is he my best friend but he studied to become an attorney.

"It's work, the work load has increased."

He doesn't believe me.

"Mmmmm. When is the wedding day?"

I chuckle.

"I don't know if she's playing hard to get or what but I love her I really do."

"Chase your dreams mfana sendlini."

"Last night I dreamt about your white Rolls Royce."

He laughs," Keep dreaming. You need

some time off work so I came to tell you that you and Mrs Zulu are going to on a vacation to Cape Town with me. I will tell you when once the plans are finalised."

Before I can protest he's already leaving.

A minute later there's a knock on the door, and Langa enters.

"Good afternoon Sir."

I chuckle I guess I didn't make myself  
clear when I told her to stop calling me  
Sir.

"Afternoon Miss Langa."

"Sir I was told you sent for me."

This has David's name written all over it.

Sigh. Seeing my sister in the state she's in pains me but Langa's  
rejection pains me even more. I won't give up. Gold is always  
buried in the bottom of the earth covered in rocks

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to get it you need to be patient and work hard.

"Sir are you fine?" she asks.

"Langa I told you to stop calling me that  
and am not fine."

My eyes keep going to her lips. I have

never wanted to kiss someone so badly.

She settles down on the chair across mine.

"What's the problem Msebe?"

I promised my sister I wouldn't but I tell her what has been happening to her.

"I'm so sorry Msebe. I will put her in my prayers, she will get better. Don't worry."

She squeezes my hands. I don't know when it happened but I'm now sitting on my chair next to her we are facing each other.

"Langa, nkanyezi enkulu kunazo zonke ngiyakuthanda."

"I didn't hear the first part," she says blushing, "I love you too."

"You love me too?" I ask with my eyebrow raised.

"Yeah but I can't be with you."

"Is there some one else in your life?" I try to disguise the pain in my voice.

"No. I'm just..I don't know am.." she stands up to leave but I pull her to me and kiss her. When she doesn't respond I try to pull away but she holds my neck and we kiss. The feeling is foreign yet amazing, I could do this for hours.

Langa

To say am nervous is an understatement .

I'm not really a shy person but these people might be my family I don't know how I will be expected to behave.

Everyone will be comfortable and I will that person everyone is trying hard to accommodate. After wearing my gloves | put on my fur coat and go to the sitting room. Maqhawe and Mbalenhle are

holding hands. Mbalenhle is blushing like a love struck teenager. People can make your life difficult how am I going to face Maqhawe's wife and share jokes with her knowing that my brother is cheating. You can't tell if Maqhawe is happy or not, I doubt that he loves her.

"I'm done, "I inform Maqhawe.

"I will see you when I get back," Maqhawe says to Mbalenhle.

She gives me a tight hug, I needed it but not from her. Not someone who can destroy my relationship with my family.

Maqhawe takes my suitcase because he's superman he doesn't push it he carries it.

I'm planning on coming back with him on Sunday this big suitcase is just for getting him off my back. I haven't talked to him since the day he beat Mbalenhle. Him and Mbalenhle are fine scratch that they are happy that's one of the reasons I don't poke my nose into people's business because they are now happy and am the one whose angry at Maqhawe.

"Do you want to get breakfast?"he



inquires.

I'm hungry but where are we going to get breakfast at 4am?

"MaZungu ngiyaxolisa sisi wami. I can do anything for you to forgive me," Maqhawe. (I'm sorry my sister)

"You are apologizing to the wrong person again," I snap and instantly regret it.

"Don't talk to me like that! And Mbalenhle is not angry I don't think it's necessary for me to apologize to her unlike you MaZungu you are dramatic."

"How I'm I going to form a relationship with your wife knowing that you are cheating on her?"

Relationships are built on trust and honesty how can you be dishonest to a

person you claim you love. I'm now crying not because he's cheating, I don't want to ruin the relationship I will have with my family. They are the only family I have now and Mbalenhle is not worth losing my family.

"Langa please don't cry, I will break up with her. I just..we just found you Langa

and you are my only sister. I want us to have a good relationship, please don't hate me."

"I don't hate you. I just despise dishonesty.

For the rest of the way we are quiet. We make a few stops before we arrive.

There are about 5 cars outside the homestead we are entering. The yard is big there are rondavels which I don't think are necessary considering how huge the main house is. People are coming out of the house surrounding Maqhawe's car. My palms are sweaty and my heart rate has increased

"They were expecting me?" I ask facing Maqhawe.

"Welcome home Langa Zungu," he says

11

Langa

I have been trying to fit my biological father into my mother's and the late King's love story and I've concluded she chose royalty and wealth over my father or maybe she wasn't in love with my father anymore. They met when she was on vacation with her friends they had no planned destination, they just wanted to explore Africa. She was attending the Akwasidae celebration where the King noticed her, when her friends left Ghana she stayed.

A month later she came to South Africa and informed her parents that the King wanted to marry her. Her parents told her that won't happen when they are still alive. She was always a rebel, her elder sisters married at the age of 19

they expected her to follow in their footsteps but she rejected every suitor.

Despite his wealth the King was already married and they wouldn't approve their

daughter marrying a man whose 12 years older than her who was from a foreign land. She requested her uncle to take the bride price on behalf of her father. Her parents didn't bother coming to the negotiations or the celebrations that followed before she left to Ghana. She's told me this story a multiple times always claiming that the King was her first love. What about my father? She never mentioned him.

They welcomed me in warm hands. I'm still a bit uncomfortable I just hope I will get used to them soon. They told me to feel at home. Apparently my nose looks like my late grandmother's.

"Bizo how is Ghana?" Nomalanga asks.

She's my cousin.

"Ghana is a nice country. Though it is less industrialized than South Africa growing up there was the best."

"I heard the people there are drop dead gorgeous."

I laugh.

"But no one has drop dead since I arrived."

"Mnxn. You know what I mean. And am talking about the guys."

"They are fine just many of them are dark."

"Kanti dark guys ain't your type?" she inquires raising her eyebrow, " Please get me the green peppers in the fridge."

"Not really.. I don't know I don't really have a type."

She frowns. I give her what she asked for and pour myself juice. A child enters and sits on the chair next to me.

"I'm Lisa but you can call me Lee. I'm a vegetarian," she sure does look like she's been a vegetarian all her life with those rabbit teeth.

"That's nice," I reply.

"I'm sure you're wondering why I became a vegetarian when most people like you wouldn't survive a day without meat?"

I give Nomalanga a questioning look she presses her lips surpressing a laugh. I don't want her hating me so I tell her to

tell me. I'm her aunt if she doesn't talk to me who else is she going to talk to. I try to concentrate as she blabbers about how it benefits her health and helps save the planet. Child God gave us permission to eat this animals please give us a break. I keep saying mhh from time to time to show that I'm paying attention. A woman passes the kitchen and gives Lee a thumps up, that gives Lee the courage to go into detail about her vegetarianism.

"Lee did you get the crown?" Nomalanga asks her.

"I did," she half shouts excited. "Noma it was the best experience ever seeing the heart break on all those brats faces when I was crowned miss teen Emalahleni was the best feeling ever."

Did she call Noma by her name?

"I'm sure they knew you were going to win," Nomalanga says.

