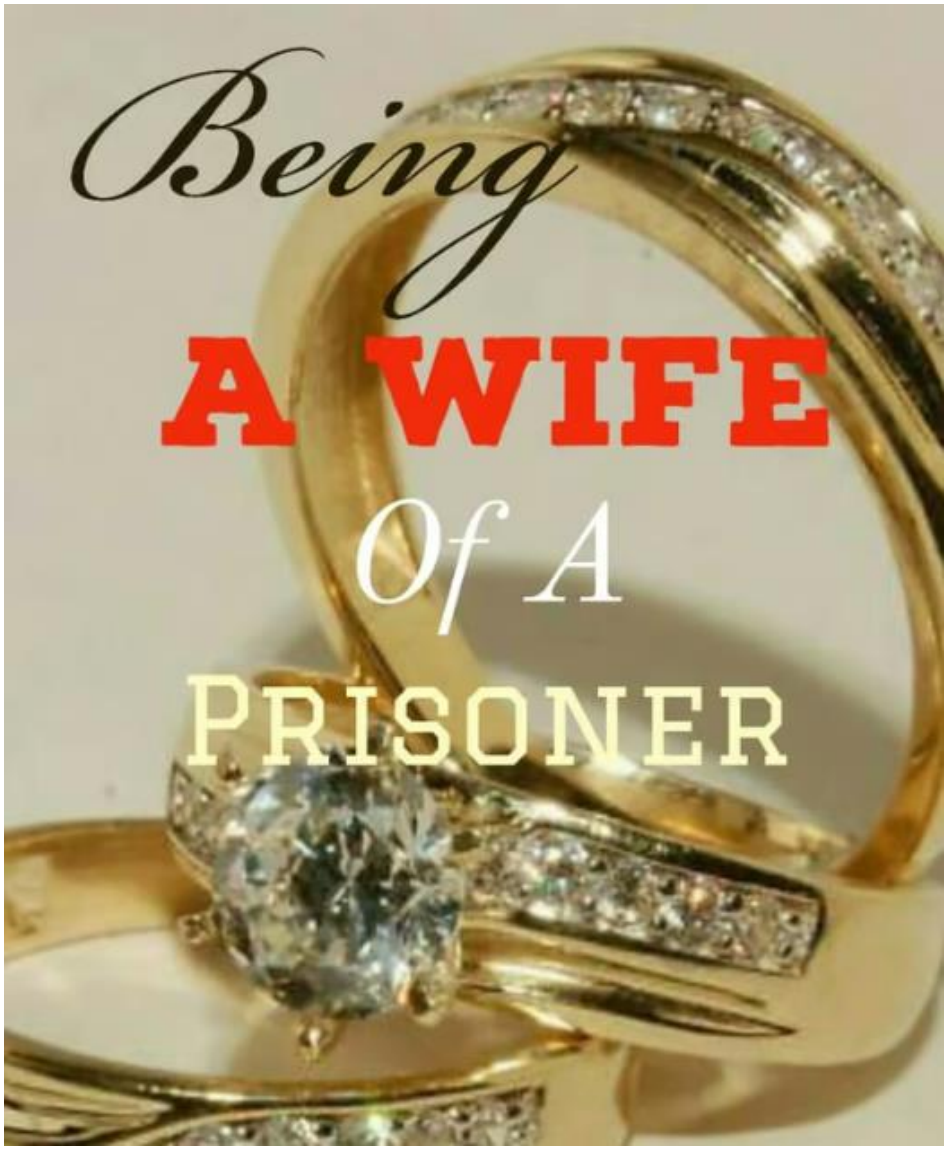

For Daily Latest Books Free to Download on https://novelsguru.com/ and visit my Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/groups/3345453369055623

BEING A WIFE OF A PRISONER by Gxashe A

PROLOGUE

Thud

Thud

Thud

That’s the sound of my own heart beat. I drop my hands to the side of my dress and wipe my moist palms.

Judge: May the accused please stand.

Tears fill my eyes as he locks the with mine. One expression we share; fear but there’s a mixture of regret in them.

Judge: The defence failed to prove the accused was not in the crime scene so therefore I find the accused guilty of all charges brought against him.

My knees weakened causing me fall back on the bench defeated. Tears involuntary rolls down my cheeks.

Judge: I sentence him to 7 years imprisonment with the possibility of parole. Court is adjourned.

He hits the gavel and walks out of the room. I cover my face and cry louder as the court official shouts all rise.

Akhona: Aza.

I raise my head and look at him.

Akhona: I'm sorry.

He shouts as they escort him by the police. I close my eyes and let it all out. The world feels like it's closing up on me. I've warned him many times but he didn't pay attention to my opinions. Our mother who was encouraging him is six months late. They used call it hustling but all in all it was stealing. I blame my sperm donor for this because if he was in our lives maybe my mother wouldn't have died of stroke and my brother wouldn't have resorted to crime to keep us fed and clothed. Why do men keep doing this? Aren't they tired of the cycle of leaving kids behind with their mothers? Aren't they tired of letting single mothers raise their seeds on their own? I wipe my tears and make my way out. My phone beeps as I ascend the stairs.

***I'm trying to get hold of your brother? The children's school fees hasn't been paid" Natasia

My eyes get glossy while my lip quivered. Akhona just had to live me in a mess. How am I suppose to take care of his 4 children and crazy Natasia not to mention my own self. Call me evil or anything I hate my parents for what they did to us. My mother for condoning crime and my father for being the king of slyza tsotsi.

1

AZASAKHE

Flipping my eyes open, I roll the bed and lie on my side as a knock bangs on the door. Whoever it is must be a violent person. I rise my head and look at the clock on the wall and it reads 23:45pm.

Voice: (screaming) Azasakhe.

I widen my eyes and jump out of the bed. Doesn't this woman know that witchcraft is real? She can't be calling up my name at this hour. I wouldn't be surprised if neighbourhood witches practice witchcraft with my name because the crazy coloured woman decided to give them on a silver plate. Sometimes I ask myself what did my brother see in her because that race is crazy as it comes.

Nat: Aza?

Me: (whispering) I'm coming.

Instead of stop shouting my name, she walks to the window and start knocking on them. I open the door and look at her.

Nat: What took you so long?

She drags the kids and pushes me out of the door and walks in. I close the door and heavily sighed then turn to her. This woman stays 2km away from my house.

Me: (whispering) You walked here?

Nat: Where is your brother?

I shrugged my shoulders causing her to frown.

Nat: What do you mean about that? Do you know where he is?

I shake my head.

Nat: What the hell is wrong with you? Can't you speak?

I nod and pick up my bag on top of the couch and look for my notepad and pen.

Me: I've already made a mistake by answering her by using my voice. The witches already know my voice right now so I'm confusing them a bit.

Nat: (frowning) What are you talking about?

Me: You're shouting my name not so long ago so I'm just protecting myself from witches. I'm too broke for them to practice witchcraft with me. I'm just an intern at Coca Cola who earns a basic salary so they should try next door. Mapula has everything including a stable relationship so they should take her not me.

I show the notepad after writing and she erupts in laughter.

Nat: What nonsense is this?

Me: I’m an orphan who just lost both parents. My brother is in jail so that makes me an orphan.

Her eyes widen before she burst in tears.

Nat: Yhoo who is going to take care of the kids?

Me: What do you mean?

Nat: I had a disagreement with my mother and she kicked me out.

Me: What?

Forget the witches for a second

Advertisement

she did what? The shock is evidence enough in my voice.

Me: Are you crazy? Do you ever think before you do anything?

Nat: Don’t you dare call me crazy, Aza.

She paces up and down in front of me like a patient who just escaped from the mental institution.

Me: This what happens when you keep congratulating your baby daddy for nonsense. Where did you think he got the money he flashes you with?

Nat: I thought he was working like a normal guy.

I laugh and clap my hands once. I've never meet someone stupid as this woman in front of me. Kanti what is the meaning of umjolo? These people have kids together and they are about to be on the third grade next year so how come doesn't she know that her man doesn't have a job?

Me: You'll have to come with a plan.

Nat: I can't because you know I'm not working.

I shake my head and usher the kids to the father's bedroom and tuck them in bed. Love is really blind. Everyone in our neighbourhood knows my brother as iphara. Ask around for Akhona Khali's house and they will just answer by saying iphara? I walk back and find her still pacing.

Nat: Is he really in jail or he left me for someone else?

I chuckle.

Me: You won't see him for the next 7 years.

She gasps and burst in tears again.

Nat: I will never get married because they will turn my man into Lasizwe.

She sinks on the floor crying. I shake my head and storm to the bathroom. It's pointless talking to her because she will only hear what she wants to her. Instead of worrying about her children's well being she's worried about being married and

Akhona. Indeed love is really blind. Picking up the bucket, I fill it with water and Shibhoshi then walk back to my room. I strip naked and cover my body with my robe and pass by the kitchen to pick the sea salt and make my way outside. I untie the robe and walk around naked in the yard and splash the water.

Me: (mainly voice) Her name is not Azasakhe but Ntomb' elahliweyo. Don't come for her witches. She doesn't even have wealth. She's not educated with zero experience.

My throat feels so dry as I mimic a man's voice. I throw the salt in my mouth and chew before spitting around. I don't even know if I'm doing this right but I saw this from witchcraft chasers from Facebook.

Me: She's not a virgin. She's a community bicycle and all the man around the neighbourhood knows her in her birthing suit.

I cringe at that shake my head. I've only know one man in my entire life. My high school sweetheart Kuhle but the witches don't know that.

Me: No witch formed against Ntomb' elahliweyo shall prosper.

The front door flies open and Nat peeks around.

Nat: (shouting) Aza?

Jizas! What is wrong with this woman? She closes the door and walks around screaming my name. Here was I thinking I'm

protecting myself but crazy Natasia just had to throw me under the bus. Now the witches know my name is really Azasakhe.

2

AZASAKHE

There’s nothing that wakes up a person than a strong black cup of coffee in the morning. I had to cut my ritual short last night because of Natasia. That woman really bad no timing. I’m sure the whole neighbourhood knows that I’m practising witchcraft.

