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1

ZINHLE

I drag my huge belly making my way to the main house. I'm sure the boss has left for work already. This house becomes bigger when his around. I pass the kitchen that has a pile of dishes waiting for me. What did I expect he had a guest last night. My eyes widen as I stop dead on my tracks. Voice: (screaming) Yes baby fuck me harder. He growls like an animal he his and collapse on top of her. I quickly rush back to my room before he can see me. I don't want to be on his bad side especially when he nearly killed my unborn baby for the third time. This is what I have succumbed into, this is my life being a slave to the prince and his family. I laid on the bed on my side with my thoughts hovering around. It would have been better if they used the bedroom instead of the couch. It will take me

days to scrub off the stain and I know how much he hates stains in his white couches.

a knock snaps me out of my thoughts but I ignore it.

Voice: Zinhle.

He bangs on the door. I sigh and jump off the bed stumbling my way to it.

Me: Yes I muttered with no care at all as I see one of the guards standing on the door.

Guard: You have been summoned in the main house.

He says and walks out before I could reply. I make my way inside and wear my flip flops before forcing my legs to the main house. They were still in that position they were before I left them. I cleared my throat and bow down.

Me: My prince you have summoned me?

I enquiry still bowing. He pulls out of her and sit next to her. I feel like gagging when I see cum dripping on both of them.

Siyanda: Get a towel and clean us up.

His hand is still circulating on his coochie. If I don't live this room I will puke right here.

Siyanda: Now Zinhle.

He roars at me making me to jump.

Me: As you wish my prince.

My shaky voice says before ascending to the bedroom upstairs. I chuckled as I enter his room. How could someone so heartless have a beautiful room like this? There only time I'm allowed to enter this room is when his on top of me, banging me like there is no tomorrow or when I'm cleaning it. One would swear I'm the maid in this house but no I'm the wife. His wife precisely, he married me by force. I was only 19years old coming from school when a group of royal guards ambushed me. I tried fighting but they were to many. They sedated me and threw me in the back of the van before they drove off. The next day when I woke up the queen was with a dress. She told me to dress up for my wedding. I begged her to let me go home but it fell on deaf ears. Months passed by with me still living in the royal house while his son was feasting on my body day in and day out until one morning that I was pregnant.

I took a basin full on laundry and went to the river to wash the laundry. Instead of heading to the river I changed directions and went home to my parents. Luckily my father's car was still on the drive way. I barge inside crying and told them my story. My mother was comforting me crying while my father was livid. He told me to hop inside his car he will fix everything. The naive little girl I was I trusted him because of his my father. He drove

me there on told the queen he found me on his doorstep this morning.

Being the respectable man he was he couldn't let a married woman stay inside his premises without informing her husband's whereabouts, after that he left there begging crying to take me with him. I was hanged on tree naked by the queen for the whole village to see what she does to people who disobey her rules. We live in a kingdom that is ruled by ruthless queen and her sons. The king died before his last horns birthday. His was sweet soul who couldn't harm a fly. He left the kingdom under the care of his wife because his children were not fit to rule by then.

They have 5 children all together. Mpumelelo the first born who has 3 wives and 16 children altogether. The second born Zweli. A gentleman who doesn't care about the throne or whatsoever then the third born Bongeka. A bitter woman who is like her mother. The 4th born is Siyanda who is a heartless bastard I married who was married to Zonke at that time. The last borns are twins Bheki and Khwezi. For days I was hanged on the tree without any food or water. I would pee and mess up myself but they didn't care, instead they would curse and swear at me for dumping on the royal grounds.

Zonke the first wife would sneak out food and water for me but that was short lived. They brutally murdered her in front of my

eyes. They didn't care about the audience they had as long as it appease them. That's where I lost my first baby, it was due to hunger and the cold as the rain would pour on me. The frost and the wind would blew right in my face while I was hanging on the tree like Jesus waiting for his verdict the difference on me I had no nail in my palms or anything. From that day I taught myself to obey them. I take the towel and make my way downstairs.

Siyanda: Hurry up Zinhle.

His eyes are piercing through my soul as mine are roaming around the house. I'm not comfortable seeing him naked.

Girl: Baby where did you get this idiot?

Her legs are still wide open. Doesn't she have shame that she's exposed for the whole world to see her secret place or is it me alone who has an idea that place is secret? My eyes look the other way as I wipe him. I could feel myself gagging, I move from him and went to kneel next to her.

Her coochie looks so pink, swollen, dripping with cum and stinking. My stomach turns as I wipe her. A bile rises deep down I clench my jaws to keep it in.

Girl: You're hurting me.

She whines.

Me: I'm sorry madam I will do it gently.

I whisper wiping her. The bile rises and I could not hold it in. I puke right in her coochie and she screams.

Siyanda: What the hell Zinhle?

A slap land on my cheek.

Me: I'm sorry my prince the baby couldn't hold it in.

I mumble wiping my lips while tears streaming down like a waterfall on my face. The couldn't blame for this. What did they expect from a pregnant lady?

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I wipe my mouth and hold my stinging cheek. I could feel tears are on the verge of my eyes, with just one blink they will fall freely.

Girl: (screaming) Baby do something

Me: I'm sorry madam it was an accident.

I mumble. That's my logical explanation.

Siyanda: Move

He snatches the towel in my hands and push me aside. My back lands on the corner of the coffee table. I whimper silently.

Siyanda: Zinhle

He squints his eyes looking at me with a disgusted face.

Me: (lower voice) My prince

I bow my head as a sign of respect. We are not allowed to make eye contact with the royal family. If one fails so he/she will brutally murdered like a dog. I keep asking myself if the king was still alive would things be different or just he was just like them behind closed doors. Many girls in our village didn't get the privilege to make it to grade 10. I was the lucky one's to step my foot on grade 11. I was so sure that after matric I would move far from the village and start my life elsewhere but that dream was short lived. They turned me into a royal wife who has no say about her life at the age of 19. Which 19 year old knows how to take care of a household? The worst is that I can't even cook.

The queen once asked me to prepare breakfast. I was only 21 at that time. I whispered to her so the others couldn't hear that I can't cook, did she listen? No she didn't

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instead she dragged me and ordered me to cook while shouting which 21 year old couldn't cook. I tried making soft porridge and serve them after I was done cooking. She threw the plate in

my face screaming she can't that garbage that i've cooked. My hands were quick enough to block the plate. I have burnt marks on my hands and arms. That alone was not the only punishment. She beat me to a pulp the whole day until my body was numb. The beating resulted me to a miscarriage, I wasn't even aware that I was pregnant at that time.

Siyanda: (hissing) Lick her clean.

He muttered bringing my face to her coochie. My eyes widen as tears streaming down. 7 full years I've been treated like a dog in this house. Some days get better some become worse. I was so happy when we moved from the royal house to Mthatha to stay in his house. I was so sure things sure things would change but always the naive me always becomes ignorant and see good in all people.

Me: (low voice) I can't my prince.

Siyanda: What was that?

He charges towards me aggressively.

Siyanda: Speak up Zinhle I can't hear you.

His hands grabs the back of my neck and collides it with her coochie. I silently sob and gag at the same time as my face went around the most sensitive part of a woman. A bile rises deep from my stomach. The smell from my vomit and her cum is making difficult for me to hold my bile. My face is covered in vomit.

Siyanda: I said lick her clean Zinhle

He roars at me. I shake my head looking down at her open legs. I can't do this; if it was something else I would have done it without asking questions.

Girl: (screaming) Baby do something.

Her screams echoed the whole house. She shakes her body with a disgusted face while tears are flowing down ruining her expensive mud on her face.

Siyanda: (grinding teeth) Zinhle I'm going to say this one last time. (roaring) Lick her clean.

Me: (sobbing) I'm sorry my prince I will take any punishment for my stupidity but please don't make me do this.

I plead to him but a slap sends me to the moon as I see stars. I gasp stumbling backward and fall with my butt.

Siyanda: (pissed) Zinhle you're challenge me?

I quickly shook my head. He grabs his pants on the floor to remove his belt. He takes a step forward and swinging to my thighs. I scream bending down and cover my stomach with my hands. This is my last chance to be a mother I can't lose this baby too. He kept swinging the belt all over my body, after a while he uses his fists and he starts kicking me. As always my

plea feel on deaf ears. No matter how much I cry and apologise he doesn't seem to care at all. The girl is still his scream how dirty she is.

Me: (mumbling and sobbing) I'm sorry.

Siyanda: (pissed) Stand up and lick this mess now.

He clicks his tongue and move away from me. My whole body is numb at this point I can feel my dress soak wet. I've peed on myself. It takes me a minute to crawl where they are. I look at my mess and start licking it bit by bit. There is no use of avoiding it because I would get worse that what I got. The more I lick is the more I gag. He pushes my head around her. I bite my lip muffling my sobs and gagging.

Siyanda: That's enough.

He says after a while pushing me aside and scoop the girl in his arms and ascended upstairs. I get a chance to breath and just cry out my pain. I sit there asking myself was I a burden to my

parents that they would turn their back on me like this. They didn't even fight for me. Wait fight against the royal house I'm sure they would have made an example of them especially my mother. Woman don't have a voice in our village it's more of our jobs are in the kitchen and bedroom. The queen made a law of girls who are at the age of 16 are not allowed to go to school. They are at the right age to start a family.

A voice trails me off my thoughts. I jump startled and flinch.

Siyanda: We are living I better find my couch and house spotless. I wanna see myself on the tiles when I walk in do I make myself clear?

I nodded my head repeatedly wiping the tears with the back of my hand. They kept flowing like an open tap.

Girl: Baby you will find me in the car I can't take the smell. Hey piggy you heard my man I hope you won't have a problem of washing my underwears and please remove the pads. They become to much for me to handle. They are in the laundry basket.

She fakes a smile before they walk out. I scream letting it all out. Not only is my body sore but my heart is torn into million pieces that won't be mended soon. My only concern is my baby nothing else or I would have killed myself by now.

It's been a hour of me scrubbing the couch. I crawl to the window and use the wall for balance. I open the windows and crawl to my room to clean myself up. I would have used the many bathroom inside but I'm forbidden to use his bathroom, food and his electricity. Sometimes I use cold water to bathe and for food I eat the food from the dogs

3

I start by washing her laundry of undergarments. I gag as I remove the sanitary pads. Some women are lucky out there; they mess up their undergarments and dump them on the floor for the likes of Zinhle to clean them up for her. I never got a chance to wear a sanitary pad ever since I step my foot on this house. I always used my torn clothes even when the excruciating pains of period pains hitting me I just soldier on. I wouldn't think of telling the Prince that I'm on my periods because his response would be I must stop making my problems his and stop being lazy cause he knows that's one of my famous excuses to avoid doing my job.

I open the windows after cleaning the couch to dry it. After opening the windows I mop the floor and take a break in between because my body was tired and sore. Everytime I try to move around my body fails me, it reminds me that I was almost beaten to a pulp a few hours ago.

The door cracks open followed by the sound of clicking heel on the tiled floor. Laughter and voices approaching the living room. It's the madam of the house and her friends. I say madam because she makes her position well known by me the

slave. I immediately rise up from the floor and take the dust the TV stand.

Lilitha: You're still cleaning at this house?

She muttered looking at her wristwatch. I just nod continue cleaning

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if I dare say another word I know a hot slap that will send me to Egypt for a few seconds will follow.

Lilitha: (clicking her tongue) Girls let's go to the balcony. Bring us a bottle of wine.

She stumbles her way out and her friends follow her. I don't know which wine does she want. There is a variety of them and I don't know their names. I just take the first bottle I see on the fridge and limp my way to them.

Lilitha: (yelling) Should I say bring glasses too? I don't know why does Siyanda keeps you around you're useless marn Zinhle.

Me: I'll bring them madam.

I manage to say even though that took a lot in me because of the pain.

Lilitha: Make it snappy.

She snaps her fingers and shift her attention to her friends who have disgusted looks plastered on their faces.

Lilitha: (clicking her tongue) Seriously that pig know how to ruin my mood.

Friend: Why are you still keeping her around? It's obvious she's useless and not capable to do her job.

Lilitha: Who will clean the house and do the laundry if I fire her? I can't mess up my manicured nails.

Friend 2: True.

They bursted in laughter while tears blurring my vision as I limp out of the balcony. They spoke about me like I was not even in the room. I'm like an object to them to do as they please. I take out 3 glasses from the cabinet rinsing them and put them on the tray. I soldier on the walk even though I'm limping.

Lilitha: We drink juice with these glasses.

She says taking all three of them and throw them my way. I duck them and they collide with the wall scattering on the floor.

Voice: Come on friend you're being harsh on the poor girl. Glasses are glasses.

One of her friends says defending me. I wipe the tear that escaped my eye furiously. I told myself I wouldn't give them the satisfaction of my tears but they keep streaming down involuntary. They already broke me enough and my tears

somehow just brings them satisfaction to break me even further.

Lilitha: (hissing) She's a nobody she must know her place. Stop defending her

Her beautiful face is covered with a disgusted look. If it was up to her I would have long gone on this house but the prince won't allow that.

Me: (trembling voice) I will bring them madam.

I quickly limp to the kitchen before she muttered words that will break me more.

Lilitha: (yelling) Are you making those glasses Zinhle?

Her voice echoes on the corridors, footsteps making their way to the kitchen. Glasses are glasses to me. I didn't know there are glasses for juice and glasses for wine after all they serve the same course.

Lilitha: Move.

She pushes me aside. I balance myself with the counter. She takes the glasses in the sink and makes her way towards the door. Just as I thought I would just sink down on the floor and let all out she turns and look at me.

Lilitha: Well those glasses won't sweep themselves.

I nodded with tears on the verge of my eyes. She stumbled her way out and the lump i've been holding rise up. Tears wailed down.

Lilitha: (yelling) Piggy?

I wipe the tears away.

Me: (breaking voice) Coming madam.

I take dustpan and broom making my way to the balcony. I put the dustpan on the floor and start sweeping while they are laughing how lucky she is to have Siyanda in her life. If I was her I wouldn't consider myself lucky because that man is a monster alongside with his mother.

Lilitha: Are you eavesdropping on us Piggy?

She takes a sip on her wine and narrow her eyes at me. I shake my head and bend down to take the dustpan on the floor. I whimper and bit my lip.

Me: (breaking voice) Is there anything else madam?

Lilitha: Make yourself useful by disappearing from my face before you make me choke on this wine. I can't even enjoy it because of your ugly self.

I nodded with a lump on my throat and make my way out.

Lilitha: Useless pig.

She clicks her tongue while they laugh with her friend. Tears streamed down. I furiously wipe it and start washing the dishes.

Voice: You can't let her walk all over you.

I jump startled with the voice coming from behind. I turn and find the girl who was defending me leaning on the door frame. I fake a smile and turn to continue with the dishes.

Her: How old are you?

Me: Ma'am I don't want any trouble please pretend you didn't see me.

I respond rinsing the dishes.

Her: You're a human too, you've got feelings too. Lay a charge against them.

She muttered before walking out. My puffy eyes widen with my heart thudding on my ribcage. Who am I to report Prince Siyanda to the police? They will slaughter me like a dog before sundown. I'm not about to risk my baby's life because of unnecessary drama that I could have prevented. This is my life and nothing will change. I have accepted it that the only way out is death.

4

I'm sitting on the fluffy mat gulping my saliva each time they took a bite on their food. They are watching a movie laughing they insides out while I'm sitting like a dog waiting for it's next meal. I'm not allowed to watch TV or use any electronic devices for my personal use unless I'm doing something for them. Danger starts to bark outside.

Siyanda: Is that danger barking outside?

I'm not sure who is he directing the question too.

Lilitha: Hey piggy danger needs to be fed.

I feel her eyes piercing through me as I'm looking on the floor playing with the mat. I crawl to where they are and take their dishes before going to the kitchen. I'm trying my best not to limp but it proves to be difficult to walk normal. My body is still sore for what I encountered earlier on.

Lilitha: Piggy those two pieces of chicken are for danger. Don't you dare eat them.

She yells from the other side as I dish up the leftovers for danger.

Me: Yes madam.

I unlock the door and make my way outside. Danger starts barking as soon she sees me with a plate of food. I bend down a dish up for her. She wiggles her tail with saliva dripping; she bark more when I step on my heels. I stop on my tracks and turn back.

Me: What now danger? I'm not in the mood to entertain you.

She barks and push her bowl of food towards me and barks again.

Me: Thank you.

I sit down on the stoep and take the bowl before indulging. This is how I get most of my meals. Danger share her food with me like she understands my situation. She's become a friend I never had. It's funny how I consider a dog a friend than a human. She barks and turns around a few times before she lays down. I know she's about to place her head on my tummy. She loves doing that most of the time.