"I felt like crying but I held my tears. Mom would have gotten mad at me she

ordered that make up from Kylie

cosmetics," she says like it's nothing big.

"You did good my child," Nomalanga.

"My celebrity crush bought me flowers it took so much self control not to jump on him and kiss him," her cheeks are red.

"Menzi this is why I hate bringing my children to the village! Now your good for nothing cousins are teaching her nonsense!" the woman I saw earlier shouts with her hands on her hips.

"Stop vomiting nonsense Nomaswazi," Nomalanga.

"How dare you call..." Nomaswazi grunts and she drags Lee away.

Baba requested to speak to me in private.

For some reason am scared. The sun is setting. I find him sitting on a chair rubbing palms together.

"Baba you sent for me.'

"Sit down," he says indicating the Reed mat next to him. Sigh. Who will help me up?

"There's no easier way to say this and I never prepared for this day

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" he burries his face with his hands. "I want you to know that this doesn't change anything you are my daughter I'm only telling you this because you deserve the truth. Your father loved your mother, he was a player back then but he wanted to settle down with her."

I fail to hold my tears I keep wiping them with the back of my hands but it's no use they keep flowing down.

"Where is he?"

When he doesn't respond I ask again,"

Where is my father?"

"He died months ago."

I sob loudly than I ever have. I have never been weak I'm always good in hiding my emotions but today they are out of control. I can't believe my father died without meeting me. I'm an orphan.



"Don't cry my daughter. I'm glad you found your way home," Bab'Zondo says.

Honestly speaking I miss Ghana, I miss my old life, my family, my sisters but this is where I belong. This is my rightful home the place my mother kept me away from since I was born. This is a new beginning for me.

Msebe

My mother is going to be mad at me for driving at night but I couldn't wait to see them. I wanted Nandi to come with me but she would rather be in Thomas's chest than be with her family. I instructed the security guard not to allow her to leave the house. When I left in the morning she was in a great mood she even agreed to go see a therapist when I got back to get her my house was a mess. She wanted to go to Thomas but I refused. She kept on trashing my furniture until it got physical. I have no idea what happened next I woke up with a pounding head ache and she

wasn't there. I'm beyond angry at her the woman who gave birth to me has never laid a hand on me and she has the guts to do that.

The gateman checks who I am before letting me in. They live in a village but I think they should put an electronic gate or an outside intercom. Luckily the lights are still on they usually sleep early. I check my wristwatch it's 9 pm, I actually arrived earlier than expected. I knock.

"Who is that?" my mother yells.

"It's me," I respond.

She chuckles, "Baba it's me is at the door."

It's not been that long and she has already forgotten my voice. Dad looks more surprised than happy to me. Mom hugs me tightly and pecks my cheeks after preaching about how unsafe it is to drive at night.

"Did anything happen?" my father asks concerned.

"Baba I just wanted to see you," I say.

I need to take a day off more often to visit them.

"You should have told me, I would have left an extra plate for you," mama says.

"I'm fine."

"Well my wife and I were about to go to bed," baba says standing up.

"Baba I found her," | blurt out.

I have been thinking of ways to initiate the conversation about her but I failed.

"You found who?" he asks confused.

"Langa. The one you've been looking for."

My mother starts ululating. I won't be surprised if MamNdlovu enters asking what's going on she is loud.

"When should we send the lobola letter?"

Retiring before 70 should be illegal.

12

Langa

Yesterday was exhausting I would be still asleep but Msebe decided to disturb my beauty sleep. Who calls at 3am to tell you that he loves you? I have decided to give him a chance. He has good intentions but I think we are moving too fast. He's already talking about getting married, I get that he's 32 but there's no need to rush things. Getting out of bed can be challenging on cold mornings, sometimes I ask myself why winter is my favourite season. Considering how it's silent not many people are awake. There's nothing i can do on my phone Msebe hasn't texted me as he promised the only this he does is call. His my first boyfriend I've never received much attention from boys, my father loved it that way sometimes I felt like it's because was a princess. I used to envy my best friend almost every boy in school was her friend or they wanted to date her.

I slept with Nomalanga in one of the

rondavels outside even though Bab'Zondo was against it, the rooms in the main house are occupied. It seems like all my

relatives came to welcome me. I wake up and look for something warm to wear. Nomalanga enters holding a mug she woke up long ago. She's already bathed, swept the yard she's a typical rural girl and definitely wife material.

"Good morning Langa," she says with a warm smile.

"How are you babes?" I say.

"I'm great. How did you sleep?"

"I slept like a baby but it could have been better if I didn't receive a call when I had just began dreaming."

"If he's going to wake us up late at night I will report him to Bab'Mkhulu. He's already dating his only daughter which is a huge crime on it's own," she says.

"Really," I say with my eyes widely open.

"If it was up to them woman in this family would marry at the age of 40 I had my daughter when I was 21- nine months after my memulo.."she laughs but I don't get the joke am worried that they will give Msebe a hard time. "You should have seen what your brothers did to my poor baby daddy. That was the last time I say him."she keeps sipping whatever is in her mug.

"They killed him!" I exclaim.

"No silly, they roughened him up and he left him. I've heard a rumour that he's married but he wouldn't."

He actually would her daughter is 5 years that means it's been 4 years since he left.

"Sorry for waking you up."

"Just make sure Maqhawe doesn't find out. I will prepare bathing water for you Konke wants to take you somewhere."

Konke is the second born.

When I'm done bathing I immediately go to Konke he's been waiting for half an hour the only thing I do slower than washing dishes is bathing. Every one is minding their own business, didn't these people come here for me? It's early in the morning and my uncle's are sitting around a fire one of them is drunk. Konke is

waiting for me inside the taxi he's already started it. I enter in the passenger seat.

"Good morning," I greet.

"Sawubona MaZondo," he says.

Konke is the least scary version of

Maqhawe and he's handsome. If

Maqhawe was the only man Mbalenhle

was seeing I would set up a date for them.

"How are you?" he enquires.

"I'm well and how are you?"

"I'm great," he looks around for

something. "I will be back. Please hide

when you see mama coming."

He's gone before I get the chance to ask

why. As am busy scrolling through my

phone someone opens door.

"Good morning baby," Mama says.

Konke will have to forgive me I didn't see her coming.

"Good morning Ma. How are you?"

"I'm good. You look beautiful, where are you going?"

"Konke didn't tell me where we are going."

Konke appears holding his wallet.

Suddenly I'm excited maybe we are going shopping, it's been long and I need that Prada clutch bag Nomaswazi came with yesterday. That bag costs more than my salary.

"Konke where are you taking my daughter she hasn't even had breakfast yet?" MaNgcobo asks.

"Mhh.. ma we are not going to take long.

We will be back before you notice we even left."

"That's not what I asked,"she's angry.

"Baba knows where we are going. We will back in time for breakfast and Langa is not hungry."

I look at him shocked me and not being

hungry he has to be kidding me. The usual time I have breakfast has even passed.

"Langa do you want to go?" MaNgcobo.

"Yes."



"Be safe. Konke look after my daughter if anything happens to her you will know me," she walks away.

"MaNgcobo and drama

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she watches

Nigerian movies too much."

I laugh.