Nat: Morning.

She snaps me out of my daze.

Me: Morning.

Nat: I called their transport and it will be here any minute from now. So…

She trails off and heavily sigh. I raise my eyebrows.

Me: So what?

Nat: The driver will be expecting the money. Their transport is not paid.

Me: You got to be kidding me. Where the hell am I suppose to get their money?

Nat: Don’t be sting, Azasakhe. These are your nephews you’re about to let them miles and miles away to get to school.

Me: Unfortunately I don’t have that kind of money.

Nat: It’s your pay day today.

Me: So what? I don’t have a fish, a pig, a dog nor cat. I already have plans for my money.

Nat: So you’re going to let them be kicked out of their transport?

Me: I can’t just break my budget for them, Natasia. What happened to your share that I gave from the policies?

Nat: I used all of it. The was a new line of clothes in Woolworths and couldn’t just walk out of the store without getting them a thing or two.

She shrugged her shoulders.

Me: Well this is the part you look for a job.

Nat: I’ve never walked a day in my life so why should I start now? Don’t forget I came from a wealthy family.

I shake my head and dump the mug in the sink and padded to my bedroom. It’s pointless talking to that one. I take of the robe and throw my uniform and pick up my bag then walk out.

Me: I’m leaving.

Nat: Are you seriously leaving without paying your nephews transport? In case you forgot they are your children now since their father is not here.

Me: I’m well aware of that but I’m not about to dictated on what I have to do. I sweat my butt off each day for that money.

I open the door and walk out. I’ve got bills to pay like the water

Advertisement

electricity, grocery, my transport, the loan shark we borrowed money from because we needed to take Akhona to the hospital. The community beat him into a pulp because they caught him in the act and now I have unnecessary loan I have to pay. My phone chimes as I cross the street. I smile seeing the caller ID.

Me: Hey baby.

Kuhle: Hi love, how are you?

Me: I’m good and you?

Kuhle: I’m good. Listen baby there’s a car that’s about to pick you up. Knowing you would have not got in the car.

I turn and look around for the car and spot a grey Corolla.

Me: Where is it taking me?

Kuhle: It’s a surprise baby and I don’t want to ruin it.

I smile and change direction walking to the car. The driver steps out and opens the door for me and drives off after I step in. I smiling from ear to ear smitten by the gesture. Love can be so beautiful and right especially when you just experience it with

the right person. Kuhle has been my day one since from grade 8 until now. The long distance relationship between us just keeps proving that our love is stronger and it can conquer anything. I know my friend will eat me alive about this but they just don't understand the kind of man Kuhle is.

Driver: Ma'am we have arrived.

I look around and the car is parked not far from a caravan.

Me: (smiling) Where are we?

Driver: My job is to fetch and drop you here.

I nod.

Me: Just share a little bit. I promise I won't ruin the surprise.

I bargain still smiling but the man doesn't barge. I shake my head and step out of the car. Men don't know that surprises sometimes do kill people. I turn back to the driver.

Me: Where am I suppose to go?

Driver: Inside the caravan.

I nod and walk to the caravan. My mind is already trying to come up with what could be the surprise be.

Me: It's a picnic right?

I murmur to driver and he shakes his head.

Me: I promise I won’t tell him you told me.

I yell and pick up my pace. I halt in front of the door and contain my excitement.

Me: Keep calm and act surprised Aza.

I exercise my breath and ascend the stairs.

Me: Wait… what if he wants to propose?

My heart skips a beat. My hands tremble as I turn the handle and walk in. Wedding bells are already ringing in my head.

Me: Yes baby I will marry y…

Words died in my throat. My eye better not be confirming what my mind is already thinking.

Luyanda: Aza siyakwamkela enqubeni. Igama ndingu Luyanda Potwana, uyamazi ubhuti. { Aza we welcome you to the show. My name is Luyanda Potwana}.

Good Lord the man just had to speak and confirm everything.

Luyanda: Uyamazi uKuhle? {Do you know Kuhle?}.

Words get stuck on the roof of my throat.

Luyanda: Kuhle nanku Aza. Mxelelele lento ubuyithetha phandle. {Kuhle here is Aza. Tell her what you told me outside}.

Kuhle: Aza I brought here because I want to confess to you. I have a 3 year old daughter.

I snap out of my daze and storm out of the caravan. How could I not see the sign? The whole world knows what the caravan stands for. Hands sneak on my waist.

Kuhle: Baby wait.

Me: What do you want?

Kuhle: I can explain.

Me: Explain what? That you brought me to national television to turn into a laughing stock?

A lump settles on my throat while tears roll down my face. I let them fall and cry for the unmarried youth of South Africa.

Me: The whole world watches this show.

I laugh and cry the same time.

Kuhle: I'm sorry but I wanted to tell you but I couldn't do it. This thing has been bugging me for years now. I hated looking into your eyes and lie.

Me: I don't want to hear it.

I wiggle out of his grip and walk away. The nerve of this guy. I can't believe wasted my precious brain thinking that there's a wedding. My life is a mess.

3

BUSISIWE

I grab Sihle's hand and walk back in the building after seeing my father's car outside.

Sihle: And then?

Me: We'll take a cab.

Sihle: Okay but where are we going?

Me: Aza's house.

Sihle: I almost forgot. Your parents will kill you.

I giggle.

Me: That's the fun part of it. My parents keep forgetting that I'm not a little girl anymore. I'm a 24 year old woman who is capable of making her own mind.

Sihle: Don't say I didn't warn you.

I wave her off. I roll my eyes as my phone rings.

Me: Ma.

Mama: Princess we are outside. Where are you?

Me: (whispering) Inside still working. You guys should go because I'll probably be here for a while.

I lie through teeth causing Sihle to shake her head.

Mama: No, princess we will wait for you.

Me: I've got to go. My boss is coming.

I hang up and breathe out.

Sihle: Let me guess they are not leaving?

I nod.

Me: We'll just have to come with another plan.

I mingle with the people going out and shield myself with them.

Sihle: Seriously?

She blows out and sigh and copies my movements.

Mama: Busisiwe.

She screams peeking through the window. We pick up our paces and start running.

Mama: (screaming) Busisiwe.

We giggle and start running. Sihle flugs a taxi and we jump in.

Sihle: You're really a bad influence.

Me: They will forget it as soon I get home. I hand the fare to the person next to me.

Me: Two.

Sihle: No way.

Me: What?

She shoves her phone in my hands. I look at the screen and gasp.

Me: Is that our friend?

Sihle: I hate to say this but I told you guys that someone was shady about Kuhle.

Me: I wish we listened to you.

I shake my head.

Me: We cannot let him get away with this.

Sihle: There's nothing we can do.

Me: There's something we can do. The fool embarrassed our friend and we can't just sit back and let him get away with it. He has to pay.

Sihle: I don't like that look on your face.

I giggle and pick up my phone as it beeps indicating a message.

"Use a condom please. My first born just because I was smiling with a man. The second born came because I want to fetch the first born winter clothes and the last born which is you came 10 years later when I was willing to retire from sex. In whatever

you do princess do not let a man fool you. They are slick and smooth with their words including your father”

I laugh and hand the phone to Sihle. My mother tells us that story every time when she wants to manipulate us. I always thought my parent’s love story was the most beautiful until my mother starts narrating it. My dad met my mother in a taxi and fell in love with her. Just like the famous words of my mother they wanted to have fun but Bandile was the results of that fun. My mother ran away from him because a child was not part of their plan. 2 years later they had Banele and how he came about is just another hilarious story. My dad asked my mom to fetch winter clothes for Bandile and the man locked the door and told her nobody will walk out of that hour without labelling their relationship status.

Sihle: After hump.

The taxi comes into a halt and we step out. We walk to Aza’s house and Nat opens the door for us.

Sihle: Hey Nat

Advertisement

is she home?

Nat: She locked herself in her bedroom and she’s been crying since.

Me: May we?

She nods and disappears to the kitchen. We walk to her room and knock.

Me: Babe it's us.

Sihle: We are not leaving until you open this door.

The door opens and she burst in tears.

Me: Oh, babe came here.

I drop my bag and envelope her in my arms.

Sihle: Kodwa ke mntase I told you his bad news.

Her cries ceases and raises her head. We both glare at her.

Sihle: Okay but ke I'm just telling the truth. The red flags were there.

Aza: How could I be so blind?

Me: You wouldn't have know. They are don't have sticker notes on their foreheads written I'm bad news.

Aza: (crying) The next person I day better have that sticker note.

We laugh causing her to cry harder.

Sihle: I always tell you guys to enter a relationship with one foot and the other on is reserved for days like this. Days were you

need to run and never look back. Who enters a relationship whole heartedly this day?

Me: You’re being insensitive right now. We get the picture.

Sihle: I don’t think you do. The pyramid scheme of Mjolo didn’t just start now. People have been scammed for years by this thing and you’re still crying for it.

Me: Feelings won’t just disappear now. We understand but what he did was the last straw.

Sihle: You’re not thinking of going back to him right?

Aza: (crying) I love him.

Sihle claps her hands.

Sihle: Amen! Hai mna andisayazi shame.

Aza: (crying) Mntase my heart wants him.

Sihle: There’s a plenty of fishes in the sea.

Aza: I yearn for him.

She walks to the door shaking her head.

Me: Stop talking.

I murmur to her

Sihle: Khawusile inyembezi wethu uyeke ukukhalela amadoda. Ube uyinyididi apha uzenza uMaria. {Wipe those tears and stop crying for men. Stop making yourself Maria}.

Aza's cries become worse. I heavily sigh and rub her back. Sihle is just a special case.

AKHONA

It's day two in this place but it feels like a million years. I've been in and out in jail but it was never this serious. Maybe if our father was much involved in our lives maybe I wouldn't have resorted to crime to feed my family. The man left and I had to step in and fill in his shoes. The laughter coming from the inmates breaking me out of my thoughts.

Inmate: (laughing) This show should be banished.

I bite back a gasp. TF is my sister doing in that show? The presenter goes on and until Aza runs out. I run to the warden.