I put the bowl down and push her aside with the bowl. She rises her head and barks. I'm not full but I'm grateful I have something on my stomach. I make my way back to the house and wash the dishes the pile of dishes.

Lilitha: (yelling) Piggy I need water.

I wipe my hands with the dish cloth and bring my hand on the mouth and exhale loudly to sniff my breath. I don't want to show them that I ate the food that was meant to be for the dog or else I would never hear the end of it. I take out a bottle of water and a glass from the cabinet and stumble my way there. I can hear her yelling at me about how slow I am. I would have been walking faster if I was not limping.

Lilitha: At last I was about to die.

She muttered snatching the bottle in my hands. A smile creeps on my lips as I see the prince has retired to bed. I know I will also be going to bed soon.

Siyanda: Zinhle I can't find my red tie.

He muttered walking down the stairs running his palms on his face. Frustration is written all over him. Of course he wouldn't know where I keep most of his things because I'm cleaning after him

without me his like a lost puppy.

Me: Your ties are on the left drawer my prince.

I say and he walks upstairs and comes back a few minutes holding his coat and car key in his hands. My eyebrows furrow.

Lilitha: (sulking) Do you have to go?

She makes her famous puppy eyes making me to roll my eyes. I silently pray nobody caught that.

Siyanda: I'll be back before you know it.

He plants a kiss on her forehead and walks out.

Lilitha: (yawning) I'm going to bed piggy. I doubt I will sleep with my man out there but I can't stand you're ugly self. Switch off the lights when you're done.

She switches off the TV and take the remotes with her upstairs. There's a TV in their bedroom but she's just preventing me from watching TV. I sigh and walk back to the kitchen and continue with my work. An hour passes with me still doing the dishes. I still have to mop the floor since it's dirty all over again. There goes my early night.

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I'm woken up by cold water splashing on my face. I gasp and rise up from the bed.

Lilitha: (yelling) Wake up piggy those curtains and windows won't wash themselves. Get your lazy ass up.

She clicks her tongue and stumble her way to the door with a jug in her hands and slam the door. I sigh jumping off the bed and wipe my face. I stumble my way to the bathroom to do my morning routine. My skin shivers as the cold water contacts my skin.

Lilitha: (shouting) Piggy hurry up!

Me: Coming!

I shout back apply Vaseline in my body and quickly slide in my dress and flip-flops before walking out.

Lilitha: Finally I thought I had to drag you out.

She says placing a step ladder next to the windows.

Me: (mumbling) I'm sorry madam I overslept.

I couldn't sleep last. I tossed and turn the whole night looking for a cold spot that could calm my body. The heat was too much plus my blood pressure was sky rocking. The belt did a number on me. I have permanent marks on my arms and thighs. I'm glad that my baby is still safe in my womb even though I was kicked and beaten to a pulp. I felt his little kicks last night. He/she is a survivor.

Lilitha: I don't want your excuses piggy just get with it.

She hands me a bucket filled with water and cleaning materials. I fake a smile and take the things waking to the step ladder. As I climb my muscles are stiff and sore. My back is killing me.

Me: (whispering) Hold on baby.

I bit my lip and climb on the ladder. It keeps shaking I pray I don't lose my balance and fall on the floor.

Lilitha: (smiling) Listen Piggy leave that and pack my bags.

Her voice is laced out with excitement. She's beaming from ear to ear. I realise a breath that I wasn't aware I was hold.

Me: If I may ask madam where are you going?

I muttered taking small steps climbing off the ladder. Not that I care where she is going but I'm just trying distract myself from looking down on the ground since I was up high on the ladder.

Lilitha: That's none of your business piggy but if you must know I'm meeting my in laws.

She sequels like a toddler. I just nodded and went upstairs to pack her luggage . I head back to the lounge and found her

sitting on the couch cross legs sipping champagne. How I wish I was her right now.

Me: Is that all madam?

Lilitha: That's all you can go back to work.

I bow down and went back to what I was assigned too. The door cracks open and the prince walks in just as I was washing the windows outside.

Lilitha: Babe.

She runs to his arms. He catches her and kiss her all over, her giggles echoes the whole house. I wonder if my parents could have stood up for me where would I be? I would have been working on those fancy big buildings that I once saw in town as a Chartered Accountant. I would have been married with two children or atleast have a boyfriend but they ruined it all before it begin.

Siyanda: Honey.

I can hear their conversation since I didn't close the window.

Lilitha: You look exhausted how did it go?

Siyanda: Not good! Where is Zinhle?

He eyes roam around the house. My eyes widen while my armpits start to itch. My heart beat is up on my throat. The prince is asking about me? He never asked about my whereabouts before.

Lilitha: Doing her job.

Siyanda: Tell her I need to talk to her.

He muttered sprinting upstairs. What does he want from me?
Oh no I hope he didn't see me eating with the dog last night.

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Siyanda: You're not leaving Lilitha.

He says and signals the guards to take out her luggage out of the boot. I hop in the backseat with my black plastic bag. I was surprised when he asked me to pack my bags because we were going back to the village. I thought he was taking madam with him but he knows he won't survive a day in there. It's one awkward situation I find myself in. Madam is leaning on the car door while the prince is rooted in his seat not fazed by her tantrums.

Siyanda: (softly) We spoke about this baby please understand.

He caress her knuckles and plants a wet kiss on them.

Lilitha: No Siyanda there is nothing to understand. You promised me to meet your family.

Siyanda: I know baby. I know but things are a bit complicated right now.

Lilitha: (shouting) Bullshit! That's bullshit! Why does she have to go with you will me as your fiancée gets to stay behind.

Siyanda: (pissed) Don't you dare raise your voice at me.

His tone is firmly.

Lilitha: (shouting) I'm coming too.

He opens the door and drags her away from the car. She whimpers trying to get his grip off her.

Lilitha: (yelling) Let me go Siyanda. If you think I'm going to let you go with that pig clearly you don't know me. (hissing) Get your fucken hands off me.

I gasp and hold my mouth when he slaps her.

Siyanda: (grinding teeth) I'm going to say this for the last time.
You're not going Lilitha.

Lilitha: (teary) Siyanda you slapped me?

Black tears run down her face. Her mascara and mud is ruined.

Siyanda: I'm not going to have this conversation with you.

He clenches his jaws.

Siyanda: Zinhle is going there because she's my fucken wife and you're a mistress. I'm a prince for heaven sake I can't just rock up with a mistress at my house. Beauty without any brains. Use that small brain you have there.

He clicks his tongue and push her off him stumbling his way to the car. My mouth is left hanging. My ears could be deceiving me. Did he just told her where to get off?

Siyanda: Drive.

Guard: As you wish my prince.

The guard brings the engine to life and drove off while Lilitha is screaming his name running after the car.

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We finally arrive at the royal house in the wee hours of the morning. The drive 9 hour drive from Mthatha to Eshowe has me sweating. Apparently Queen Mother has summoned all of us at the royal house. No words have been spoken since we left the house. I would be lying if I say I feel sorry for madam. Surely she should have picked up the signs from me

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if he could do half of the things he does to me his "servant" as he say imagine what he could he do to his wife? His fist where bleeding when we arrived. He punched the car window after a phone call. I assume it was madam. We walk to our room to lay down. Wait stretch that its his room if it was up to him I would

be outside on the cold. He slides on the bed while I sleep on the cold floor. My stomach had to embarrass me by grumbling when he was eating earlier on. He was eating a takeaway from the shell garage and my saliva couldn't stop salivating. He tossed a R100 note in my face and told me to buy something to eat. He words where he can't swallow his food properly because I'm looking at him like a hungry lion. I wanted that food to choke to death; that would have made me happy but I know I wasn't going to be free from his family.

The bright sun hitting my face wakes me up from my slumber. I yawn and stretch my stiff muscles before going to the bathroom. I quickly brush my teeth and run myself a bath before he wakes up. I clean the tub and run him a bath and walk back to the bedroom to search through my plastic for clothes. He wakes up and makes his way to the bathroom just as I slide on my worn flip-flops. It's the only pair of shoes I own. I make the bed and place his clothes on the bed and walk to the kitchen.

Voice: Zee.

A voice chirped in behind me. I turn and find Ntombi grinning. She embraces me before I could utter a word.

Ntombi: Look at you.

She breaks the hug and scan me with her big marble eyes. I giggle for the first time in years.

Me: (giggling) Ntombi!

She takes my hand in hers and rushes to the kitchen. Ntombi is the first wife to Prince Mpumelelo. I whimper as the pain hits my body.

Ntombi: (frowning) Why are you limping?

Me: It's nothing I fell.

She nodded not convinced. We walk to the kitchen slowly.

Ntombi: I see the treatment has improved.

I fake a smile and nodded; if she only knew.

Ntombi: Look who I found.

She says to her sister wives.

Thuli: (smiling) Zee!

Thulisile the second wife attacks me with a hug followed by the third wife Nompumelelo.

Ntombi: That thing looks heavy.

Her fingers point to my stomach. I giggled.

Thuli: Zee and I will wash the dishes and lay the table since we are useless in the kitchen.

We lay the table chatting and laughing like old friends. Somehow we relate to each others pains. Ntombi and Mpumi joins us as we wait for the others to wake up. Prince Mpumelelo is the first one to come down and dishes up for himself. The others follow behind him. The table is filled with laughter as we wives are sitting on the floor waiting for the to finish eating so we can eat. I'm surprised Queen mother didn't come down for breakfast. She's never later for such occasions.

We take the dishes back and dish up for ourselves. Just as I sit down Prince Zweli makes his way towards us. We bow down.

Zweli: Zee a word.

He muttered ascending to the hallway. My eyes roam around the others. They all have inquisitive looks on their faces. I quickly wipe my mouth and give the bowl to Mpumi and walk to him.

Me: My Prince.

I bow down.

He chuckles and helps me to stand up.

Zweli: How many times I told you to lose that Prince title shit?

My head involuntary shoots up and look at him in the eyes. My eyes are popped out of the sockets. I quickly drop my head.

Zweli: (chuckling) Can I trust you with a secret?

My heart beat leaps up. What secret? He places his index finger on my chin and rise my head.

Zweli: Would you relax?

He breaks into laughter. His beautiful white teeth comes light. His laughter is the most beautiful thing i've ever heard. It's like a melodic rhythm.

Zweli: Come with me.

I frown and follow him all the way to the outside. He opens the backseat of a SUV.

Zweli: Get in.

I'm a bit hesitant and scared at the same time.

Zweli: Trust me I won't hurt you.

My feet are paralyzed on the same spot. I can't move and I'm in distress. The baby keeps kicking. My mind has already have different scenario.

Zweli: (smiling) Trust me.

I hop in while he closes the door after me and jogs to the driver's seat. My eyebrow creases into a frown. Isn't he supposed to allow the guards to drive for him? The drive takes longer than I anticipated. He keeps stealing glances in the view mirror. My anxiety kicks in when the car suddenly stops on the basement of a parking lot.

Zweli: Relax Zee I'm not a monster like my mother and siblings. You may try and convince the others that you fell but I know he hit you didn't he?

I look at the window and nod. A lump in my throat forms. I refuse to cry not today in all days. He sighs and hops off the car. He opens the door for me. I slowly step out clenching on my dress. My heart beats thudding on my ribcage. Whatever thought he might have on me please God make it quick and less painful.

He presses the elevator and waits for me to step in. If he thinks he can have his way with me I swear to God I'm going to kill him. I may have not have any knowledge of how to kill a person but he would be my first victim. I'm tired of the royal family

thinking they are our God. The elevator pings open and we make our way out of the corridors. He takes out a card from his pockets and opens the door. I stand on the door while he walks in.

Zweli: (smiling) You still don't trust me?

He has that smile again. How I wish I could wipe it off.

Zweli: I'm harmless Zee.

He raises up his hands in surrender and gives me his hand. I slowly take it and walk in. He closes the door behind me.

Zweli: Can you keep a secret?

Me: (frowning) Depends on what kind of a secret.

Zweli: It's a matter of life and death.

My eyes widen with my armpits itching.

Zweli: I want you to meet someone.

He muttered and disappear to the corridors. My eyes scan the room for any weapon I can use if he tries to force himself on me. They land on a vase. I take it and hide it behind me. His footsteps approach me while I'm shaking like a leaf.

Zweli: Zee meet my family.

He moves in front of them and my eyes set on the 4 pair of green eyes staring at me. A woman and a baby boy probably one year or two.

Zweli: Babe meet Zee my brothers wife.

She envelop me in her arms.

Her: Hi my name is Catherine Zweli's wife.

My eyes popped out of the sockets.

Catherine: (frowning) Why do you have a vase behind you?

Zweli bursted in laughter.

Zweli: (laughing) She was going to use it to hit me.

I'm tongue tied. I don't know what to say to them. Not only did they burst my secret of self defense but I also got to learn theirs. Queen mother will flip when she sees this. No wonder Prince Zweli choose to leave them at this hotel because he knew his mother will not have it. He choose to marry a white woman instead of black woman like his required too. I don't blame them for leaving them here because his mother is the devils advocate, if I were in his shoes I would have done the same thing.

6

ZINHLE

I slowly open my eyes as someone was slightly shaking me.

Cat: Come eat sweetie.

She cooed and walk out. I jump off and march to the bathroom. The sun is starting to set. My breathing hitches as I realize that. I slept the whole afternoon without any disturbing me. I wash my hands and walk out. I spent the whole day with Catherine while Prince Zweli went back home. His secret will eventually come out and I don't see myself tied to it. He must come clean. I have problems that could last me a lifetime; I can't add his to mine. Queen mother won't spare me when she found out that I knew and didn't tell anyone.

I found Catherine feeding her son Nathan.

Cat: Take a sit dinner will be ready soon. Zweli will join us shortly.

I yawn and fix my dress. I don't know when was the last time my body relaxed like that. Their bed and sheets were inviting me to a slumber.

Me: (alarmed) Did you say dinner?

Cat: Yea sweetie its dinner time.

The time stops and I froze on my spot. My heart beat pummelled. God what did I do? I can't stay here, already I spent the whole afternoon here. My stomach churned as the thought of what will the Prince do to me.

Cat: (frown) Are you okay?

Me: (panicking) I have to go.

I march to the door and walk out. Her footsteps are not far from behind me.

Cat: Wait!

I don't dare look back I rush out. I'm sure a search party has been gathered looking for me. They were suppose to wake me up and drive me back but here was I roaming around in the streets at night looking my way home. Tears trickled down as scenarios of what he will do cross my mind.

PRINCE SIYANDA

I'm fucken pissed. One thing I hate is disrespect. Where the fuck is that bitch I call a wife at this hour? My phone vibrate in my pocket. I fish it out and answer the call..

Me: What?

Caller: My prince we still haven't found her.

One of the guards I sent to look for her cooed at the end of the line. I clench my fist and curse under my breath. My blood is boiling she wouldn't have gone far.

Me: (pissed) Find her! Search the whole village and I don't care whether it takes you the whole fucken night just find her.

I ordered him and disconnected the call.

Me: Fucken bitch! Fucken bitch! Where the fuck are you?

I slam the balcony door and it breaks. The glass pieces scattered on the floor. Who the fuck gave her permission to walk out of this premises without my permission? I see she has grown some pair of balls over this years. Who the hell does she think she is going up against me the Prince of this village. She has a death wish like those babies she keeps popping over the past 7 years. I'm not sure if they are even my mine. That sweet innocent act she's pulling over they years was nothing but fake. Probably that's why she ran away because she knew I was going to kill her because that thing in her womb is not me.

Me: (chuckling) Run! Run Zinhle as fast as your feet can take you because I'm going to do was than killing you. A bitch like you deserves a slow painful death.

ZINHLE

I have been on the road for while now. I don't know whether it's been minutes seconds or hours. I shouldn't have taken Catherine's offer when she offered me food. I would be home instead of gallivanting in the streets at night.

My legs can't carry me anymore. Fatigue is slowly creeping in. I'm thirsty and exhausted. My eyes set on a rock that is surrounded by the bushes. I stumbled my way to it and sit on top of it catching my breath. The tears that been blurring my vision haven't stopped. I use my dress to wipe them and try to grasp my surroundings but the water works doesn't stop falling from my eyes. I'm in the middle of the highway with no food or money. I don't whether to go east, south, north or west. By foot I will probably get home tomorrow midnight if my estimation is correct. Come think of it I'm happy I managed to escape from him. Freedom flashes right through my eyes staring back at me. This is my chance to start a new life and I would be a fool to go back now. A car drives pass me; it stops and reverses just after passing me. I quickly rise up from the rock and try to run to the bush behind me. At this point I don't care whether a snake bites

me can kill me it would be much better than being killed by than animal.