Why are we in a taxi rank? If they are

chasing me away they should have let me take my bags. I'm staring at him with

confusion waiting for him to explain. He

parks the taxi next to the other ones that are not on the stalls.

"Why are we here?" I ask trying to hide that I'm disappointed. I know I could just tell Maqhawe I want the bag and he would buy it for me but I'm not good at asking people for things.

"This is where I work," he says.

I wonder why he's not working at the

family business Maqhawe told me about.

"You are a taxi driver."

"I'm a taxi owner. Bab'Mkhulu your father owned taxi's and when he died I took ownership of them, they are your inheritance. I spoke with Zondo and he said after your ceremony and when your surname is changed. Bab'Mkhulu's taxi business will be handed over to you."

"Why did you take over his taxi's instead of Maqhawe?"

"I was closer to him and I had experience of working in the rank from my teenage years. After getting my license I asked Bab'Mkhulu for a job as driver and he agreed. My parents weren't pleased but it was what I always wanted. He was and still is my role model."

I'm trying to form an image of him.

"He owned all of these taxi's."

"No he owns 15."

"How much are they all worth?"

"Bab'Mkhulu wasn't academically talented like my father. He worked hard to get enough money to buy his first taxi, getting a job isn't easy for educated people in this country you can just imagine how hard it is for an unemployed person."

I guess the apple didn't fall far from the tree. People always asked themselves why I wasn't fond of my books like my mother was I guess am my father's daughter.

"I don't want to sell his taxi's you can keep them I don't know anything about them."

"Don't worry I will assist you."

"Do you think he knew about me?" | ask  
blinking back tears.

"He didn't if he did he would have looked for you until he found you."

---

I'm sitting in the kitchen watching

Nomalanga prepare supper. I silently pray she doesn't ask for my assistance I don't want anyone questioning how my mother raised me.

"Where did you buy your weave?" Aunt Demazane, Nomalanga's mother asks.

"I ordered it from Brazil," I respond.

"It's beautiful, so where have you been all these years?"

I look down not knowing what to say. I

don't get why her question offends me |

mean it's a simple question right.

"My brother dies and you decide to show yourself."

"I recently found out about him."

"Really?" Aunt Demazane.

"Mama please don't," Nomalanga says.

"I'm tired of these gold diggers. I will get

rid of them starting with Nomaswazi wena if you know what's good for you you will disappear."

"Mama please stop. Langa can take care of herself,"  
Nomalanga.

"Is that so I don't think a receptionist can afford a long Brazilian  
weave."

"What can they afford?" I blurt out before  
can think about it. I hate being accused of something I am not.

"If you think you will have my brother's  
hard earned money forget about it. That  
won't happen while I'm still alive," she  
says. .

I stand up and go outside before things go wrong. I never react  
well to these types of things. I'm heartbroken that my aunt  
thinks am here because I want their money. What if that's what  
they all think?

"You are just like your father he believed  
the sword is mightier than the pen," Baba says.

I wipe my tears.

"All I wanted was to find my father I'm not here for his money."

"Don't mind Demazane, it's old age."

"May you please tell me about my father."

Later I receive a call from Ashanti. We haven't spoken since we parted ways after mother's funeral, I'm the worst sister on earth. I hesitate before answering it.

"Agysei," that's the first they he says.

That's the name my stepfather gave me,

it's been long since anyone called me by

it. When I changed my surname to my

mother I took Langa as my first name and kept Agysei as my second name.

"Hello Ashanti," I say.

He is crying, I close my eyes and swallow the lump in my throat.

"Baby are you fine?" | ask.

"How can I be fine Agysei, when all of you have neglected me," he says sounding pained. I hate that he's hurting because of me and I made him feel neglected. "It's not been a year since I moved hear and you..you have forgotten about me."

"I haven't baby. I've been busy with work

and getting my life in order," I say.

"Have you been busy to the point that you can't even text me? I'm transferring to Ghana next semester since my family can't love me when am far."

"Ashanti don't do that. I will visit you when I get money and I promise to call you every chance I get."

"Are you seriously using money as an excuse? Can't you use the money that Kwame has been refusing to send me to come?"

Why is Kwame not sending him money?

"Ashanti since mom died my life has been complicated and I can't speak about it through the phone. I love you Ashanti and I won't ever neglect you."

"I love you Agysei."

"When last did Kwame send you money?"

"Last month when he didn't send it this month I called to remind him but he refused to send it."

Even if he found out I'm not his blood sibling he must not cut off Ashanti. "May you please assist me with paying for my apartment?"

I want to ask why doesn't he use the money he got from his inheritance but I can't. I'm his elder sister I have to care of him.

"I will send you the money as soon as I get it."

"Thank you. Where are you?"

"I'm in South Africa."



13

Nandi

After she told Thomas what occurred

between Msebe and her, Thomas begged her to apologize to Msebe. That's not the reaction she was waiting for it angered her. She took a cab back to Msebe's house and the guard let her in without asking questions. Msebe and Thomas are the only family she has, why do they keep telling her what to do? She was glad that Msebe was gone when she got here, he is the last person she wants to see. Since

the day she arrived to his house he has

been pressurizing her to go see a

psychologist and she believes she doesn't need anyone evaluating her sanity or asking her to forgive herself whatever those doctors do.

"After everything I have done for Thomas, he keeps choosing others over me!" Nandi yells in frustration.

She's never been so angry in her life, the

anger she's had for the past weeks is

slowly consuming her. She easily gets

frustrated and breaks down. It takes

everything in her not to destroy the living room. She sits on the cold floor with her arms around her legs rocking herself.

"Sis'Nandi are you fine?" asks Mandisa, Msebe's helper.

When she doesn't reply Mandisa kneels next to her and brushes her back.

"Must I get you water?" Mandisa asked concerned.

"Go away," Nandi says.

She stands up and walks away hesitantly.

She saw what she did to Msebe, she doesn't want the same thing happening to her. She worked hard since high school to make sure her skin is clear. When she's at a safe distance away from her she turns to her and says, "Sesi there's someone at the door."

"Tell that person to go away."

"She said it's an emergency."

"She" that means it's not Thomas, she stands up wiping the tears off her face.

"Let her in," she rushes upstairs to wash her face. She looks at her reflection on the mirror and she feels like crying all over again. She looks nothing like herself, she has under eye bags and her lip is torn a little from biting it. She applies Vaseline and goes downstairs there's no time to put makeup she can't keep the guest waiting and it's not her business how she looks.

She finds Sthembile in the lounge with a glass of water. She's wearing a coat that reveals her thighs with stilettos. She should be the one Msebe takes to the psychologist who dresses like that in this type of weather?

"Hey," Sthembile greets with a forced smile. She didn't expect to find Nandi here, her presence could ruin her plan.

"Hello," Nandi says.

Sthembile keeps looking behind Nandi  
she's expecting Msebe.

"What do you want?" Nandi asks.

"Ummh.. I'm here to see Msebe,"

Sthembile responds.

Nandi is amazed she didn't know

Sthembile could pronounce Msebe she

has never called him by his name. Things change shem.

"He's not here," Nandi.

"Ok," Sthembile says disappointed.

"But I can deliver your message to him."

"It's not urgent, I will talk to him on

Monday. Bye."