Me: I need to make a phone call.

Warden: Sit down sboshwa.

Me: Please this is a life and death situation.

Warden: In here you don't call the shots we do. Your freedom ended when you stepped in this place so sit the fuck down.

Tears burn my eyes. I swallow hard and walk back to the others.

Me: Excuse me that’s my sit.

The inmates laughs and jumps to his feet.

Inmate: Not anymore or do you have a problem with that?

I quickly shake my head and drop my eyes to the floor.

Inmate: Thought as much. Vaya.

I scoot away and stand against the wall. I won’t survive this place.

4

AZASAKHE

Kuhle has been blowing my phone since last night. I have no energy to speak to him nor see him. I trusted him with my heart and he broke it. I cried myself to sleep last night after my friends left. I invested my time and heart in that relationship. I saw a future with that man.

Mr Collins: Jennifer.

I snap out of my thoughts and find all eyes on me.

Me: Sir?

Mr Collins: Where is your mind?

Voice: Her mind is still stuck on yesterday's episode of Nyan Nyan.

Laughter fills the room. Mr Collins clears his throat.

Mr Collins: We are trying to come up with new strategies that will up our market. Our competitors Pepsi, Kingsley and Twizza are stealing our clients. We are not selling anymore and we need something.

Busi: How about we create a website.

Mr Collins: What is it about?

Busi: We make our customers aware of our products and we sell it at a much cheaper price.

Mr Collins: (yelling) That's all you can come with? I'm telling you guys that business is not doing good these days and the best thing you can come with is that we should sell our products at a cheaper price. Who the hell does that?

He stumbles to the door.

Mr Collins: I expect those ideas first thing in the morning.

He halts on his steps and turns to Busi.

Mr Collins: Do yourself a favour Miss Zibi don't ever run a business because you will run it to the ground. Jennifer in my office now.

Laughter. I follow behind him and close the door.

Me: Sir you called for me.

Mr Collins: HR is waiting for your signature.

Me: (frowning) For what?

Mr Collins: You leave.

Me: What? I didn't apply for any leave.

Mr Collins: You didn't but I did on your behalf. You're always zoning out and always late. You miss work and if you're here you barely do anything productive.

Me: So you're firing me?

Mr Collins: No I'm not firing you but saving yourself from you. You're falling apart.

Tears sting my eyes.

Me: This job is the only thing keeping me sane. I'm fine.

Mr Collins: No you're nit. Sign those papers and go home.

I turn on my heels and walk out of his office. I stand against the wall and burst in tears. Not only did that man embarrassed me he has turned me into an overnight felebrity. Just this morning people were calling me the Nyan Nyan girl from my stop all the way to town. If I had a gun I would shoot everyone who talks about that stupid show and last night's episode. Wiping my tears, I slide my hand in my pocket and take out my ringing phone.

Me: Hello.

Akhona: Hey it's me.

Me: Akhona?

Akhona: Yes it's me.

Me: Are you okay?

He breathes out on the end of the line. Worry latches on me.

Me: Akhona are you okay?

Akhona: I don’t think I can survive this place.

My heart picks up speed.

Me: Did something happen?

Akhona: No but I’m not cut up for this place.

Me: I’m coming there.

Akhona: No I…

I disconnect the call and rush to the elevator. Maybe I do need this leave.

SANDILE

The bars of my cell open.

Warden: Boss you’ve got a visitor.

Me: Who?

Warden: The usual.

I place the cards on the little table and jump to my feet.

Me: Vuks you can take my place.

Vuks: Sho bozza.

The warden closes the cell and we make our way to the visiting hall. Just as I was about to reach the table my acquaintance is I

bump into someone. She staggers and almost fall but I quickly hold her in place.

Lady: I'm so sorry.

Me: It's okay.

Lady: I wasn't looking where I was going.

I smile and look at her. She's really beautiful.

Me: Don't sweat about it.

Her lips crack into a thin smile and her eyes lock with mine. The atmosphere changes and the people surrounding us suddenly disappear. I could feel my heart missing out it's normal beat. I've heard of this thing called love at first sight but I just thought people were making it up. I never knew it existed until at this moment. Someone clears his throat while a high pitched up voice calls me.

Mamello: Babe I'm over here.

Her croaked teeth out in full display as she waves at me. I bite back a grunt.

Lady: I have to go.

She walks to the table behind mine and hugs what I assume is her boyfriend. The thought just leaves a bitter taste in my mouth.

Warden: No touching.

Lady: Sorry

Advertisement

are you okay?

Boyfriend: I'm okay. Just happy to see you.

Mamello: Babe?

I force my legs to walk around the table and sit down. The angels back and mine are facing each other. I eavesdrop on their conversation.

Boyfriend: I missed you.

Lady: I missed you too.

Judging by her tone of voice she's smile.

Mamello: (snapping) Sandile.

Her voice had to just replace the angelic voice I just spoke too.

Me: Hello.

Mamello: Haibo what's with the cold greetings?

Me: (snapping) The fuck do you want from me? I don't remember calling you.

She swallows hard.

Mamello: I missed you and I…

Boyfriend: Aza wait.

Her follows behind her but the warden stops him.

Warden: Time up.

He yells. I jump to my feet ready to walk out but Mamello holds my hand.

Mamello: But I just got here.

Me: Time is up.

Mamello: What the hell is going on today? Time has never been a problem before.

Me: I don’t make the rules.

Mamello: You always broke the rules all the time.

Me: Go home.

I yank my hand and walk back to my cell.

Me: What do you know about the guy who was behind me in the visiting hall?

Warden: That one is singing Ngeke balunge.

I chuckle.

Me: When?

Warden: Three days ago. Is there something wrong bozza yam? Should I keep an eye on him.

Me: No and no.

Warden: Isn't that Mafikizolo?

I follow his line of gaze and they have the boyfriend pinned against the wall. His squirming like a little boy.

Me: Voetsek.

Inmate: I was just playing with him. Showing him the ropes.

Me: Does he look like he wants to play?

Inmate: Hade bozza.

He smacks the boyfriend head and walks away.

Me: Are you okay?

Boyfriend: Yes, thank you so much.

Me: Crying doesn't help in this place. It's either you kill or be killed.

Boyfriend: I'm not a killer.

I chuckle.

Me: That's what we all say but morals don't work in this place. Toughen up and be a man. Insizwa ifela empini.

Boyfriend: I'll keep that in mind. Thank you.

Me: Tell me something the lady you were with in the dinning hall is she your girlfriend?

Boyfriend: Aza? No she's my little sister. I'm Akhona by the way.

I nod smiling. My heart makes that nonsense of missing a beat. I make a mental note of her name. Good to know his not the boyfriend because I was ready tomorrow shoot his ass.

Me: I can give you protection.

Akhona: (smiling) Really?

Me: Yes but I need something in return.

Akhona: Which is?

Me: You sister. I want her.

Akhona: (frowning) You want her? Why don't you go and find her.

I chuckle.

Me: I don't think you understand. (Smiling) Let me rephrase myself, I want you sister as…

He cuts me off.

Akhona: As your booty call?

Me: You sister is precious for me to make her as a booty call. I want her hand in marriage.

His eyes widen while his mouth goes ajar.

Akhona: (shocked) What?

Me: It’s simple give me your sister and I give you my protection. Sleep on it.

I pat his head and continue with my destination.

5

AKHONA

Sleep on it? I've been tossing and turning since I laid my head on this floor. My mind refuses to shut down. If I really take up on his offer what guarantees me that he will protect me for ever? What if agree then he starts mistreating my sister? Apart from my 4 children Aza is the only family member I have. The bars of the cell open.

Warden: Mafikizolo the boss wants to have a word with you.

I raise my head and find his eyes on me.

Me: Me?

Warden: You're the only Mafikizolo here.

I pick up my jumpsuit that I was using as a pillow and slip it on then follow him. Boss? Who the hell is actually this man?

Me: Where are going?

Warden: Keep your head down and do as they told you. In here you don't ask questions but do as they told you unless you see the order as shit then you don't do it.

I swallow hard and nod. I frown seeing the bars of one cell widely open in particular.

Warden: As per your request bozza yam.

The boss smiles and jumps to his feet.

Sandile: Welcome to my little heaven. Join the party and be merry. Let me introduce you to the crew.

He turns to other inmates in front of us.

Sandile: Boys this our new member. His the most valuable person in my life. When he says just you only ask one question, how high. Protect him with you lives. No life is much important than his in all of you. You're the shield

protecting from harms way. Take him as your deputy president. Should he get any scar while in your custody consider yourself dead or do yourself a favour and kill yourself before I get to you.

He runs his eyes around the room.

Sandile: Verstaan jy? {Do you understand?}

Inmates: Ja baas. {Yes boss}.

Sandile: Glad we understood each other.

He turns to me and hands me a cup.

Sandile: Take a sit and make yourself at home.

I cautiously take my sit next.

Inmate: Heita.

Me: Sho.

Inmate: Cigar?

My eyes bulge out. Aren't we suppose to be in jail? And why do they get to have this freedom while others don't? A box of ham and cheese pizza is shoved in my hand.

Sandile: Eat and tell me more about your sister.

Me: Who are you?

He smirks.

Sandile: All in due time my brother, all in due time.

I hungrily pick up the first slice and shove it in my mouth.

Sandile: There's need to rush eating. Nobody will take it away from you. Take your time and absorb the flavours in my mouth. Let your taste buds get used to that because this is how your life will be starting for today. Why live like any normal person when you have a brother in law like me?

I nervously chuckle. The man is really selling me a dream and I must give it to him his really good. I'm slowly falling on his trap.

Me: How will I know if my sister will be taken care of?

Sandile: She will be Mrs Dlamini. Anyone who doesn't know that surname then he/she has been living under a rock. This is my turf and we run this country.

Me: (frowning) You and who?

Sandile: His a lawyer during the day but a thug in a suit at night.

He smiles fondly then chuckle.

Me: Do you work for him?

He cracks up so hard.