Me: (panicking and crying) He found me! He found me! His going to make me pay.

Tears streamed down as I run in the bushes. Running becomes an obstacles because of my belly. I run where my little feet can carry me. I stand behind a tree panting and wipe off the sweat in my forehead. I look back at the direction I came from and saw two figures pointing at where I am. My lips quiver and my whole body trembles as I try to run. I'm frustrated because I can't run faster with my huge belly and this people are few meters away from catching up with me. I feel a thorn penetrating with my skin. I bend down and remove it from my flip flops. It's only a matter of time the guards caught up with me; just as I cross I stream I slipped and roll all the way down. I scream as my body is rolling on the ground.

Voice: (alarmed) Zweli help she's hurt!

A voice yells on top of the hill. My eyelids become heavy after i've heard that. I close them and let darkness take over

7

PRINCE SIYANDA

It's been three fucken days and they haven't found that bitch yet. I don't know what's so difficult on finding her. She's too dumb and too naive to come with a master plan of escaping

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I doubt she would go that far. There has to be a mastermind; someone who hiding her. Zinhle is stupid to execute an escape plan someone probably planted that seed in her mind. She better pray I don't find her or else I'm going to rip that heart of hers while she's still alive begging me not too. I want to look straight in her eyes as she gags fighting for her life; this will be a reminder to her on the after life that nobody mess with me.

LILITHA

Three days without any calls from him. I'm just giving space to cool down. Siyanda is that type of the man who doesn't beg you or even apologise even though he was wrong. He moves past everything like nothing happened; if you're still holding to a grudge of what he did then it becomes your problem because

he won't be there anymore. I know what he did and said three days ago broke my heart. I hurts like hell knowing that he took that pig instead to his parents house instead of me. What he said about piggy being his wife he was trying to hurt me and get me to stop nagging at him. Maybe he was also not ready of introducing me to his family as yet. I pushed him to snap at me and that shouldn't have happened. His a man of integrity and status; of course Princess from the Bundu's are meant to marry stuck up village girls who have no education waiting for their prince charming to rescue them from poverty. I will be dammed if I let piggy take my man. She's too plain and stupid for Siyanda. He deserves a woman like me whose smart and beautiful not that pig.

ZINHLE

The beeping sound of machines woke up from my slumber. I flip my eyes open and try to sit up. My mind scan the room and it slowly sank in that I was in hospital. Someone fixes my pillow and helps me to sit up. I turn and found Catherine with tears in her eyes. Surprisingly she attacks me with a hug and sob out loud.

Cat: (crying) Don't scare me like that. Do you hear me?

I nodded even though I don't what happened. I can feel my body is in pain from head to toe. My throat is dry and raspy.

Me: Water.

I muttered with my raspy throat.

Cat: I'm so dumb of course you need water.

She giggles breaking the hug and wipe her tears. Her feet leap up to a small cabinet where the jug of water was. She pour water in the glass before handing me to me. I gulp it down in one go but my quench doesn't die instantly.

Cat: Another one?

She enquiries with a frown. I nodded and hand her back the glass. She takes it and pour water in it, the door cracks open as

she hands me the glass. Prince Zweli walks in with flowers and takeaways. His faces lights up like a Christmas tree when he sets his eyes on me.

Zweli: (smiling) Look who is up!

I gulp down the content as he places the flowers and takeaways in the cabinet next me before turning to plant a kiss on his wife.

Me: What happened?

I found the my voice and courage to ask why am I in hospital. They look at me with pity eyes. I hate that look.

Cat: You tripped and fell on a stream.

Her eyes are moist with tears threatening to fall while her lips quiver as she narrates what happened. The doctor walks just as try to grasp what she told me.

Doctor: (smiling) I see my patient is up.

He checks my vitals and turns to me.

Doctor: There is no need for me to keep you here anymore but I suggest you get counseling. Losing a baby-

My eardrums shut down completely. I can see his lips moving but I can't hear what his saying. The room suddenly start spinning as tears stream down.

Me: (crying) My baby! My baby!

I scream looking at the three people in front of me. Prince Zweli is consoling Catherine as she was crying hysterically.

Me: (screaming) Switch off the machine doctor I don't want to live.

I muttered between my sobs jerking up and down.

Doctor: Miss calm down.

He takes out an injection on his pocket and inject my IV.

Me: (screaming) I don't want to live anymore doctor switch off the machine please. It hurts.

Catherine runs out of the room. Prince Zweli follows her while the sedation start to kick in. I can feel my body becoming numb.

Doctor: (sadly) I'm so sorry about your loss.

My eyes fight to stay awake but I was fighting a losing battle. That baby was my last chance to become a parent. Why did God take my reason for living? All my babies died in my womb before I could hold them in my arms. If God did really exist he wouldn't have allowed what they did to me happened. His a cruel God I don't want anything to do with him. I'm done hoping that someday he might chance my life.

FRANK

The exhibition took long than I thought. I gather my equipment and pack them in my bag. I walk to the front to check if everyone has left the gallery.

Voice: Great exhibition man. I'm looking forward to your next one.

One of my regular customers muttered. I smile as he shook my hand.

Matthew: I hope to buy more beautiful collection like this one.

He points out to a painting in my hand. I chuckle and nod my head. It's not everyday where I paint a beautiful piece. It depends on the setting of the place and mode. I have to be inspired by something in order for me to grasp a magnificent art piece.

Me: There are more where they came from.

My phone rings disturbing our conversation. I slide my hand in my pocket and fish it out.

Me: Excuse me.

Matthew: Of course go ahead take it. Great job man I will see you next time.

He pats my back and walk out of the gallery. I sigh and answer the call.

Me: Traitor how are you?

She giggles and sniffs. My heart beats faster on my ribcage. I hope it's not her in laws cause I swear to God I will fly down to Durban right now.

Me: Cathy what's going?

She bursts into tears.

Cat: She needs help Frank I can see in her eyes. She's scared of him.

She tries to muffle her sobs. Here we go again Mother Theresa is back again. I thought Catherine was done helping people who didn't need help. The last time she helped someone that person stole from her and sold her stuff for a quick fix.

Me: We talked about this.

Cat: (pleading) Please Frank this one is different.

Everyone is different in her eyes. I don't know when will she learn not every one has good intentions as they portray themselves to be.

Me: (grinding teeth) No Catherine we are not helping another junky who will fuck us up.

Cat: (sniffing) Please.

She knows very well I would move mountains for her if they can move. I heavily sigh; she's putting me in a tight spot and she won't stop nagging until I give in her demands.

Me: (puffing) Fine.

Cat: (screaming) You're the best! Book us a flight for tomorrow and pick us at the airport she will be staying with you.

Me: (scoffing) You got to be kidding me.

Cat: I love you too.

She hangs up before I can say anything. I hate the fact I can't say no to her. She's always manipulating me into help her it doesn't help declining because she nags you until she wins.

Look at me yepping where are my manners? My name is Franklin McKenzie. A 32 year old bachelor who disowned his parents because they were forcing the family business down my throat. My father has his shares in a truck company and he wanted me to take over from him. Being in an office and wearing expensive suits didn't fascinate me at all. I was more passionate about art and my parents didn't approve. I moved away from home and started painting on the streets. Showing my collections on the street until I was recognised by a famous artist who invited me into her exhibition. At first people wouldn't buy my pieces and I would go back home with them. As time went by I taught myself everyone has their own taste and preferences. I would watch YouTube videos of people on how they sold their pieces on the net and I also thought I should try it. Little did I know that was going to change my life. I started selling them on a cheaper price.

Months went by and orders piled up. My parents didn't even bother to check up on me. My sister Catherine was the only one among my siblings who still kept contact. She was paying

for my apartment and everything I needed; basically she was taking care of me behind my parents back. Now it was my turn to return the favor since she was disowned by my parents because she married a black guy. I didn't take them as racists but after what they did to Cathy I will never forgive them. God knows I will do anything to protect my sister she is all I have.

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8

FRANKLIN

My sister is one annoying women I've ever met. Can you believe she woke me up at 06:00am whereas her flight will land at 09:00am. I've been sitting at this damn airport like a fool waiting for her. I should stop falling for her tricks they are getting old now. I've wasted 2 hrs and 30 minutes sitting here; with that time I would have been on the studio drafting my next piece. I just hope she's not bringing another junky along with her.

Finally I see her stumbling her way towards me with a girl behind her. My feet find their way to them and she launches herself in my arms.

Cathy: I'm sorry I missed your exhibition.

She muttered placing a kiss in my cheek. I kiss her back and look at the girl behind her whose clinging on her dress for dear life.

Cathy: This is Zee the girl I told you about.

A low hi escaped down from the girls mouth. It was almost a whisper.

Cathy: Zee this is my brother Frank.

Me: I hope she's not a junky.

Cathy: Hey!

She scolds me hitting my chest.

Me: I'm just saying.

I shrugged my shoulders and just nod my head making my way to the car. They follow suit. I can tell from afar the girl is the

type of shy girl in front of people but you never know behind closed doors.

Cathy: Drop me off at my place.

I hit the brakes and hear multiple honks and swearing from other drivers. I turn to Catherine.

Me: You can't live with a junky.

Cathy: For the last time Frank she's not a junky.

I bring the engine to life and we drove out in silence. I'm taken back when I hear the girl sniffing.

Cathy: I'm so sorry Zee Frank can be insensitive at times.

Her eyes are piercing through me as she muttered that. I just know she's mad as hell. I don't understand why does she keep defending this girl.

Cathy: You're a jerk Franklin do you know that?

Why am I being insulted for a mere junky? I'm just looking out for her like any brother would do. People are con artists out there I don't want her ending being receiving line.

LILITHA

I'm at the spa with my sister for a spa day. My body has been tense while my eyes are puffy with eyebags. I look horrible. I cannot go by a day without crying. My mind always drift back to how he manhandled me on the driveway and live with piggy instead of me. I've never been so humiliated in my entire life. The house looks so empty and big than its usual self. I'm like a walking zombie the only difference is that I'm much alive and aware what's happening around me. I'm pretty sure piggy was rejoicing on the inside but I won't let her win. Pig could fly the day I let her take my man.

Lily: Sis are you okay?

She engulfs me and I just let it all out.

Me: I miss him Lilly. God know how much I love him.

Lily: Oh baby why don't you book a ticket and fly down to him if you miss him that much?

I sniff back the tears with a smile creeping on my lips. Why didn't I think of that in the first place? I would be next to him the entire time. I mentally scold myself for being stupid and dumb. I bet he will love the surprise. Make way for your girl Durban Lilitha is on her way.

Me: Sis I call you later i've got to pack.

She smiles and me and nod. I wipe the tears away with the back of my hand.

Me: Sorry lady to waste your time but I'm needed someone.

I muttered to the masseuse and stood up. I've got packing to do

ZINHLE

Catherine's brother doesn't like me at all. He made that clear when with his remarks. He said I quote "If anything goes missing in his house I will pay dearly". I don't know why people always judge me without knowing me. It's not like I was going to steal anything I wouldn't bite the hand that feed me. I know I should be hurt by being called a junky but I prefer it than being beaten up into a pulp and starved to death. His a protective brother that I wish I had in my life. If I had one maybe my parents wouldn't have sold me like a cheaper price of bubblegum. I can't say I blame them because everything was beyond their control. It's no use of crying over spilt milk I forgave them a long time ago for what they did to me. The wound of losing a baby is still fresh in my heart and I believe I will never heal from it. They say time heals everything I just hope as time goes by I will also heal. I don't want to forget about my experience and my babies but I just want to heal from everything. Scars are what makes us human. I have more

than enough scars to last me a life time. I will just embrace them and try to overlook past them.

PRINCE SIYANDA

I couldn't sleep I feel agitated. I need to know where she is. I toss the blankets aside and stumble to the kitchen. I found my brother Mpumelelo there.

Mpume: Bro you look like shit.

He burst into laughter irritating me.

I drag the stool and sit down rubbing my face furiously. My knuckles are aching to punch her face leaving a blue eye that will be a permanent mark for her to never cross me again. My mind already has a picture of her screaming with blood flowing pleading me to stop. Her sobbing asking for forgiveness as I beat the shit out of her.

Mpume: She wouldn't have gone that far. They will find her.

His voice snaps trails me out of my fantasy.

Me: She will pay.

I mumble under my breath banging my fist on the table.

Mom: Did you take your pills today?

She asks sitting next to me. I didn't even hear coming in.

Me: Don't start.

I rise up from my seat ready to walk away. I'm fine without the damn pills I don't need them. Being diagnose with bipolar disorder has my family threading carefully around me. They think I'm crazy and I know those stupid pills are the one making me do that.

Bipolar disorder associates with episodes of mood swings ranging from depressive lows maniac highs. Treatment can help but, this condition can't be cured. Chronic can last for years or be a lifelong. It requires medical diagnoses. People with bipolar disorder may have trouble managing work everyday life tasks at school or work or maintain relationships.

There are there main symptoms that can occur with bipolar disorder: mania, hypomania and depression.

While experiencing mania a person with bipolar disorder may feel an emotional high. They can feel excited, impulsive, euphoric and full of energy. During mania episodes, they may also engage in behavior such as unprotected sex, drug use and spending sprees.

Hypomania is generally associated with bipolar II disorder. It's similar to mania, but its severe. Unlike mania hypomania may result in any trouble at work

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school or social relationship. However, people with hypomania still notices changes in their mood swings.

During a period of depression you may experience: Hopeless, deep sadness, loss of energy , lack of interest in activities they once enjoyed, suicidal thoughts and periods of too little or too much sleep.

Men and women diagnosed with bipolar disorder in equal numbers. However the main symptoms may be different between the two genders. In many cases women with bipolar disorder may be diagnosed later in life, in her 20s or 30s. May have mild mania episodes. May have 4 or more episodes of mania and depression in a year which is called rapid cycle.

Man with bipolar disorder are less likely than women to seek medical care of their own. They are likely to die or commit suicide.

Medication can include mood stabilizer such as lithium(Lithobid). Antidepressants- antipsychotic such as fluoxetine- olanzapine(Symbax) and benzodiazepines, a type of anti-anxiety medication such as alprazolam(Xanax) that may be used for short term treatment.

You can imagine the type of shit I go through but they don't seem to understand shit.

Mom: Don't make me force those pills down your throat.

She hisses startling me. My mom knows how much I hate those pills. They make my mood lighters and different from my usual self and I hate that. If I knew better I would say my mother is the one who needs those pills not me. One minutes she's jolly and happy the other minute she's breathing fire ready to burn their entire kingdom.

Me: Mom not now.

Mom: Don't you dare tell me that nonsense Siyanda. You keep failing everything in life. You're useless I gave you a wife in a silver platter and what did you do? Huh?

Mpume: Mom please!

Mom: Shut wena! I also gave you wives in silver platter what did you do?

She roars at him.

Me: I have far more better things to do than this. Bro I will be in my room.

I push the barstool backwards and stood up.

Mom: (hissing) Sit your ass down boy.

I swallow hard and remain in my seat. The authority and power this woman has over us still amaze me. The only person who can tell her where to get off is my brother Zweli other than that the rest of us worship the ground she walks in.

Mom: I gave birth to 5 boys but none of them took followed in my footsteps.

Mpume rolls his eyes earning a chuckle from me.

Mom: A kingdom needs a ruthless leader whose not afraid to take risks. A ruthless leader whose running the show. The villagers must know who their boss is. You make commands and rules to your people they follow them. Those who refuses you force them too.

She bellows with rage.

Mom: You should be out there looking for that girl instead of sitting your lazy ass in my chairs. When will you grow up Siyanda? I will not be here for a very long time. You need to suck it up and run the show when it is your turn. Those weak balls fascine them and hold them tight to be strong.

I drop my eyes and look away from her.

Mom: You're weak. I'm not going to be here for a very long time. (hissing) Find that girl.

She clicks her tongue and walks away. Damn you bitch.

9

LILITHA

My flight landed a few hours ago. I had to ask around for directions to the royal house. I have to say they are well-known family. My stomach has been filled with butterflies since I left the airport. I can't contain my excitement. The car a stop in traffic. I scoffed

Me: Isn't there route you can take?

Driver: There is one but its approximately a 2 hour drive.

I run my hand in my frustrated. I have to be in the royal house before sundown. I didn't plan on spending my day on the road.

