



Time Is Never On Time

Time wasted is never gained

Nomthandazo Tsembeni

2014

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I dedicate this book to every man and woman out there who always allow fear to stand in the way of their happiness. I want them all to know that sometimes the best things are those that come unexpectedly.

Live life with no fear of "what might happen ", just allow you to have real fun in life without worrying about what never adds a penny on your bank balance.

Enjoy!

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Preface

We sometimes insist to wait upon soul mates we are not certain that they exist because we have this description of a soul mate as someone who would never hurt you, someone who will never make you cry or even make you feel heavy. However, does a soul mate exist? Is a soul mate really, that someone special specially created for you, to be yours and only yours alone? Is there really a right moment to live your forever? This fiction story goes along the lines of wasting time waiting for the right moment that will never come until we do something to make that right time a right now.

About the author

Born August 25 1992, in Welkom, in the Free State province, a black South African artist, Nomthandazo Tsembeni an author of *God Is a Poet* and an award-winning poet whose poem "[The Hardest Part](#)" won an online poetry contest with distinctions, judged by Michael Thomas.

The artist won the first position at Moduwana District Festival, in 2012.

She founded an online poetry group called Poetic Design in 2014, which has been successfully active, that some of the poets who post in the group got the opportunity to have their work contributed for the anthology called *Via Grapevine Volume I and Volume II*, edited by Brigitte Poirson. She also contributed two of her poems, "Life You Betrayed Me" and "I Am a Poetess".

The artist performed at the Macufe Word Festival in 2014 where she shared a stage with Reabetsoe Matobako and Charmaine Morwebi. She then shared a stage with Tinah Mnumzana and Hector Kunene at the Central University of Technology, Bloemfontein campus for the University's 30th anniversary in 2012.

In 2013, she received an invite to perform at the Nights of Poets hosted at the Pretoria State Theatre by Mandla Maseko of the Black Eagle Media Group where she

shared a stage with the wordsmith Croc E Moses and the reggae king, Carlos Djedje.

Later that year shared a stage with the talented Ntsiki Mazwai at a poetry event that was organized by a young group of writers, Traces of Ink, from the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus and adjudicated for an art event held by the Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation that held in Kutloanong, Odendaalsrus.

In 2014, she entered Welkom's Got Talent 2014, a talent show for artists in her hometown, Welkom. She competed with her musical crew, The Golden Mystique, where she was singing and reciting poetry. Her journey was very long and educational because they went through all the final round of the competition and they unfortunately did not take the first prize.

She received an invitation from the president of the PASMA student politics at the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus in 2014, to adjudicate their art event.

She is the former writer of an online magazine called Verbal Streams Magazine was in charge of the entertainment part of the magazine, which is poetry, storytelling, and a little bit of hip-hop. The column she worked with was to help market young writers and entertainment artists who cannot afford to advertise

themselves, by sharing their work, a biography about them, information regarding when and how to get hold of them and their up-coming performances or any other activities.

She is in a process of publishing her collection of poems, which will follow shortly after this book and is a former drum student and a former member of the Lejweleputswa Drum Ensemble.

Chapter 1

"I didn't mean it, I am sorry, please I didn't mean it!" shouted a young woman crying shaking her partner whose body temperature was decreasing every second she shook him, while his hands and feet turned blue.

It had been two beautiful years that the two couple were together. She was a twenty-five-year old independent young woman who was the younger yet over qualified employee at her firm, earning a good salary. Her salary could actually be salaries of her other six colleagues, that is exactly how much she earned. Her partner on the other side was an attorney who was a partner at a law firm at the age of twenty-eight. He had a healthy bank account and could afford to buy three states if he wanted to, but money was not a priority to him.

They met at a coffee bar one Monday afternoon when he had a hectic day at the court. He was defending a fourteen-year old girl who has been sexually abused from the age of four. The case drained energy out of him because the evidence was there that the child has been sexually abused, but the defendant's attorney raised points that got his client emotionally blackmailed. Therefore, the girl often felt like the law was not on her

side, which really sabotaged his case and that, is a weakness in every legal representative because the client ends up losing faith in you and doubts everything you do.

Well she on the other side was heartbroken. She decided to go to a place she had never gone to before since she moved in that neighbourhood. She went there to have a strong cup of coffee with no one to greet or no one to converse with as it was the first time she paid that coffee bar a visit.

The day before she went to the coffee bar, she had slept over at her boyfriend's apartment because she spent the weekend over there. They had been together from high school, he was her first and she vowed to herself that he would be her last. Therefore, everything was fine as usual, they did what they normally did when they are together but this weekend was a bit different. No not bad different, but actually good different because he was organising a surprise. You must be guessing how she knew it was a surprise, well on Saturday, she overheard him order flowers, and asking whoever was on the other side of the phone to make sure the chef will be at his apartment at 13:00 with the meal already prepared for lunch.

Automatically this sounded like a marriage proposal; I mean I too would be excited about it.

She called up all her friends and family and told them that Shaun, her boyfriend, might propose that weekend.

She was happy that finally; her one last wish will come true, being married at twenty-three. She even saw herself walk down the aisle towards a man who has always been there for her when she needed him the most. Getting married, having kids, a big house and a dog, that for her was a dream come true.

They went to bed, she and made love to him in a manner that she never did. She literally gave herself to him entirely and she made a point that they are one. After the lovemaking, he asked her where did all that come from, he was not used to her being that tremendous. She smiled and said, "That came from deep within, to reassure you that I love you with all of me". They cuddled and dozed off in each other's arms.

Shaun woke up early and left Kim in bed. When Kim woke up she reached out for his side of the bed and he was already up. She smiled and assumed that her man is probably making her breakfast in bed and thought to herself that the breakfast might be accompanied by a white rock.

She went back to sleep a little, but Shaun was not coming. She called out for him; Shaun was not in the house. She woke up, went to the bathroom to brush her teeth and came back. She did not feel like putting on any of her clothes. She went in his closet for his shirt and on the top shelf; she saw a box that she had never seen in there before. The box might have been placed there for her to see it; it was wrapped with a beautiful cover with teddy bears on it. She smiled and told herself

that, because she loves teddy bears, that must have been the first clue to the engagement.

The box was not written anything outside. She opened it and saw two pregnancy test kits. She got puzzled, both of them were used and positive. Inside was a piece of paper written "The best day of my entire existence" and a date, October 14. That was like six months back.

She went back to the bedroom with a sour face, confused as she had every reason to be. She tried to remember what happened six months ago, and she realised the only time she used a pregnancy test kit was back in high school when she fell pregnant. Shaun advised her to abort because he was going to lose his bursary if it came out that he as the first year student impregnated a fourteen-year old and her parents would probably disown her because her mother chased out her older sister for being pregnant.

Chapter 2

She called Shaun and his cell phone rang on the dressing table. She went through his phone and saw everything Shaun wanted her to see, from images to call logs and conversations. She could neither believe it nor accept she that was awake. She broke into tears when she came across a picture of a pregnant woman in his phone. In the picture, the woman was topless, and Shaun was kissing her belly. She tossed the phone on the wall, pulled the blankets and threw the pillows away. To her surprise, she saw a piece of paper that he placed beneath his pillow. She picked it up and it was a marriage certificate that certified that Letlotlo Shaun Mokoena was lawfully married to Nonzwakazi Emily Zulu-Mokoena.

She froze for a second and felt a bit dizzy as if everything was going too fast, as if her planet was orbiting faster than normal.

She wanted to die, she thought of many ways to kill herself, but she decided to go have some wine from the fridge and digest everything because she might just be assuming. As she got to the fridge, she saw a note neatly addressed to her saying "Hey babe. I believe you know what is going on by now. I went to fetch my wife; we will be back before 13:00. Please be a lady and

excuse yourself, I have a lunch date with my wife.
Loving Shaun"

She felt as if she was losing her breath, like there had been a big hole punched through her chest. She wanted to continue crying but she was too hurt to release more tears.

She packed her things, called a cab and left, just like that.

Therefore, the following day, on Monday, she went to work; her day felt like a nightmare, she hardly did anything, thus she went to that coffee bar.

On the other side, the young man who was troubled by his court case saw her shed some tears while sipping on a strong coffee with no sugar. He asked her if she was okay, she did not reply. "May I at least sit with you? I promise not to be a bother," he asked, still she did not reply. He sat either way.

As they sat together in absolute silence, she lifted her head up and asked him, "What is the fastest way to die and actually feel death taking you away?"

"Drinking black coffee alone and crying your lungs out sure seems like a recipe for instant death." he replied, and she laughed.

"Now, are you going to tell me why such a beautiful lady like you is crying in a coffee bar like this?" he asked.

"I am not really sure which one of my miseries is I crying for. A boyfriend who has been cheating on me without my knowledge, him making another woman pregnant while with me yet we aborted our child and refused to try again now that we are older because he was not ready for children or him marrying another woman and making sure that I see it all!" she replied.

"And here I was thinking I have problems." he said, holding her hand, "Would you like us to take a walk? I think you need some fresh air," he asked.

She responded with a sigh, "No, that sounds like a plan", she said, as he paid their bill and they walked out of the coffee bar, into his car and drove off to a park near her apartment.

They got out of the car and took a walk to the park, they sat down and he told her a little about his case and she was emotional, he dried her face.

They spoke about many things and they both paused in the middle of nowhere, they looked at each other and laughed. They both realised they have been talking for hours yet they do not know each other's names. "I am Kim, Kimberly, my African name is Nombuyiselo but that name belongs to my late grandmother and the only way for anyone to use it, is to respect my grandmother and call me Gogo Nombuyiselo." she introduced herself.

"That is a beautiful name Gogo. . ." he said smiling, she laughed and smiled back. "Well I am Kgositsekgoloane Thato ya Batlhaping, but I prefer being called Thato" he introduced himself. "Wow! So all of your names appear

on your identity document?" she asked surprised, *laughs* "Yes Gogo, my identity documents contains the names Kgotsile Thato Batlhaping." he replied. "Are you royal or something?" she asked. "No I am not; I too have been named after my late great grandfather. It seems like we have something in common already." he replied.

They both laughed at that. She checked her watch, "Wow I never realised it was this late. I need to have an early one, I have an early meeting tomorrow," she said.

"Yoh I am sorry for keeping you out until this late" he apologised. She smiled and said "Don't apologise, you actually helped me forget about reality a little . . .".

"It was all just a pleasure. We should meet often, maybe have another cup of coffee and get to know each other? I would love to add you in my friend list. Speaking of which, may I have your number please? I promise to use it wisely," he said jokingly. As he opened the car for her and they got inside.

They drove off a little towards her apartment when Kim said, "Of course you may, please don't forget to give me yours". She gave him her numbers and got off at her apartment.

"I will text you for you to have my numbers. May I walk you in?" he asked.

"No thanks I am fine, you have done enough for me already" she said smiling walking in and waving him goodbye. He drove off and few minutes later, he called her and made sure she had his number.

They were friends from that day until she finally got over Shaun, which was not an easy thing to do because everything she did reminded her of him. From the music she listened to, the restaurants she went to, to the way, she brushed her teeth, but eventually she got over him and Thato was the perfect friend for her at that time.

He liked Kim, a whole lot but he did not want to seem like he was taking advantage. I mean who would not like Kim. She was a taller, thick size 38 beautiful caramel-skinned girl. She had big round eyes, big cheeks and thick soft lips that every time she spoke you should swear she blew a kiss. She wore her hair natural and locked. She had curves and the fat in all the right places. Her legs were perfectly shaped and she looked very attractive in everything she wore. She was a straightforward kind of a person; you would get mad at her and even talk to her because she was not a person you would get mad.