"Why did you drive all the way here if it's  
not urgent?"

"It's fine," she says taking her bag from the coffee table.

"Ain't your legs cold?"

Sthembile rushes out.

---

Langa

My traditional ceremony was successful. I'm now Langa Agyse  
Zondo Bab'Zondo wanted me to change the name Agyse

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he hates it but I can't it's always going to remind me of my childhood where I come from. Maqhawe's wife is a humble and caring woman she was so kind to me at some point I thought about telling her about the affair but he's ending it. And Mbalenhle is not worth losing Ziyanda. I get why my friend did a nose job they say everyone has flaws but Ziyanda has no flaws. Out of curiosity I asked Maqhawe why he cheats on her and he didn't say anything. Why? Because there's no good reason for him to cheat on Ziyanda. The communication between Ashanti and I is better and he's coming to South Africa next month. Excited is an understatement I miss my mother's baby.

After talking to Msebe on the phone I go to the sitting room. He can't fetch me

today but at least he will pay back the money I used for the taxi fare. I find Mbalenhle sitting with her feet on the couch facing up that's been her daily routine since she got the surgery sometimes she sleeps on the couch.

Maqhawe is not allowed to see her, she looks so horrible her eyes are swollen she has bandages all over her face.

"Mbalenhle what does nginosi wami yakuphila mean?" | ask. Msebe knows | don't fully understand Zulu but he speaks to me in Zulu and doesn't translate.

"Langa if you are going to butcher my language like that I will send you back to Ghana, and please do yourself a favor and never tell anyone your name is Langa," Mbalenhle says, even in her worst state she's still a blabber mouth.

"Why?"

"Because Langa sounds like a name for a real Zulu maiden who grew up in a village called Mbuba fetching water from the river and they will speak to you ngesiZulu sempela thinking you call a door isicaba," Mbalenhle.

"Keep talking like that we will see who will feed you."

"And I appreciate your help babes."

"Actions speak louder than words."

"Don't worry when I heal I'm taking you to Thailand."

"Don't you have to wait for a year before you can travel abroad?"

"Langa, inhaling the air in Thailand won't damage my nose."

You can never tell even if she's involved in a little accident her face will be rearranged forever.

"I'm off to work see you when I get back."

"Langa please don't go," she begs.

As much as I'd love to I can't I haven't

been at work for a week, I might be dating the boss but I must respect my job.

"I will bring you chocolate."

I rush out before she blackmails me into staying with her. Maqhawe gave me a month to stay in Joburg I need to make the best I can of it. Sthembile is giving me a hard time at work if I don't come for another week she will make sure I get another warning, the first one I got was because Miss Lauren asked me to make her coffee and I didn't because I thought she was joking. I was surprised because it was not part of my job description.

---

"Langa please order donuts for me,"

Sthembile says.

No ,no! This isn't what I come here for. I could be at home watching Game of Thrones I've had enough of her



disrespect. Sometimes fighting bad with good doesn't work. I put away my nail filer and check the time on my phone, it's almost lunch time. I'm so excited Msebe is taking me out we rarely have lunch together he always has meetings to attend.

"Langa I'm talking to you," she snaps.

"Sthembile how are you?" | ask.

Whatever I did to this one is serious. If she doesn't tell me how I wronged her | don't get how I'm going to apologize to her.

"Can't you obey my instructions for once?

You aren't paid to file you nails."

"I'm paid to order donuts for you?"

"Langa just because you are sleeping with your boss it doesn't mean you own the company."

She's causing a scene now people are looking at us. I want to tell her how amazing he is in bed but I won't lower

myself to the level of arguing with this girl.

"When you are done get out of my sight."

"You should know that he doesn't sleep with you because you're special. You aren't the only one he sleeps with."

I'm hurt but I won't show her. If what she's saying is true Msebe I will scatter you. Three minutes later she's still standing with her hands on her hips staring at me. I give her a questioning look.

A couple holding hands approaches us. They are an interesting pair, I don't usually see a black person dating a white person the lady is formally dressed and the man is wearing shorts and a springbok's t-shirt. Before they even get the chance to greet Sthembile throws her arms around the guy, he doesn't return the hug. The lady rolls her eyes, she looks familiar. I've seen her in one of the pictures in Msebe's office she must be Nandi. When Sthembile finally of the guy Nandi clicks her tongue.

"Chill Nandi, I just got a little over excited," Sthembile says.

"You hug people when you are excited,"

Nandi says annoyed.

"You know Thomas is not my type, we are living in a material world and you know am a material girl. And we both know he can't afford."

"Is my brother in?" she asks looking at me.

"Yes."

She takes Thomas's hand and walks  
away.

14

Langa

"Msebe please remind me to never watch movies with you," I say annoyed.

"Who am I going to watch movies with then?" Msebe.

Msebe is unbelievable he invited me over to his house to watch Pirates of the Caribbean claiming he doesn't know it but since the first episode he's been telling me what's going to happen next.

"Let's watch something we have both never watched before," I say looking up at him there's little space between our faces.

He hates it when his mother calls him

baby but he behaves like one, most of the time when we cuddle he's always the one on top of me. Trust me he's heavy complained and he said," Indlovu

ayisindwa umboko wayo."

"I have never watched it before."

"But you seem to know everything that's going to happen next."

"Baby, I just can predict what's going to happen next."

Msebe is a serious man in the office am slowly getting used to this side of him and I must say it's interesting.

"You have watched this movie before, "I insist.

"I haven't, I've been waiting for someone special to watch it with."

I blush.

"Truth or dare."

He kisses me.

"Baby, I don't understand why you easily let go of things with other people but you can argue with me over stupid things all day."

"The relationship I share with you is different from the relationship I share with other people."

"You have watched the movie right?"

"You aren't letting this go, are you? I have watched this movie a million times."

"Why did you lie to me then?"

"I wanted you to watch the movie with me it's my all time favourite and I wanted to watch it with someone special to me."

"That's cute baby. Thank you."

This movie is boring I pretended to enjoy it for his sake but since I know he has watched it before I can't continue.

"Love I want to watch something else."

"Which movie should we watch?"

"Akelaah and the spelling bee."

He busts into a fit laughter.

"Teddy bear you can't be serious even my 13 years old niece doesn't enjoy watching that movie."

Is he calling me a Teddy bear? Does he know bears eat people?

"Any suggestions then."

"365 days?"

"As long as it doesn't have adult content."

"Teddy ain't you in your late twenties."

"I am but I don't want to pollute my mind."

He laughs.

"Pollute your mind, soon we are going to be sexually active you know."

"Not me

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we should watch a horror

movie."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely sure."

"Baby you don't look like the type that

watches horror movie's, I don't want you

to be traumatized."

This guy clearly underestimates me. I will show him that I'm made of steel.

I put my fears aside and suggest that we watch Us ,as soon it starts I'm holding onto him tightly. All my life I watched chick flicks | watched one horror movie and it haunted me for days to the point that my mother took me to church. I heard that Us is a less scary movie but you can never know with Ashanti he finds horror movie's fascinating

I shouldn't have watched that movie |  
can't believe I'm regretting it so soon. I  
can't sleep I keep hearing her voice and  
seeing her face the voice scares me more than what happens,  
I'm a huge fan of Lupita but I think her pictures on my  
phone need to go for a while. I open the  
torch on my phone and run as fast as I  
can to Msebe's room. He wanted us to  
sleep together but I refused, I'm just  
scared this is all new to me. Yhoo I will be marrying superman  
he's sleeping  
peacefully after watching such a scary  
movie. I get under the covers and place  
my head on his chest. He puts his arm



around my waist.