FRANKLIN

The weather is unpredictable today. The mode of it forced me to go to the gallery. Catherine was all over my apartment with

his junky friend. They have invaded my personal space I couldn't even concentrate with them there. I enjoy my space and company something my sister doesn't understand.

I drop the paint brush and look at the piece in front of me as the rain drops were pouring softly on the roof. I always get inspired by the rain; it just tells a different story and sets you in the mode. It challenges you as individual to know the story behind why people prefer to stay under it Washington washing their sins away. My phone vibrates on top of the table. I sigh and read the text from my sister.

Cathy: I had to go something came up. I left Zee asleep.

I hold my bridge nose and exhale. I could myself starting to lose my shit. Catherine can't seriously she left that junky in my house alone unsupervised; she got to be kidding. I immediately dial call her.

Me: Tell me you're joking.

Cathy: No I'm not. Look Frank she's fragile take care of her. I will see you guys tomorrow.

Me: (shouting) Cather-

(Tu tu tu) She hangs up on me.

ZINHLE

I feel my bones cracking as he tosses me on the wall. He took his calculated steps towards me with a smirk lurking in his lips. He drags me on the stairs all the way to his bedroom. I scream and try to wiggle his grip on my hair as my feet a floating in the air. He opens the bathroom door dragging me inside and drown my head on the toilet pit. I scream I'm sorry as I gag and cry at the same time.

Siyanda: (hissing) You thought you can run away from me?

I cough hysterically and hold my throbbing neck as blood seeping in the corner on my bottom lip. He drowns my head

again and flushes the toilet. I hold my breath so the water doesn't choke me but it doesn't last long when I feel water invading my nostrils. He removes his hands on my neck and fix his gaze on me. Tears trickle down as I cough soothing my neck.

Me: (stuttering) I-I-I-I'm sorry.

The words slip out of my tongue making hard to form a sentence as hiccups choke me. He corners me like I'm a pry.

Siyanda: Why?

My lips quiver while I keep licking the blood that keeps seeping on my bottom lip. My head and body doesn't feel like mine. I'm pretty sure he broke one of my ribs when he tossed me on the wall and drag me up the stairs.

Me: (crying) I'm sorry.

Siyanda: You're sorry?.

He chuckles like i've shared the most humours joke he ever heard.

Siyanda: I'll show you sorry.

He marches to the bedroom and comes back with a barbed wire.

Siyanda: (smiling) Come here Zinhle my love.

I shook my head crawling backwards; my dress rolls up exposing my thighs. A dark chuckle escaped down from his throat before he charges stumbled towards me and hold my legs and presses the barbed wire in my thighs. I scream in agony.

Siyanda: I'll show you what I do to people who defy me.

He sneers putting more pressure on the barbed wire.

Siyanda: Shut up! This is all your fault.

He roars and moves the barbed wire from my thighs. Blood seeping in my thighs down to my feet.

Me: (crying) Please I-

Words choke me as I burst into tears. He smiles and wipes away my tears with his thumb.

Siyanda: Hush now baby. Stop wasting precious tears.

My skin cringles to his touch. He retrieves his thumb on my face and slaps me. I howled in pain.

Siyanda: (pissed) Fuck Zinhle I'm trying here the least you could do is meet me half way.

I sniff back the tears and the mucus. He crouch in front of me engulf me with one hand while the other one was still holding the barbed wire. His breath his my ear and i shiver as i hear him whispering sweet nothing in my ear. The only words I have been longing for for the past 7years he was finally saying them.

Siyanda: Shh baby your breaking my heart if you keep crying like that. It's not good for your health remember you're pregnant.

His tone is soft and soothing you would mistaken for a gentleman not a monster. I stop crying and move from his arms.

Me: We-

I bit my lip suppressing a sob to escape my mouth.

Me: I lost the baby.

Siyanda: (shocked) What?

His soft gentle eyes turn to the dark eyes I know very well. A slap send me to the shower door and I collided with it. He slammed my face on the shower door

Me: (screaming) I'm sorry.

My pleas fell on deaf ears as he wrap the barbed wire in my neck and drag me with it to the balcony. At this point my voice is hoarse from all the screaming and crying. I've been kicking fighting for my life for the past few hours and I already see my life flashing right in front of me. The blood that keeps seeping down on me doesn't scare him at all. The time Frank or Catherine find me I would be long dead due to the lost of blood and the bruises.

Siyanda: You're mine Zinhle. Do you hear that.

I try to nod vigorously but it was hold because of the barbed wire in my neck. He puts the pressure more.

Siyanda: (grinding teeth) Say with me Zinhle you're mine.

Me: (sobbing) I'm yours my prince.

Siyanda: If I can't have you then no one can have.

Me: (crying) Please! Please don't do this. Please.

His size seven boot land on my ribs. I scream and remove my hand from my neck and hold my ribs; that gives him enough time to use the wire to make me stand on my feet and push me off the balcony.

Siyanda: Goodbye sthandwa sam.

My body and dress floats on the air. I have no more tears on my eyes they are dry like drought. I'm just waiting to feel the excruciating pain my body will feel when I land on the ground. I could see his signature smirk as I fly down to the ground. I'm just disappointed I didn't even fight for my life. My body finally lands on the ground and I smile at last I get to be free.

I jump off the bed with tears running down my face. My whole body was shaking and I was drenched in sweat. I normalise my breathing and look around the room. The rains drops on the roof calms my pumping heart. I'm safe away from him but he still got a hold of me. I sink on the floor and burst into tears. Will I always constantly looking over my shoulder my whole life? How long will it take before he found me?

LILITHA

The driver steps out the car as we are currently parked in front of Siyanda's residence. I roll down the window and look at the view. The gigantic mansion before my eyes makes me squeal. I can get used to living here.

Driver: Good day how may we help you?

I lean on the window and clear my throat to gain his attention.

Me: I'm here to see Siyanda.

Guard: (frowning) You mean Prince Siyanda.

I nodded as he narrow his eyes at me.

Me: (shouting) Hey stop looking like that and open this damn gate. Do you know I can fire you with a snap of a finger.

He bows down and turns stepping on his heels.

Me: Useless servants.

I clicked my tongue. I don't know why does Siyanda keeps hiring useless people. First it was piggy now this stupid guard who takes his goddamn time. I'm losing my patience waiting outside like a bimbo.

Driver: Ma'am I've got to go.

I scoffed in disbelief when I see my luggage in front of the gate. I furiously step out of car and threw and R200 note on the driver and clicked my tongue. I know when Siyanda hears about this he will make an example out of him.

I pace back and forth on the sun still waiting for the guard to come back. His been gone for a while now.

Me: (screaming) Siyanda! Siyanda!

I stretch my neck and scream outside the gate but no one has attended to me instead the stupid servants they keep passing me like they don't see me.

Me: (screaming) Siyanda! Siyanda!

Voice: Hey! Hey! This is not tarven or a strip club for you to be shouting like that.

10

LILITHA

The old woman asked narrowing her eyes at me. I feel my anger rising from the tip of my stomach. How dare she talk to me like that? Does she even know how the hell I am? I could get her fire.

Me: (frowning) Who are you to ask me that shit?

Gasps followed.

Woman: Hey wena-

Me: Hey wena gogo do you know how am I? I could get you fired within a blink an eye.

I clicked my tongue as gasps followed. I can hear whispering by this low lives rural girls who keep taking about my outfit. I'm

wearing my short summer dress with my sandals. My perky breast are out in display.

Me: Gogo are you going to stand there and stare at me or you're going to open the girl?

Woman: Hey wena nondi-

Me: Gogo I know I'm beautiful there is no need for such words. Now I'm going to count to three and you will open this fucken gate before you lose your job. Got that?

I close my eyes and start count when I open them the girl is still closed.

Me: Bitch open the fucken gate now.

I snapped at her shouting. This woman is testing my patience. I've been standing on this blazing sun while my skin has been baked by the sun. When I step my foot inside that gate she is the first person I'm going to fire for making me wait this long.

ZINHLE

I take the bread knife and roll up the sleeve of my top to my elbows. I bit my lip as I feel the excruciating pain of the knife cutting my wrist. Blood seeping from the just ease the pain that I have in my heart. That man took everything away from me; I don't see any reason for me to live anymore. He took the one thing I was hoping for. That baby was my sanity and the only thing keeping me from committing suicide a long time ago. I roll the other sleeve and continue assault my wrist. I smile when I see the blood dripping down to the tiled floor. It's way better than living and feeling worth less. Nobody can love and protection someone like me. I'm always going to be a worthless woman whose hopes and dreams have been ruined by that monster and his family. My own wish is to close my eyes and let the pain sinking deep in me without anyone trying to save me.

LILITHA

The old woman decided to go inside the house without opening the gate. She gave strict instructions to the guards to not open

the gate for me. I've been too nice with this people they don't know me.

Me: (screaming) Siyanda! Siyanda! Baby it's me open the gate this ugly bimbo instructed the guards to not open for me.

I kept screaming until I see the front door opening. The old woman steps out again with her hands in her hips.

Woman: Guard remove this mosquito in my gate.

I gaps.

Me: Bitch did you just call me a mosquito? Do you know who the fuck I am? I will fire you like this.

I snapped my finger to demonstrate for her.

Me: (shouting) The minute I step inside the premises you will be sorry. You will regret making me wait hours outside on this blazing sun.

She rolls into a fit of laughter like I've just shared the most ridiculous thing.

Me: (pissed) What are you laughing at bitch?

Voice: Mom what's going on? Whose making such noise?

Woman: It's this whore outside the gate.

Me: (gasping) Did you just call me whore bitch?

Voice: Who the fuck are you talk to my mother like that?

A deep voice says marching to the gate. His tall dark and a very handsome man but my Siyanda stills takes the cup shame.

Man: Sisi ufunani?

Me: Thank God someone sensible in this village I thought I was going to die standing here. I'm looking for my fiancé.

Man: (frowning) Fiancée.

Voice: Mom what's going on?

A smile creeps in my lips when I hear his voice. I see talking briefly talking to the woman and makes his way towards the gate.

Me: There he is. Hey baby.

Siyanda: (pissed) What the fuck are you doing here?

Me: (smiling) Surprise.

Man: Do you know her?

Siyanda: She's my maid.

My eyes widen as I gasp.

Siyanda: Can you give us a sec I need to take to her.

The man nodded and walk back inside the house.

Siyanda: Open the gate.

The guards nodded and open the gate.

Me: (shouting) How dare you say I'm your maid Siyanda. Do I perhaps look like piggy to you?

I hold my cheek and gasp.

Me: Did you just slap me Siyanda?

He holds my arm tightly and drag me inside the yard.

Me: Siyanda you're hurting me.

PRINCE ZWELI

I parked my car on the driver way and head inside. My eyebrows furrow as I hear loud voices shouting inside.

Me: What's going on?

I divert my eyes to my mother and brother who were shouting on top of their lungs when I walked in.

Mom: Instead of him to go and look for that girl he thought it was best to bring a city girl in my house. Siyanda get rid of that immoral girl today.

He nodded and disappeared on the corridors.

Me: Which girl? What's going on mom?

Mom: That useless brother of yourself see it fit to bring a rude, disrespectful girl in my house. It hasn't been a week his wife has been missing and already his thinking of bringing another whore in my house. A city prostitute in all people.

She spats out venom and claps her hands once.

Me: (frowning) Wait mom what do you mean his wife is missing?

Mom: If you were here Zweli you would know that Zinhle has been missing for 4days now.

Me: And it didn't occur to you to let me know. I'm just a phone call away mom. This is the main reason I choose to do things myself because you always shield bullshit in this house. The poor girl has been missing and I think no one had the brains to report this to the police.

Mom: (shouting) Zweli! Watch your mother boy. I made you I can easily end you.

Me: I'm going to out there to look for the poor girl. I'm sure Siyanda is waiting for mommy to help him. He should grow a fucken pair of balls.

Mom: (yelling) Zweli get back in here.

I clicked my tongue and steep on my heels living my mother yelling behind me. I step inside my car and drove out of the yard with a smirk in my lips. They will never find her and I'm going to make sure of that.

PRINCE SIYANDA

Me: What the fuck are you doing here?

Lilitha: Baby I thought I should surprise you.

I chortle.

Me: Didn't I tell you to stay back?

Lilitha: (sniffing) You did baby.

Me: Then what the fuck are you doing here?

Lilitha: (shouting) If you thought I was going to let you walk away with piggy you have another thing coming.

Me: Don't you dare raise your voice at me. Do you hear me?

Lilitha: Don't you dare talk to me in that manner Siyanda I'm not piggy.

My fist connects with her jaw. She gasp and slap me. I throw another punch and start punch her over and over again as she screams and cry.

Me: Shut the fuck up!

I roar at her as she was on the floor with blood seeping on her jaws.

Me: You disgust me. I like women with class not desperate bitches like you

I click my tongue and walked out.

FRANKLIN

Me: I also have a life Catherine I can't keep asking me to babysit a grown ass woman. What's so special about her anyway?

I lean on the door ankle crossed. I can't believe I left my work at the gallery to babysit that junky. I'm getting sick and tired of having to prioritise my work for her. Catherine called me to go and check because she promised she would be back after 2hrs to her; now she's held up somewhere and thinks she needs company. Is she 10 that she can't stay along for a very hours?

Cathy: She's fragile Frank and needs someone on her corner right. She could use a friend right now.

Me: I don't care whether she has mommy or daddy issues she's not my responsibility. When are you fetching her anyway?

She heavily sigh.

Cathy: She will be staying with you Frank until I'm sure she's safe.

Me: Safe from what? Catherine she better not be running away from drug dealers cause help me God I'm going to kill you. First it was a junky now a criminal what the hell is wrong with you woman?

I half shouting.

Cathy: (groaning) Franklin she's neither of those things you paint her to be. Zee is just an abusived woman running away from her abusive husband.

Me: Yeah right I'm also the abuser.

I sarcastically muttered.

Cathy: I'm serious Frank Zee needs all the help she can get. Keep your negative comments to yourself because that's the only thing that will discourage her and she doesn't need that right now. She needs love care, attention and protection. She could use a friend right now someone she can relay to.

Me: (chuckling) I'm not her knight Cathy.

Cathy: (softly) Please brother just keep a close eye on her for now. I know I'm asking for a lot from you but please brother your my only hope. I know you still have heart in there even though you don't want to show it.

I pinch my bridge nose and grunt. Her manipulating words got to me. No matter what she knows she will win especially when she starts using that smooth soft voice of hers.

Me: (grinding teeth) Fine Catherine but if one single thing goes missing she's out.

She screams one the other line. I chuckle and move the phone from my ear.

Me: Are you done?

Cathy: Thank you brother you don't know what this means to me.

She says with a singing voice. No matter how old my sister is she will always be childish.

Me: (chuckling) Yeah!Yeah!

Cathy: Shit! Did you have to wake up now Nate? Baby I just put you to sleep a minute ago.

She whines making me to laugh.

Cathy: Nathan is handful Frank sometimes I ask myself why didn't I fall pregnant in the first place.

I laugh.

Cathy: Let me attend to him then I will call you later to check upon you.

Me: Fine kiss my boy for me.

I hang up sliding my phone in my pocket and unlock the door and close it behind me. The house is awful quite which is a good thing. The junky is out of sight I don't need to bumping to her in the corridors. She better stay in that room.

I strip naked and open the shower. The hot water hitting my skin relaxes my muscles. I've been working so damn hard this past couple of weeks making sure I deliver my best performance. Those portraits are not just art pieces of art hanging on the gallery. Theirs a story behind each piece. I close the tap and step out of the shower wrapping a towel in my waist. I jog down the stairs whistling for a glass of milk. I will need all the strength to talk to that junky.

Me: Fuck!

I cursed under my breath frowning when my feet land on a pool of blood. I walk in further in the kitchen and my land on the

lifeless Zee on the floor next to her was the bread knife. I assume she used it to cut herself.

Me: You got to be kidding me. In all places you choose to die in my kitchen what the fuck is wrong with you woman?

I kneel and check her pulse. It was there but faintly.

Me: Come on woman don't die on me.

I ran upstairs to the closet and pull out sweats and t-shirts. I run to the kitchen barefoot and scoop her up to the car. She better not die on me.

Me: Hold on Zee!

[FIVE MONTHS LATER]

11

PRINCE SIYANDA

Weeks, days and months has pass by without any word from Zinhle. I'm starting to think she's dead wherever she is. A broken woman like her would not able to live with herself; no sane man would look past those scares and love a woman whose been pregnant not once but three times and lost the babies due to miscarriage all the time. She's like a used piece of bubblegum right now and useless. The next person would just stay for the sake of pussy nothing else. Zinhle cannot be loved.