Chapter 3

Thato was a taller dark man with a baldhead and neatly shaved moustache. He had black thick lips that looked very appetizing. He had a well-built body; he kept himself in good shape as a man. Well he was slim enough to be able to carry a thick plus size woman.

He had a closet full of psycho exes which one, Lindi, was his recent ex whom they have been dating for many split years because they would break up and get back together again.

Lindi was a size 32 tall, beautiful dark skinned woman with dimples on her cheeks and a bad attitude. She looked down on people, had this annoying voice and an annoying character. She was a spoilt brat who got everything she wanted because she was the only child her parents had together, her parents divorced and used her to get to each other. If Lindi asked for a new Tablet from her mother and her mother refused, she would go straight to daddy dearest and would get it because mommy "couldn't" buy it. Therefore, she lived that kind of a life where she had everything just like that.

The reason she broke up with Thato several times was that she was a nag, she was self centred and assumed that because she is Thato's girlfriend, she can control

him and tell him where to be, when and why. So Thato could not really stand such, he would let her boil, leave, cool off and come up.

This last time that they broke up, Thato and Lindi went out for dinner as Thato felt he has been too busy his woman that whole week. So Thato made reservations at Lindi's favourite restaurant, as money called him daddy and was not a priority to him, he booked the whole restaurant for them to have a candle lit dinner. Thato actually planned to surprise Lindi; he fetched her at her hair salon, straight to the restaurant. Lindi was out of speechless; she actually thought Thato was going to propose, I mean they had been dating for a sum of four split years.

Well Thato was simply being the gentleman that he was, he just wanted to make his lady feel special, nothing more and Lindi was a bit disappointed to realise there was no marriage proposal coming her way. After dinner, they danced a bit and she felt that she was too disappointed to dance any further. She asked Thato if they could please leave. Thato did not really notice she was expecting something out of the dinner but he noticed she was a bit sour.

As they walked out of the door, a woman beggar sitting outside the restaurant with her two kids begging for money for food. Thato came closer to the beggar to hear what she was saying and if he could help her in any way. Lindi pulled him by the arm said, "Come drive me

home. That's just a low life bothering people in the streets begging for money and food."

"You have known me for over seven years and yet you still do not understand why I help the needy. You are fortunate to have been conceived by a golden womb, because life is a walk in the park for you . . .," he said to her, reaching out his hand to the beggar to get up.

"Please get in the car with your kids ma'am", he said while opening his car doors. Lindi was annoyed, disgusted, on top of her disappointment, she was not happy.

"Did you smoke something Thato? How could you take a stranger from the street into your car? Where are you taking this woman? Where is she going to stay!" she yelled asking him.

"My house, my guest bedrooms", he replied while driving off. He stopped at a fast foods take away store and bought the woman and her two children food.

Thato drove over to Lindi's apartment instead of taking her home with him and she looked at him with a disgusted face and yelled at him, "Firstly you book the entire restaurant just to stare at me and not say anything new. Secondly, you pick up a beggar from her street with her two puppies. Thirdly, you buy them food and decide that you will ditch me at my apartment! You must be insane!" Thato being the calm man he is, he got out of the car silently, opened the door for her and told

her they will talk tomorrow. He left Lindi yelling alone, he apologized to the woman on Lindi's behalf and drove over to his house.

When they arrived, he welcomed the woman in and her two children. He showed the woman around the house, where they will sleep and showed them where the bathroom is for them to clean up.

He took out three towels, three toothbrushes and three gowns for each of them as they only had the clothes they were wearing. He warmed up food for them and as soon as they finished, he realised that this woman was not as old as he thought she was. They ate and after the meal, the woman thanked Thato for his kindness, they all went to bed to rest.

Chapter 4

The following day Thato called his personal assistant and told her to cancel all his meetings for the day because he was not going to work. He took the woman and her children to town and bought them all they needed. The woman was a bit tense about a stranger offering to help her and not just help her but also go all out for her. She seemed a bit uneasy; Thato gave the kids money for ice cream and asked them to leave him and their mother for few minutes. They kids went to buy ice cream and Thato was alone with the woman.

"I am sorry for invading your space like this; I couldn't help seeing a woman with two children begging for money and food late at night. I can see you are uncomfortable about all of this but please allow me to help you. . . ." looking at this woman, Thato said. "What do you want from me in return? Who are you and why are you being so kind to me?" the woman asked. "My name is Thato, Thato Batlhaping and I want nothing but to help you. I know what it feels like to be needy and not have anyone to help you. Please tell me your name and how you ended up on the streets . . .," Thato said while patiently waiting for her to respond. She looked at him with tears in her eyes and replied, "My name is Mamosidi Ngoma, but my maiden surname is Mohapi. I came to the big city of Johannesburg to look

for a job and seek for my husband's package at the mines because he died at the mine and we never got the opportunity to bury him. My in laws and the people from the village of Palmietfontein in Eastern Cape burnt down my house accusing me of witchcraft because I refused to marry my husband's younger brother. They spread rumours around the village that I killed my husband with muti because I wanted to inherit everything, so they chased my children and me away". He took a deep breath asked, "How did you get here from Eastern Cape?"

"I took hikes from Eastern Cape to the city. I did not have money, so the truck drivers made me pay them with my body. I did not have any choice but to do it because they gave my children food to eat and water to drink and I had no money to pay them for feeding my children for that journey, neither did I have money to pay for the transport. We arrived in the big city, they left us in the middle of the Braamfontein, I did not know where to go from there, nor did I know where to begin looking for the mine my late husband worked at. We searched but the people in the city are not as kind as you, many men offered to help me find the mine my husband worked at but they only took me away just to sleep with me. I searched for a year and every time I tried speaking to anyone, people would not bother listening to what I was saying because of how I looked. I gave up, and started accepting my life on the streets with my children. Our next meal came from a generous

person who left their food or two rand they threw at us near that restaurant you found us sitting next to." she replied with tears rolling down her cheeks.

He handed over a tissue, moved from the seat in front of her to the one next to her, wrapped his arm around her and said, "I am sorry you went through all of that. But why didn't you go back to your family instead of coming here to the city where you know no one?"

"I do not know have a family. My parents died when I was still a baby, my mother's aunt who abandoned me when I was 6 years old and sold me to a family in Burgersdorp to raise me. That family decided for me at the age of 16 that I should get married to the Khangela family. I couldn't have children for 10 years and was sent to be married to the Ngoma family where I had my first born at the age of twenty-six and my second born at the age of twenty-eight, and from then I have never heard or seen my family and the Khangela's ever again" she replied.

Thato held her tight and told her not to worry, he will help her and she may stay with him for as long as she needed to. Luckily, she had an Identity Document and the children had birth certificates. He took them to the doctor for checkups and luckily, they were all healthy after feeding on dustbins.

Lindi hated every moment of Thato helping Mamosidi,

and she hated her even more when she realised Mamosidi was indeed a beautiful woman and not as old as she seemed before.

Thato got Mamosidi in the Adult Base Education Training while Thato took her children to the best primary school although they were a bit older than first graders. Mamosidi helped clean, cook and do laundry, so Thato's helper who also worked for Lindi had to leave because Thato needed her no more. Thato got the helper another job at his friend's place, so Mamosidi's arrival did not inconvenience the helper in any way. Thato and Mamosidi were close like brother and sister, a relationship Thato never had growing up. The kids called him Malome Thato and that made him feel good everytime because he had no one to call him uncle.

Lindi started accusing Thato of sleeping with Mamosidi. She was so mean to Mamosidi that every time she came over, Mamosidi's day instantly became dark. Thato tried several times to prove his innocence but it was a waste of time.

Thato loved Lindi with all of her flaws, from her bad attitude to her mean and annoying personality. He had a key to her apartment as she had the key to his. Therefore, one day he decided to surprise Lindi because he was ready to settle down and have her as his wife as irritating and annoying as she was. She was the best mistake he ever made. He got in his car in midnight, drove off to Lindi's house

with a ring in a box.

He packed his car in front of her apartment knowing what a heavy sleeper Lindi is. He unlocked and opened the gate, closed it, went straight to the door. Unlocked the door and slowly opened it. He was tiptoeing to her bedroom and as he went up the stairs, he heard Lindi's heavy moans and groans. He stopped a bit, he heard her call out the name Tumi, and he rushed up stairs to her bedroom.

The door was wide open. He, Tumi, was under her and she was having the best time of her life.

Thato switched the light on, Lindi jumped off Tumi.

Thato could not believe his eyes, this Tumi happened to be his best friend who always stood for Lindi every time Lindi did something wrong. He would go on about how Lindi is a good woman and how any guy would be lucky to have Lindi.

Thato was so shocked; he dropped the box and went out. He got in his car and drove home.

Lindi called every single day to apologize but Thato did not want anything to do with her.

Thato cut her off his life entirely and focused on the case of the fourteen year old that has been sexually abused from the age of four.

Chapter 5

Even though Thato got over Lindi and liked Kim, he was afraid of losing Kim as a friend.

Kim knew how to make him laugh. He was able to talk to Kim about any and everything.

Thato was free to be himself around Kim, they did stupid things together, and they laughed them off. That is how close they were.

Kim respected Mamosidi as if she was Thato's biological older sister. As for the two children, Nceba and Nomonde, she spoils them rotten.

He did not want to seem like he was taking an advantage of Kim's broken heart but his heart became heavier every time he tried ignoring the fact that Kim was the perfect woman for him.

One day he asked Kim to go out on a weekend away with him to his home. Kim needed a break away from her place, so she agreed to it and was excited about it because she always wanted to meet Thato's family. Thato was a bit worried about the trip but he just decided to be stress-free for a little.

They planned their getaway. Kim went shopping for the trip. She bought four beautiful summer dresses as it was towards the end of the year. She went to get her locked neatly crotched and bought presents for Thato's mom

as she only heard Thato talk about his mom and no one else, except Mamosidi and the kids.

Then came the day to drive down to Ficksburg, Free State. Kim was so excited to be travelling to the Free State for the very first time. They got on their way and they were approaching Thato's home, Thato told her that the farm they are heading to be his home. Kim saw a car outside and two white women sitting outside. She was a bit puzzled. Thato went out of the car; he opened the door for Kim. One of the two women called out, "John? Thato is here! Our boy is home." Kim was very confused what happening. The woman came forth; Thato introduced her to Kim as Lydia, his mother. He then introduced Kim to Lydia as the 'friend' he has been telling his mom about.

"I am pleased to meet you Kim . . .," Lydia said while hugging Kim. "I am pleased to meet you too ma'am . . ." Kim replied.

"No please call me Lydia," Lydia said with a big smile.

The confusion on Kim's face seemed permanent because she never imagined Thato to having a white mom with all his African names and not even one English name.

The woman Lydia was with was Gloria, her younger sister, who was Thato's aunt. Thato greeted her aunt with a hug and introduced Kim to his aunt and his aunt to Kim.

Gloria hugged Kim and said, "Hello Kim, I am pleased to meet you. How was your trip?".

"I am pleased to meet you too ma'am, the trip was fine thank you", Kim replied.

"No please call me Gloria", Gloria replied as they all went inside.

"John! John where are you? Thato is home", Lydia called. John was in the shower when Lydia was calling out for him.

Lydia told Kim to make herself at home and asked them both how their trip was. "It was safe mom, I am however exhausted, it has been a long drive with all the traffic, we should have left at midnight, there is no traffic at that time", Thato replied. "You know your aunt doesn't want you driving at that time, it is not safe!" Gloria replied to Thato. "I know aunty but you know how I despise the traffic", Thato replied to Gloria.

Kim was having a conversation in her mind, trying to figure out how could Thato, a dark African man have a white mother. Could he be adopted, she asked herself and looked very lost.