Sandile: Don't let him hear you spew that nonsense because it will boast his big ego and no I don't work for him. He's a brother from another who just happened to push the same agenda as me. We meet on this streets.

A burp escapes my lips causing them to chuckle.

Me: Excuse me.

I murmur embarrassed.

Sandile: There's more where it came from. Want some more?

I shake my head.

Me: You haven't answered my question from earlier on. How will you take care of my sister while you're in here?

Sandile: I'm here because I'm bored. There's nothing exciting in my life so I thought why not push more work inside than I'm out.

I blink once, twice.

Me: You're in a gang?

Sandile: (smiling) Now we are getting someone.

I suck in a shaky breath and cast my eyes around the room.

Sandile: They all work for me.

Me: Do I have to work for you also?

Sandile: What kind of brother in law will that make me? Usbari wena.

Again I blink rapidly to clear off the mist in my face. If confusion would be a category I would fit straight into it.

Sandile: By the way I cleared your debt for your children's school fees and transport.

Me: (shocked) What?

How did he know?

KAGISO

Whoever is blowing my phone better have a fucken good reason. I slid out of her cunt and make my way to the bathroom. I roll the toilet paper and carefully empty my seeds in the toilet and cover the condom with the toilet paper and throw it in the bin. I don't trust this bitches and I'm not about to start now. Women are just crazy human beings who will do anything to trap a man. I pick up my briefs on the floor and put them on and walk to the balcony answering my phone.

Me: Mofokeng.

Sandile: Why are you so formal?

I chuckle.

Me: Fool what do you want?

He laughs on the end of the line.

Sandile: I called all your phones earlier and you're were unreachable.

Me: I was in court the whole day.

Sandile: Figured. I need you to draft me a contract.

Me: Regarding?

Sandile: A marriage contract.

I chuckle.

Me: Who is the unlucky lady?

Sandile: My future wife.

I can already picture the smug on his face.

Me: Oh hell no you're ain't cuffing that bitch.

Sandile: Easy tiger. Who said I'm cuffing her?

Me: (frowning) Then who?

Sandile: My future wife.

Me: Are you okay man? Because you're not making any sense right now.

Sandile: I'm in love.

I throw my head back and burst in laughter.

Me: What? That's the same as being a born again. We don't do love. We smash and hit that's who we are. Did you even do a background check on this "wife of yours?"

Sarcasm drips out of my tone at the last sentence. People fall in love in order to get married. You don't just woke up and decide you're in love especially not in our life of work.

Sandile: Not anymore. I'm taking that parole.

He disconnects the line after that statement.

Me: (shocked) What?

I stare at the phone in disbelief. I've been pushing him for months now to apply for a parole but the fool always refused. What the hell is going on and who is he cuffing? I wouldn't be surprised if his using his dick to think because that's just who is. Fucken Sandile Dlamini who has no brain.

6

KAGISO

Walking in a club, I greet the bouncers and make my way to the VIP section.

Me: Gentleman.

I bro hug them and sit down.

Ade: Drink?

Me: Make it neat please.

Ade: Trouble in paradise?

I thank him and knock down the glass in one go. I pour another one.

Ty: Whoa! Let me guess women?

Me: Can you believe that fool says he wants to get married?

Ty: Who? Dlamini?

His accent always cracks us up.

Me: He says his in love.

Tyson chuckles.

Ade: Pussy must be good abi.

I snort.

Me: To the extent of marrying her?

Ade: Let me tell you something about love boys.

Tyson and I snicker in unison.

Ty: Don't start with your monologue. The only reason you're married is because they stole an ID for you in order for you to have that citizen.

Ade raises his hands in surrender.

Me: I don't think you guys understand this. Whoever he is in love with will make him weak. A weak Dlamini is a liability to us.

Ty: I agree.

Ade: I'm married but I'm still me.

I glare at him.

Me: The reason being is that she doesn't love you. She hates your guts.

Ade: Way to broke a man's ego.

We chuckle.

Ty: Hell will freeze the day I will admit that I'm in love.

Me: Last time I checked you had a fiancée.

Ty: Don't remind of that. I don't think the will be a wedding.

Me: About damn time. I told you the first time we meet that Yvonne doesn't love you but what you have. Do I have to school you for everything?

Ade chuckles.

Ade: I'll take being hated than being taken for a ride.

Me: Says the man who been hated for nearly a decade now.

Ty cracks up.

Ade: One of these days you guys will experience what Dlamini and I are going through and it will be us who will have the last laugh.

Ty and I share a look before bursting in laughter.

Us: Not a chance.

We muttered in unison.

Me: See we have that thing call brain. We don't listen to our hearts because they lead us astray. Our mind is more dominant than our hearts.

Ty: To dominant minds

We click our glasses toasting. Ade puffs his cigar and shakes his head.

NARRATOR

Sitting opposite his sister, Akhona popped his knuckles and looked at the table behind Aza. Sandile nodded and pretended like he was reading a newspaper. The week flew faster under Sandile's protection than those two awful days he spent without anyone on his corner. He was given the offer and he has seen the benefits of having a brother in law. Sandile has been taking care of him making sure he was out of harm's way. He was still alive because of this man so what more does he want? He owes Sandile his life and the least he could do was ask his sister this favour. And knowing his sister, Aza would agree in a heartbeat just to keep him say. After all he was her father, mother

Advertisement

brother and the only family she has.

Akhona: You look sick. Are you okay?

Aza: Forgot to close my window so I caught a cold.

He nodded.

Aza: You know I can't keep visiting you every time you want me too?

Akhona: I know that's what I called you here.

Aza: Okay.

Akhona: I’m barely surviving this place and the inmates are not fondly to new inmates.

Aza sneezed and raise her brows.

Aza: Did something happen?

Akhona: No but I don’t want it to come to that.

Aza: (frowning) Meaning?

Akhona dragged out his breath and went silent. His own heart pounding on his ribcage. After a lot of run around from Kagiso the man finally drafted the contact and delivered it accompanying it with a thousand swears which didn’t shake Sandile. He had one goal in hand and which was to make Aza his wife through her brother and he got his wish. Akhona signed the contract without thinking twice after seeing the changes. He was gaining a little bit of respect and his kids were taking care of so what more did he want?

Aza: Akhona?

She brought him out of his thoughts.

Aza: What did you mean by your statement?

Akhona brought his hands on her and kissed her knuckles.

Akhona: I love you.

Sandile raised his head from the newspaper and glare at him. Hearing another man saying he loves her just makes his blood boil.

Aza: You're worrying me right now.

Akhona: I…

Aza: Hold on a bit.

She interjects fishing out her beeping phone giving Akhona a chance to breathe.

"We are raiding Kuhle's house tonight with or without you" Sihle.

Aza shook her head and shove her phone back in her pocket. Instead of the Nyan Nyan saga blowing away people were becoming more and more aware of who she was. She thought by now people would have moved on to something else but it was like she was the first ever woman to be brought to the show.

Aza: Sorry about that. You were still saying.

Akhona: You're married.

He blurt out and felt like a huge weight has been lifted of his shoulders. Aza looked and him and burst in fit of laughter. If her brother was switching careers from being a criminal to the next

Trevor Noah then he should leave comedian to those who know it. Seeing that the man was not laughing, Aza's laughter ceases.

Aza: You've got nothing to worry about. I wouldn't marry that douchebag who humiliated me publicity even though he was been coming to the house and sending texts and calling none stop.

Akhona: I'm not talking about Kuhle.

Aza: Okay, I'm confused. You're saying I'm married but when I oppose you refuse.

Akhona: I did something.

Aza gave him the go on look.

Akhona: You know I'm new here and…

Aza: (snapping) Get straight to the point.

Akhona: He offered me protection and in return I gave him your hand in marriage.

Again Aza laughed.

Aza: Hai marn Akhona uqhunyiwe? {Are you high?}.

A dark chuckle filled the room. Aza raised her head and looked where the sound came from. Wasn't it a bit odd that it's just them and warden plus that man who's hiding his face with a

newspaper. Judging by his choice of clothing he was also an inmate.

Aza: Why is only us here? Where are the others?

Sandile shook his head behind the newspaper.

Sandile: A very sharp mind you have there Mrs D.

He murmured to himself and continued eavesdropping on the conversation.

Akhona: We needed privacy so he organised it.

Aza: Who?

Akhona: Your husband.

Thinning her eyes, she narrowed them at her brother and whispered.

Aza: What did you do?

Akhona: I needed protected and gave him you. You're his wife.

Aza leaped up to her feet and jumped on him over the table. A slap landed on Akhona's face.

Akhona: Sis wait I can explain.

Aza: (yelling) Explain what? That you sold me off to an unknown man?

Akhona: I'm sorry okay but I thought would agree.

Aza climbed on the table and dived on him causing Sandile to crack up so hard.

Warden: Should I stop them?

Sandile shook his head still laughing. It was a sibling fight and who were they to intervene on that because these people might turn on them? As long as Akhona was not touching any strand of her hair then he deserves her wrath.

Akhona: Lolly, I can explain.

He shielded his face from those soft merciless punches from his sister while Sandile was in stitches.

7

AZASAKHE

Have your ever suffered from a blocked nose to the point that of not being able to breathe? That's me right now experience the cruelty of flu and on top of that my brother just had to add on my breathing problems. I certainly do not understand how do you sell someone as if you're selling furniture. He's my older brother but his walking with his brain and it doesn't surprise me. Akhona has been always like that. Failing to use his brain at his age.

Akhona: Lolly, I can explain.

I don't want an explanation but I just want to keep punching him. I'm punching him for days whereby I had to sacrifice everything for him. I've always knew my mother loved him more than me and that's why his like this. Since I was born I devoted my life into sacrificing for him because that's how we were raised at home. My brother hasn't worked a single day in his 29 year old years but in my 23 year old years I had to give him half of my first salary because one of his children was short of something.

The only thing he knows is to keep taking and taking from me and this time he didn't have the audacity to even ask for it. Arms holding my waist forces me to stop punching him.