"Teddy bear didn't you say you think it's too early for us to sleep together."

"Not anymore, you made me watch a scary movie and I can't sleep."

"Teddy if you watch some of the horror movie's I've watched you'd wake up at a mental institution."

"Those movies aren't for me I'm not taking chances again. Why are you calling me teddy bear?"

"Because you are my cuddle buddy, your skin is soft and you are cute." I blush.

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Msebe

Don't people have timing. I tried ignoring my phone but it keeps ringing. The only person who I talk to at 3am is my baby

and she's sleeping in my arms. When she asked me to take her to her apartment | told her it was late even though she was against it she slept over. I've been trying to figure out why she refused to sleep with me I just hope it's not about what Sthembile said to her. We talked about it and she said that she doesn't believe her. If it wasn't for Langa I would have fired Sthembile.

I reach for my phone on the table next to my bedside I reply without checking who it is.

"Msebe Zulu speaking, hello."

"Mr Zulu there has been a break in at Mageba Logistics, "the person says.

What? That has never happened. I quickly get out of bed and look around for my clothes.

"Who is this?" I ask alarmed.

"I'm Herald from the security company," he replies.

I check the date it's July so this can't be an April's fool prank.

"Have you informed my father?"

"No Mr Zulu."

"Please don't, I will be there in a few minutes."

The thought that there's someone out

there planning to murder the only person | have ever loved causes my heart to beat faster than normal. Who goes through so much trouble to destroy a drawing worth nothing to others but everything to me? It

can't be to hurt me I can draw that woman all day. When I arrived at the office the police were already there. Every thing was still intact nothing was stolen the only thing that this person did was damage the drawing of Langa in my office.

My sister is in her apartment waiting for

Thomas, his knock off time was an hour

ago. I'm expecting her call I've recited

what I'm going to say to her about his

whereabouts. When the ambulance

arrived he was already dead this is exactly what she feared. The other security guard is no where to be found. I know she's not going to handle this well. She will hate me.

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Msebe

As soon as the police finished questioning me about possible suspects I went home, they suspect that it's someone from my company or someone who's been there and is working with the security guard.

They might be right because it's hard to

see the person in the CCTV footage he

knew exactly where the cameras are and avoided facing them and he was wearing a balaclava. I'm getting Langa a bodyguard her safety is my number one

priority.

I research body guard agencies

my heart won't be at rest until I find one,

then I remember I have a wealthy friend

who doesn't go anywhere without guards. He answers when I'm about to end the call I'm not surprised usually he doesn't even respond.

"Good morning David," I say.

"Mfowethu who wakes up so early. Has the sun risen yet?"

"Wake up it's already 7am the sun has risen."

"Rich people wake up at 11am."

"Rich person I need your help finding a good body guard for my wifey."

He laughs out loud.

"It's not been two months yet but you already obsessed to the point of stalking the poor girl."

"I would never do that. Someone wants her dead."

"What happened?"he asks concerned.

"I can't talk about it on the phone."

"Ohk I will send you the contact details of someone who can help you."

"Thank you mfowethu."

"Bye ngiyalala mina. Please don't call me," before I get the chance to reply he's already hung up.

I find her sitting alone in the dining table with a plate with food in front her.

"Hello baby," I greet her.

She pours sugar in her bowl and continues eating.

"How did you sleep?" I ask kissing her forehead. "I'm sorry I left you alone, I thought I'd be back soon."

"What if those people get me?" she says trying her best to sound angry. When it comes to me she likes throwing unnecessary tantrums. I laugh.

"I wanted to watch The Conjuring with you in cinema but since you need counseling for watching that movie you won't survive three minutes of it."

Langa

"Whatever. To answer your question my night was wonderful since I slept next to the love of my life."he blushes.

"Same here baby. What are we eating?"

"I'm eating food."

"May you please feed me,"he says his voice low, he thinks he can charm me into feeding him.

"Mr Zulu don't you have hands?"I turn away from him, he can't see me smiling.

"I have a girlfriend don't you know that a way to a man's heart is through his stomach. Please make me food."

Unfortunately that's not the case in our relationship and never will. Since we've been together I have avoided cooking for him. Mbalenhle complained about my eggs being crunchy meaning they have been together I have avoided cooking for him. Mbalenhle complained about my eggs being crunchy meaning they have shells, that was the last day I cooked.

"I'm not done eating."

"You are almost done, I will wait."

"Love I'm not used to cooking can we just order?"

"No I want a home cooked meal."

Msebe didn't finish half of the food I made for him. I'm not really offended because I know I'm not domesticated. I have been looking for online cooking classes or someone who will teach me how to cook. The sooner I learn the better my family won't eat take aways forever.

"Where were you?" | ask.

When I woke up he wasn't in bed he didn't even leave a note.

"Langa don't ever ask me that question

again." Let me guess it's because you

don't ask a man where he's coming from, I want to roll my eyes but I know it will add to his sudden anger.

"I'm sorry for asking, "I whisper.

"I was at the office someone broke in,

nothing was stolen but Thomas was

murdered."



To say I'm shocked is an understatement, he didn't seem like someone who had beef with anyone. From what Msebe told me about Nandi I doubt she will be able to deal with the news of his death.

"Have you told Nandi?"

"Baby I can't tell her, it will break her. It would have been easier if she was seeing a psychologist."

"But baby at some point she will have to know," I say holding his hand.

"I will make me a plan but for now I have to make sure she doesn't find out. Let me go and freshen up. You will accompany me to fetch her right?"

"I will."

It's not fair but I get why Msebe doesn't want to tell her if I lost Msebe I'd be beyond sad even though we've been together for a few weeks and a person with issues like hers won't think twice before jumping over a bridge.

Msebe

It's been less than a month since I met

Langa

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there's not much I know about her but I agree with Lauren working is not her thing. I tried convincing her to stop working but she refused.

"Come to think of it I have never seen her working it's either she's on her phone or busy with her nails," Lauren says clearly annoyed, if it was up to her she'd drag her out and make sure she never sets foot in this building.

"Lauren we need to be patient with her, it's her first job," I say.

"I had my first job when I was fifteen and I didn't behave like her."

Good for you. Apart from her lack of work ethic Langa is an amazing person and we have never received complaints from clients about her. I don't want anyone bad mouthing my future wife.

"If she doesn't get proper training I'm

giving her an immediate warning."

"Please call her to my office on your way out."

"But we are not done discussing the issue with the delivery trucks going to Kenya."

"Does Langa have anything to do with the delivery trucks because since you got here you have been talking about her not trucks?"

She stands up and leaves my office.

I'm trying to get rid of the fear of loosing

Nandi, she was with Thomas for a long

time the news his death could be the

death of her. When Langa told me to tell

her I told her I'd tell her after my mother's birthday party. I

need them to reunite having mama by her side might help her

deal with his death. I talked to Nandi about going home with

me and she agreed to say I was surprised is an

understatement it's been a long since she went home.