"May I make you two tea or coffee? Juice?" Gloria offered, "Juice for me please", Kim replied to Gloria. "A cup of rooibos tea with cayenne pepper for me please aunty", Thato said. "You are still drinking and eating everything with pepper in it huh?" Gloria asked Thato. *laughs* "There is no other way aunty", Thato replied. Gloria went to the kitchen and left Thato with his mom

and Kim.

"So how are you and dad doing mom? How's the business?" Thato asked his mother. "We have been good, although your father thinks it is time for you to come back home and take over the family business. The business is doing well. This season we had quite a number of multiple births, which is good for business. How is life in the city? Are you eating well? Where is Lindi? Are you two still okay?" Lydia replied and asked Thato. "Wow I am glad the business is doing good mom. Well, everything is good and Kim's presence in my life as my friend has made life easier than before. Um, about Lindi, we are no longer together and it has been almost a year now, but enough about that. Ain't dad done showering?" Thato replied to his mother, changing the topic because he did not want to talk about Lindi in anyway. "Let me go check for him", Lydia replied. As she was getting up to go look for John, John came through. "Speak of the devil", Gloria said sitting down. "Wow, what a lovely surprise. Good afternoon son, how's my boy doing?" John greeted Thato with a big smile while hugging him. "I am good dad and how are you?" Thato greeted back with a light laughter. "I am good. What a lovely surprise, why didn't you let us know you were coming?" John asked Thato. "Oh where are my manners. Hello Miss, how are you?" John greeted Kim while reaching out his hand to shake hers. "Good afternoon Sir I am good thanks and how are you?" Kim greeted John back while shaking his hand. "No please

call me John, I am good thank you" John replied to Kim. "Dad meet Kim, my best friend, and Kim please meet my dad" Thato introduced them while they all sat down. "I pleased to make your acquaintance Kim, you are welcomed in this house, please make yourself at home", John said to Kim. "Thank you Sir. . . I mean, John, I am pleased to meet you too".

Kim's confusion was too loud for no one to notice because John, Thato's dad, was a black, tall, well-built man like Thato. Thato resembled his father and it was clear that indeed he is his father. However, she was puzzled how Thato had a white mother, and was amazed how warm-hearted Lydia and Gloria were to Thato.

"So how is the city son? When are you coming back home? I need you to take over from me, I am getting old." John asked Thato. "Come on dad, old at 48? You are not old. You know my passion is within the court, being a voice to the voiceless in court. I do not think I can ever take over from you. Unless if you turn your cattle into a court room, then I'll spend the rest of my life here," he said jokingly. *laughs* "Oh well, I almost forgot how you love being in trouble", John replied to Kim.

Gloria came back with Thato's tea and Kim's juice with biscuits on the side. She served them and while they were sipping on their tea and juice, Gloria said, "I need

to get going now sis. I don't like driving late, it is not safe!" Thato, John and Lydia laughed and Lydia said, "You are too cautious sis, the road is always safe when you are sober and awake."

"I do not want to take any chances", Gloria said while taking her car keys. "I am pleased to have met you Kim, I am sorry for I have to leave now, I didn't plan to sleep over. Had I known Thato was coming I would have fully prepared. Please do come visit again and this time let us know so that we can prepare for you", Gloria said to Kim. "It is okay Gloria, I will definitely come visit again and I will call personally to let mom know we are visiting again", Kim replied to Gloria with a cute smile from her chubby cheeks. They all said their goodbyes and Gloria left for Welkom.

Chapter 6

Lydia decided to get supper started and Kim offered to help with the peeling of vegetables as she was preparing some lamb poitjiekos, which she wanted to serve with steam bread she prepared earlier on. Kim helped Lydia to peel the vegetables and as they were busy in the kitchen, Lydia offered Kim wine and asked her to tell her more about herself.

"There is nothing much to tell about me, I am the third and last-born from a very small town of Lichtenburg, North West. My parents relocated from De Aar, Western Cape, when my sister was six years old because my father was transferred. . . ." Kim told Lydia. *laughs*

"I was about to ask if you were Tswana. I don't mean to make you feel uneasy or anyhow, but . . . how do you think Thato is dealing with his break up with Lindi?"

Gloria asked Kim.

"To be honest with you, I think he has gotten used to not being with her, to not being her partner and he has gotten used to the idea of being without her. He likes hiding behind his work but as a friend, I can see that he has emotionally moved past that and has made peace with it." Kim told Lydia while chopping the carrots as Lydia told her to.

"This poitjiekos sure will be the best I have ever had. With your help, this meal will taste heavenly." Lydia said to Kim while they both laughed and did a little

unwinding with their glasses of wine.

The two women were not only the ones having a good evening in the kitchen; Thato and John were catching up too.

Thato looked a bit troubled, like there was a heavy load on his shoulders.

"What is wrong son? You look troubled; I haven't seen you like this since your mother's death." John asked Thato.

"Dad I have never been so drained in my entire existence. I have been trying with all of my ability not to fall for Kim. God knows I have tried and I gradually fail. Instead, I love her more every time I try to stop myself from loving her. I keep convincing myself that we can remain friends but I am failing to be just a friend to her! How do I befriend someone I love this much dad? In fact, how do I tell her that I love her without her thinking I am taking advantage of her? How do I confess without ruining our friendship?" Thato asked his father. John looked at Thato and made a remark, "I have noticed the way that you look at this girl. She really must be special and she is the first girl you bring home. I will be honest with you son, if you love this girl, tell her. If she loves you as much as you love her, she will tell you. If not, she will still tell you. If your confession breaks your friendship, then let it be, because you cannot keep your feelings to yourself, as you do not get any interest from keeping them to yourself. Never waste time my son, express your love when you should,

apologize when you are wrong and forgive those who wrong you. Because time is never on time to allow you to delay because of fear because fear is an abortion of good things. I say, tell her, and let her decide if she wants to be with you or not. Being the matured grown up she is, she will make a good decision, and respect it, because loving someone does not guarantee you that you will be loved back. . .".

"Thank you dad, I needed to hear those words!" Thato replied to his father as Kim and Lydia were approaching the living room to tell them that supper will be ready in few minutes.

"Honey, may you please bring us that wine we got from that friend of yours from Namibia? It will go down well with what Kim prepared for us", Lydia said to John.

"You cooked. You can cook?" Thato asked surprised.

laughs "Well I am not just a pretty face Thato." Kim said while smiling with her chubby cheeks closing her eyes a little.

John fetched the 10years old wine from his study while Kim and Lydia laid the table and brought the food to the eating room table.

John came back and joined them; they sat around the table, dished up them, said grace and had supper. Thato was looking at Kim in a way that his mother would notice that he was into Kim. Kim clearly noticed it too that night but she ignored it and thought that if Thato wanted to be with her he would be straight

forward with her as he knows her by now that she calls a spade a spade and doesn't like the guessing games. They spoke about random things, made jokes and said things about Thato's childhood and it was fun. They later had desert and Thato offered that he would help Kim wash the dishes, as it was his way of sending his parents to sleep.

They washed dishes and while Kim was rinsing and drying them she said, "Tay you know me by now right?" "Yes I know you Kay, why?" Thato responded and asked back.

"You'd tell me anything you feel I need to know right?" she said.

"Yes Kay, I would tell you all you need to know. Why are you asking all these questions?" he answered Kim and asked her back.

Kim stopped drying the dishes, looked him in the eyes and said, "You looked a bit troubled and worried on our way here, why? And don't tell me it is the traffic".

"I am not sure what are you talking about Kay. That wine from Mr Beneke, dad's Namibian friend must have made you too sane", Thato said jokingly trying to change the topic as he thought Kim was asking about how he feels about here.

Kim felt the need to be specific and asked, "Tay. You were worried about me knowing your mother is white yet you and your dad are black, am I right?".

"Oh, that?", Thato said relieved, "Well yes I was a bit

worried how I will explain my mother being white and us being black because I haven't really told you everything about me. I actually brought you home for you to know Thato entirely and it was only fair that you come witness everything before I tell you more about me".

"Well go on babe", Kim said.

Chapter 7

Thato would get this great feeling every time Kim name-called him, so he would smile and shake his head, so he did that and said, "Well my father is actually my uncle, he is my father's brother. My father died before I was born and because my mother had to go give birth to me at my maternal grandparents' home, my mother left two months before I could be born. She gave birth to me, my dad's family came to see and identify me as their own. Indeed, I was because I looked like my father, Uncle John and my great grandfather whom they named me after. My mother now stayed at her in laws for my sake because she could not leave with me; neither could she live without me. My paternal grandparents freed my mom to go raise me at her home, saying that they will come fetch me to visit home because they saw how my mother was lonely without her husband home.

My mother was the only child, her parents died and we now lived with her aunts, which are her father's sisters.

My mother had low blood pressure and she died when I was eight-years old, I was terrified.

John, my uncle, had come to ask my mother's aunts to allow him to take me to my paternal grandparents but they refused. They reassured him that I was safe and they would take a good care of me.

I attended school while staying with my mother's aunts but they wanted me to do everything while their children relaxed. My mother had taught me how to fetch some water, how to make fire, how to do simple chores like sweeping and how to wash my socks and under-wears

At age eleven, I was told to drop out because I was able to write my name and a letter because I was brighter than all the scholars at school. They wanted me to be their children's house cleaner and a helper for their home-works. I had no power, so they cut me off school because now they had stopped giving me food regardless the fact that I fetched the water, washed dishes and made fire for the food to be prepared. I would steal my older cousin's books to keep myself updated with what they were busy with at school.

At age, thirteen I decided to leave and look for my father's family because my mother's aunts had moved where my paternal family knew we were. I asked for a lift from one white farmer whom I always saw near my father's home every time we visited with my mom, but he told me he is not going there, he will leave me a town near it then I can get myself there. Indeed he left me there and I got where they stayed but they had moved from Matatiele when John, my uncle went to study in London. No one knew where they moved to exactly but people said somewhere in the

Free State. I had to take random jobs to survive from the age of thirteen where I was not paid for my labour because I did not have the necessary documents. They paid me with a plate of food and at times, I did not eat at all. I was still hurting and grieving my mother's death.

I moved from city to city until I arrived in Free State, in a City Called Botshabelo, not too far from Bloemfontein. I moved up to Bloemfontein where I hoped my luck would come that I will see any of my paternal family roaming on the streets. However, I ended up being homeless, eating from dustbins because now the city is a bit difficult to get odd jobs.

I lived that life until I was fifteen when John came back to South Africa with a friend, Lydia he met in London whose family originates in Bloemfontein. He had gone to visit Lydia and his family in Bloemfontein for the summer holidays when he noticed someone who looked like him.

I had forgotten how they all looked, how I looked, as I no longer took a shower nor had any chance to look at myself in the mirror. The streets took care of me and were the safest place for me away from my aunts because the streets did not make me do what I did not want to do.

John recognised me while he was walking with Lydia in town, came to me and asked me what my name was. I

told him I am Kgositslekgolwane Thato ya Batlhaping. He fell on his knees, hugging me, crying. Lydia had never seen so much love and emotions in her entire life.

John took me to the family.
He got married to Lydia and Lydia is infertile.
I met with Lydia's family and that is how Lydia and her family accepted me as her own."

Kim was sobbing in tears to hear Thato's story. Thato held her and said holding his own tears back, "Come on now Kay, you can't really be crying over that little hardship I went through".
"You are strong Thato, thanks for telling me this. Now it explains why you help people without expecting anything back", Kim, said in tears.
Thato held wiped off her tears and placed her head on his chest.
"May I tell you about my story Tay?" Kim asked.
"I'd be honoured to know you that better Kay", he said while Kim wrapped his hands around her.