ZINHLE

Me: I won

I stick my tongue and giggle at Frank's reaction. We were playing Suduko for the zillion time and I won through all those games.

Frank: You cheated Zee I want a rematch.

Me: (giggling) Boy please just accept defeat. I don't know how many times I won this game and you kept saying I cheated. I won fair and square accept defeat Franklin.

Frank: Never.

He stood up from the floor and charge towards.

Me: What are you doing?

Frank: I want my money back. You sure didn't think I will let get away with 5K.

Me: Well you'll have to catch me first.

I giggle and move backwards. He takes two steps forward and I start running while he chase's after me around the gallery.

Me: (laughing) Accept defeat Frank.

Frank: Never! Give me my money Zee.

I run around the whole gallery as he chase's after me like a predator stalking it's prey.

Me: A bet is a bet Frank.

I giggle and run faster making sure I don't knock off his paintings. A lot has happened this past couple of months. After I tried committing suicide Frank and Catherine were on my case scolding me like a child. I cried and begged them to just let me die because I was tired of living. I was tired of having any feelings. My heart was broken a thousand time by that monster. He took away my children and broken me not mentally but physical

emotional, spiritual and sexual. He took away a lot from me but they made me realise that killing myself is the same as giving him power over me. They told me to realise myself and forgive myself because what happened was not my fault.

It took a lot in me just to forgive myself. The hatred and vengeance I had I channel it through counseling. I attend it three times a week and I can safely say it has been the best thing that has ever happened to me. If someone would have to me I would be this free 5 months ago I would have laughed in their faces. To say I'm happy is an understatement. I feel free and much more alive. Frank has been the big brother I never. His so protective and caring something I had longed for. Someone to care and protect me. It doesn't matter if the person doesn't love me but I always wished for was care.

Frank: Fine Zee you won.

I bend down and hold my knees panting.

Me: I told you Frank I always win.

I stick out my tongue and he chuckles.

Frank: Okay miss let's get back to work.

I nodded and walk to the back to take the cleaning equipment. I work at Frank's gallery as a cleaner. It's not much but at least its something. I'm working hard for my own money something I didn't know.

LILITHA

I run down the stairs to the nearest bathroom and puke. I feel my inside like they are about to come out. I have been puking the whole day and snapping at everyone.

Voice: Nondindwa ukuphi?

She shouts on the other side.

Me: The bathroom ma'am.

Karabo: What the hell are you doing in my bathroom? Bitch you better no mess it up.

Me: I won't ma'am.

Karabo: Anywhere I'm quickly dashing to the mall tell my man I went out.

Me: Yes ma'am.

A lump rise in my throat and tears stream down. I rinse my mouth and splash water on my face. The reflection staring right back at me I don't recognise it anymore. This woman staring right back at me has a scar on her left cheek. I got that scar from Queen Mother when she started her abuse. It's been 5month since we came back from the bundus and my life has been one hell of a roller coaster ride. Not only does Siyanda abuse me his face family also did the same especially his mother. I was hanged on a tree naked and whipping with a sjambok everyday for disrespect her for the whole 3 weeks. By the time they realised me I was close to death. My body failed me each time I tried to stand in my two feet. I was exhausted and starving. During this times there was no food or water. Everytime I look at the scars in my body especially the ones in my back I just broke down. They stripped me off my dignity and

self worth. I'm disgusted by my own body. The scars makes me want to just die. They changed me from a free spirited person to this stranger I barely recognise. I always lay awake at night with tears in my eyes asking myself what went wrong? Where did I go wrong?

Siyanda has been living with another girl in the house while I also stay here. The girl has been making my stay here a nightmare. I've turned into her personal slave. My family tried to beg me to come home but I just can't give up on my relationship with Siyanda. His the first guy i've had a serious relationship with. The first guy who was ready enough to see me fit to be wife material compared to my previous relationships. I know that that person abusing me right now is not my Siyanda but a demon who is bewitched. I'm sure this girl bewitched because there is no way my Siyanda would act like this towards me. He know how much we love each other.

PRINCE SIYANDA

I'm in a meeting with King Nkosi and his wife. His been asking for this meeting but I have been dragging it to meet with him.

King Nkosi: I think this project will benefit many villagers.

Me: Agreed.

Queen Nkosi: Especially women. This project is about women mostly. Most villages are still thinking women I just weak species. They have a mentality that man are stronger; what they don't know is that women are stronger than men.

King Nkosi: I agree with my wife. Women are the feature of this country. They can be great leader and do a better job than we men do within a week. This people are intelligent and smart. We have to stop underestimated and undermining them because some day they will be our leaders.

I chuckle and shake my head. What kind of bullshit is this? This man is uttering nonsense in his mouth. Hell will freeze the day women become our leaders. They too weak, pathetic and naive. A great leader is determined by their strength which is something women don't have. All they do is scream when trouble comes knocking.

Me: I think I'll run it past my people then get back to you. We will be honoured working with you especially on a big project like this.

King Nkosi: We will take our leave right now.

We stood up and shook head.

Me: I will personally will be handling the project to make sure that my people won't mess it up.

Queen Nkosi: Oh no Prince Siyanda this project is about women therefore I expect your wife will be handling it.

I froze on my spot. My breath hitches. I hear the front door open and closing. Light footsteps approach us.

Karabo: Baby I'm so horny I could eat up right now.

Shit this is not happened at least not right now. I could feel the King and Queen's gaze on me.

Karabo: (giggling) My bad.

She burps.

Karabo: I didn't know you had visitors baby.

She giggles again and burps. She's drunk.

Me: My king and Queen I humbly apologize about this behavior.

Queen: If I may ask where is your wife?

I stretch the back of my head. Karabo stumbles towards me and start assaulting me with kisses. She's infuriating me. I push her off but she keeps coming strong filled with lust.

Queen: I'm certainly sure this one is not here.

Karabo: Whooa girl you're so uptight didn't daddy give you an orgasm this morning?

They gasp and the queen clasps her hands once.

Queen: I've never been so disrespect by a commoner my whole life. Prince Siyanda what is this?

Me: Uhhh....

King Nkosi: I'm not going to join forces with someone who can't control his household let alone disrespect my wife like this. You can forget the deal it's off.

Me: Wait I can explain.

They march to the door and walk out.

Me: Fuck!

I push Karabo off me and she falls on the floor and whimper.

12

ZINHLE

My phone rings on top of the counter. I wipe my palms with the dishcloth and pick it up. A smile creeps on my face when I saw how the caller is.

Zweli: Zee

Me: My prince

He chuckled

Zweli: How many times did I tell you to loose that title?

Me: I'm sorry it's just that I kinder disrespectful no to acknowledge your status.

I chew the inside of my bottom lip. I'm kind of nervous I don't why because he calls approximately everyday to check up on me. It feels weird that his on my side. Everyday I ask myself how long will I take for him until he turns his back on me and side with his family. Blood is thicker than water that is what I taught myself this past few years i've been living in that hellhole.

Zweli: OK fine Zee since you won't lose the tittle shit.

I gasp and he chortle.

Zweli: How are you take me as an older brother. Instead of you saying my prince at the time you will say Bhuti.

I giggle as he mimicked my voice.

Me: I don't sound like that.

Zweli: You sure do.

I laugh and shake my head forgetting he can't see me. My laughter sometimes startles me. I didn't know how my voice sound like when I'm laughing; the only thing I knew was my voice sobbing or screaming in agony.

Zweli: Listen I wanted to tell you that I'm going back to Durban tonight. I have to keep checking how far they are with you search. We cannot afford to relax I until I know they gave up. I know my stupid brother gave up a long time ago but the problem is my mother. She isn't the type that gives up easily.

My stomach churned and my heart pummelled in my ribcage. Suddenly the room feels like its sucking the breath out of me when he mentions Queen Mother. That woman took a lot from me and she's still doing so even when I'm aware from her. She feds on fear and right now I'm giving her and her son power over me even though they are very far away from me.

Zweli: Hello? Zinhle?

I close my eyes and took a deep breath and try to remember what I was taught on my counselling meetings. The victim living in fear because of the abuser gives the abuser more power over him or her. I normalized my breathing and open my eyes.

Me: Yes I'm still hear.

Zweli: Are you okay?

Me: I'm more than okay my pri I mean bhuti Zweli.

Zweli: That's good to hear. Look Zee I was just checking on you.

Me: Thank you please pass my greetings to Cathy and kiss Nate for me.

Zweli: Will do bye for now.

Me: Bye.

I heavily sigh as he disconnects the call. My mind keeps remind me that Prince Zweli is royalty I must not trust him but my heart tells at least give him the benefit of doubt if I don't trust him. It will take time to trust people especially a male figure. Those species always want to benefit something.

I force my legs to the fridge and take out an apple. I open the drawer and look for a knife. I know Frank has been walking on egg shells with me and it's annoying sometimes. Yes he my best interest at heart but his exaggerating this whole thing. The was no need for him to hide the knives around the house. How am I suppose to peel my apple now?

LILITHA

Fatigue has been keeping locked up on this room like a dog. I feel disoriented and exhausted. Every part of my body hurts even my heart. I'm not a fan of praying but everyday I found myself kneeling with tears trickling down my cheek pouring my heart out to God to change my situation.

ZINHLE

A smile creeps on my face when my eyes land to the set of knives hidden on top of the fridge. I push back the barstool and seat on it peeling the apple.

Voice: What are you doing?

I jump startled and hold my chest. I turn to find Frank's furious face staring at me.

Me: Sweet Jesus Frank don't sneak upon me like that.

I muttered moving my hand away from my chest.

Frank: Zee what are you doing with a knife? And where did you find them?

Me: Peeling an apple want some?

He shook his head. I shrugged and continue my task.

Me: (giggling) Your thought I wouldn't find them?

He stumbled his way towards me and snatches the knife. I frown.

Me: Frank what's going?

Frank: I specifically told you to not use knives Zee.

Me: Come Frank it's not a big deal. You're blowing this out of proportion.

A dark chuckle escapes his mouth.

Frank: (pissed) Not a big deal?

Me: Yes Frank not a big deal.

I stood up and pushed pass through him to the lounge. Cutting the apple into pieces was much easy than to cut it with my own teeth. His still on my tail.

Frank: You nearly died Zee

Me: I know jeez stop reminding me that.

I roll my eyes and take the remote switching on the TV but instead his stands in front of it.

Frank: Refrain from rolling your eyes at me or else I stuck them out right now.

His firm and stone voice echoes in the lounge while my eyes are pop out of the sockets.

Frank: (pissed) You were fucken unconscious when I found you close to death. So excuse me for carrying for you life something you can't do.

My mouth opens and close like a fish. He marches to the door leading to the kitchen but stops on his tracks.

Frank: (snapping) Stay away from fucken knives Zee. I'm throwing those set on the trashcan I don't care whether we don't have knives in the house or not but one thing I know from now on we won't be needing one.

He turns to his heels and walks out and few minutes later I hear the door being slammed. I look the apple in my hand and immediately lost my appetite for it. I've never been scolded like that in my life.

FRANKLIN

I seat on the stairs outside and mentally slap myself for loosing my cool like that on her. I didn't mean to snap on her like that

it's just I panicked when I saw her holding a knife in her hands. The last time I found her close to death with cuts on both wrists. This woman has permanently found a place in my mind for the past few weeks. She might not be aware of that but my thoughts have been invaded by her smile, giggles

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laughter, her eyes sparkling when she's laughing or excited but most of all her beauty. Her short self is the last thing before I close my eyes and the first thing I want to see each morning. She makes makes everything so simple and easy. I know she's been through a lot but I can't help myself. I'm deeply in love with her. She's not a woman of many words but she's a sucker for romance; that's one thing I've noticed. I spend most of my time observing her likes and dislikes. She's living rent free in my mind and I'm slowly losing it.

PRINCE SIYANDA

I heavily sigh and nervously place a call. I've been ignoring my mothers calls all day long. I know she wants to know if we will working with King Nkosi's village.

Mom: Yeyi wena Siyanda.

She bellows on the end of the line with rage. I know she's about to bite my head off.

Me: Mah

Mom: Don't mah me. I've been calling you the whole day.

Me: I've been busy

I lie through my teeth knowing very well she will cause havoc once she hears that we didn't get the deal.

Mom: Don't give me excuses Siyanda I want answers. Do we have the deal or not.

Me: Eish!

I swallow hard and stretch the back of my head.

Mom: Do I have to dragging it on you what do they say?

Me: We don't have the deal mah.

Silence! I expected her to shouting and cursing at me but instead she's silent.

Me: Mah did you hear what I said?

Mom: I did Siyanda. How did we not get the deal? I thought everything was finalized the only thing that is left is to sign of the dotted line.

Me: They kind of-

I trail with my thoughts going back to earlier today when their disgusted faces left my living room. Perhaps inviting them to a

restaurant would have been far better than my house. We could have avoided a lot of things.

Mom: They what Siyanda?

She's snapped at me. I can tell she's getting impatient.

Me:

They wanted to work with Zinhle and my girlfriend was here she insulted the queen.

I breath out after saying that fast in one sentence.

Mom: What? I hardly heard what you said.

There is no excuse on lying to her or else she would go to the Nkosi's herself.

Me: It's a women project mom so the queen wanted to work with Zinhle.

Saying her name lives a bitter taste in my mouth. This woman costed me a lot of money because of her stupidity. She better pray I don't find her or else I would do worse than hitting her this time.

Mom: What did I say about being weak Siyanda? You keep disappointing me over and over again. I'm starting to ask myself are you really my son because no son of mine has shown weakness like you do. You just gave up on the search of that girl just like that. Your milk didn't come from my own two breasts because if they didn't you wouldn't be whining to me like a child. You would have had a solution by now. (hissing) Fix this mess and find that girl before I do that for you and trust me you won't like that.

She hangs up after clicking her tongue. I clench my jaws and throw the papers on the desk on the floor. The study door cracks open.

Karabo: (softly) Baby

Me: (annoyed) Not now.

Karabo: Look I want to apolog-

Me: I said not now woman.

I roar at her and she quickly steps on her heels and close the door behind her. My veins are popping and rush of blood makes me want to punch something. I'm about to lose my shit any second. I open the drawers of the desk and look for those stupid pills. Damn you Zinhle this is your fault.

13

FRANKLIN

A day has passed and i've been ignoring Zee since our last encounter. I know is ridiculous and childish but I can't seem to face her. I don't know how am I going to explain my sudden outburst to her. It may seem like I don't care to her but at the same time I do care but just scared that she might reject me. If it was up to me I would look her up in the house and just be the only guy who set his eyes on her.

Zee: Hello?

She snaps her fingers in my face bringing out of my chain of thoughts.

Me: Huh?What?

Zee: Jeez Frank what's with you and being moody these days?

It's you dammit! You living in my heart and mind. I'm yearn for your touch. To feel those small lips against me.

Zee: (yelling) Frank?

Dammit I zoned out again fantasizing about you. Get a drip Frank boy.

Me: How can I help you Zee?

Zee: It's my tea time.

I look at my wristwatch and realize i've been sitting on this chair the whole day just staring at her doing nothing.

Me: Do you want me to come with you?

Zee: Maybe some other time but I've got a date.

She flashes me a smile.

Me: What? Where? With who?

Zee: (frowning) Just a guy-

I chuckle

Me: You're not going Zee.

Zee: (shocked) What? Why?

She folds her arms across her chest and give me the you don't own me look. Oh were being sassy are we?

Me: Because I said so.

I move the chair backwards and stood up.

Zee: That's not a reason enough to make me cancel my date.
I'm going Frank and that final.

Me: You're not going Zee.

Zee: You're not the boss of me and you can't tell me what I can do with my private life. I'm going Frank and that's final.

She furiously turns on her heels and walks out. I can hear her mumbling.

Zee: (pissed) Who does he think he is to me shit?

I chuckle and shake my head this woman is going to be the death of me I swear.

ZINHLE

My steps are rushed as I walk down the road to a close coffee shop. I'm pissed. Who does Frank this he is to tell such things. I

let is slide last night when he was freaking out about the knife but this I've had enough of his behavior. I escaped one most to live free and I'm not looking forward to another one. Franklin can go to hell for all I care. I walk in the shop and take place an order while I wait for my date. I've meet this guy Njabulo when I was knocking off at work a couple of weeks ago. His been nagging me to go out with him for a while now but I was not ready for any relationship. My mind was still stuck on what I went through and I honestly didn't think I would heal. The are somedays where I lay awake at night thinking Prince Siyanda might barge in my room and start his assault on me. My external scars might be healing but it will take years to heal the internal ones.