Thomas's death might be a blessing in disguise.

She knocks once and enters. I have

missed this beautiful face. Langa is a dark beauty and she is size 36 her body makes her look older than her age but she's perfect.

"Hey Mr Zulu you sent for me."

"I did?"

"That's what Miss Lauren told me."

"

"And here I was thinking you came here because you missed me.'

"I'm at work I don't mix business with pleasure," she sits on my lap.

"How is your day so far?" I ask placing her head on my shoulder.

"Work is hectic but I'm good. Before I forget Nandi called she calls me a lot these days asking about Thomas."

"What does she ask?"

"If you anything to do with his disappearance."

It hurts that she thinks I'd do something

bad to Thomas. Yes I hate him but the

love I have for her is enough to make me accept him and care about him.

"I've contacted his family, they transferred him to a mortuary in KZN. I'm lucky Ma's birthday is tomorrow I will get the chance to tell her before his funeral."

"Love I get where you are coming from but don't you think she will want to be part of the funeral arrangements."

"What difference does it make if she's part of the arrangements or not? It's not like they were married."

"Love it was just a suggestion. She will be less angry at you if you tell her earlier."

The one time I need Langa to keep her opinions or suggestions to herself she doesn't.

"Copy these papers," I hand her a stack of papers. She takes my wallet and heads to the door. I call out for her.

"You didn't use the magic word."

Consequences of working with someone you are in a relationship with.

Langa

My phone rings I ignore it. I've dealing with Msebe's mood swings for long now I can't deal anymore. My phone keeps ringing, it's an unknown number from Ghana. I hesitate before answering. Silence.

"Good day sister," a familiar voice says.

My heart rate increases. Where did he get my number?

"Hey," I reply.

"How is life there?" Kwame asks.

"Fine."

I'm not in the mood for small talks especially with him.

"I miss you the palace is not so warm without you."

I hang up. He calls again and I respond.

"I'm not calling to talk about us, I want us to make a deal."

Like there was ever an us.

"I'm listening."

"You don't tell anyone how your mother died and I continue providing for Ashanti."

"If I was going to tell anyone wouldn't I have done that a long time ago?"

"Good to hear that. Always know that you are welcomed here."

"Bye Kwame."

Msebe

I deepened the kiss. We should be out of bed if we want to arrive in KwaZulu- Natal before dawn. I'd rather be exchanging body heat with my woman but my mother would be angry at me she's so excited to see Langa. These days she only calls to talk about Langa. I kiss her neck and she giggles.

"Baby stop that's ticklish," she says

pushing me off her.

I lie next to her and she places her head

on my chest. Just a few minutes ago she was uncomfortable with being naked in front of me.

"We have a long way to go, we should get ready," she says.

"You've been to KZN?"

"Yes, that's where my father's family is from?"

She sits up and I do the same, I hold her hand.

"Thank you for loving me, I thank God for creating a wonderful human being like you and for your ancestors for seeing me fit enough to be your life partner. I had lost all hope of ever finding love but the moment I looked into your eyes you gave me hope. Ngiyabonga Langa lam."

She blushes. I kiss her cheek.



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Langa

[ A month later]

It's true that everything happens for a reason. Leaving Ghana was a blessing in disguise I wouldn't have met Msebe if I'd never come here. He's an amazing partner growing up I wasn't really the well-mannered child I always hoped I'd find a handsome husband whose well raised and well groomed who my children will take after, because I'm God's favorite child that's exactly what he gave me. He has sent a lobola letter to my family the negotiations will be held in KZN next week Thursday. MaNgcobo wants me to go home early so she can teach me the basics of being a Zulu wife. He has amazing parents, his mother is welcoming. I was shocked when I saw them it's really a small world I couldn't believe my future mother-in-law is the woman I spilled coffee on in the airport.

Last week we were celebrating Kwame and Nandi's traditional wedding. Msebe wasn't fond of the idea of his sister marry Kwame but his parents gave them their blessings. She dealt better with Thomas's death than we thought she even agreed

to see a psychologist. I've let go of the hate I have for Kwame's mother karma will deal with her, how people treat you is their karma; how you react is yours.

I have a bad feeling about this, there's nothing positive I have heard about clubs. It had been my wish to do something fun before being shipped to KwaZulu-Natal but going to a club is not my ideal type of fun. But Mbalenhle convinced me to go with her. She's celebrating her new status of being a house mistress. Yes, Maqhawe didn't keep his promise I didn't expect him to, he's an adult he makes his own decisions.

"Babes are you ready!" Mbalenhle yells.

I make my way to the lounge. I keep pulling the dress down, I don't usually wear dresses this short it's the shortest I have ever worn.

"Msebe would immediately get horny if he sees you looking this hot."

"This dress is too short."

"Gogo Langa you need to dress your age when going to a club. Msebe has to see this

say cheese," she says taking a picture of me.

After our little photo shoot I go to change. Being comfortable is more important than dressing my age. I go to my bedroom and change into black jeans, white polo t-shirt and stilletos I will wear my coat when we get outside. I look in the mirror not only do I look better but I feel better.

"There goes my efforts of trying to make Langa Zungu look sexy."

"Honey I always look sexy."

She rolls her eyes.

Just as I'm about to put it in my bag my phone rings. I was thinking about leaving it at home but I doubt it will be stolen at the club we are going to is said to be classy and fancy. He called about an hour ago saying he's going to sleep, why is he calling now?

"Missing me already," I say.

"Where are you going dressed like that?"he's livid.

"I'm lost?"I say confused.

"Then you better be found. Langa I won't have a wife who wears dresses that reveal her butt cheeks."

I can't believe Mbalenhle. Couldn't she have asked for my permission?

"Uyangizwa yini."

"Love I was just taking pictures. I would never go out wearing a dress that's barely there."

"I hope so. I'm coming to get you."

"But love I'm going out with Mbalenhle."

"I guess I will be joining you then," before I can say anything he hangs up.

"He is on the way," I tell Mbalenhle.

"He can't come with us Langa anever. There's a be reason they can it a girls night out."

"Maybe if you didn't send him the pictures things would have gone exactly as we planned."

The streets are empty as usual. Cars speed past us in full speed. Mbalenhle has been awkwardly silent, which is unlike her she's always talking. If Msebe doesn't get here this minute I'm going back inside. As a car approaches Mbalenhle comes close to me.

"Langa please forgive me," she says pushing me into the street.

Narrated

"Where is she? What happened to my daughter?" Muzi yells approaching Msebe. He was on his way home when he received a call telling him that Langa was hit by a car. He immediately drove to Joburg he didn't even get time to inform his family. Muzi Zungu is a successful business man whose famous for being a philanthropist, he's one of Msebe's role models, business wise. It had been his greatest wish to meet Muzi and maybe do business with him, he was sad that he had to meet him under such circumstances.

"Sir may you please keep it down," says a nurse.

"Where's my daughter?"he asks.

"Who is she?"the nurse asks.

The Zungu family is famous and she has a history with one of his son's and he has never mentioned anything about having a sister.

"Langa Zungu," he replies.

"She's in ICU," Msebe says and they both look at him.