Whoever it is better let me go because I still want to punch some senses to my older brother. I'm thrashing around like a possessed woman and dragging out my droplets of mucus that keep falling. I don't know why didn't these drops fell on Akhona. It would have made my heart at ease that at least he got something from me since he shielded his face. The mucus would have punched his clothing better because nobody would have seen it and try to remove it.

Akhona: Just give me a chance to explain.

Me: (screaming) Explain what?

Akhona: I'm sorry.

Me: Oh you will be sorry as soon as this person let's me go.

I threaten pointing out my finger at him. He brings his hands together like his praying. No prayer will save him right now. Doesn't he know I laugh with the witches?

Akhona: I understand you're mad as expected but calm down baby sis.

Me: I'm calm.

Voice: Are you sure?

The mainly voice asks. I nod breathing out. He releases me and I turn to find the warden.

Warden: I'll be over there watching you.

He warns and make his way to the table far from us. As soon as he looks the other way I jump at him again, knocking off the table. He whimpers hitting the corner of the table before he falls on his back. Who said I'm done? Round 2 starts now.

Akhona: I'm sorry okay.

Me: I don't want your stupid sorry. I want to know how can you do this to me?

Akhona: I thought I was doing what was best.

Me: Best for who?

Again I'm being pulled off him. This warden is forward for my liking. Doesn't he know siblings fight all the time?

Warden: Lady don't force me to lock you up.

Me: I'm not scared of prison.

I hisses at him and turn back to the traitor. He drops his guilty eyes to the floor.

Akhona: No amount of sorry will make you forgive.

Me: What kind of human being ships off his sister like that? You sold me off like I was a piece of furniture.

I scream at him.

Akhona: Just hear me out.

Me: I don’t want to hear it. I trusted you with my life.

I blink back tears.

Me: You’re my brother for heaven sake. I would do anything for you except that.

Akhona: I’m sorry.

Me: Stop saying sorry because you’re not.

I snap agitated.

Me: Kuhle broke me but you did a lot of damage.

Akhona: Aza I…

I raise my hand interrupting him.

Me: Save it for someone who cares. From now on your own your own. Don’t call me ever again because you’re dead to me.

I turn on my heels and preparing to storm off the room but the warden stops me.

Warden: Your cell has been prepared.

I furrow my eyebrows.

Me: What?

Warden: You said you're not scared of prison so I thought why not join us for a night?

Me: Do you guys have WiFi?

Warden: (frowning) No!

Me: Is it a no working zone area like the are no chores.

Warden: Of course the are chores. Take it like at home.

Me: Are your beds robotics? Do they pick up people and place them in the bathroom in the morning?

His frown deepens.

Warden: No!

Me: Then I'm not prepared to join you.

I storm out leaving a man's laughter echoing the room. Why couldn't god let me choose my own family? On a second thought I'm taking that offer of raiding Kuhle's house. I pause on my steps and take out my phone log on the app then text Sihle.

"Mission on board. I'm in" Me

It beeps in seconds.

“🙈🙈I knew you will change your mind. We’ll have to kidnap Busi at her house because you know how her parents are” Sihle.

I giggle and text back.

“Noted! Any ideas?” Me

“I’ve got tons of them 😎” Sihle

I laugh and log out of the app. The friends I keep will get me in trouble one of these days.

BUSISIWE

I look at the time and heavily sigh for the umpteenth time. My parents are usually asleep at this hour but not tonight. They are busy giggling, glued to the TV like their bed time hasn’t passed. I’m not even watching the movie anymore because of their presence. I leap up to my feet and walk to the bathroom and do a conference call.

Sihle: Tell me they are sleeping.

Me: No they are not sleeping. In fact they are like kids who just eat candy before bedtime.

I growl out and close the toilet then sit down.

Aza: Guys we need to move. Kuhle should find us in his house. I still have the keys.

Sihle: What time does he knock off?

Aza: Dammit his probably on his way home right now. He knocks off at 7:30 and 20:05 right now.

Sihle: We can still make it if only Busiswe can just play her part.

She snaps.

Me: Hey

Advertisement

I don't have the guts to disobey my parents.

I snap back.

Sihle: You did it once, what's stopping you from doing it again?

Aza: Okay, girls you're losing the plot right now. Our main focus is Kuhle not each other.

Me: You're right. I'll figure something out.

I disconnect the call and flush the toilet and walk out. Just as I reach the living room, I force a yawn to escape my lips.

Me: I'm going to bed.

Them: Good night.

They murmur still keeping their eyes on the screen. I padded to to my room and open the window. I size the ground and shake my head. I will probably broke a hip or a leg if I jump out.

Me: Jumping is not an option.

I breathe out.

Me: You're a 24 year old woman and your age mates are turning up in a club. Take charge of your life and tell those people where to get off.

I pep talk myself then walk back to the living room and stand in front of the TV blocking their view.

Tata: Something wrong?

Lord! My heart pounds in my chest. I fake a smile and scout away.

Me: I was just passing by going to the kitchen. Yhoo ndinxanwe okwe ntliziyo inxanelwe umthombo. { I'm thirsty. I'm thirsty like a heart thirsty}.

Mama: Go drink something and move out of the way.

She snapped. I walk to the kitchen and open the fridge and close. I lean on the door and slide down. I blame my brother's for leaving me behind with them. How do you leave your own sister behind on a Saturday night? Shaking my head, I raise my head and my eyes find the main switch. I jump to my feet and pick up the bar stool and position it straight with the main switch. I climb the stool and switch off the main switch.

Me: Yhoo loadshedding so early. Ifuna siyolala kengoku kwa early. {It wants us to sleep so early}.

I yell climbing off the stool and bolt to the door.

Tata: Go to sleep princess. My wife and I will wait for your brother's.

He yells back.

Me: (shocked) What?

Who's parent are they? God needs to come back and take me. I seriously need to have a conversation with him woman to man.

8

BUSISIWE

I’m pacing around the kitchen frustrated. I don’t know why can’t my parents go to sleep. My phone chimes.

Me: (whispering) Hello?

Aza: Where are you?

Me: (whispering) I’m still inside. They don’t want to sleep.

Sihle: You’re delaying us. We are leaving you behind.

Me: I’ll make a plan. I’m coming.

I drag out my breath and walk to the living room and find it empty. I padded the their room and knock softly.

Mama: Come in.

I push the door and walk in. I hear some shuffling in the bathroom indicating my father is there.

Mama: Something wrong?

I drop my eyes and fiddle with my hands. Here goes nothing.

Me: Aza called and she’s not okay. Everything is taken a poll on her and she’s falling apart.

Mama: Shame that poor child. She’s been through a lot and Akhona just had to make things worse for her.

Me: I was thinking I could go and sleep over at her house just to show her we are there for her.

Mama: That's a very good idea.

My heart dances in excitement.

Mama: But you girls need an adult to after you. I'll prepare the spare room tell her to come here.

My smile drops. What is wrong with this woman? Can't she read between the lines. I fake a smile and walk out. I stumble to the kitchen and take out the broom then walk out. I take out the gown and leave the broom next the door after covering it with the broom. Closing the padlock, I lock the gate and turn to them.

Sihle: Finally.

Me: Let's go.

Like thieves at night, we walk to Kuhle's house. His a tenant in someone's house which makes it more easy for us.

Sihle: (whispering) Which flat is his?

Aza: (whispering) The one next to the toilet.

She takes out the keys and we tip toe to his room. Aza unlocks the barge and the door and we step inside. I flick the lights on. Kuhle is fast asleep on top of the bed still in his work uniform.

Sihle crouches next to him and opens his work bag. She takes out his wallet and empties on the floor.

Aza: What are you doing?

Sihle: Taking money for the trauma he caused you. We will need therapy after wiping your tears.

I giggle and walk to the cupboard and take out the new set of glasses.

Me: Who bought these?

Aza: We did together.

I open the drawer and shut the drawers looking for a plastic causing Kuhle to stir up in his sleep. He rubs the sleep off his eyes and squint his eyes.

Kuhle: Babe is that you?

He jumps to his feet and padded to her.

Kuhle: I'm so glad you're here. I'm sorry.

Aza: Why?

Kuhle: I couldn't face you okay. I was so scared of losing you.

Aza: Oh

Advertisement

now you're not?

Kuhle: The fear just become more than before.

Aza: I trusted you with my life.

She turns to us.

Aza: Take everything valuable.

Sihle and I smirk while Kuhle's eyes widen. That's music to our ears.

Kuhle: What do you think you're doing?

Sihle: She's paying herself for the embarrassment you caused.

I nod shoving the glasses in a plastic while Sihle strips off the bedding. Kuhle rushes to me and yanks the plastic. He pushes me out of the cupboards. I stagger losing my foot but someone holds me down.

Aza: That's my friend you're pushing like that.

She stands in front of me and punches him. Kuhle holds his nose shocked.

Kuhle: Babe I understand you're angry and I'm going to let this slide. Tell your friends to leave so we can talk.

Aza: Who said we came to talk?

Kuhle: (frowning) If you're not here to talk then what?

Sihle: This.

She raises the belt and whip him across his shoulders. He grunts pushing his chest forward.

Sihle: Nimelemi? Betha inja. {What are you waiting for? Beat a dog}.

I aim for his stomach and punch him. Raising her foot, Aza knees him on his groin while Sihle keeps whipping with his own belt. He screams rolling on the floor trying to cover his body.

Kuhle: Babe I'm sorry.

Sihle: Phezu kwakhe bantase. Sanumyeka aphefumle. {On top of him. Don't let him breathe}.

SANDILE

Scrolling down the contact list, I click on the contact written MaDlamini and place a call. Her phone rings three times before she could answer. Getting her number wasn't that hard.

Aza: Hello.

Me: MaDlamini, how are you?

Aza: Ndithetha nabani? {Who am I speaking to?}

Me: Your husband.

Aza: Jonga your husband I'm in the middle of…

I hear shuffling in the background.

Voice: Nantsi inja iqwesha. Bamba. {The dog is running away. Catch him}.

I chuckle.

Voice: Mntase thatha okuncumisayo. {Take what makes you smile}.