I've been sitting here for 40 minutes right and I'm on my second cup of coffee. This guy wasted my time I could have done something else with this time. I click my tongue and place the bill on the table before walking out. I could feel myself getting disappointed as I approach the gallery.

Frank: (smirking) Back so soon?

Me: I'm not in the mood Frank.

Frank: What happened?

His worried voice is audible.

Me: He stood me up. Can you believe him?

A smirk graces Frank's lips. I squint my eyes and look at him.
Wasn't he pissed a few minutes ago?

Me: Well?

Frank: Well what?

Me: I'm waiting for you to tell me how stupid am I to believe a
guy I met a couple of weeks ago can give me a chance.

Frank: (smirking) There is nothing wrong with you baby the
problem lies with him.

I narrow my eyes at him. There is just something about his smirk it's sinister. His really weird I thought I can understand him but he keeps proving me wrong.

PRINCE SIYANDA

Every thing is falling apart just in front of my eyes. Not only did I lost the Nkosi deal yesterday but most Kings and Queen's don't want to work with us. They kept pulling out left

right and center. While I try to grasp and mend this I get a call from other kingdom's that they can't associate themselves with people who don't respect women. I've been drowning myself with alcohol in the early hours of the morning.

Karabo: Baby breakfast is ready.

She announces on the other side of the door. I stood and drag myself downstairs.

Karabo: Morning baby.

I just nod and start dishing up for myself.

Lilitha: (smiling) Allow me.

She takes my plate and start dishing for me and give it with a huge smile. If it was any other day I would have slapped her but I'm drained.

LILITHA

I sniff back the tears and wipe my mouth. This thing of vomiting has becoming constantly on me and it's annoying. My problems keep piling up each day and I feel like giving up but I'm not stupid. That man in that house is mine just going through a phase I know when his done with her; he will come back to me where he belongs. It's a temporary situation I have to accept.

Karabo: Nondindwa

I purr and stood stumbling my way outside my room.

Me: What?

She giggles and clasp her hands.

Karabo: Are you somehow forgetting your place in this house?

I fold my arms over my chest.

Me: I haven't.

Karabo: It seemed like it sweetheart. You're just a maid stick to that and stop try to seduce my man.

My eyes widen.

Karabo: You thought I wouldn't notice how seductively you speak to him.

She steps close and shove her finger in my forehead.

Karabo: You're not in his status honey I am. You see am the future and wena you're always be a maid. Someone whose picking after us. You're a nobody and believe me your worthless if I were you I would kill myself.

I could feel tears are on the verge of my eyes with just one blink they will fall freely.

Karabo: Stay in your lane.

She clicks her tongue and start walk away. Tear roll down how can she say that I'm a nobody whose worthless. I've got feelings too

14

FRANKLIN

His been meaning to talk to Zee about his feelings but everytime words just don't slip out of his tongue. He always forgets and gets scared. His sure that she will reject him and his only fear is rejection.

Zee: Frank

She slaps his thighs snapping him out of his daze. It's friday after work watching a movie. They made Fridays to be movie night but it seems like the movie it's watching Frank. His miles away.

Me: Yeah I'm fine.

Zee: No you're not. I've been blabbing alone for a while right now.

Me: I'm sorry Zee I'm tired.

He forces a yawn to escape his lips and stood up stretching his muscles. A frown settles on Zee's forehead. She has never seen Frank acting this way let alone walk away from movie night.

Zee: You're sure you're okay?

Me: I'm fine Zee let me just sleep on it then I'll be fine.

Zee nodded and sprint outs of the living room to his room and realises a shaky breath. How long will he keep lying to her? Zee is very fragile. From what he gathered from his sister she was from an abuse situation which he wouldn't call a marriage or a relationship because he so called husband is a piece of shit. He broke her and it will take time to mend back the broken piece. He doesn't mind mending the back to gather but the big questions that always on his mind is, is she willing to let her guard down and allow someone else to love her? Is she ready enough to be loved the way she truly deserve? Is the feeling mutual? Those are the questions that keep her awake in most nights.

LILITHA

Her life has been one hell of a roller coaster ride. One minute she was on top being the madam issuing chores at everyone and the next minutes she's scrubbing a toilet as part of her chores. Her stomach has been grumbling since this morning. The last time she consumed food was yesterday during lunch time even though at that time she stole the food. She's weak getting sick each minute. If its not her vomiting and feeling disoriented; it's her always clinging on Siyanda like a magnate for only to return the affection with a slap or a punch. She's lost two of her front teeth but that doesn't seem to stop her from clinging on him or get the message. She always convince herself that he will be back to her. Karabo is just a mere fling that will end soon.

Voice: (hissing) Lilitha?

She quickly wipes the buds of sweat in her forehead and stood up. If it was up to her she would have stayed in her room until she's better but unfortunately the new management doesn't think so.

Me: Yes madam.

Karabo: I heard that you're sick so I brought you madam. You can leave that and go to your room to rest.

A lonely tear trickle her once of chubby cheeks. She's not that bad the way she thought she is. She actually cares for others something she failed to do.

Me: Thank you!

Karabo smiles at her and escort her back to her room. Her stomach grumbles on their way back. They stop on their tracks and she narrows her big marble eyes at her.

Karabo: When was the last time you ate?

She folds her lips with her teeth and look the other side. She's suppose to be swearing at her and making her life difficult but instead she here she is pitying her.

Karabo: Let me take you to your room then I will quickly whisk something for you right?

She nodded with tears seeping on her cheeks. They limp to her room and she lays on the bed while she walks back to the house to make food for her.

KARABO

Her only wish is to make them pay. They took everything from her family let alone strip her a sister she never meet. Her mother is shaking like a leaf everytime she mentions the royals. The fear they have installed on the poor villagers is painful.

She once had a sister

Advertisement

her name was Zonke. She was shipped off to get married to the royal house as it is a custom and tradition in their village to get married at 13. She never got the chance to meet her nor have a proper conversation with her. She was conceived to fill the void of losing their only daughter to them. Her father named Karabo because he was in love with the character Karabo Moroka from Generations.

She was shipped off the minute she was born to stay with a relative because her parents feared history might repeat itself. She's been living at Jo'burg most of her childhood life but her current parents moved to Mthatha where she meets Siyanda for greener pastures.

Everyday she looks at him with nothing but hatred but she has to act in order to gain his trust. The time she kisses him she wishes she could stab him with a knife but they say patience is virtue. It's a vicious cycle that lives one dead but this time she vowed to be the one killing her enemies with nothing but trust, kindness most importantly love. It's a suicide mission but she's willing to risk it all. If she doesn't make them pay then who will?

15

SEASON FINALE

PRINCE SIYANDA

Everything has been spiral out of control in less than a week. Each and every village doesn't want to work with them; those who already signed the deal with them just comes with a lame excuse that they can't fund projects outside their own village and pull out. Its a mess his been trying to fix but each time its like his takes 5 steps forward then the next day it's 20 steps backwards. He doesn't want to call his mother and prove her right that his useless. He wants to do this by himself and prove them that his not weak. He has a backbone like any other man out there but it gets difficult each day. He told himself this tune his not going to run to mommy and let her save the day.

He runs his hands through his hands and gulp down the glass of scotch his hands. It burns his insides and squeak. He can feel his blood rushing down from his head to his whole body. A soft knock on the door startles him.

Me: Come in.

The door cracks open and Karabo walks in.

Karabo: Can you please borrow me your car mine is out of gas. I'm already late for work.

Me: Do you need me to drive you?

Karabo: No I'll pass by my parents later on.

He retrieve the car keys on the drawers in toss and fishes for his wallet in his pockets. He takes out his card and hands them to her. She smiles and plants a soft kiss in his lips before swaying her hips out of the study. He sinks further down on the leather chair and close his eyes. He fucked when brought the Nkosi's to his homestead; he should have met them at a restaurant or their home. The deal would be signed and his village would be accumulating instead of losing wealth. It's only a matter of time before his mother finds out about this and she will go berserk on him.

A beeping sound snaps him out his daze. He takes out his phone from his pockets and reads the text.

Me: The fuck?

A bank notification alerting him that R25K has been withdrawn from his account. His car just left his yard a few seconds ago where he would pin the blame on Karabo. She's just two blocks away from the house it wouldn't be her. If it's not her then who?

ZINHLE

She walks down the streets of Pretoria for a walk. She's never done this before or even attempt to walk alone. Everyday when she goes to work or knock off she's with Frank. Even though she's miles away from Siyanda she keeps looking backwards from the direction she came from for any suspensions people following behind her. She immediately regrets her decision of walking alone when her eyes sets on a man looking at her holding a conversation on his phone. She stops dead on her

tracks with her eyes popped out. Her breath hitches while a shiver runs down her spine. The man across the street crosses to her side and she starts running bumping to people.

Me: He found me!!

Tears fell down on her cheeks as she runs down. She crosses the road and starts running in the middle of the road. Cars are honking her while other drivers have to swave or hit the brakes in order not to hit her. Her mind is not even aware that she's running in the middle of the road; her main focus is to get away from the man as fast as she can.

Man: No man I haven't seen her in a while.

The man laughed behind her. His not waking faster nor running after her. Her paranoia is the one making her believe the man is one of the royal guards if not his one of them then he was sent to look for her.

Man: No she's here.

The tears streaming down her cheeks frustrates her; even worse she can't find her way home. What the man said made her lose her mind. Her feet couldn't take it anymore while her knees were wobbly. She stopped running with her hands on her knees. She's panting like a dog coming from a run.

Man: Yeah talk later dude.

The man hangs up and stops beside her.

Man: You sure can run miss. Why don't you join the comrades marathon? I'm totally sure you would win.

He smiles sweetly and pat her back before stepping on his heels and enter a near cafe that was behind her. She stood there for a while trying to process everything that just happened. A chuckle escape her lips when she finally get what the man was saying. She ran for nothing and the poor man probably doesn't even know her. She feels so stupid for running like that even crying in public like that. Surely the people think she just lost her mind.

LILITHA

She just ate leftovers of pizza and her mouth salivated like it's the most delicious meal she's ever ate. It's been a while since she eat a meal that good and the last time she ate was yesterday during lunch time. The constant question in her mind is how did Zinhle survive this because some days she would go for days without any food.

Me: Thank you.

Karabo: (smiling) It's fine.

She squeezes my hands for assurance and looks at her wristwatch.

Karabo: Look at the time.

Karabo leaps up on her feet and makes her way to the door.

Karabo: Do you need anything?

Me: No thanks again.

A big smile graces her lips before she walks out. She lays on her side on the bunk bed. Her life was so simple 5months ago. She had a stable job

friends who adore her. A man who loves her and a maid she took for granted. All that changed when she forced herself to visit his homestead instead of waiting home like she should be. Siyanda from the loving gentle soul he was to monster overnight. An abuser precisely.

The door bust open and drunk Siyanda stumbles in. She rose up to her feet and runs to the bathroom but he catches up with her and jumps on her back. She falls face flat on rug and crawls to the bathroom. Siyanda drags her with her feet. She kicks him on the face he stumbles back and lands on his butt but quickly rushed to her

Me: (crying) Please don't do this.

She crawls and pushes the door open and holds it. His hand gets hold of her legs and drags her towards him. He puts one knee on her back and slam her head on the floor. Her screams echoes the she room but he doesn't care. He stands up and strips the sweats and boxers off. His erected dick springs free.

Siyanda: (hissing) Shut up. This is all your fault

Me: (crying) Siyanda please don't do this. Look at me it's me your love Lilitha. I'm begging you don't do this.

She doesn't lose the fight; she still crawls to the door and hold the edges tightly.

Siyanda: I said shut up.

He kicks her ribs. She moves her hands on the door and hold her ribs wincing in pain. Tears wail down her cheeks while her heart is thudding. He's eyes went to her exposed thighs and

licks his lips. She furiously rolls down the skirt and move backwards. This cannot happen to her. She never thought it will actually happen to her; her mind is aware what is about to happen to her but her heart refuses to believe it will happen. She always heard Zinhle screaming like someone was slaughtering her and never paid attention to it because she thought Siyanda was beating her black and blue for behind lazy.

She rose up from the floor as he takes his steps forward to her. She quickly turns back and run to the bathroom but was pushed to the wall. Her forehead collide with the wall and she loses her balance falling on the floor. Siyanda takes this opportunity while she's unconscious to roll up the skirt and tore her thong. He bends her to her knees and parted her legs holding her waist. He kneels between her legs position himself before he slammed into her. A deep groan escapes down his throat.

16

SEASON FINALE

WEEKS LATER

LILITHA

Doctor: How are you feeling today?

I shrugged my shoulders and look outside the window. I've been in this institution for weeks now and this doctor doesn't give up. Karabo found me passed out in a pool of blood in my room. Siyanda was arrested but his case didn't even go to court. They kept him in a holding cell for a day and at night he was back home in his house while I was in hospital trying to process the news that I was pregnant. Not only did he kill my baby but he tore apart my vagina. I had a tear down there and it took me days to heal. I couldn't pee, wear underwear or even walk properly.

Doctor: You order for me to help you; you have to talk to me.

Tears roll down on my cheeks. I don't want to talk about how stupid and naive I was. Everything happened right in front of me but I didn't stop it. I enjoyed when I saw him inflicting pain on someone else I didn't think the tables would turn and I would be the one with a scar in my forehead and tear in my vagina.

Me: (crying) Just leave me alone I don't want to talk.

I scream and sink down on the floor. I can see the pity look the doctor has. The door opens and other doctors rush in and sedate me. This is how i've been living the past couple of weeks. She asks my feelings

I bust and start screaming on her. I land on the floor and they sedate me. It's a routine I'm getting used to.

ZINHLE

Cathy: Should I order for you?

Me: Yeah sure.

She makes her way to the counter and live me with baby Nate. Catherine took me out for dinner today. Frank is in Durban for one of his exhibitions while and left me alone at home. A few months ago he didnt trust me enough to live me alone, if he was going somewhere he would call Cathy to babysit me like I'm a child.

Cathy's job is demanding plus she has to become a mother to baby Nate whose also demanding. She comes back with three milkshakes. Nate starts to sing and clap his hands. I smile with tears blurring my vision. He reminds me of the children that I have lost.

Cathy: So how have you been?

Me: (sigh) I've been fine Cathy regardless of the circumstances.

Cathy: (frowning) Which circumstances?

I heavily sigh. I don't want to bother her going into detail about my fucked up life. Yes I miss my children a lot even though I didn't get a chance to meet them but I always have that what if question on the back of my mind. What if I ran away just in time I would be a mother right now.

Me: Nothing much Cathy. I don't want to bother you.

I lie through my teeth. Cathy and Zweli have done a lot for me. The least I could do is show appreciation and not to nag them about my problems.

Cathy: Nonsense Zee spit it out.

Me: I feel like I'm moving around in circles you know.

I sip on my milkshake while she gives me the go on look.

Me: I haven't done much with my life. I don't want to live in fear for the rest of my life Catherine. Most nights when it's

raining cats and dogs I always have the same dream over and over again.

She stops sipping her milkshake and narrow her eyes at me.

Cathy: What dream?

Me: It's like he knows where am I. I feel like someone is watching while I'm sleeping outside on the window even though the curtains and window being shut. I always see this figure just standing there not moving just looking inside.

She chokes and start coughing.

Cathy: (shocked) What?

Me: Maybe I'm being paranoid.

Cathy: No Zee how long have this been going on?

Me: Since Frank left for the exhibition in Durban. I sometimes hear footsteps in the kitchen while I'm on the lounge watching TV. This only happens at night.

PRINCE ZWELI

It's around 7pm when I park my car on the drive way and sigh. I was suppose to come back home a few weeks back but I couldn't because Nathan got sick in the middle of the night and we had to take him to the hospital. I couldn't be selfish and live my wife and my sick son just because my mother summoned my presence in the royal house. Just being in that house makes me repulse everybody living in there except for the servants of course.

Me: Evening everyone.

I greet the servants in the kitchen and they bow. I pass the quiet lounge like I anticipated to my bedroom. Just as I turn the doorknob I could hear low sobs and flinching inside. I open the door and found my brother's first wife Ntombi sitting in my bed

with a bowl on the pedestal that has red water. I assume it's blood.

Me: Ntombi what's going?

She turns and her eyes popped out while the low sobs continue. She turns to the bowl and dips a cloth and dry it before putting it on someone. I hear the small flinching again. I move from the door to the bed. My eyes widen when they land on someone's back. Judging by the scars I assume a sjambok was used on this person.

Me: Ntombi what's the meaning of this? How is this and what the hell are you guys doing in my bedroom?