"Have you heard from the doctor."

"No Sir."

"What happened to her?"

"She was crossing the street and was hit by a car," Msebe replies.

Muzi looks at Mbalenhle whose sitting next to the chair Msebe was sitting on, she has her face down looking at her hands.

"That's her roommate Mbalenhle she was with her when the accident occurred."

When Maqhawe arrives he's shocked to see his father.

"Sawubona baba,"he greets disturbing Muzi from his thoughts.

"Qhawe your sister was admitted three hours ago," Muzi replies.

"Sorry baba, I was in a meeting."

"Your meetings are important than Langa."

His father will never change. He is always telling them about the importance of family according to him when a family member needs you you must drop everything to help them. Maqhawe loves his family and he'd do anything for them but he couldn't just up and leave in a middle of an important meeting that was about to end.

"Call your mother and tell her about Langa," Muzi says.

"Yebo Baba."

After waiting for hours the doctor comes out of the room.

"Langa Zungu," he calls out.

They all rush to him. Maqhawe gives Msebe a questioning look, he has been him sitting in the chair next to his father's but he didn't pay much attention to him.

"I... I'm Langa's boss. I'm the one who brought her here," Langa says.

"I'm sure there's nothing you have to say to her. You can't tell her about work in her condition

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" Maqhawe says.

Msebe turns and makes his way towards the exit hurt.

Mbalenhle Mkhonza

I have been tossing and turning all night thinking about what I did to my one true friend. Langa has shown me real love

something my own mother failed to do. In the short period of time I've been living with her she has become a sister to me. It's true that money is the root of all evil, but I had a choice. I did it to hurt Maqhawe more than I did it for the money. I love him more than anyone in this world. Thinking about the sacrifices I've made to be with him makes me feel stupid. One minute he loves me and the next he treats me like trash, everytime we argue he reminds me that he has an amazing wife and I will forever remain his mistress. He even joked about how I'm a bad influence to his precious sister. It took me time to realize that no one deserves to be treated the way he treats me.

I go to Langa's bedroom hoping I can find sleeping pills, I don't like pills but I need something to drug me. This is my first time entering her bedroom, I'm not surprised to see books lying around after all she grew up believing she was a princess and always had someone to clean up after her. I'm lucky enough to get panado. After taking two pills with warm water I get in bed.

Just as I was about to drift off to lala land my phone rings, it's a private number. I'm not sure if I should answer it who could be calling me at such an ungodly hour with a private number. The caller won't stop so I answer it and put it on loudspeaker.



"I haven't received an invitation to Langa's funeral. Would you like to explain why?"the caller says.

"I did what you asked me to do. When I'm I getting my money?"

"I have deposited half of the money as soon as Langa is six feet under you will get the rest of your money."

After a few minutes of silence the caller says," You better finish what you started even if it means going to the hospital and switching off the machines."

"Lauren that's crazy if she makes it it's not my fault it's the driver's fault."

"Tell that to someone who cares and you better keep your mouth shut," she says before hanging up.

Lauren Plaatjies

She always works hard to get what she wants that's how she was raised. If she wanted extra pocket money she had to work for it. Being raised by politicians taught her a lot about going after what she wants. She hated it when people got things the easy way, that's one of the reasons she lost her childhood friend in grade 11. She studied hard and sure she was always the best in her class. She didn't let her shy nature interfere with

her way to success she was nervous when she was called for an interview to Mageba Logistics spent hours practicing for her interview to be perfect and fortunately she got the job. She had already pictured her future with Msebe, they've known each other for 6 years and he hadn't make a move but she was a patient girl she was ready to wait for him to notice her. Then Langa came along and crushed her plans, at first she hated her for getting the job easily and then she started dating Msebe.

She is pacing around when her bedroom door opens and her mother enters. Right now she needs a glass of wine, she had a feeling that Mbalenhle was not too weak for the job but she needed someone who was close to Langa and she was the only one. After getting off the call with her she asked someone to follow her. Hopefully she doesn't go running to Langa's brother since they are lovers.

"Wazi valela ekamereni kwenzenja," her mother asks.

"I was on the phone," she responds.

"Lauren you are always at work we only get to spend time with you once in a month and when you are here you stay in the bedroom kanti didn't you come here to spend time with us."

"Mama it's not like that I was talking to your son-in-law."

Her mother starts ululating.

"I'm so proud of you my daughter of all my children you are the only one whose stayed with her partner for the longest time."

"Thank you mah," she says with a weak smile.

This is more reason to get rid of Langa and make Msebe her's.

"When is he paying lobola."

"Mama we don't want to rush things."

"Lauren you have been together for two years now and you still haven't introduced him to your father."

"I don't worry I will introduce him to father soon."

"Okay, dinner is ready."

"Ngiyabonga mama."

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Msebe

I don't really have a preference when it comes to weather but did it have to be cold today. If it wasn't because I wanted to get my mind off things I wouldn't have gone to the gym. I wished there was a way I could get in contact with Langa since her brother doesn't want me to see her. Having him hate me would be really bad for my relationship with Langa. Apart from the fact that she's my chosen one I love her a lot and she's going to be my wife.

I receive a video call from Nandi.

"Hello my brother," she says with a huge smile.

"Hi, how are you my beautiful sister," I say.

"I'm great actually great is an understatement I'm awesome.

My husband is building a palace for me and I'm going to become a mother, everything is just amazing this side," I don't

miss the excitement in her voice. I'm happy King Kwame is taking care of my baby sister I don't want to lie I was against their marriage. I tried my best to convince my father not to let them get married but it's good that I failed. My sister has been through a lot she deserves to be happy.

"Congratulation Lolo, have you told Mama."

"I did, she said she will come to Ghana as soon as she can," she says, "and I'm not a Nigerian queen person."

I just say okay since I don't get what she means.

"I was looking for rings online and I think I have found the perfect one or you can just get her a custom made ring..."

"Slow down. What ring?" I interrupt.

"Msebe so you are going to date Langa for ten years before marrying her. The girl is beautiful someone will take her."

"That would never happen, it doesn't matter how long I take before proposing to her at the end of the day we are going to get married."

"If you say so. How are you?" I sigh.

"I'm good."

"I sense that there's a but. What's wrong sthandwa sika sisi wakhe?" she says.

"I'm surprised you can still speak isiZulu," I say trying to dodge her question.

"Trying to change the subject won't help, tell me what's wrong Mageba."

I miss my sister Nandi Zulu, Nandi Kwame Tutu is too noisy I know she will keep pushing until I tell her.

"Yesterday Langa was involved in a car accident, it was a hit and run."

"Oh my goodness. How is she?"

"Eish I haven't seen her

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her brother won't let me see her."

"Bhuti Msebe go and see Langa!" she half shouts before hanging up. I'm left wondering if she's disrespecting me or it's pregnancy hormones.

I get to the office and as I'm about to take the elevator to the third floor I go back to the parking lot. I won't be able to work not knowing if Langa is fine or not, her brother will have to deal I love Langa and I need to be with her in times like these. When I get to the hospital I find her whole family waiting at the

reception. I thought they were from KZN, how did they all get here? As I'm about to turn back to the exit someone calls me, I turn back and find all the Zungu family members staring at me. Bab'Zungu doesn't seem to be sad as he was yesterday, you can just see on his face that there is hope for Langa.