"As you know I am the third and last born. . . . My mother stayed in an abusive marriage for her entire life. She says her falling pregnant to my brother after three years of marriage, was somehow a relief because her not having children made her a doll to toss around because even if she went back to her family, they did not accept her because she now belonged to my father's family traditionally so.

Chapter 8

My father asked for a transfer to Lichtenburg, he got it and took my mother along with my brother. Life for my mother was better because she conceived my sister two years later and I was born when my sister was seven years old of age.

I honestly had the best childhood growing up except that my father would beat my mother up, so my siblings and I would run to our neighbour and spend the night there.

My sister was however, my father's favourite amongst my siblings and I did not really mind because I was mama's baby.

My sister fell pregnant when I was twelve years old; she was eighteen years old of age.

My mother was angry about it and wanted to send my sister to her sister, my aunt, but my father refused. My sister would speak to my mother in a manner that made my mother disown her and kick her out.

My father left with my sister and I blamed my mother for my dad and sister staying away from us.

My father stayed in Klerksdorp with my sister. He would fetch me to go visit them and he took care of my sister throughout her pregnancy. He even made her a baby shower inviting all our relatives, except my mom. My

sister gave birth to a pair of sons and my dad took care of my sister's kids as if they were his own.

I would hear my mom cry herself to sleep, praying and asking God to heal her. I would ask her to forgive my sister and let her and dad come home but she would say, "Only if you were older, you would understand".

As I got older allot of things made sense to me and I heard rumours that made me complete each puzzle, which was incomplete in my head.

I overheard my mother talk to brother and my brother said, "He gave her more kids! That bastard gave my sister more kids!"

I walked in and they kept quiet. I asked them who gave whom more kids; my mother twisted my ears for responding to what was not my concern.

I then fell pregnant at fifteen with Shaun's baby. I could not afford to be kicked out like my sister. I mean, my sister was my father's favourite that is how she managed to survive being disowned by my mother. I on the other side was mama's baby, I loved my mother wholeheartedly so I could not afford to disappoint her, and Shaun gave me a million reasons why I should abort and not even one why I should keep the baby. I did abort because it was clear Shaun would pull out.

In matric, at age seventeen, I heard more rumours in the street that the reason my father left with my sister

was that my dad made my sister his wife.
I asked my mother about it, she just burst into tears
with no word further said.

A lot made sense to me.
I completed each puzzle and honestly, it hurt me to see
how my mother was.
My mother was admitted for severe depression and
Shaun was still there for me even when people made
fun of my family and me.

I hated my sister and my father for what they did to my
father. My sister gave birth to two sets of twins for my
father.

I moved to Johannesburg right after matric because I
got a bursary, I attended at Wits University where I
studied psychology because it related to me in all forms,
helping people by listening to them and giving them
strategic solutions to their problems.

I was the first masters' degree student at age twenty. I
got a job the day I graduated and because I could afford
my mother's treatment, I took her from Lichtenburg to
Boksburg, Dawn Park, where I got her a nurse. She got
better and now she is an executive who opened a day
care centre.

My brother is married and stays in Pretoria North with
his wife and kids. As for my sister and her husband, no
one knows what is going on with them because we cut
them off our lives."

"Wow I am sorry about all you went through babe."
Thato said. They spoke more.
She dozed off in his arms and Thato carried her to bed.
She woke up in bed without knowing how she got there.

They spent that weekend well with Lydia and John until
they drove back to Johannesburg later on Sunday
because they had to go back to work on Monday.

Chapter 9

When Thato, arrived home, he found Mamosidi wounded, he asked what went wrong and Mamosidi told him what had happened. "I was taking the children to the movies on Saturday midday when they decided they want to play video games indoors. I was exhausted so they did me a favour. I decided to unwind with a glass of red wine when I heard a doorbell, I asked who it was and it was Lindi. I told her you are not home and she said she was here to see me. I was curious what she could possibly want from me and the only way for me to know was if I let her in. I opened the gate and she came in. She was with other two women. She insulted me, called me a hag who took her man away from her. I sent the kids upstairs as I realised she came for a fight. The other one spilled my wine on me while the other one was at the door. Lindi was poking my forehead and. Lindi hit me with a bottle of wine on my head, I grabbed her hair and pulled it. Punched her and got on top of her. The other two tried to beat my children up but Nomonde and Nceba beat their knees with a golf stick and a bat while I was beating Lindi. They left the kids and came downstairs to break glasses including the television. Lindi begged me to stop hitting her, and ordered the others to get me off her. They left me bleeding. I called the police, gave them my statement, they called an ambulance and I went to the hospital and

got eight stitches. I am sorry this happened."

"Why did you not call me? Are you okay? Are the kids alright?" Thato asked looking terrified.

"I did not want to worry you Thato. I saw how you were worried before you left, I did not want to make my burden yours. And yes, the kids are alright", she replied.

"Did you open an assault case against Lindi?" he asked.

"Yes, I did, they took her with them, and she slept over there last night. They said I should come to court on Monday for the case", she replied.

"Good, finally she gets what she deserves! Let me go check on the kids, are they still up?" he asked.

"No, they went to bed early. I am sorry about the television, I will save up and buy it.," she said feeling bad.

"There is no need to buy it sesi; it was not your fault. I will go get another one, it is insured," he said while hugging her.

The following day was the hearing for the case; Thato went as Mamosidi's attorney. They dropped off the children at school.

On their way to court, Mamosidi told Thato that she wanted to close withdraw the case because it was not worth it. Thato tried to talk her out of it but Mamosidi quoted a bible scripture of the Lord's Prayer. "'And forgive me and I forgive those who wrong me. . .' this part of the Lord's Prayer would be meaningless to me if I carry on with this case. She shall get what she deserves

and I won't be the one responsible for it", Mamosidi said as they got off the car.

When they got inside, Thato told the judge that Mamosidi is withdrawing the assault case and she apologizes for the inconvenience. Lindi was more wounded than Mamosidi. They all left the court, Lindi went running to Thato and said, "Thank you baby. I knew you wouldn't have allowed this nobody to do this to me", she said with a smile. Thato shook her off, looked at her as if she was a used sanitary towel and said, "Don't ever touch me and call me that! You should be thankful that 'this' nobody has a good heart and she is more of someone than you could ever be. If it were up to me, you'd be jailed in a cell with a murderer that would break each bone in your entire body, because you have bones yet you are not stable." Thato got in his car, drove Mamosidi to work and drove off to Kim's work.

He arrived at Kim's work looking worked up. ""Are you okay?" Kim asked. "No I am not, do you have time?" he replied and asked. Luckily, Kim had no patients so they went and sat in Kim's office.

"What's wrong my friend? You look angry", she asked while locking the door. "Lindi attacked Mamosidi and the kids. She assaulted her badly; Mamosidi has eight stitches on her head. She however withdrew the case and I honestly wish she hadn't!" she said looking

angrier.

"Babe please calm down, she is not worth it. She did all that to get your attention. Don't let her get through you", Kim said while holding his hand. "Look at yourself, you are fuming yet it's barely midday. Relax please, I don't like it when you are this way", she said while lifting his chin up and smiling at him. He smiled back and thanked her for listening. "Now I know why your patients keep on coming back, you are not just a beautiful psychologist, you are a good listener too", he said while looking in her eyes. *laughs* "Come on, they keep coming back because they refuse to let go of things they can't have", she said while laughing and looking at her watch. "Are you going somewhere? I hope I am not keeping you", he asked.

"Not really, I am taking my best friend out for lunch, it is her birthday but it can wait". "No let me not keep you", he said while they walked out.

Chapter 10

Thato spent the whole week calming himself down that he avoided being in contact with Kim. Kim would offer to come through but he told her he was busy, of which he wasn't but he actually spent much time in his office to run away from the reality that the girl he loves has friend-zoned her.

On Wednesday, it was the last day of his case. His arguments to the case of the fourteen year old who was sexually abused from the age of four made the judge see that as much as the step father of this teenager was guilty, so was her mother. I mean, regardless how much a woman loves a man, she should never sacrifice her own child for her to have food on the table, a roof on their head and money to buy all that she needs. Yes, times are tough, but letting a sick bastard to molest a four year old and make up excuses for him is sick. Then the judge's verdict was on Friday, where the teenager won the case and both her mother stepfather were guilty and jailed. The mother got five years imprisonment for child abuse and the stepfather got fifty-five years in jail because he had also infected the teenager with HIV intentionally.

It felt like a very long week for Thato, but he was happy that justice was served to the two adults. The court had

ordered that the teenager go live with her grandparents whom she was isolated from them for a long time because her mother did not want anyone know of what her boyfriend did.

Thato took the teenager out for lunch as part of celebrating their victory. She seemed very uneasy because she was not used to eating out or having a man do anything for her free without him trying anything. Luckily, the judge also mentioned that she should go for counselling because the incidents affected psychologically.

Later on that day, Thato received a random call from Buli.

"Hey Thato, it is I, Buli. Kim's friend?" she said.

"Oh yes I do remember you, how are you?" he replied.

"I am good thanks but would be perfectly fine if you'd agree to have dinner with me tonight", she said with that tone that she uses every time she insists about something.

Thato knew there was no way of getting out of this one, he then said, "Okay, its fine. Tell me where and where" Buli smiled alone and said, "I will text you the address and the time. See you later"

Thato already noticed that Buli wanted him, it wasn't really hard to see that she wanted him. The way that she threw herself all over him made it clear that she definitely wanted a piece of that dark well-built good-

looking man.

Few seconds later, Buli texted him the address. It read, ". . . .Diepkloof Zone 6, Club 808 near the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital and Universal Church at 6pm. Please call me when you get there. XOXO"

Thato still had time to go refresh, he went home and told Mamosidi that he was going out and she shouldn't save him dinner.

"You and Kim sure love eating out, does she ever cook for you? Can she even cook?" Mamosidi asked jokingly. "I am not going out with Kim tonight and yes, she can cook. She cooked for us at Ficksburg this past weekend", he replied looking uneasy talking about Kim. He literally avoided the Kim topic.

Mamosidi realised something was not right. She knew how much Thato loved Kim, Thato spoke to Mamosidi about any and everything.

Thato looked as handsome as ever. He had on a pair of caramel pants, maroon Bass shoes, a black shirt and a maroon blazer. He left to Diepkloof around five o'clock because the traffic was impossible at rush hour.

Kim called him on his way to Buli to invite him over for dinner; he told her that he got other plans. Kim felt that something was wrong but decided to talk to him about his awkwardness at the party the following day.

Chapter 11

Thato got at Zone 6 and before he could call Buli, Buli called out for him. He got out and locked his car. He had intentionally left his phone in the car.

"Hey you", Buli said with a huge grin, giving him a hug. Thato replied with a cold hey. They went inside, ordered some food and ate. Buli had planned for them to go elsewhere after the dinner.

He told Buli about his day, including the case.

"We have to celebrate then", Buli said while texting on her phone.

So Thato relaxed a bit and agreed to all Buli said because he needed to have fun.

After the dinner, they got in their cars and drove off to Buli's house to drop off her car for them to use one car. They then went to some fancy lounge that looked similar to Georgies Lounge in Mshenguville, Thabong, Welkom.

They went inside and ordered drink. Buli drank Guaranna Smirnoff, while Thato ordered Castle light. They drank, danced and had a lot of fun. They were tipsy but fit enough to drive. They stayed up until around 3am the following day.

Thato did not realise how late it was because he and

Buli had an epic evening. He then told Buli that it was time they left.

They drove off to Buli's place and Buli invited him inside. Thato agreed. Buli had one thought, having this yummy man until morning.