Ntombi: (stuttering) I....

Her voice trails off.

Me: You're what?

Voice: Zweli come down.

She muttered walking in.

Me: (shouting) Mother don't tell me to come down.

Mom: Don't you dare raise your voice at me Zwelibanzi. Your brother needs help and his not coping with the kingdom.

Me: So what does that have to do with me?

Mom: You're not on the line.

I bursted in laughter. Surely this woman has a loose screw I don't know how many times did I tell her I don't want to be stupid King.

Me: You brought me for that nonsense? Mother please don't make me laugh again; my life is perfectly fine where I am.

Mom: And where is that exactly? Nobody knows where you live Zweli and you don't even take the guards with you.

Me: Do you blame me? Royalty life doesn't fascinate me mom if it was up to me I would exchange with someone else.

Mom: You don't mean that.

Me: I do. Everytime I'm here it's like I'm in hell. I'm living in hell on earth.

She gags.

Mom: Zweli.

Her reprimanding tone startles Ntombi. She jumps and the person on the bed winces louder.

Ntombi: Sorry.

Voice: Please just let me go.

Mom: Shut up!!

Voice: (crying) I just want to go home.

Me: Mom what the fuck is going on here?

Mom: Watch you tongue boy.

She clicks her tongue.

Mom: If you must know since Mpumelelo is stepping down and you're taking over I took this time to find you a wife.

I choke on my saliva and cough hysterically.

Me: (shocked) You did what

KARABO

The intercom goes off. I stand up to attend to it.

Me: Yes

Man: Ma'am we are looking for Mr Siyanda Mkhize.

Me: Regardless?

Man: I have his parcel.

Me: Okay.

A frown creases my forehead when I open the gate. His been very secretive this days I can't figure it out what his up to. A

knock on the door snap me out in my daze. I make my way to the door and open it.

Me: Come in.

The man makes his way in with a box in his hand.

Me: Let me sign that.

Voice: There is no need I'm here.

He walks down the stairs to the man. He takes the pen and sign. The man thanks him and walk out. He follows him and close the door.

Me: What's in the box?

My curiosity got the better of me. I thought I would wait for him to open the box but I couldn't wait any longer. His been secretive with everything he does this days. I pray he hasn't

caught up with me that I've been making donations with his money to charity.

Siyanda: Some stuff.

He muttered opening the box. I nervously bite my lip praying he isn't into me. He puts the box down and takes out pictures. A smile graces his lips.

Siyanda: Finally!!

He muttered and ascended to the stairs. My whole body starts to shake while my breath hitches. What is in those pictures that made him smile? I have to have them

17

SEASON FINALE

KARABO

I nervously bite my lower lip and knock on the door. His voice shouts come in on the other side of the door.

Me: Uhm hey babe

My voice is barely audible. I'm nervous and scared; if he finds out that I'm the one stealing his money I might leave this house in a body bag.

Siyanda: You're okay?

He arch his eyebrows. The pictures are scattered on his desk. Sweat has been running down my back and forehead.

Me: I'm fine just tired.

I force a yawn to escape my mouth.

Siyanda: I'll call the doctor. You look much pale.

He takes his phone from the desk and scroll down his contact list before he place a call. Who wouldn't be when they are dealing with a psychopath like you? My chances of survival in this house are close to zero if I don't play my cards right.

ZINHLE

Cathy: You can sleep over at my house tonight.

Catherine has been calling to check upon me every five minutes since she dropped me off earlier on.

Me: That's unnecessary thought Cathy. I promise I'll be fine beside Frank is on his way.

I lie through my teeth. I don't want to be a burden to her. Her life doesn't have to stop because of me.

Cathy: Honestly Zee I don't mind.

I switch off the side lamp and pull the covers to my head. I had long day at work today. Since Frank is not there to manage the gallery his partner and friend Austin is there to run it and his been working us like slaves.

Me: Like I said earlier on I could be paranoid. Fear does that to a lot of people.

Cathy: Zee stop being stubborn. This man could be watching you in your sleep every night like a creep.

Me: My mind is just hallucinating Cathy. There is no way Siyanda could know where I am. It's been five months and seven weeks now surely he forgot about me.

I don't know whether am I trying to convince. Surely that monster is still searching for me. The only time he would stop his search is when I'm dead.

Cathy: I'm really not comfortable of you staying alone in that apartment Zee.

A figure pass by my window.

Cathy: Hello? Zee are you still there?

Me: (stuttering) Y-y-yeah I thought I just saw something.

I jump off the bed and tip toe to the window. I slowly move the curtain to one side and peep through. I'm only seeing my neighbors gate being closed. I breath out and make my way to the bed.

Cathy: (panicking) Sweet Jesus his there right?

Me: No I think it's one of our neighbors. He loves walking his dog at this hour. I think it's him.

PRINCE ZWELI

Me: I'm not going to marry this woman mom.

I click my tongue and stumble my way out of my room. This is one of the reason I chose to stay far away from my mother. She's very toxic and it's unhealthy especially for my son and wife. I can't be forced to marry someone I don't love like I'm a teenager who is still on puberty stage.

Mom: Zweli?

Me: I'm not going to manipulated by you or anyone else mother. I'm my own man.

Mom: Why are you so selfish Zwelibanzi?

I chuckled and shook my head.

Me: How am I selfish mother? Enlighten me. Is because I'm not one of your puppets like my fellow siblings?

She marches towards me and slap me. I chuckled.

Mom: Always selfish like your father.

Me: You want to talk about dad? Why don't we talk about him and his mysterious death mom.

She swallows hard and place her hands on her waist.

Mom: What are you talking about?

Me: You know exactly what am I talking about mom.

FRANKLIN

Voice: His still much alive but he passed out on me.

The baritone voice muttered. I flip my eyes open and try to familiarize my surrounding. The room is dark only the light from outside the window is making light.

Voice: He hasn't talked yet.

My head is banging and my body hurts. What does he mean yet? Who is this man and where the hell am I? The last thing I remember is when I was packing my bags in the trunks when a bat hit me from behind. I was suppose to fly back to Pretoria today since the exhibition is over.

Voice: By the time I'm done with him; he will sing like a canary.

My throat becomes dry and my heart beat leaps up. I try to move but my body is restricted by chains. They make one hell of a noise alerting the man.

Man: Looks like our subject is awake I'll call you back.

He ends the call and flips the lights. I squint my eyes and adjust to the bright light. The man is about 6 foot and has tattoos all over his face. I've never seen him before.

Man: Where is she?

A frown creases my forehead.

Me: Where is who?

18

SEASON FINALE

FRANKLIN

Blood seeping down from my chin to my chest. His been throwing punch after punch. At this point I'm just numb to the pain. I've never seen this man before in my life and I don't even know who is he talking about but I have a strong feeling this has to do with my parents. They hate blacks with everything they have and I'm sure they are looking for Cathy since she defy them. The door cracks open and the man walks in holding a hummer in his hands.

Man: (smiling) White boy are you ready to talk?

He closes the door behind him and walks further into the room. The smile he has just rubs me off the wrong way.

Man: (chuckling) Oh come white boy don't tell me you're scared of my little friend here. His much harmless unless provoked of course.

I close my eyes and ignore him. I pray someone is suspecting I'm missing.

Man: I hate being ignored white boy.

He caresses the hummer on my face. I flinch and open my eyes.

Man: Will you talk or shall I force the truth out of you?

I keep my mouth shut and look the other side. I'm not about to sell my sister to those racists. I wonder are they real our parents? Every parent wants their children to be happy right?

Man: Your choice.

He shrugged his shoulders and slams the hummer in my knees.
I groan.

Man: Should I do it again or will you talk?

He smirks and caress the hummer with his fingertips.

Man: Okay!

He slams the hummer twice on one knee. A deep groan forces
it's way out my lips.

Man: I'm going to enjoy this.

He slams the hummer over and over again on left knee. My
whole leg feels numb I think I heard some bones cracking.

Man: Where is she?

Me: (groaning) Who?

He places the hammer on the floor and rolls up the sleeves of his shirt. A punche lands on my stomach.

Man: We can to this the whole day I've got time but I'm not sure about you.

The more he punches is the more I groan. He can torture me until I die I don't care but one thing I know is that I will never tell him where my sister is.

KARABO

I pace around in the room placing a call. He can't be on to me right now. I haven't even started to do anything yet. I want to live him bankrupt before I start striking on him. It's still to early and I haven't stolen that much that will leave him broke.

Mom: Hello

Me: Hi ma it's me.

Mom: Oh Karabo my baby you don't know how much i've been longing to hear your voice.

A feeling of guilt creeps on me. My biological parents and I don't have that kind of relationship whereby I can call them anytime I want. I'm still considering my aunt and uncle my parents instead of my biological parents.

Me: I'm sorry I took to long to get back to I have been busy.

A white lie rolls down my tongue. I'm getting used to lie to people like it's a norm thing this days.

Mom: (breaking voice) It's okay baby I'm just happy you finally reached out. I understand you're a busy person.

Me: Mom there is something I want to ask you.

Mom: What is it?

Me: I just want to know more about Zonke. How was she and how old when she passed on?

I bite my tongue as she goes silent on me.

Mom: Why are you asking about this?

Me: I'm just curious that's all.

Mom: You're going after them aren't you.

I nervously laugh.

Me: I don't know what you're talking about mom.

Mom: Your aunt told me everything. (crying) Please baby just stop what your doing and leave everything to God.

Me: Mom please it's been years since my sister was brutally killed like a dog by those people. They have to pay.

Mom: (crying) I can't lose anything child Karabo. Please stop.

She burst into tears breaking my heart. As much as I want to listen to her I can't just go back now. They have to pay for those lives they took without feeling any remorse. They took away many children from their parents and took away many parents from their children. If I'm not standing up to them who will?

Me: Ma stop crying nothing will happen to me.

Mom: (breaking voice) You don't know those people. They are ruthless. They won't spare you if they find out what you have been up to.

Her leak of confidence in me amuses me. I made this far without them noticing anything. I can't back up now Siyanda will obviously know it was me.

Me: Ma I have everything under control. I mean I wouldn't be alive right now if Prince Siyanda suspected anything.

She gasps.

Mom: What do you mean by that?

Me: I mean ma I wouldn't be his girlfriend if he suspected something. I wouldn't call you right now.

PRINCE SIYANDA

The bank is on my neck if I don't pay the bond within two weeks my house can be repossessed. The damn IT specialist can't find a simple thing on whose behind stealing my money. His only response is that it's an anonymous donor who keeps giving out my fucken hard working money to charity. Whoever

did that shit better pray I don't find them. I collect the art pictures in my desk and make my way to my room. I'm trying to find way to make money without asking help from my siblings or mother and what better way to do it than investing in art?

Karabo: I know ma okay you don't have to remind me.

I stop dead in front of the door and eavesdrop.

Karabo: I'm not backing down on this. I will take this fight to the grave I owe it to myself and my sister.

Didn't she say she was sick early on? And who the hell is she talking to? It's a pity I'm hearing an one sided conversation.

Karabo: Stop exaggerating everything. I'm still alive ain't I?

Dozens of questions swim around my mind. Who would want to kill her and why? Why didn't she tell me in the first place surely I would have tried to protect her.

Karabo: I made it this far without him suspecting anything. I'm taking a huge risk by staying here while still stealing his money.

A gasps followed by a chuckle escape down my throat. I wouldn't have suspected her because she sleeps beside me every night pretending everything was okay.

Karabo: I'm bringing justice to us. Zonke didn't deserve to die like a mere dog and you also didn't deserve to lose a daughter over people. The justice system didn't take its course on these animals. I'm her justice. They took her away before I can even meet her.

She burst into tears. I slowly tip toe moving backwards. I slam the study door and stumble to the cabinet and pour a glass of whiskey knock it in one go. I pour another one and threw the glass on the wall.

Me: Fuck!!

The sound of the glass scattering on the floor has me cursing under my breath. Bitch has been staying in my house pretending to be someone else knowing exactly that she's here on a mission. I furiously pace up and down and rubs my face if this gets to my mother she won't hesitate to take matters in her own hands. I have to prove to her I'm my own man she has to die to night.

I walk back upstairs to my room but stop midway when an idea comes to mind. If she's willing to roll with the big sharks in the sea let me see where will she ends up. Game on bitch!!

PRINCE ZWELI

I fix my gaze on my mother who seemed to not able to hold eye contact. Her eyes roam around the whole room. This woman has gone too far this time around.

Me: Cat got your tongue mother?

Mom: Zweli?

Me: Let me refresh your memory mother.

FLASHBACK.

Mom: (smiling) How was school boy?

I drop the backpack on the floor and run to my mother's embrace. I've always been a mother's boy. My father and siblings always tease me about that.

Me: School was hectic mother. Who came with the idea of going to school anyway?

She breaks into a fit of laughter.

Mom: How old are you again?

Me: I'm 10 years mom.

Mom: You're too smart for your age. Why don't you go upstairs and ask one of the maids to change you.

Me: I'm a big boy mother I don't need their help.

I scoffed and ran upstairs leaving my mother laughing. I quickly change before the maids can come in and ran downstairs to my mother bumping to my father and brother.

Mpume: Where are you off to mama's boy?

He chuckles and fold his arms.

Me: Baba tell him to leave me alone or else I'm going to knock off his teeth.

My father cracks up and laugh.

Father: Easy boys. Mpume apologise to your brother.

Mpume: (mumbling) We all know Zweli is a mama's boy baba.

Father: What was that?

Mpume: Ncese Zweli.

I fake a smile and bow to my father and run downstairs. I find the living empty with no sign of my mother. I stumble my way to the kitchen and find the minds there.

Me: Ma have you seen my mother?

I ask the head maid MaKhuzwayo. She points me to the garden.

Me: Thank you.

I place a kiss on her cheek and sprint to the garden.

MaKhuzwayo: (shouting) Zweli stop running inside the palace.

Me: Sorry.

I stop running and walk faster. As soon I'm out of her sight I start running I hear her laughing. Mom had her back facing me I tiptoe to her but turn back when I heard she was talking to someone. I assumed it was an important phone call hence she took it outside.

Mom: I know we agreed on having that partner. Mkhize is starting to be soft and it's pissing me off.

I stop dead on my tracks and frown when she mentions father.

Mom: His response was that his ancestors would turn on their grave. Greed doesn't take anybody anywhere.

The more I listened to this conversation is the more I got confused. Who was mother talking to and why is father so against this partnership.

Mom: I know that is why I need your help. How did you get rid of Mthetha?

My heart leaps up to my throat.

Mom: I need him dead we can't lose this partnership because of him.

I froze on my spot with my eyes popped out. I feel a hot liquid run down my thighs.

Mom: We've been working well together for years I don't know where the sudden change of heart came from. He's such a hypocrite because he's been benefiting from this poor villagers as he calls them for years now.

I slowly back away and start running to my room with tears prickling down my cheeks.

END OF FLASHBACK...

The atmosphere has changed in the room. Eyes popped out and fear is plastered on my mother's face.

Me: A week later dad was found dead on his chambers.

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SEASON FINALE

PRINCE ZWELI

She couldn't look me in the eye this morning. I can't believe she killed our father like a dog just because of power. My mother is power hungry and greedy if I don't stop her now am afraid she might influence my siblings if she didn't already.

Mpume: You've been quiet since you came here.

He muttered sitting next to me outside. I was just sitting outside enjoying the view of the village my father built. He worked really hard to make it to what it is today.

Me: I've got nothing to say.

I say dismissive and shrugged my shoulders. I've got one fucked family. I wouldn't be surprised if my brother conspired with my mother

KARABO

Siyanda: Don't you want to join me for lunch?

I squint my eyes and look at him. A smile is plastered on his lips. His been acting weird since last night.

Me: I'm already late babe. I've got to go.

Siyanda: (smiling) You wouldn't want to miss this scrumptious breakfast baby. I made it special just for you.

He ushered me to the table and start dishing up for me.

Me: You're in a good mood today.

I muttered taking a bite on my plate.

Siyanda: Who wouldn't be baby. I mean it's a beautiful day today. I'm back on the pill again I guess they are working.

Me: That's great news babe.

Siyanda: So how is the meal?

I would be lying when I say the meal is not delicious. He sure knows his way in the kitchen.

Me: Delicious baby thank you.

I fake a smile and take another bite. He smile and push his plate forward and just look at me eating.

Me: Staring is rude Mr.

He chuckles and shrugged.

Siyanda: I'm just lucky to have you baby. You're the best thing that's ever happened to me.

Another smile plastered on his face. I wish I could say the same because if he wasn't a monster I would have fallen deeply in love with him but I'm not about to lose focus just because of his words.