Voice 2: Hai Sihle uyayibaxa ngoku. Aza akazithenganga ezinye izinto.{ Hai Sihle you're exaggerating now. Aza didn't buy some of these things}.

Sihle: Who cares? Thatha wena mntase ebekungqengqisa ngomqololo mahala. Akabheji nobheja loswine. Kunani imali yomqamelo just for wenze intloko? {He was laying you on your back without anything in return. He didn't even give you money. How about money to do your hair?}.

I laugh. Me: What's going on?

Aza: Can I call you back later?

Me: Take your time.

Aza: Sharp.

Me: I love yo…

(tu tu tu) she disconnects the call. I smirk.

Me: Someday you will say it back. It's only a matter of time sweetheart.

9

NARRATOR

Kuhle ran down the streets like a mad man. Not only did these women caught him off guard, they were vandalizing his home and assaulted him. If he knew Aza was crazy like that he wouldn't have looked her way. How come a woman who was sweet and innocent turn so violently over night? It was a mystery he couldn't understand. He knocked on the door and waited for someone to respond. The door opened revealing an annoyed Mapula. Her eyed bulge out seeing who was on the other side of the door and quickly stepped out and closed the door.

Mapula: (whispering) What are you doing here?

Kuhle: I need a place to crushing for the night.

Mapula: You can't my husband is here.

Voice: Babe who is at the door?

The man shouted inside. His footsteps approaching. Mapula panicked.

Mapula: Aza. She came to ask for salt and we are still catching up.

The man chuckled inside.

Husband: Woman.

He claimed and shook his head.

Husband: Don’t forget to lock the door.

Mapula: Will do.

She waited until his footsteps fade away and turned to Kuhle.

Mapula: What happened to your flat?

Kuhle: Aza and her friends ambushed me. I don’t know how did they come in but I suspect Aza used her key.

Mapula: What did you expect when you went in public to announce that you have a child. Couldn’t you just let me and my husband continue raising her as our own.

Kuhle: I’m tired of hiding my daughter. Tell your husband that he can’t have kids and stop playing happy family with my child.

He clicked his tongue and stumbled to the gate. It seemed like odds were against him this evening. He had one destination in mind and thinking about right now he should have went straight to it instead of asking for a place to sleep for the night in his baby mama’s house.

_

--

Astonished, Busi looked at Sihle as she shoved the cutlery in a plastic. Wasn't she being a bit too much because they had cutlery back at their houses so she didn't see the need for it?

Sihle: What?

Busi: Ekhona nje amacephe kowenu. Uzawenzani anga? {You have cutlery at your house. What are you going to do with them?}

Sihle: Start a business or something. It will be my side hustle.

Aza chuckle.

Aza: As long we get equal profit to it then we are taking them.

Sihle frowned.

Sihle: Why should I share the profit with you? I'm the one who came with the idea?

Aza: And who's boyfriend house are we stealing from?

Sihle: It's not stealing when we are taking what you deserve. You cannot be crying because of a man mntase. There's a lot of things you can cry for in this world.

Busi: Something like what?

Sihle: Like your dream job, promotion, child birth, death.

Aza: Marriage.

Sihle: Hell no.

A frown covered both woman.

Busi: Why not?

Sihle: Who's marrying you? Isn't a man?

Laughter erupted.

Aza: You've got issues.

Sihle giggled and continue with her task at hand. Aza opened the wardrobe and took out the plastic from Markham.

Aza: I'm returning this to the store. We recently bought them.

Sihle: Yabona kengoku mntase uyawuchana umcimbi. Kuhle kaloku ebenxiba kwavumbulala ngaphambi kokuba ufike ngoku uyabona bona uyaphapha.

Laughter.

Aza: Tyhini! Eyananto ndifike elala phantsi. Khanifane nicinge ndibane nditaka nditakela umntu olala phantsi. {He was sleeping on the floor when I found him. Imagine I've been doing sleep overs at someone's place who sleeps on the floor.

All eyes turned on her, pausing what they were doing.

Busi: (shocked) Intoni? {What?}.

Aza: Kaloku uthe ukufumana kwakhe umsebenzi waphuma kowabo. Ngoku ebengena bhedi, esondlala phantsi. {When he got a job he moved out of his home. He didn't have a bed, he was sleeping on the floor}.

Sihle: Hai marn mntase ufuna ukundixelele ukuba ubane ukhwelwa nje ukhwelelwa phantsi lonke elixesha? {You want to tell me his been fucking you on the floor?}.

Aza nodded.

Sihle: Isibindi sakho, Azasakhe. Ubane uphuma kwaFezeka ebusuku nje, ushiya ibhedi kowenu kanti uzozunyelwa phantsi okwenja efikisayo. {Your liver

Azasakhe. You've been leaving Fezeka's house at night, leaving your bed only to be fucked on the floor like a dog that just reached puberty}.

Aza and Busi bursted in laughter.

Busi: (laughing) Inja iyafikisa na? {Can a do go through puberty?}.

Aza opened her mouth trying to speak but just laughed again.

Busi: Qaluyiva!

She shook her head and sat down.

Sihle: Iphelile ngoku incasa mntase uyayibaxa noko. {You're exaggerating mntase the taste ended}.

She murmured to Aza who was still laughing. Aza wiped her tears and opened the bar fridge looking for cold water.

Aza: There's pizza bantase but it's cold.

Sihle: Phaka wethu iyofudumala emathunjwini. {Dish up the intestines will warm it up}.

She took out box of pizza and the 1L of Stoney and placed it on the floor. They sat down and started eating. 20 minutes later they were done. Like each employed person, their break time ended and they got to work. The wardrobe, fridge and bed remained in the room. They started with the wardrobe and carried it all they way to Aza's house.

Busi: (panting) Where are we going to put it?

Aza: Let me get the keys to the backroom.

She unlocked the door and walked inside. Opening the drawer, she took out the key and close it then walked outside after locking the door behind her. Sihle and Busi carried the wardrobe while Aza went to unlock the door and open it widely. They made three trips from and too Kuhle's house and back at Aza's house for the bar fridge, base of the bed and the mattress.

Sihle: I love Kuhle's neighbours. They just mind their business like nothing was happening next door.

Aza: That's what I love about these flats. They very peaceful people who don't poke their noses on people's business.

Busi: (panting) Guys I'm tired. My legs, arms and back are burning. Who's turn is suppose to be?

Aza: Sihle's.

Busi paused pushing the wheelbarrow that had the base and catches her breath. Sihle handed her the blankets and took her position. Aza who had the plastics with cutlery, glasses, dishes followed close behind them. Sirens rang in the causing them to halt on their steps.

Busi: He wouldn't call the cops on us will he?

Silence.

Busi: (panicking) Guys?

Sihle: Maybe it's those ones patrolling.

She muttered trying to convince them or was it herself? Aza nodded turned to Sihle. They both have the same expression on their faces; fear. Kuhle who was inside the van pointed out.

Kuhle: That's them.

He rolled down the window and stuck his head out.

Kuhle: (shouting) Azasakhe.

Aza's eyes bulge out. She knew that voice even in her dreams.

Aza: Run.

Busi didn't even need to be told twice, she ran while Sihle struggled with the wheelbarrow.

Sihle: Sanundishiya. {Don't leave me behind}.

She shouted still pushing the wheelbarrow. Leaving it behind was not an option right now. The van halted and both officers stepped and chased after them.

Aza: (screaming) Yeka ikiriva ubaleke. {Leave the wheelbarrow and run}.

Sihle looked dumped the handles of the wheelbarrows and ran after seeing the officers were catching with her. The blankets on Busi's hand kept falling as she ran. They were becoming an obstacle course on her and she didn't want to spend the night in jail because her parents might eat her alive. That thought alone made her to run faster.

Sihle: Mattress bantase ushiyekile asikwazi ukuphinda silahle enye imali. {We've already lost the mattress we can't be losing money}.

She bend down and picked up the blankets one by one. The officers finally caught up with her and cuffed her.

Sihle: (screaming) Woman down. I repeat woman down.

Aza and Busi stopped running.

Officer 1: That’s right. Hands in the air.

Busi: (panting) But our hands are occupied.

She timidly muttered.

Officer 2: Voetsek, hands up!

Busi: (panicking) I can’t go to jail. My parents are going to kill me.

Sihle: Hai Kuhle we were just playing with you. Kutheni uzenza into zodlala njenge toys zase China nje? {Why are you making yourself something to play with like toys from China?}.

Aaza:(singing) Kaloku besidlala nawe why uba serious? Ungazoba serious.

10

AZASAKHE

Life is really playing a dangerous game with me. The only time I've been to the police station is when I visit Akhona and when I came to certify my documents. I've never been in a holding cell before nor even spent a night in here. And for that matter what kind of boyfriend gets his girlfriend arrested? Doesn't he know a relationship doesn't always have to be serious? The are times where we need to play like friends and times when we need to fight like enemies. My friends and I were just testing his sense of humour.

Sihle: Lolly dump him.

Her voice breaks me out of my thoughts.

Sihle: We just teasing him. If he was a man enough he would have easily took the punches without getting the police involve.

I nod.

Me: You just had to voice out my thoughts. He did me wrong and he didn't see me reporting it to someone. I retaliate like I should and he runs straight to the cops.

I shake my head.

Me: I was going to give this relationship a second chance but after this there's no future between us.

Sihle: Exactly mntase.

Busi: Please just let us go. We will never do it again.

She cries and they open the cell for her.

Officer: You should have thought of that before you assaulted someone and stole his things.

Busi: (crying) Please.

Officer: Get in sisi and stop wasting my time. If you could only give me what I want then you'll be going home.

He turned to us.

Officer: You.

Sihle and I shared a look and turned to him.

Me: Me?

Sihle: Mna?

We mutter in unison.

Officer: I'm talking to you. Come.

Sihle walked out while Busi walked.

Me: What did he ask you?

She sniffed and wiped her tears.

Busi: He asked me why did he assault Kuhle.

Me: What did you say?

Busi: I denied everything.

Me: You did good mntase. We'll get out of here.