They got inside Buli's house when Buli offered Thato coffee. Thato looked at her and they both laughed. They went to Buli's living room; they sat on the same couch. Thato said it was late he needs to go rest now, while Buli asked him not to go because she was scared. Thato seemed like a more down to earth person under the influence of alcohol. He agreed to not leaving. Buli initiated a kiss, the only thing Thato had in his mind was Kim, but he then remembered he sees him as her friend. Thato kissed Buli back.

He held the back of her head with his one hand, placed his lips on her lips. Buli took a deep breath while Thato was working his magic with her. She held him tight while he pulled her lower lip, sucking it and feeling it with the tender part of his tongue. It was not a mystery any more that he had an erection from Lucifer. While Buli on the other side was so aroused that she could not hold back. She undone his belt, unzipped his trouser and got on her knees. Thato knew that he was going get lucky, it already registered in his brain. Buli gave Thato a mean blowjob. She was actually an expert of blowjobs according to how Thato felt. Thato had two consecutive

mean orgasms when he got up and stripped Buli naked.

He kissed her from head to toe when he went down on her. Buli climaxed within five minutes of Thato being down there. He pulled his head down everytime he tried to stop.

Thato penetrated her with two fingers while working on her clitoris.

Buli had multiple orgasms. She could not hold her breathe, she then squirt all over Thato's shirt.

Buli had never made such a mess before; she could not believe how good this person was with his fingers and tongue.

When Thato was about to penetrate Buli with his manhood, he paused and told Buli he cannot do it. Buli tried insisting as usual but it did not work out. He apologised for letting it go that far.

He realised that he had done the worst mistake of his entire life. The worst mistake of his entire life was not having foreplay with Buli, but allowing a woman toss him around that much and doing all that she wants and mostly being intimate with any woman but Kim.

He took off his shirt, got in his car and drove off. Buli was not hurt or anything but, she saw him as an idiot who could not handle having everything given to him, just like that, Oh and a damn good diver.

Thato arrived at his place around 6am. The first thing he

did was take a shower because he was in a real mess. He did not regret the deed itself because damn that girl could blow. He however wished it could have been Kim.

I loved Kim for the things that Buli were not. He loved how she never let anyone of anything tell her what to do. She was a strong dominant woman but knew how to humble herself before a man. She saw a man as God because in Sesotho a man is ¹*Monna*, which simply means that when God created a man, He created Himself, a reflection of Himself.

Therefore, Kim mastered the simplicity of being a woman and being strong and level headed.

She was hard to figure out, so Thato thought, but she was actually an easy person to figure out. He just needed to dig a little deeper.

¹ A Sesotho word meaning a man

Chapter 12

The Saturday of the party Kim woke up very worried feeling like there was something missing inside of her. She called Thato but Thato did not pick up because his phone was still in his car. Before she could get out of bed, she received a message text from a number she did not have saved on her contact list reading, "Hello Selo [Nomuyiselo]. I hope you are okay. I woke up missing you and I would understand if you do not respond. Take care".

Kim knew there is only one person who calls her by her African name and it was Shaun. She tried to calling Thato again but he still did not answer. She then banged her phone on the wall out of anger.

On the other side, Thato was super hung over, head spinning, heartburn and vomiting left, right and centre. Mamosidi went to his room trying to check if he was okay, she found him hung over. She made him a strong cup of black coffee with one spoon of sugar for the hangover. Thato drank it with cold water and felt a bit better. He asked Nomonde to bring her his cell phone from his car. Indeed Nomonde came with it and he had almost twenty missed calls from Kim and four from Buli and a text reading, "Hey sugar. I hope you are okay. I am sorry about last night, I did not mean to get that extreme with you but I sure had the best life of my

entire year. I hope you are still a naughty boy. XOXO"
He then remembered what went down between him and Buli he felt very bad and was worried that Kim might know of what went down last night.
He returned Kim's call but it went straight to voicemail. He took a quick shower and went down to Kim's apartment but she was not there.
He wanted to go to Buli's house in Diepkloof but was not sure how he would face her. I mean, he did not plan to do all he did with Buli, he was asking himself how Kim would take it and how it might jeopardise his chances of being with Kim forever.

On his way back home he figure he should just go to Buli and try put things right and tell her it was a mistake which he neither planned nor did he meant any harm.
He took a turn, drove straight to Buli's house, and saw Kim's car outside.
He was convinced that Buli had already spilled the beans. As he approached the door he heard Kim's voice, she was crying asking, "How could he do this to me? Why me? Why do not ever deserve happiness? Why Buli why!"

He was too afraid to knock; he turned back when four of Buli's friends were approaching the gate to come prepare for that night's party. They greeted him and asked him if Buli was home, he said he aint sure, he just got there.

They knocked and opened the door. They greeted and Buli seemed very normal. Kim went running in Thato's arms and asked, "Tay may you please drive me away" Thato was confused if she knew what he and Buli did, why would she still ask him to drive her away.

"Thato you may take her with your car. She is not okay. I'll keep her car safe for her, she needs you", Buli said while giving Thato Kim's car keys. Thato got Kim in his car and they drove off to the park at Diepkloof Zone 2 where he parked, looked Kim in the eyes and said, "I am sorry for being a jerk for these few days. I know I have been acting somehow, I sincerely apologize for that"

"He texted me, Shaun texted me. After one full year, he decides to text me and tells me that he misses me. Why is this happening to me Thato? Just when I thought I was over him and he was out of my life for good, he decides to miss me so much that he decides to text me. This ain't fair", she said sounding furious.

"Do you still love Shaun, Kimberly? Do you still want to be with him? Why are you so upset that he contacted you?" he replied sounding more furious than Kim.

"No, I do not want him back. Neither do I want him back. It just hurts me to know that I gave that man my all, my life, yet he threw it back on my face. Now he has the audacity to text me, after all he has done to me", she replied.

"It is funny how you pay attention to things that hurt you but never take a second to acknowledge those that are meant to make you happy and appreciate you", he

said while starting the car.

"What do you mean Thato? What is going on?" she asked holding his hand.

"Nothing is going on Kimberly, I mean nothing, perfectly nothing!" he replied while driving away.

When they arrived outside Kim's gate, she looked at him and asked him why he was acting strange. Why was he so furious at her? He held her left jaw with her left hand and said, "I love you Kimberly"

She looked at him and said, "I love buddy and I love you more"

Thato pulled her head, went forth and kissed her.

Kim looked at him and tried asking her what he was doing. Thato placed his left hand pointing finger on her lips and said, "Not another word from you, especially not 'buddy', let me speak"

Kim looking shocked that Thato was really into her she silently looked at him. "I love you Kimberly. I love you more than I thought I would, more than I thought I could, more than I should. I love you more than I know how. I have tried to be just a friend to you but being 'just a friend' to you kills me more than looking at you wishing Shaun could sincerely apologize and ask you back. Loving you hurts me each day that I wake up reaching for the other of the bed with the idea that I might wake up next to you only to have you as nothing but a friend who does not know how I feel about her.

Chapter 13

I love you in a sense that I am afraid of losing you as a friend because that is the least I can have, a room in your friend-zone. It hurts looking at you as someone I would love to show how she should be treated but then realise that she sees me as a friend, a big brother. I. . ."

"Shhhh, stop talking", Kim interrupted him while kissing him back. She closed her eyes, came closer and let herself lose in his warm loving hands. Thato held the back on her neck with one hand holding Kim's hand.

"I am sorry Thato. I saw how you looked at me, how you would compliment me. I saw all the signals but I kept convincing myself that they were not true. At some point, I felt like I was paranoid or obsessed with you that I even used the word "buddy" to see your reaction every time I use it because I could not differentiate between reality and my fantasies. I loved you from the day you allowed me into your personal space. I saw not a gentleman only, I saw a good hearted someone whom God uses to touch other people's lives. I didn't think you would love me, let alone want to be with me after knowing of the baggage I have", she said with tears in her eyes.

"What baggage Kim?" he asked while weeping off her tears with his fingertips.

"The baggage of me of me aborting", she replied while looking a bit embarrassed.

"But Kim, have I ever judged you? Have I ever said anything that might have made you think that I would reject a woman because of her past? He asked.

"No Thato, but, I mean you are a good looking young successful attorney who can have any woman she wants. I never imagined a good person like you to have interest in a girl like me. What would he even want from me?" she asked.

"He wants your time, patience and love. Moreover, right now he would appreciate if you could stop talking about his woman like a no-body because she is the most beautiful woman with big beautiful cheeks, long slick and neat dreadlocks. Big and round eyes and a cute smile", he said while caressing her cheeks with the back of his hand.

"Ah babe", she said while looking at him.

They spoke about each other's feelings until they decided to go in Kim's apartment to continue the conversation over a bottle of wine.

Later that evening was still Buli's braai and Thato was hesitant about it.

"So babe, should we tell Buli about us since well you were going to be her date?" she asked him.

Thato was still a bit confused whether he should go face Buli and take to her or not go at all because Kim was definitely going to introduce Thato as her boyfriend, while Thato made out with Buli the previous day. That wouldn't sound right; the poor guy was in deep shit if you ask me.

"I don't feel like going any more, I'd rather spend the evening here with you", he said looking at her.

"However, babe we promised her that we would go. You know how she is; she will not be pleased with me. You saw how she was leading you on and flirting with you, she will think I took her man away from her because that is how she already sees you. So please babe, let us go and tell her already that we are together. What Buli wants, Buli gets, right now she wants my man and I better tell her right away that you are mine so that she will leave you alone", she replied.

Few seconds after they spoke about Buli, she called on Kim's phone. Kim put the phone on loud speaker and replied, "Hey Buli".

"Hey *s'thandwa sam*², when are you coming through? I thought we agreed you'd be here before everything starts".

"Eish I am sorry lovie, I was caught up with someone, I mean something. I will be there in two hours", Kim replied.

"Oh, okay then. See you then", Buli replied sounding

² A Xhosa or Zulu word meaning "my love"

disappointed.

"Did you hear that? She is disappointed. Let's go please, it will be fun", she said to Thato.

"Please go alone, I will just drop you off and come back. I have not spent time with Mamosodi and the kids in a whole now. So get yourself ready and call me when you are done", he said while getting up and getting his car keys.

He kissed Kim and told her that he loves her; Kim replied and told him that she loves him too.

He drove off to his place.

When he got there, he found Mamosodi watching a movie and the kids were doing their homework, he greeted them when the kids came running to Malome Thato. "Who are *Malome* Thato's favourite niece and nephew?" he asked.

"We are!" the kids replied.

"What are you two writing?" he asked them.

"I am practising for the Spelling Bee competition *Malome*", Nomonde replied.

"Wow, Spelling Bee! Do you need some help Monde?" Thato asked sounding proud.

"Yes *Malome*, I have few words that I need you to help me with", Nomonde replied.

"And you big boy?" Thato asked.

"I am writing my mathematics homework *Malome*. I got 98% for my mathematics formal test yesterday *Malome*", Nceba replied to Thato.

"You received 98%! Where is my other 2% boy-boy?" he

asked looking very proud.

"You will get it ³*Malome*, I promise", Nceba replied.

"That is my boy. I will take you guys out for dinner tonight to celebrate, how's that?" he asked the kids.

"Yeeeeeey, thank you *Malome*!" they replied with big grins on their faces.

The kids ran upstairs and left Thato alone with Mamosidi.

"Are you okay Thato? You seem a bit worried", Mamosidi asked.

"No ⁴*ausi* I am not okay. I need your advice and please be as honest as possible", he replied.

"Okay, shoot", she said while giving him her full attention.

"As you know that I have been having feelings Kim for a while, I finally told her how I feel and. . . ." he said when Mamosodi interrupted him.