Me: That's very good baby I guess I'm the lucky one.

Siyanda: Juice?

Me: Please.

He pours the juice and hands to me.

Me: Thank you.

I place my head on my mouth and start coughing. Blood seeping down on my mouth.

Siyanda: (alarmed) Babe you're okay?

I shook my head and continue coughing. He comes to my aid and makes me gulp down the juice. It doesn't take long when I feel my stomach tightening on me. I gasp for air when my chest start closing up on me.

Me: (coughing) What did you do to me?

I choke on the blood while his looking at me doing nothing. The more I cough is the more blood keeps seeping. I try to stand up but I lose my balance and fall on the floor.

Me: (choking) Call...the... ambulance.

He shook his head and crouch next to me.

Siyanda: This is what you get for think you can take me on.

My eyes popped out of the sockets. Tears fell down. I should have listened to my mother.

Siyanda: I'll see you in hell bitch.

He rose up and stumble his way outside whistling. I try to crawl outside while I still can but I'm weak. I'm losing a lot of blood; whatever poison he used it worked fast. I balance myself with the wall to stand up but my I collapse before I can even stand.

Me: I'm sorry mom.

I close my eyes with tears stream down and let darkness take over me. The monster won again.

ZINHLE

I close the gate behind me panting. I walk to the house and rush to my room to take a bath. This has become my daily routine everyday sometimes Frank jogs with me. Speaking of him I hadn't heard from him in a while now. I make a mental note to call him after bathing. I open the lid draining the water and take a towel on the rack. I walk to my room to look for clothes but was startled by a cold metal being placed on my neck.

Voice: Don't scream nor move.

My breath hitches while my stomach churned. I nodded.

Man: Hands up and slowly turn around.

I rise my hands and slowly turn around. My shoulders sank on me and drop to my knees crying. I knew I could not live a peaceful life while his still alive. I don't know what does that man want from me.

Man: Stand up!!

I ignore him and keep crying. His going to kill me this time.

Man: Hey

hey I said stand up.

He snarls shoving what I assume is a gun on my neck. I flinch standing up.

Man: Let's take a walk shall we princess.

He leads me to the door with the gun on my back.

Man: If you try any stunt I won't hesitate to pull the trigger got it?

I nodded and ascend down the stairs.

Man: We'll use the back door in case your neighbors are out there.

Again I nodded sniffing back the mucus. I was never meant to be happy. Why did God put in this misery if he knew I would be struggling like this?

LILITHA

I rock myself back and forth with tears stream down my cheeks. How did my life come to this? I had a perfect life with a man that I truly love. He just turned on me like the weather does. I love Siyanda with my all. I saw a future with him but I guess it was never meant to be. The pain I'm in right now is deep. I feel useless and worthless. Guilt has been eating me up everyday when I think of the things I did to Zinhle. Her piercing screams echoes in my ear. That woman shed a lot of tears because of me. Sometimes I still hear her piercing screams echoes in my ears. If I walk out of this place the first place I want to go is to her home and apologise to her. She may not forgive me but I would be at ease knowing I atleast tried apologising to her. My apology won't take away her pain.

PRINCE SIYANDA

Me: Guards.

I shout looking at her lifeless body leaning on the wall. It was so damn easy killing her. I thought she would have fought for her life. The posion I put in her food worked faster than I anticipated. I thought it would take hours before it works. Just once pinch of the crocodile poison and the bitch is gone. The guards emerges and bow down.

Me: I want this body gone by the time I came back.

The nodded and quickly rush out. I take my car keys and stumble my way to the garage. I've got two bodies I need to deal with. The first one is that white boy who thinks who can make my woman his and the second one is Zinhle's. I want her to tell me who taught her to be slut. She belongs to me no one else. I drive out of my drive way to Durban. I want to deal with this tonight once and for all.

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SEASON FINALE

FRANKLIN

My body feels numb while my throat is dry. I don't know how long i've been on this dump; the dried blood on my face makes my skin cringe. The last thing I remember before passing out is when the man played a dentist on me using a hummer. He took out my three front teeth. The pain is something i've succumbed into. Now I'm hanging from the ceiling upside down naked while his punching my abdomen. The door cracks open. Two sets of boots walk in.

Voice: (whistling) Yeses man it's fucken smelling in here.

They chuckled.

Man 1: Is this the piece of shit that has been fucking my wife?

Man 2: That's him.

I lift my body up a little so I can look at them. The door are dark with a scar on their faces while the other one is about 5'6 foot from them. His wearing an expensive suit for a thug if I must say. The man stumbles his way towards me and start punching me. I groan and spit the blood on the floor. I feel my abdomen numb.

Man 1: Tsek, tsek such a waste.

He turns to the two man stand behind him.

Man 1: Bring her in.

The third man walk out and shortly comes back hold a woman wrapped in a towel.

Man 1: Finally my Zinhle came back to me.

Me: (groaning) Leave her alone.

They bursted into laughter.

Man 1: You're still much lucky you're still alive white boy. Boy make him unrecognizable I'm going for a smoke. I have to be here when my queen wakesb up.

LILITHA

I walk around the garden and inhale the beauty of nature. I wish I could try to make progress but I'm not ready to face the outside world. The poor doctor is patient enough to sit there everyday asking me about my feelings even though I don't say anything. I'm always sitting on top of the bed facing the window staring into space when our session starts. The woman doesn't know how to give up but I guess she's used to dealing with difficult patients like me.

Doctor: Feeling better?

I nodded..

Doctor: Let's head back.

We head back inside and I feel rejuvenated already. She takes a seat on the couch like she always does while I sit on top of the bed.

Me: Thank you.

Her eyes popped out.

Doctor: Did you just talk?

I giggled.

Me: Yeah I did.

Doctor: I thought you can't speak.

She sarcastically muttered making me to laugh.

Me: I can. I was just not in the right state of mind to speak.

She nodded flipping her notepad and start jointing down.

Doctor: Tell me about yourself.

I heavily sigh.

Me: I'm just a girl who fell in love with the wrong man.

I muttered shrugging my shoulders.

Doctor: I want to know the real you. Who is Lilitha?

That question caught me off guard. Who am I really?

Me: I don't know.

A frown creases her forehead. I probably sound ridiculous to her but it makes sense to me. I don't know myself the way I thought I did.

Doctor: Tell me before you came here. Your life in general.

Me: (sigh) I was working at bank as a bunker when I met Siyanda.

Doctor: I don't want to talk about him now I want to talk about you. This session is about you not him. I'm going to give you a chance to talk about about him but right now I want to know about you.

Another sigh escaped my lips. I don't know how am I apart from the life I lived with Siyanda. My whole life revolved around him.

PRINCE ZWELI

Mom: Zweli study now.

She hisses storming upstairs. I mentally rolled my eyes. I wonder what lie is she going to feed me right now.

Me: Is the girl gone home?

Mom: No.

Me: Then we have nothing to talk about mother.

I toss the popcorns in my mouth and continue scrolling down the remote.

Mom: (yelling) Zwelibanzi.

Me: You can throw a tantrum and do whatever you want mother but I'm going to marry that girl.

Mom: Hey wena Zweli who do you think you're are? I carried you for nine months 5hrs and 52sec in my womb and you have the audacity to talk to me like that. You-

My phone rang as she was still yelling. A smile lurks on my lips when I see my wife's name flashing on the screen.

Me: Hold that thought.

I placed the popcorns on the table and stood up to answer the call.

Me: Baby.

Cathy: Hey babe how are you?

Me: I'm good my love how are you?

Cathy: I'm good too baby I just miss you.

My heart swirls with joy. She's the only woman who can make me feel like that.

Me: I miss you too snuggle bunny.

Cathy: I miss being in your embrace. Nate misses you too.

Me: (smiling) I miss him too baby. I think I'll be coming home soon than I anticipated.

She screams earning a chuckle from me.

Cathy: I can't wait baby. Let me call back later I'm driving to Frank's to check upon Zee.

Me: (panicking) Is she okay?

Cathy: She's not picking up my calls. I've been calling her from last night.

I take a huge breath. Zee is like my little sister if anything happens to her I could lose my mind. She's been through a lot and one of the few strongest women I know. I have much respect for her.

Me: Let me not hold you my love. I love you Mrs Mkhize.

Cathy: I love you too Mr M.

I chuckled hanging up. I dont know when will she learn to pronounce Mkhize.

Voice: So that is the slut that's making you to lose morals.

Me: It's rude to eavesdrop on peoples conversation mother and yes she's not a slut but my wife. The mother of my child.

Mom: What?

Me: Yes mother you're precious son got married behind your back to a white lady so deal with it.

I click my tongue and walk outside for fresh air. Her presence suffocates me to a point where I can't stand her. If she was not my mother I would have longed killed her but I don't want her blood in my hands. I don't want to turn into a murderer because of her.

ZINHLE

A voice groaning loud wakes me from my slumber. I jolt up opening my eyes and see Frank hanging on the ceiling upside down naked. I gasp and try to stand up but my hands and feet are restricted by a chain.

Me: (breaking voice) Frank.

He groans and lifts up his face. His eyes are swollen and so is his mouth. Tears are blurring my vision as I crawl toward him but the chains don't allow me.

Me: (crying) Frank who did this to you?

He groans in pain. I swallow the lump in my throat.

Frank: (groaning) You have to get out of here baby before he comes back.

I shook my head with tears prickling down. So I was not hallucinating. Siyanda knew where I was.

Me: No Frank I'm not leaving you here.

Frank: No Zee you have to go. I love you okay just know that.

I shook my head.

Me: (crying) Stop talking like a dying person Frank. You're not dying.

Frank: (groaning) I'm in pain Zee. I lost a lot of blood.

Me: Please just hang in there.

I know I'm trying to be selfish because he is in pain but he can't leave me like this especially not now. I still need him.

Me: (crying) Please Frank don't leave me. I still need you.

Frank: (breaking voice) I love you Zee

His voice comes out almost as a whisper.

Me: (crying) Frank dont to this to me. Stay with me.

The door cracks open just as I beg. The man whose been making my life a living hell walks in first with a smile on his face.

Siyanda: Well

well, what do we have here?

EPILOGUE

LILITHA

Me: Thank you.

She smiled standing up and close her notepad.

Doctor: I was just doing my job. You did good for our first session.

She muttered opening the door and walked out. I exhale and open the drawer of the cabinet. I took out a paper and a pen and start writing a letter to Zinhle.

Dear Zinhle.

I'm sorry for the pain i've caused you. I know no amount of words would take away the pain I've inflicted you. I was blinded by love I thought what I was doing was fine at the time. I was trying to please Siyanda. I didn't want to be seemed weak in

front of him. The flashy life he provided me with was my dream since as a little girl. All my siblings are married I was the only one husband-less. I want to keep him because I was competing with my siblings who were not aware of the competition. The funny part is that I was competing with myself as they didn't even take part in my stupid competition that i've set for us.

The same pain he caused you is the same thing he did to me. He tossed me aside like a used tissue after being used. I feel so dirty and useless as i've put my trust on a man. I've learnt to depend on him more than I've dependent on myself. I thought he was the one for me but I was wrong. I hope you find you happiness wherever you are.

From the bottom of my heart I'm sorry.

Love

LILITHA

I wiped off the tears and fold the paper placing in on top of the cabinet. Words seemed to slip off my mind; I wanted to pour out my heart to her and apologise serenely but words can't be

form. Lord knows how much I wanted to say more to the letter but pride took over me. I'm praying she might take time to read the letter before she tore it apart. I owe myself this much.

PRINCE ZWELI

Me: Move dammit!!

I snarl hitting the steering wheel. The traffic seemed to be move on a slow pace as a snail. The text from Cathy keeps playing in my mind. I hope that bastard hasn't gotten his hands on her or else I swear I would forget that his my brother. Someone needs to stop him and if that person has to be me so be it. My phone rings snapping me out of my daze.

Me: Did you find her?

Cathy: The manager said she didn't pitch up for work this morning. The house is empty and i've been trying to call her. Her phone rang inside the house.

Me: Move the fucken car!!

I honk yelling to driver in front of me. She starts to cry on the end of the line.

Me: We will find her.

Cathy: (crying) What if he found her?

Me: Don't think like that we will find her.

Cathy: (crying) We all know that your brother might do to her if he finds her.

Me: Have faith baby we will find her.

I muttered convincing her more than convinced myself. Chances of him finding her are very slim but my mind knows he got to her.

ZINHLE

The two goons shut the door after stepping out of the room. I silently sob staring at the monster before me. A signature smirk graces his lips while a shiver runs down my spine.

Siyanda: You know finding you was easy.

He took his calculated steps and stood in front of Frank. I scream as he punches Frank's abdomen. Frank groans are shallow.

Siyanda: Answer me.

He seethes punching him over and over again.

Siyanda: Don't want to talk?

He shoves his hands on his pockets and lean on Frank's body. He chuckles as his low groans echoed in the room.

Siyanda: (chuckling) I'll tell you anyway. I post a picture of you on social media and asked for fellow South African help me find my sick wife.

My eyes popped out of the sockets while the tears prickling down. The sick bastard laughs punching Frank.

Me: (crying) Please stop hurting him.

He pauses and chuckled rolling his sleeves and takes out a gun on his waist. My lips quiver as my insides freezes.

Siyanda: Scared are we?

He mocks chuckling and cock the gun. My heart leaps out to my throat.

Me: (crying) Please don't do this. This is not who you're.

Siyanda: (chuckling) That's where you're wrong Zinhle. This is who I am.

Me: (crying) Just let me go.

Siyanda: (frowning) Let you go?

I nodded and he breaks into a fit of laughter.

Siyanda: I can't let you go. The only way out of you is by killing you. Zinhle you disobeyed me over and over again. Who helped you to escaped?

I keep my mouth shut sniffing back the mucus. At this point I don't care what he does even if he kills me. Catherine and Prince Zweli helped me a lot the least I could do was to protect them because I know this monster won't spare them.

Me: (crying) Please don't do this. Just let us go.

Siyanda: Us?

He smirks rising the gun and aim at Frank.

Me: (crying) No!No! No! Please.

I scream when the trigger went off. His blood splashing the whole room.

Siyanda: Now that's out of the way let us play.

He stumbled towards me and crouch next to me. He caress my face with the gun. I tilt my head to the side with tears stream down.

Siyanda: (softly) You made me to do that. Do you know how much I love you Zinhle?

I shook my head.

Siyanda: I love you more than anything in this world. We can be finally be happy if you could just let me in.

He puts the gun on the floor beside me and engulfs me in a hug. My body stiffened as he unlocks the chains in my hands whispering sweet nothings in my ear rocking me back and forth. 19 year old naive Zinhle would have believed each and every single lie that rolled down his tongue but I've been with this man for 7years to know his tricks. This is one of his tricks to let my guard down so he can crush my spirit again. I've seen enough and went through enough because of him.

Siyanda: I'm sorry baby after this we will start over just the two of us like it was meant to be.

He voice is barely audible as he whispered. My hand stretches to reach for the gun. My hands are shaking as I take it on the floor. He breaks the hug and kiss my dry lips.

Siyanda: I'm sorry for everything.

Me: (crying) So am I.

I place my second hand on the gun as it's start getting heavier on my hands. He tries to snatch it on my hands but I don't think twice pulling the trigger screaming until the it was empty. His body fell on the floor while his blood is all over me. I curl like a ball and burst into tears. The sick bastard was dead I'm finally free from him.

Director: (cheerful) That's a wrap everyone.

I smile standing and dust myself. The crew clapped their hands while the others are helping the team on their feet.

Lilitha: At long last I was thinking we will never get it right.

I giggle while the director chuckles.

Director: That's was Epic Thando.

Me: Thank you.

Director: Khaya I loved the energy you brought there. You were a true villain.

Siyanda: (bowing) Thank you.

Director: John my guy you killed your part like how it was on the script.

Frank: Thank you.

Director: Thando! Thando! Thando! Girl you were on fire.

I giggled shaking his hand. He went on praising the whole team. I can't believe we managed to pull this movie off. My role gave

me sleepless night. I didn't think me the whole Thando Ngubane could pull this off.

Me: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to show case my talent.

The director smiled nodding his head.

Karabo: What about us?

Director: How can I forget about my two divas?

We bursted in laughter.

Siyanda: We did on hell of a job.

Frank: You can say that again.

Zweli: Mr director celebration nyana for our performance?
Phela we worked our assess of to make that movie.

We erupt into laughter. My name is Thando Ngubane and this was journey acting the leading role of Zinhle. A movie showcasing domestic violence.

.....**THE END**.....

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