I envelope her in a hug and brush her back. I don't even know if we will ever get out of here but she always likes to panic. Always blowing things out of proportion.

Busi: How do you know?

Me: I'll find us a good lawyer.

Busi: Where will you get the money? And which lawyer and judge will bail us out before morning?

Me: I don't know okay Busi. I'm stressed as you are.

Busi: I knew I shouldn't have came with you guys.

I click my tongue and break the embrace.

Me: Nobody forced you to do this, okay. We didn't put a gun in your head so don't come with that nonsense.

Sihle: (singing) Imnandi indoda.

I turn and find the officer dragging her back to this cell.

Sihle: Injani indoda?

We laugh.

Us: Imnandi indoda. Worse xa inemali.

The officer pushed Sihle in.

Officer: I think you're all not taking me serious or the situation you're in.

Me: Is it my turn already?

Officer: I'm still talking. Don't interrupt me.

He spits out.

Sihle: I've already told you we were playing with him. Kuhle ngumntana womlungu kaloku yena kudlalwa naye ngemali.

Officer: Shut up wena. You come.

I follow behind him and he ushered me to the interrogation room.

Officer: You and your friends think this is a game right?

Me: No we take police officers seriously.

Officer: If you did you would tell me why did you assault him?

Me: When a man humiliates you and embarrass you in public what should I do? Should is sit back or just stay hidden at home crying?

Officer: So you're admitting you assaulted him?

I giggle.

Me: Did I say that?

Officer: You just admitted to doing it.

Me: Hai tatu polisa suxoka. Khange ndithethe lonto. Wena ufuna ndithethe lonto. { No Mr police officer you're lying. I didn't say that. You want me to say that}.

The officer rubbed his face frustrated.

Officer: You can save yourself because your friends have already told me what you guys were up too.

Me: My friends will never throw me under the bus.

He chuckles and lean back on the chair.

Officer: Are you reckon? They both sang like a canary.

Me: Oh

Advertisement

what did they say?

Officer: I'm the one who gets to ask questions in here but since you've asked they told me that you guys went to his house and you used the key he gave you to let yourselves in. You gave them the order to vandalise his place and beat him into a pulp because you couldn't handle the fact that he had a child with someone else, something you failed to do.

I snorted.

Me: Imagine three skinny women like us beating a man like Kuhle. He’s not that muscular but his got a little bit of muscles.

He thinned his eyes.

Officer: Are you calling me a bluff?

Me: Yes.

I tap my fingertips on the table. I could feel my heart ready to leap up to my throat but one thing I know is that my friends will never throw me under the bus like that. That’s one thing I’m sure of. He nod chuckling.

Officer: Okay I see this.

He leap up to his feet and rounds the table then drags me out of the interrogation room.

Me: Ouch you’re hurting me.

He ignores me and picks up his pace. He opens the cell and throws me in. The girls catch me before I could fall.

Officer: Since none of you is not ready to respond to my questions you’re all spending the night in here.

Busi: No. My parents can’t find out I sneaked out.

Officer: Give me what I need then maybe just maybe I might let you go. Shout if you’re ready to talk.

He closes the cell and walks away whistling.

Voice: Did they talk?

Officer: No they are just still trying to make themselves strong. Two days in here they will be ready to spill the beans.

Our eyes widen.

Busi: (crying) Two days?

She turns to us.

Busi: I can't spend another nights here. I left with the keys.

Me: Nawe uyahlanya. Uhamba njani nezitixo? {You're also crazy. Why would you leave with the key?}.

Busi: I thought will be able to sneak in the morning. Plus I left the broom and robe outside.

Us: What? What for?

Busi: Just in case I become late and find them already awake I would have pretended to sweep the yard. I don't think I'm ready to spend another night in here.

She runs to the bars.

Busi: Officer I'm ready to talk.

We rush to her and Sihle covers her mouth while I pull her.

Sihle: Uphambene? {Are you crazy?}

Me: No one is leaving the other behind. We did this together and we die together. Let’s not forget you also beat Kuhle and eat his food.

The bars of the cell opened.

Officer: I heard someone calling me.

Me: I’m the one who called.

The officer smirked.

Officer: Ready to talk?

Me: Yes, I need the bathroom.

These two erupt in laughter causing the officer to storm inside and slap me so hard.

Officer: (yelling) This is not a game.

As long we keep our mouth’s shut it’s a game to us. Busi’s parents are the least of my worries right now. We can’t afford to be cracking and turning against each other.

11

NARRATOR

Morning came and they were still in the holding cell. After that vicious slap from the officer none of them have spoken a word to each other. Now it was really sinking on them that they were jail and they couldn't escape it.

Sihle: Mr Collins will be on our case if we don't report for duty.

Aza: I had no choice but to take leave because he forced me.

Busi: Better you than us. What's will be our excuse will be?

Aza: You'll tell him the truth.

Busi snorted.

Busi: You're not the one who will get a bad reputation but we are.

Aza: What is that suppose to mean?

Busi: I mean our lives are suddenly revolving around you. You lost your mom and we had to drop everything and come to support you. Six months later your brother gets jail time and who has to drop everything to sympathise with you, us again? Now your boyfriend just aired your dirty laundry to the public and who has to drop everything for you?

Aza: Khayeke ukugwegweleza Busisiwe uthethe lento ufuna ukuyithetha. {Stop beating around the bush, Busiswe and get straight to the point}.

Busi: I'm tired of getting in trouble because of you.

Aza: I didn't ask you to do any of those things.

Her chest pounced up and down as she sizzles this words.

Sihle: Guys don't give the officers that satisfaction. This is what they want, us fighting each other. We can't be falling apart right now. We came so far.

Aza: No let her say what she wants to say. It's clear she's been harbouring that for a very long time.

Sihle: Guys this is really unnecessary. We're cranky, starving and scared of the unknown which is understandable. We didn't know where will this lead with us.

Busi: No, Sihle this friendship has been on sided since it started. It's always about Aza and nobody else.

Aza: If it really bothered you so much why didn't you just being my friend? I don't need uncertain people in my life.

She spits out.

Busi: Vele I was thinking of leaving this friendship because it doesn't even benefit me. The only I get from it getting in trouble and ending up in jail.

She screamed at her.

Aza: We were ready to leave you behind but you insisted that we wait for you so don't make it sound like you were pressured to do so.

Busi: I was just being a good friend not know will eventually regret it.

Sihle: Guys stop it.

She stood in the middle of the room.

Sihle: We all have to take responsibility for our actions. At the end of the day we all played a part in what happened. Let's not forget you also punched Kuhle and ate his food, Busiswe.

Officer: Ladies.

He broke the commotion standing outside the cell.

Officer: Are you guys ready to talk?

Sihle: Our answer is still the same as yesterday.

Officer: Spending a night in jail isn't easy especially on pretty ladies like you. I'm quiet surprised that you're still in one piece

but then again you were alone in the cell. Imagine if it was a bit crowded.

Aza: Just like she said our answer is still the same.

Officer: Oh

Advertisement

well if that's you answer then fine. I can't imagine beautiful women like you have a criminal record.

Busi: (shocked) What?

Officer: What do you think the fingerprints was for? We didn't take them to verify your criminal record status but to charge you guys. We are talking about 6-7 years for assault or even more depending on the judge. Then there's theft and other hideous things you did.

Panic rose in Busi. Not only did she disobey her parents but she also skipped work and on top of that she got a criminal record.

Busi: I need the bathroom.

Officer: Think about what I said. Let's get you in the bathroom.

The cell opened and Busi looked at her friends before she walked out. Guilt was choking her but she had no choice.

Officer: I heard you guys arguing. You don't need friends like them if they keep getting you in trouble. They are the type that

our parents warns us against. Save yourself before it's too late. I can make sure that you get a lighter sentence than theirs or if you turn state witness then you won't set a foot in jail.

Busi: So you're saying there's a way out of here?

Officer: There's always a way out of things. Just tell me what you know.

Busi dragged her breath and looked around.

Busi: I didn't want to go to the bathroom but to talk to you. I think I'm ready to talk.

The officer smirked and ushered her to the interrogation room . She sat down and narrated everything while he recorded. He switched off the tap and looked at her.

Officer: I got everything on tape.

Busi: Can I go home now?

Officer: I still need to confirm your story but checking this location. I'll have to request a warrant of arrest to my boss first.

Busi: When will I be able to go home?

Officer: As soon as my boss gets here I'll request that warrant.

Busi: (panicking) When will that be?

Officer: I don't know. He's suppose to be here by now.

Busi: You don’t understand. My parents cannot find out I spent a night out.

Officer: You should have thought about that before you broke the law. My advice to is that cut ties with those people because they will drag you down.

He leaped up to his feet and opened the door widely for her. Busi swallowed hard and walked in front. He ushered her back to the cell and locked it behind him.

Officer: (smirking) Get used to this place because it will be your new home.

Sihle snorted.

Sihle: In your dreams.

She clicked her tongue and watched him walk away before turning to Busi.

Sihle: What took you so long?

Busi: He had me corned.

She lied through her teeth and dropped her gaze.

Aza: I hope you didn’t give in.

Busi: What do you take me for?

She spat and went to sit on the far corner away from them. She nervously rocked her face back and forth while her heart

continued to skip a beat. Betraying her friends was not something she thought of over night but it had to be done. She was not cut of for jail. Her parents on the other hand were going to disown her should they go to know this. Damage control was what she was doing.

*

*

Half an hour later, the cell reopened again snapping them out of their daze.

Officer: Busiswe you're free to go.

Sihle&Aza: What?

They shifted their gaze to her and she slowly stood to her feet and swallow hard.

Officer: We got everything where you said we'll get them.

Aza: (shocked) What?

Sihle: Usincatshile? {You betrayed us?}.

Tears trickled from Busi's eyes.

Busi: I'm sorry but it had to be done.

Sihle scoffed.

Sihle: (screaming) It had to be done?

Busi: (sniffing) Your mother understands that you need to live a little while mine can't. Unlike you Aza, I still have parents to report on while you on the other hand don't have to report to anyone.

Aza: Wow!