"And she doesn't want you?" she replied before Thato could finish speaking.

"No ausi she does want me, in fact we are a couple now", he replied looking stressed.

"So why are you stressed? You got you always wanted mos", she asked.

"The story gets complicated. There is Kim's best friend, Buli. We met during the week on her birthday when she asked me to be her date for her birthday. In fact, not

³ A Sesotho or Tswana word meaning uncle

⁴ A Sesotho word meaning sister

date, but present", he replied.

"But you can tell her what is going on between you and Kim, and I don't think she'd still want to have her best friend's man as a present for her birthday", she replied.

"It is not as easy as it sounds ausi. This Buli girl and I went out clubbing yesterday and we got intimate. We had foreplay", he said sounding embarrassed.

"You did what? Yoh Thato. Kim will not like what you did mos, when are you telling her? You better tell her right away", she replied looking worried.

"Well I haven't and tonight is the braai so I chose not to go", he said.

"You need to go there Thato, to make sure that you tell Kim what happened. Do you that that Buli girl will let you be intimate with her and smile at her best friend dating you? She will think you cheated on Kim with her and will feel used by you, whom you did, then she will tell Kim and you will kiss your relationship goodbye," she said convincing Thato to go.

Thato did not reply, instead he was worried about this whole situation.

"I don't want to lose Kim, not when I finally have her as my woman", he said to himself.

He texted Kim, "Babe I am coming with. I love you". Kim replied, "Okay babe, I love you more XOXO".

Chapter 14

Thato prepared for that night's braai when he decided to rock elegant floral pants with a baby blue shirt and semi-formal shoes. He went out of his bedroom when Mamosidi was on her way down stairs and she was just stunned about how handsome Thato really was. She knew and saw Thato as a kind generous human being who is the closest thing she had as a brother but she had never really looked at him beyond that brother and sister relationship because even Thato never tried to take an advantage of Mamosidi, ever.

"Wow *abuti*⁵, you look really good." she said while drooling at Thato.

"Thank you *ausi*, I hope looking good will get me out of trouble because I really cannot afford to lose Kim over the mistake that happened between Buli and I. Let me go before the traffic gets really impossible," replied while taking his car keys heading to his car.

Mamosidi was astonished as to how she never really noticed what a catch Thato is. She immediately called herself to order because now she was already fantasizing about Thato, which really felt inappropriate.

Thato drove off to Kim's place. He got out of his car and headed to the door, as he was about to knock, the door opened and Kim came out looking more beautiful than

⁵ Sesotho word meaning brother

she already was. She wore a white floral dress with blue, yellow and red flowers, with white sandals, which had a yellow flower on the big toe. She wore a floral cloth on her hair and had a daisy flower tucked on her dreadlocks. It seemed like they planned to wear the same colour and they did not.

"Wow, you look breathe taking", he said while reaching out for her hand.

"Thank you honey", she replied with a smile while Thato kissed her hand.

They hugged; she wore cologne that made Thato take a deep breath against her neck. He could not help but hold her tight and tell her that he loves her and she should know that he loves her regardless what happens. He wanted to confess because he was not good a hiding things away from Kim but he could not say anything because he did not know how she would react.

They walked to Thato's car when Thato opened the door and said, "Shall we?"

"Thank you", she replied while getting in the car and tucking her seatbelt. Thato got in, started the car and drove off to Buli's place. He was worried about what Buli might do or say to Kim about what they did the previous night because anything was possible with Buli because Buli got everything she wanted and she said everything that she wanted to say and she said it whenever it suit her.

Luckily, there was not much of traffic so they arrived at Buli's place just in time because more people arrived.

Thato was so nervous that he looked unfriendly because he was having conversations with himself in his brain and his heart kept telling him to go talk to Buli about but his mind told him that Buli will throw a fit and cause a scene and that was the last thing he needed.

"Hon, I am going to help the girls in the kitchen with salads. I love you", Kim said to Thato while giving him a 'see you later kiss'.

Kim went inside, Buli was with her other friends, and cousins when she got up and gave Kim a hug and whispered in her ear, "I got a surprise for you"

"You have a surprise for me on your birthday?" Kim asked while looking curious.

"Yes honey, I have a big surprise for you." Buli replied when Thato came in.

"I too have a surprise for you. Baby please come here."

Kim replied while looking at Thato with a big grin and continued saying, "Buli, Thato and I are an item. We are dating"

"You are? And when did all this happen? For how long have you two been together?" Buli asked sounding very hurt and disappointed.

"This morning, we spoke this morning and decided to give it, us, a try." Kim replied while wrapping her arm around Thato's arm.

"Wow, congratulations sweetie. Congratulations Thato, I need to go check if there is enough charcoal." Buli said while giving Kim a cold hug and went outside.

Kim noticed that Buli's mood changed from that moment onwards and she asked Thato "Is it just me or Buli doesn't seem happy to hear about us?"

Thato did notice but because he knew what was the cause he said, "No babe I think she is stressing about the whole braai, she has no reason why she wouldn't like seeing us together."

Chapter 15

The braai started and Buli was really and Kim noticed it all but ignored it because she went there to support the very same person who was distant for some reason she did not know. Thato and Kim spent much time together because Kim felt unneeded in the braai because of Buli's treatment and Thato on the other side, made sure Kim stayed with him because he knew Kim would confront Buli and make her speak what bothered her, and that would make Kim know of what happened.

They enjoyed the night together, drinking and dancing when Thato needed to use the loo when he went inside and met Buli on his way back from the loo.

"Buli may I talk to you please? I know you do not want to hear anything from me but please give me two minutes of your time, please," he said pleading with Buli to talk to him.

Buli seemed a bit annoyed and irritated by Thato but she swallowed her pride and spared him few minutes of his time.

"What do you want? Do you want another blow job?" she asked with a bitter look on her face.

"Do not be like that please. Look, I did not plan for all that happened between us yesterday. I had a bad week and was at a bad space, alcohol happened and you happened, and I could not resist. I am really sorry and if I could take it all back I would." He said with a very

shameful look on his face. Buli was mesmerized by everything that Thato said, she seemed very charmed and drawn to Thato even more but she then realised that Thato never showed any interest, neither did he make any move on her. She also remembered that she was the one throwing herself at Thato and Thato being a man, he would not have resisted such a beautiful willing lady like herself more especially under the influence of alcohol.

"No I am the sorry one Thato, I got so taken by your personality and looks and I barely really gave you a chance to show your interests. I am sorry and I really am okay with your relationship with Kim. I did know that Kim was into you but she had never really declared it with her mouth. I think I should tell her, I feel terrible already", she said looking embarrassed.

"Please let me be the one to tell her, we just initiated a relationship, it would only be fair that we get through this together", he replied to Buli.

"Okay then, oh here she comes", she said to Thato while walking away.

"Oh babe have been looking for you all over, is that Buli you were with just now?" she asked Thato.

Yes honey that id Buli, she said she has to attend to her guests and she really is okay with us being together, I told you were imagining things. Let us go outside and dance, you do still know how to move, right?" he replied while changing the topic.

They went outside and they danced to the music. Kim was quite a good dancer; she knew how to move her hips and wide waist irrespective of what size she is. She was beautiful inside out and it all showed out more when she was around people because she was able to accommodate everyone. At the party were there many people who are friends and friends of friends of Buli, so you can imagine how big the party was.

Buli realised that she had ignored Kim most of the evening; she came to her with a couple that was holding hands. "Babe this is my brother, Nkosinathi" she said. "Do you mean the Nkosinathi I know?" Kim asked shocked.

"Yes Kim I am the Nathi who has been nothing but a nuisance to you from university" Nkosinathi replied to Kim.

"Wow, you have really grown, come here", she said surprised, giving Nathi a hug.

"Oh I am sorry this is my girlfriend, Emily".

Kim lifted her head up and saw someone she who looked very familiar, she could not shake the feeling that this Emily girl was familiar.

"Hello Emily, I am pleased to make your acquaintance" she greeted Emily with very curious look.

"Hello Kim, I am pleased to meet you. I have heard so much about you from Nathi.

Buli introduced Emily and Nathi to Thato, Kim was a bit destructed because she was trying to remember where she first saw Emily. She could not have been her client;

she would have absolutely remembered her because Kim was good with names and faces.

"Are you okay honey? You seem very far from here", Thato asked Kim.

"Yes baby I am okay, that Emily woman looks so familiar and I cannot shake the feeling that what I know about her is not good", she replied.

I think she is one of your patients love, we should go now, and I am exhausted", he replied to Kim.

"Okay babe we may", she said to Thato while pulling Buli with her arm and told her that they were on their way. Buli did not take any offence; she walked them out as they both got in their cars because Kim had left her car at Buli's place earlier on.

Kim could not stop thinking about this Emily woman, she even closed her eyes and tried to remember but nothing came to mind.

Thato called her to ask if they are going to his place or her place because the Emily woman preoccupied Kim's mind that she forgot to communicate with Thato about the stops. They decided to take a stop at her apartment since it was nearer than his place.

They parked the cars in her garage; she turned the alarms off and they went inside the house.

Chapter 16

Thato realised that Kim was a far away by thoughts when he made her a cup of green tea while she got into something more comfortable. He took the tea to the lounge, sat on the couch next to her, placed her feet on top of him to give her a foot massage.

"You seem very distressed by this Emily woman babe, what could she have done to hae my woman so deep in thoughts?" he asked while handing her over the cup of tea.

"I am sorry for being distant baby. I am just certain that I know that woman from somewhere. Thank you for the cup of tea; it is as if you knew I needed it." She replied while sipping on her tea.

"What a great party that was. I did not now you and Buli really go way back that you know his little brother." He said while giving her a foot massage.

"I am sorry I ruined your night with that Emily woman. . . ." She apologised when Thato interrupted her before she could finish speaking, ". . . No baby you did not do any harm. We needed to leave either way."

"Okay babe if you insist. Well Nathi had a massive crush on me when Buli and I were still in university. I remember when he wrote me a letter telling me that I should dump Shaun because he could take a better care of me than Shaun did. Above all, he is a sweetheart, he is a young gentleman." She said.

"Wow that is a mouthful indeed. I just hope he is over you because you are now my woman and that will never change not even if died." He said.

She laughed and said, "Come on baby that was years ago, he has grown and has a girlfriend now. He surely has gotten over me and he looked very genuine about that Emily woman".

"I hope he is. I should tell something you; I do not want us to start with secrets in this relationship." He said with a serious look on his face.

"What is it? Is Lindi back in your life?" she asked with a curious face.

"No babe, Lindi is history and that is how it will forever be. I would understand if you hated me after hearing this or if you wanted nothing to do with me after hearing this but I am deeply sorry. I have thought very hard about this and I know this is enough for you to end things between us and that, is the risk I am willing to take because I want us to have a transparent relationship." He replied.

Kim was clueless what he meant. For a second she thought that Lindi was pregnant with his baby or something but she waited for him to tell her what was going on.

"Okay what is it? You are really scaring me." She asked with a fearful voice.

He replied and said, "It is about Buli and us going out last night."

"Oh okay, did she force you into anything? Maybe tried to kiss you? I know how she is more especially because I saw how she kept throwing herself at you." She replied. "Well we kissed and had foreplay. I know it was wrong of me and I have n excuse but I was not okay with the fact that you decided to friend-zone me. On the other side, I was under an influence of alcohol and Buli availed herself to me. I stopped myself because she was and she is not the woman I love. I am sorry." He said with remorse.

Kim was silent for few minutes; she took a deep breath and said, "This ambushed me. I never expected you would say anything like this. I cannot lie and say I am okay with this neither could I be angry with you because you and I were not dating when you and Buli did all that. However, I am mad at myself that you had to go through all that because of my stupidity. Now it makes sense why Buli was offish towards me earlier on." Thato was surprised that Kim took the blame or rather reacted the way she did because she knew the other furious side of Kim.