"Sanibonani," I greet offering my hand to Bab'Zungu for a handshake but he doesn't return it.

"Unjani ndodana?" Bab'Zungu responds (how are you).

"I'm good and you Sir?" I say my throat dry, he's not in a good mood yesterday he was nice to me.

"I'm fine. How can we help you?"

"I'm.. I'm here to see Langa," I immediately regret my answer. I'd lose all my cases if I was a lawyer.

"Mmmm. Konje uthe wena ungubani?"

"I'm Msebe. Msebe Zulu from KwaZulu- Natal kwaNongoma."

"Wena mfana uBaba ubuze ukuthi ungubani hawi ukuthi wakuphi. Asinandaba ukuthi ubuyaphi thina Zulu," Maqhawe says. (My father didn't ask where you are from he asked who you are?)

"Ufakazi ongasi wakwa Zulu. Maqhawe give us some privacy," Bab'Zungu says.

"Kodwa Baba..."

"Ngeke ngikhulume noMsebe ngapha uyafakaza wena."

I'm relieved when he walks away, I wonder what I did to him. He's the first person to hate me for no reason.

"Msebe are you related to Mageba Zulu," Bab'Zungu inquires.

"Yebo baba, he is my father."

"He told me about the arranged marriage but I don't trust you family not after what your uncle did to my sister."

"Bab'Zungu you can't punish everyone for one person's wrongs," I immediately regret it when I see the look on his face.

He lightly chuckles, "Mfana I'm three days older than your father you won't tell me what to do, now can you do me a favour go home you will see Langa when you have learned some manners."

After waiting for a while hoping he will change his mind I leave.



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\*1 month later\*

It's been two weeks since we buried Mbalenhle. She committed suicide and left a letter apologizing for causing the accident I got into. At first it was hard for me to believe that she would do such a thing to me, I guess I'm too trusting. My family and Msebe believe she's working with someone. But who would want to kill me?

There's been a lot of conflict between my family and Msebe's family. My father refused to accept their lobola after finding out who Msebe's father is. Which is really stupid because he accepted it when he didn't know who they were. But luckily we were able to convince him and next week Msebe is paying lobola.

When I'm done bathing I check my phone, I heard it beeping while I was bathing. I immediately regret checking it. It's from work. Like really. What's the point of giving me a day off if they are going to ask to meet up with me? I wonder what they want

to talk about. Because I have friends in high places, let me try to find out what's the meeting about.

Me: Why do y'all want to see me?

Msebe: Me and who?

Me: I just received a text informing me that I should come to work for an urgent meeting.

Msebe: Don't go anywhere, make sure you lock your door.

Me: Why?

When he doesn't respond I call him but he doesn't pick up.

"Ashanti please lock the door," I yell.

"Why?!"

"Just do what I told you. You don't question an elders instructions."

He laughs out loud. Mnxn. Ashanti arrived last week. He knows about my biological father. I'm glad he took it well my little brother has really grown up. Since I'm not sure if I'm going to the meeting or not I wear black jeans and a white and baby blue blouse.

"Ashanti remove your feet from the couch I want to sit," I say hitting his ugly feet.

"I wonder if your future husband knows you don't like to see people resting

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" he sulks.

I roll my eyes.

"There's only one couch. Where should I sit?"

There's a lock on the door. Before I unlock I ask whose on the other side and it's Msebe. He looks worried. He hugs me tightly.

"Hey Ashanti," he says before turning his attention back to me.

"Are you ready to go?"

"Where are we going?" I ask.

"Get you bag I will tell you in the car."

"Should I change?"

"That won't be necessary," he doesn't even look at me.

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After driving for an hour we reach the location the person sent me. It's a beautiful restaurant but the parking lot is empty there are only two cars. This is strange. Before unlocking the door Msebe contacts the police.

"Babe what's going on?" I ask concerned.

"Someone is trying to kill you. There's no meeting you were called to," he says. "I need you to get in there and act normal if the person sees that you aren't coming in, he will suspect something."

I look at him. Is he crazy? What if the person shoots me immediately when I enter?

"I can't."

"Please baby the police are on their way. Nothing will happen to you."

I slow get off the car and make my way inside the restaurant. I find Lauren sitting on a table alone. What did I ever do to her?

I sit on the chair across her.

"Why have you called me here?" I ask with attitude.

She chuckles bitterly.

"So you thought you could take my man and I'd let you get away with it."

I guess she's referring to Msebe. I've always noticed that she has a crush on him but I thought I was imagining things.

"What do you want from me?"

"I want you to leave him."

I laugh. Just as I stand up to leave she attacks me. I've never been in a situation where I had to fight, but I hit her back. I'm grateful when I hear the police sirens. She lets go of me and reaches for the knife of the table. I run to the exit as fast as my feet can carry me. Just as she's about to catch up with me the door opens and police officers enter. The female officer cuffs her and takes her to the car. I throw myself into Msebe's arms. He brushes my bleeding lip.

"I'm sorry. I see it got a little messy."

"It's fine, I've always wanted to punch her."

He laughs.

Today is the day. My man is paying lobola for me. I'm so excited. I'm looking forward to everything we are going to do after marriage especially the sex. I bet I'm the only 26 years old virgin.

"Langa can you sit up straight, I can't tie your doek properly if you keep moving your big head," Mam'Ngcobo or should I say mama says.

When I called her aunty she said I should call her mother. Did I mention my Zulu is better now? I can literally construct a sentence in Zulu.

"Haa, mama my head is not big," I say examining my head in the mirror.

That throws Nomalanga into a fit laugh.

"You take after your brothers. All the Zungu people have big heads," mama says.

"Not me," Nomalanga says.

"Ngizomutshela ubaba."

"Get up daddies little girl,"mama says.

I get up. I look so beautiful. Things are looking bright for Nomalanga. She's decided to complete her studies and her

baby daddy is back. She says he seems to be serious and maybe after my wedding hers will follow.

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\*2 month later\*

I stare at my handsome husband as I walk down the aisle. His eyes are fixed on me. He shakes my father's hand.

"Yinkosazana yami ne uyiphathe njenge Ndlovukazi

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" my father says. It's more of a command than a request.

He holds my head and we go closer to the pastor.

"We are gathered here to celebrate the union of Langa Zungu and Msebe Zulu."

I don't hear the rest of the pastors words my eyes are fixated on my beautiful future husband.

"Langa, Langa mkami," Msebe says snapping me out of my thoughts.

Everyone is laughing. I zoned out at my own wedding. But I don't blame myself I blame this handsome man in front of me.

"It's time to say your vows," the pastor says. "Makoti you can begin."

"Msebe yami, my husband, my first love thank you for keeping your promise to marry me. I be with you through sickness and in health I will always love and support you sthandwa sam. I love you Zulu, Mageba, Sthuli skandaba."

He's blushing. I squeeze his hands.

"Langa since you came into my life it has brightened. I thank God and my ancestors for giving me a beautiful soulmate like you. I have always loved you and it shall remain like that forever."

Before the pastor can give us permission we are already kissing. God, I love this man with everything in me.

.....**The End**.....

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