He replied and said, "I did tell her that we are an item and she took it quite well. I am sorry once more."

"It is okay babe, thank you for being honest with me and being willing to jeopardise our relationship with honesty that keep me with dishonesty. Besides, she does not and will never have what belongs to me." She replied while giving him a sweet kiss for the honest man he is.

Chapter 17

Thato did not expect Kim to take everything like she did; he was actually amazed by how the conversation ended. He was relieved that he had been honest with Kim about what happened between him and Buli. He felt that if he was able to confess about something that complex, nothing would ever be hard to tell Kim because Kim was not just an understanding person, she was reasonable too. Their relationship was a very strong bond that was based on the fears of them losing one another which was the reason that they were faithful and truthful to one another. There are plenty things that Thato learnt about Kim throughout their relationship and he realised that Kim had a phobia of committing herself. It could have been what Shaun had done to her, but then again it could have been what her father and sister did to her mother. They held each other through thick and thin and counted on one another because they knew that they were all they had.

Mamosidi on the other hand developed feelings for Thato and it was difficult for her to ignore them because she spent so much time with Thato, she practically took care of him. She was so jealous of Kim's relationship with Thato but she then remembered how much Thato had changed her life and realised that whatever she felt

for Thato was not worth it and was an insult to Thato because she was now offish towards Kim.

She suppressed her feelings for Thato until she felt nothing at all anymore. Kim and Thato's relationship grew stronger daily and before they knew it, they celebrated their eight month together.

Earlier that day, Kim received a call from a private number. She normally ignored private numbers but that particular private number kept calling until she picked up the call. She was certain that someone was in need of her help, hence she replied on the third attempt of the call. To her surprise, she spoke to someone who was as calm as the wind in summer. On the other end of the phone spoke a man who addressed her as Selo, in short for Nombuyiselo. She knew right there and then that who she spoke to was Shaun.

"Please do not hang up, I know you hate me but I seriously need to talk to you." Shaun pleaded.

"What do you want Shaun?" she replied with an annoyed tone.

"I just need to meet you and talk to you face to face. I know I am the last person you would want to see but I seriously need to talk to you, it is important." He replied.

"You better speak some sense, make an appointment with my personal assistant, you know where to find me!" she replied.

"This cannot wait Nombuyiselo, I need to speak to you as soon as yesterday, and please this involves you too." He continued pleading.

"What could possibly be so important that you cannot even wait? Come to my house at midday and not a minute later. I have plans for today" she replied while hanging up on him.

She was furious and a bit curious about what that heartless man had to say to her. She got outta bed, started cleaning up, and took a bath. She had already made plans for her and her man's eighth mensiversary.

Shaun arrived an hour before the time Kim had set for him to arrive on. He knocked and Kim opened up.

"Hi, I am sorry for. . ." he said when Kim interrupted him.

"Get straight to the point, what do you want?"

Shaun realised that he was not welcomed so he had to get straight to the point.

He mumbled and said, "I am HIV positive and I think you should get tested too."

So Shaun, you came all the way here to tell me that. Don't you think I had several blood tests after I found out that you have been sleeping with someone else behind my back? Stop wasting my time and tell me why you are really here!" Kim snapped at him because she was annoyed.

He went down on his knees and cried out, "I want you back baby, I am sorry for all the pain that I have caused

you. I know I was a jerk before but now I am a changed man. I even attend church; I promise I am a new man." Kim was even more furious, she replied, "You seriously have a nerve to come to my house, kneel on my floor with your sharp skinny knees and utter absolute garbage. You wasted so many years of my life Shaun. I fell and got up with you. I was with you through thick and thin. We have been together through the worst. Was it hard to leave me without making me feel like an old toy? You make me sick!"

"I deserve it all, I deserve the insults. I deserve everything and I am willing to pay for each mistake", he replied looking very devastated; he reached out for Kim's hand and continued, "I should have never left you for Emily. You are the love of my life. I know you have a good heart and I know that you will forgive me. . ." he replied when Kim interrupted him before he could finish his sentence, "What did you just say?"

"What?" Shaun asked.

"Repeat that name again", she ordered him.

"Emily, Nonzwakazi Mokoena. Why?" Shaun asked again.

Kim was silent for a moment; she remembered that the Emily she was trying to remember eight months ago was the woman she saw on Shaun's phone. Shaun was still on his knees when Thato walked in; Kim did not hear when he packed his car outside.

Thato was surprised that there was a man kneeling down and holding Kim's hand. "What is going on here?" he asked with astonishment all over his face.

Kim quickly pulled her hand and said, "Babe this is Shaun, my ex"

Thato did not seem pleased, he asked, "What is he doing here?"

"I am sorry bro, I needed to talk to talk to Nombuyiselo" Shaun interrupted.

"How dare you come to my woman's house, kneel before her and speak when not spoken to? Who do you think you are? Do you have a bro like me?" Thato asked him sounding very furious.

"Babe please calm down. Shaun just get up will you?" she said.

Shaun got up, Kim asked Shaun to leave and he did. She then told Thato how Shaun actually came through and what he wanted. Thato's anger cooled down few minutes later after Shaun left and Kim explained to him what was going on.

Chapter 18

"I am sorry for being that angry baby; I just don't want that man anywhere near you. Are you okay?" Thato apologised.

"Yes baby I am okay. I am sorry I let him come over. He sounded like it was serious but he came to tell me that he is HIV positive and he was telling me that I should be tested. Next thing he apologizes for what he did to me, telling that he should have never left me for Emily. I knew that Nathi's girlfriend looked familiar." She replied.

"Baby do you mean that, that lady we met at Buli's place is the woman you told me about?" he asked shocked.

"Yes baby that is the woman who married Shaun and gave him a baby." she replied.

"Wow, what a small world. Anyhow, I came to ask you to come eat dinner with us tonight." He said.

"Ah babe I had already had plans for us." She said.

"But honey I seriously need you to come, Mamosidi would be so disappointed if you turned this invitation down." He said.

"Okay then, I will come, as long as I spend this evening with you." She replied with a smile.

Thato had planned an evening she was never going to forget. He used Mamosidi as an excuse to have Kim

come over but he actually sent Mamosidi away on a weekend away vacation with her children as it was her birthday, for him and Kim to have some quality time in the comfort of his own home.

He spent few hours with Kim and hurried home because he needed to be home in time so that he is home when the chef arrives.

Indeed, he left, the chef arrived and he prepared them one of his best French meals, Ratatouille. He served the meal with 2006 Bourgogne Chardonnay wine and made Sachertorte for dessert that he served with whipped cream, which is a fluffy, chocolate cake layered with apricot jam and preserves, originating from Vienna. He made sure that the dinner was super special because his future with Kim depended on it.

Kim got ready preparing for her diner with Thato and Mamosidi. He was wearing a beautiful blue-laced robe with pearls that her mother gave her when she was going on her matric dance. She still had the whole set, the earrings, the bracelet, the necklace and the ring; and they were all still new because she only wore them that one evening and she ever wore them again. She looked like a queen that she is. Her skin was glowing. She wore her coarse locked hair as neatly tied around her head. She looked like royalty. As she was looking herself in the mirror, she received a call from Thato asking her if she was ready, she replied yes. Thato told her to stay put as he was on his way to fetch her. She was surprised that how could he say he is coming to

fetch her when she knows the way to his place because they were going to have dinner with Mamosidi. She thought that maybe he was taking her out instead. She sat back and waited for Thato to come. Few minutes later, she heard a knock on her door, going to open up with a smile, to her surprise it was a chauffeur with a limousine waiting outside to pick her up.

"Good evening ma'am. My name is Henry and Mr Batlhaping sent me to collect a beautiful woman by the name Kim. I think you know her", the chauffeur said with a smile.

"Wow, I am Kim, we may leave." She replied with a smile.

The chauffeur reached out for her hand and led her to the car. Before he closed the window, Kim asked,

"Where is he taking me?"

The chauffeur smiled and said, "It is a secret ma'am. You will see when we get there."

They drove off to Thato's house. Before she could get off, the chauffeur asked her to blindfold herself with a blind folder Thato asked him to blindfold her with. She did blindfold herself and he walked her into Thato's house. She had no clue where she was but she could hear the song that played in that coffee bar where she and Thato met the first day, "Said Loved You but I Lied" by Michael Bolton.

She smiled when she recognised Thato's cologne and said, "Hello handsome. I can smell you from all the way here".

"Hello empress, you look royalty this evening, like always", he replied with a slight laughter.

"When do I get this off my eyes?" she asked.

Thato held her hand and said, "You should follow my lead and when I stop walking, you may remove it".

They walked outside to his lawn and she took it off. It was a table neatly covered with a white tablecloth.

There also was a candle, two glasses of wine, a bottle of wine in ice and two chairs. It was just the two of them, the sky and the stars. Kim was really out of words, she did not know what to say. She held him tight and told her that she loved it and complimented it.

That called his waiter who was also his chef and he brought in Smoked salmon with prawns, horseradish cream and lime vinaigrette for starters. He later on brought the Ratatouille for the main course and the Sachertorte along with the 2006 Bourgogne Chardonnay wine.

Chapter 19

The food was out of the world and Kim enjoyed every moment of the evening. The music was good too; she was just humbled of what a gentleman Thato was. After they had dessert, Thato asked Kim for a dance. They danced and while they danced, he thanked her for being an understanding, supportive, faithful and loving woman. Her eyes filled with tears; he wiped them off and kissed her forehead. He told her that she was the reason that he woke up daily and that he gave his life meaning. He reached out for his pocket, pulled out a box, went down on his knee, and opened the box to reveal the ring and asked her to marry him. She just stood there and froze. She did not know what to say, she just remained mute. Thato was afraid that something was wrong with her. He held her and let her sit down a bit. After few minutes she apologized, "I am sorry for freaking you out. I just never expected that you would ask me to marry you so soon. It is not as if I do not love you or anything but, I feel that we are taking things too fast. May I please go home and think about it, please?"

Thato was very disappointed that Kim hesitated to marry her. He was so disappointed that the disappointment was all over his face, he however said, "Okay, take all the time you need".

Kim asked Thato to drive her home because she saw how his mood changed. He did drive her home and she held on to the ring. The weekend did not go as Thato had planned; Kim's response pushed him back a little and that made him doubt Kim's love for him. Kim spent the entire weekend in pyjamas, looking at the ring and pinching herself to check if she is still alive. Thato called her several times and each time Kim replied, she sounded like she had a heavy load placed on her shoulders. They spoke about the proposal and concluded that they should wait until she was ready to commit and Thato gave Kim the ring and told her to put it on once she was ready.

Thato went to Kim's place few days later to ask if she was over Shaun since he saw Shaun at her house. He was not convinced that nothing was going on between her and Shaun, because there was no explanation for her to hesitate to marry him. He could not understand why Kim would not want to marry him. Kim snapped at him and told him where to get off. She pushed him away and said, "You are a weak paranoid man, now I realise why Lindi had her way around you. You are as emotional as a pregnant hormonal woman". Thato could not believe his ears; he asked Kim if she really meant all that. She told her that she wanted nothing to do with him and she told him to leave. Thato walked out when Kim told her that she did not care what happened to him because. As he walked out with anger, a car from out of nowhere came. It hit him

so hard that he jumped and landed on the tar road with his head. Blood was coming out of his ears, eyes, nose and mouth. She saw a white substance coming out of his ears, and that was his brain.

"I didn't mean it, I am sorry, please I didn't mean it!" she exclaimed crying shaking her partner whose body temperature was decreasing every second she shook him, while his hands and feet turned blue. It was too late he was no more. She cried so much that she wanted to die when she thought of how she delayed to be with him and to be his wife.

She woke up with tears on her face and a ring in her hand.

She called Thato and told her she loves him and wants to be his wife. She realised that time was never on time to allow anyone to wait for the right moment because the right moment is right now. She realised that Thato was not another suppressed version of Shaun that was on to hurt her but was a man who has been there from the first day Shaun walked out of her life. She realised that she was never going to be ready if she depended on time because time is never on our side. You can never hold responsible for not doing what you wanted because you were waiting for the right time. Thato came over to make sure that he heard her correctly, and it was the best Monday morning ever. He apologised for how he reacted and he went to work with a huge smile on his face. Kim called her mother and told her about the marriage proposal because now the uncles had to

take it from there. Her mother told her to come home so that they could speak.

Chapter 20

Kim's mother was a very traditional and cultural woman. She did everything by the laws of culture. She spoke to her brothers and told her that Kim's hand has been asked to marriage. The uncles waited upon Kim's arrival to Boksburg so that they could get all the information that they needed. On the other hand, Thato spoke to his father and unfortunately, Thato did not have uncles to represent him in the negotiations. Therefore, John had to go negotiate alone with two of Lydia's brothers.

Kim prepared for her journey to Boksburg and everything went well. When she arrived home, she found her brother, his wife and newborn baby waiting for her. Few minutes later, her cousins came through and it was bliss. Kim spoke to her mother about how she and Thato met and how they ended up engaged. She told her everything about her relationship with Shaun and she told her about how things ended between them. Her mother was just happy that she was okay, happy and found true love.

"About your dream, Thato will not die honey. You are just afraid of losing him and I am glad that dream woke you up because really time is never on time to allow us

to delay because we are afraid that things may not go well." Her mother said.

The weekend went well with her whole family around and they now waited for Thato's family to contact them regarding the negotiations.

Kim went back to her place on Monday morning and was sad to leave her mother.

Thato came through later on that day after work to come check how the visit went. Kim was happy to see him and he was happy to see his fiancée happy. She told her about the weekend and he told her about his. Few minutes later Kim received a call from the police station in Klerksdorp asking her if she knew Nomathemba and Mzukisani Thamarha, she confirmed that that was her father and sister.

"I am sorry to let you know that there has been a murder case concerning the two people I have mentioned to you. We found your number and name written on a note next to the two deceased. Will you be able to come identify them at the Klerksdorp Police Station?" asked the officer.

Kim was shocked for her life; she asked, "A murder case, what happened?"

"It looks as if Mr Thamarha shot Miss Thamarha few minutes before he shot himself. There is a suicidal letter, which I think you should see. We need you to come down to the station ma'am."

Kim was really shocked and tame, she replied and said, "Okay I am on my way but I am all the way from Braamfontein so I will be there in two hours or so." "Okay ma'am please ask for sergeant Jacobs when you get here, thank you." The officer said and hung up.

"What is going on babe? You look like you have seen a ghost", Thato asked.

"My dad and my sister are dead. Please drive me to Klerksdorp Police Station. We will hear everything when we get there", she replied.

They got in Thato's car and drove off. Thato informed Mamosidi that he was not coming home. Luckily, there was no traffic as it was expected; they arrived at the station an hour and forty-five minutes later.

As they arrived at the station, she asked for sergeant Jacobs and he came forward. She identified the bodies and it was indeed her sister and her father. The suicidal letter was from her father and it read, "Nombuyiselo my child, if you find this letter it means that I am no more. Please ask forgiveness from your mother o my behalf. Tell her that I am sorry for everything that I have done to her. Please tell your brother, Busisani that I am sorry for being a bad father to him. I am sorry for not being a good father to you too. I did this deed because I could not continue living this life anymore. Yes, I made your sister, my own daughter, a wife. I loved and had lust for her. She lust me too and I am afraid to say this but she was a better wife than your mother was. Until I realised

that she had inherited my characteristics of being unfaithful that she slept with all my friends and I found out that the only children I father are the twins and the rest God knows who fathered them. No one could have her, I wanted to keep her to myself but she became greedy and wanted it all. I shot her before I could shoot myself. I took the children foster care in Western Cape and that is how I want it to remain. I wrote your hand on a note for the police to call you so that you will know of what I did. Please do not worry about burying me, even if the police could bury me like a criminal, it is okay. Take care."

Chapter 21

The news really tore Kim apart, she asked Thato to drive her back to Boksburg and he did. She called her mother on her way to her and told her to expect her. It was late, after nine in the evening. They arrived two hours later and she told her mother of what happened. It was sad news but the family was strong. They spent the night and Thato only got a proper introduction the following day. They called work and told their assistants to cancel their appointment because they were going to be out of town for a while. Kim and her family prepared for the funeral for two. They buried them that same Saturday in the house they had at Lichtenburg and the family was not sad because of the death because the two deceased had isolated themselves from the family because of their behaviour. Everything went well and they all went back home to their lives.

Two weeks later the negotiations took place. John along with Andrew and Dickson drove off to Boksburg for the negotiations. The negotiations went as planned and they came to an agreement. The two families were happy that they negotiated and agreed on a bride's prize with no problems. Traditionally, Kim was now Thato's wife.

John and Thato's uncles gave Thato feedback regarding the negotiations and Thato was very happy.

Thato and Kim had not set a date for their wedding, so he planned to take her out on a weekend away for her birthday at one of her favourite beach houses. Kim was very happy that her fiancée was making her first birthday as his wife to be memorable. He sent her a present the day before their departure. Inside the gift bag, she saw a brochure of where they were going, a box of chocolates and she saw a note saying "My beautiful bride to be. Please forgive me for this early note, but I will give you your proper birthday present tomorrow on sunset. See you. I love you".

She smiled alone and thought to herself that she was blessed. Thato went to Durban alone, he had already booked her flight to Durban, she arrived later on that day, and they rested. Thato woke up earlier than usual and he left Kim a note on his side of the bed. Kim was afraid that history might repeat itself but she ended up reading the note, it read, "Good Morning Mrs Batlhaping to be. I asked them to prepare special breakfast for us. I will be back by 8:00 sharp. I just went out for a jog."

Kim smiled, checked her watch and saw it was thirty minutes after the seventh hour. She got out of bed and went to take a shower. Thato had gone to make sure everything was done as he asked. He also went to check if their guests were all there as it was an intimate event for close friends and family. His family and his family in law were already there and everything was just perfectly prepared.

He went back to their room and found his woman looking beautiful than ever, looking outside the window wearing nothing but his shirt. She smiled at him as he got in with a tray with their breakfast on it.

They had breakfast and Kim thanked Thato for treating her so well.

Thato asked Kim that they should spend the day indoors because he did not want Kim to see the guest going up and down in the area. Three hours before sunset, he asked Kim to get ready for their evening, as it starts right before sunset. Kim went to the bathroom to freshen up while Thato took a shower, and as she went out of the bath, she found two women waiting up on her bed with her dress, beadwork jewellery and a pair of sandals made of leather. They told her that Thato had asked them to get her ready for him but they refused to tell her what was going on.

They dressed her up and she indeed looked like a true African Queen. She was beautiful in a beautiful full white Xhosa garment with black decorations, which Thato had designed for her without her knowledge. She just assumed that they were going to dinner or something.

Thato ordered Kim to be at the beach at half past five for her surprise and as she approached, she saw her best friend Buli along with her cousins and her brother's wife dressed in tradition. She also saw her in laws and they started singing as she approached. She then saw her uncle come up, she asked him what was going on

and he said that it was her big day and it then registered that Thato planned their wedding for her.

They all sang her traditional wedding song while a Setswana praise poet was praising her beauty. Then a Xhosa praise poet continued praising her beauty and welcoming her in laws. As she looked ahead, she saw her mother on her left hand side smiling blowing kisses, her in laws on her right hand side. She saw Thato standing at the altar dressed in a leopard skin as he was of royalty. The wedding was well prepared as Thato prepared the wedding with his mom in law and he received assistance from Buli for the invitation cards and keeping everything discreet.

They had a traditional wedding of the century, which kept everyone talking.

Chapter 22

A year after her and Thato got married; she had severe abdominal pains that she visited her gynaecologist and she found out that he was twelve weeks pregnant and she had to take antenatal care.

Kim had severe menstrual cramps every month when she received her periods and it was something that did not occur before she fell pregnant with Shaun's baby. She never consulted a gynaecologist because she always thought it was normal since most women experienced menstrual pains. Besides, her mother knew nothing about her having had aborted so they had to keep everything to herself. Buli would tell her to have a baby and maybe she would get rid of menstrual pains. The gynaecologist said she sees a growth growing on the entrance of her womb but she was not sure what it was. They took her cervical fluids to run some tests to see what that was. Two weeks later, they called her in to have her results. The results came back saying that she contracted cervical cancer and it was growing rapidly. She said that they would have to wait for the babies to be at least twenty-four weeks before they could operate her, deliver the children through caesarean and treat the cancer. She was surprised when the doctor said babies. She had conceived healthy twins.

She had to visit the gynaecologist continuously to make sure that her babies were not in any danger. Before she

knew it, she was twenty-four weeks and had to deliver the babies prematurely because the growth was growing too. They had to remove her womb because the cancer had spread all over it.

She gave birth to beautiful non-identical twins, a boy and a girl whom Thato named Thato Junior or the boy and Thatohatsi ya Batlhaping for the girl.

She asked the doctor how she might have contracted the disease, the doctor asked her if anyone in her family had cancer before, she said no. She asked the doctor what are the other possible causes of cancer, the doctor mentioned that at times illegal abortions might cause the cervix to contract cancer, as they are careless when terminating. She there and then remembered the back street abortion that Shaun took her to. She cried so much that she almost lost her babies but she was just glad that the babies were alive.

Thato Junior and Thatohatsi grew up with no health problems but Kim was never the same after giving birth. She lost so much weight and was in and out of hospital. The cancer had spread in her body and they discovered it at its later stage.

Thato was her mother, husband and nurse. He took a good care of her, from bathing her, feeding her and changing her diapers. Thato never gave up on his wife; neither did he get exhausted of taking care of her.

Two years later, the doctor admitted and she never came back. It was a sad experience that one deed she did at a tender age could have been the cause of her death. She rest in peace knowing that Thato loved her from the minute he laid eyes on her until the last second she last saw him with her physical eye. Everyone was saddened that Kim died a silent death and she never had a chance to raise her beautiful baby girl and her handsome son.

Shaun came to her funeral; he could not look Thato and Kim's family in the eyes because of the guilt. He was the reason Thato's children did not have a mother.

Buli on the other side did not give up on Thato, she hoped to comfort him through his loss but Thato made it clear that there will never be any woman after Kim.

Nathi dumped Emily after he found out that she was the woman whom Shaun cheated Kim with and Mamosidi took a good care of Thato junior and Thatohatsi. She found herself someone and she got married to a handsome businessperson who loved her with her children.

Everything around Thato reminded him of Kim. He decided that he should relocate to a new environment and start afresh. He quit his job and just became partner. He relocated to Netherlands, Amsterdam and luckily got a job as a law practitioner. He raised his children as a single parent and he never married. Thato

junior and Thatohatsi grew older and he told them how their mother died. They were a happy family of three.

Gallery



Lejweleputswa Art Centre (photo by Monaheng Rakhunoane)



Pretoria State Theatre - Night of Poets hosted and photo by Black Eagle Media Group



Goldfields FET College TOSA Campus (photo by Teboho Setena)



Welkom's Got Talent Finals (photo by Teboho Setena)

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