Sihle: Wow in deed Busiswe.

They muttered defeated.

Officer: I don't have the whole day, let's go.

Busi: I'm sorry.

She walked out of the cell with tears running down her cheeks.

_

_

Laying on his back, Sandile blew out a sigh. He reminded himself to be calm because this damn woman he calls his wife was getting on his last nerve. Why couldn't she answer her damn phone? He excuses his breath and called again this time a bit calmer. He wasn't going to should or yell at her for not answering her phone. She was not random woman but his wife. The phone in his hand rang.

Sandile: I've been expecting your call, MaDlamini.

Bullet: Boss it's me.

Sandile: Something wrong?

Bullet: Eish bozza.

Sandile: Jaive?

Bullet: Makgata abethile round hierso. {The police where here}.

Sandile jumped off the bed and nearly fell.

Sandile: Kuphi? {Where?}.

Bullet: Hierso bozza. I don’t know the full story but they searched the house and came out with furniture.

Sandile: Where is my wife?

Bullet: Eish bozza yam.

Sandile: What?

Bullet: The thing I don’t know boss.

Sandile: What? What do you mean you don’t know?

He pace up and down in rage.

Bullet: I closed my eyes for two hours.

Sandile: You did what?

Bullet: I dozed off last night after one of her friends walked in the yard. I thought I was one of those sleep overs woman do so I took that as a chance to sleep.

Sandile chuckled darkly. Look at the fool repeating what he did wrong.

Sandile: Ufuna ukungitshela umkami awazi ukephi? {You mean to tell me you don't know where my wife is?}.

Bullet: That's what I mean boss.

Sandile: What do I pay you for, shlama? Ungitshela amasimba.

He roared in him causing Bullet to squirm on the end of the line like he was looking at him.

Sandile: How do you sleep on a job?

Bullet: Hade bozza.

Sandile: Voetsek! I don't want your sorry but to find my wife.You have 30 seconds to find her.

He clicked his tongue and hang up on him. What was the need to hire a bodyguard for her if he would fail at his job? Bullet swallowed on the end of the line. How was he suppose to find a person in 30 seconds? The man was being insane.

12

BUSISIWE

I close the garage and make my way inside. Both cars are not in the garage indicating there's no one at home. Opening the fridge, I look for left overs and start warning them. I take out the food after the microwave beeps and make my way to the living room. My eyes widen while the plate slips out of my hands. I could feel my heart rate picking up speed.

Me: Mama.

She shifts her gaze from the TV and glance at me once then cast her eyes back on the screen. I thought no one was home so what in the world of bad luck is this?

Mama: Uvelaphi? {Where are you coming from}.

Me: At work.

I lie through my teeth.

Mama: Suxoka. {Don't lie}.

Me: I'm not lying.

Mama: I called you numerous times for breakfast until I decided to go to your room and check on you. Where are you coming from.

Me: I was at work mama.

Tears stung my eyes as she jumps to her feet.

Mama: Why are you lying?

Me: I'm not lying.

She takes a step forward and I take two backwards.

Mama: You're a terrible liar. I saw the police at Aza's house.

My lips quiver.

Me: I didn't know he will call the police on us. Sihle said we…

Mama: (shouting) Sihle again, Busisiwe? What did I say about that girl? Didn't I tell you to cut her off?

I smack my lips shut and take another step backwards.

Mama: (shouting) Didn't I?

I quickly nod.

Me: You did.

Mama: Then what do you want from her? Are you short of something?

I shake my head.

Mama: We pay a hefty price for those channels and WiFi.

Me: Have you thought for a second that I also need friends?

She places her hands on her hips. Disbelief strikes her face.

Mama: Are you back chatting me, Busisiwe?

Me: I'm tired of being scared in my own home. Ndimdala xa ndingangaka and I don't need you or anyone to make me feel like a child whereas I'm an adult. And for that matter I think our friendship is over.

I was expecting some kind of sympathy from her. I don't need another lecture on I told you so. I've witness first hand on what the influence of friends is and I thought she would be thrilled upon hearing that I don't have friends.

Mama: Oh, wena umdala? {Oh, you're old?}.

Me: Yes.

Mama: Xa kunjani ke mntanam ndikhwelele emzini wam. {If that's the case my child leave my house}.

My whole body froze.

Me: What?

Mama: Andikwazi ukuhlala nomfazi kolwam uphahla. Kwezintlanti kuhlala abantwana bodwa hayi abafazi. {I can't stay with someone wife in my own roof. In my house I live with children not wives}

My heart shutters into pieces. Friends really have a negative impact the in our lives. I shouldn't have left with them.

AZASAKHE

Boredom has found a place to reside in me again. Whether Busi confessed or anything my answer is still the same and these officers seem not to understand that. It's a different officer this time and his quite handsome than those two.

Me: My answer is still the same.

Officer: You're Azasakhe right?

Me: Depends who is asking.

Kagiso: Feisty. Not bad at all. My name is Kagiso and I'm your lawyer.

Me: What?

Shut the front door! I have a lawyer? I didn't know I had one until now. Tyhini I'm someone in life. I know understand Casper Nyovest when he said Mama I made because I made it in life. A whole me Azasakhe Jenifer Khali has a lawyer.

Kagiso: Lawyer. Someone who…

I cut him off.

Me: I know what a lawyer is.

Kagiso: Good

Advertisement

for a second I thought I had to explain everything to you. You're also not bad on the looks department.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Yeyi, is he insinuating that I'm ugly? Yazini I'm taking back my compliment. Rhaaa akambi nje. He ignores me and takes out his phone and places a call.

Kagiso: She's in front of me.

He waits for the caller to respond.

Kagiso: She looks fine t… wait.

He pauses and narrowed his eyes at me.

Kagiso: Fuck her cheek is bruised.

I furrow my eyebrows and rub my cheek. It's a bit swollen. I could hear the caller dishing out cusses out on the end of line. He jumps to his feet and opens the door.

Kagiso: What happened to her cheek?

He diverts the question to the officers causing them to tremble.

Officer: We were trying to scare so she can talk. Hade bozza yam we didn't know she's your relative.

The lawyer chuckles.

Kagiso: Oh, she’s not my relative but Dlamini’s wife. You messed with the wrong woman this time.

He walks back in and closes the briefcase.

Kagiso: Let’s go.

Me: Who is Dlamini?

Kagiso: Your husband.

I smack my forehead and close my eyes. How can I forget the forced marriage my brother approved on my behalf? I didn’t expect him to make contact so soon.

Me: Is he the one bailing me out?

Kagiso: Yes, let’s go.

Me: Go where?

Annoyance flicks in his eyes.

Kagiso: Home.

Me: What about the case? They already took our fingerprints.

Kagiso: Don’t worry about its already been taken care of now let’s go.

Me: Unfortunately I can’t.

He sharply glares at me.

Kagiso: Why the hell not?

Me: My friend is also inside. I can't leave her behind.

Kagiso: Nobody told me about any friend.

Me: Well I'm telling you right now. It's either you also bail her out or just pretend you weren't here.

I smile as he furiously punches on his phone.

Kagiso: She refuses because there's a so called friend in the mix. I'm not your skivvy, Dlamini.

He hands the phone to me. I've already made a mental note of his surname since I don't know his name.

Me: Hello.

Dlamini: MaDlamini, how are you.

Me: I'm fine.

Dlamini: Don't worry about that cop that slapped you. It's been already take off.

Me: Oh but what about my friend? I can't leave her.

Dlamini: My priority is you not anyone else.

Me: Haike bhuti icacile ukuba andiyi ndawo. You buy one and get one free. {It's clear I'm not going anywhere}.

He cusses under his breath.

Dlamini: Give Kagiso the phone.

I hand him back the phone.

Kagiso: What?

I tap my fingertips waiting for him to conclude the call but instead he hands me back the phone.

Dlamini: Kagiso will handle it.

I mentally pat my back for my sharp negotiation skills. As soon as I'm out of here I'm switching careers. I cannot let such talent go to waste. Just imagine those judges and lawyers I would be up against. I could already see the opposing lawyer in defeat as the judge rules on my favour. I will erect a cute pricing fee for my services. R7k for consultation.

Me: Thank you.

Kagiso: Please sign this.

Me: (frowning) What is this?

I balance the phone with my shoulders and go through the papers.

Me: Marriage certificate?

Dlamini: I hate to do this to you but you need something from me and I also need something from you. I wanted to do this in person.

Like a good lawyer, I mutter.

Me: Request denied. If you're a good husband you will not pressure me into this.

I smile in victory. All hail lawyer Aza.

Dlamini: Then it's clear you and your friend are not going anywhere. Give Kagiso the phone back.

Me: I will not fall for your trap. You're blackmailing me to do this.

I click my tongue and hand Kagiso the phone. I will not be bullied. Akhona married him on my behalf so why doesn't he make him his wife?

{TWO DAYS LATER}

13

TWO DAYS LATER

KAGISO

In all my history of clients I have never begged a client to get out of jail like I have on the Dlamini's . Both husband and wife are damn stubborn. Sometimes I would ask myself if Sandile's brain was it functioning well? I've never seen someone who enjoys being in jail like he does. He says his much useful when his inside than out. As much as I hate to admit it he's right about that. I break out of my thoughts as she walks in.

Me: This better be good. I'm busy and I keep coming here.

Aza: I will take the deal.

Me: Sorry, what?

Aza: I'll take the deal.

I arch my brow.

Me: Why don't you take a seat and we go through the deal.

She pulls the chair and sits down. I open the briefcase and hand her the papers.

Me: That's the contract your brother and Dlamini agreed on.

Aza: As a lawyer what does it say?

Me: It clearly states that he will continue to protect your brother even if his out. Your nephews and niece school fees and transport have already been paid in advance and everything he owns is yours.

Aza: What?

Me: Should you sign the marriage certificate it will give you rights to everything he owns Money, cars and businesses.

Aza: (shocked) Hai wena you mean to tell me I'm rich as I'm sitting here?

I chuckle.

Me: If you can sign the marriage c…

She cuts me off.

Aza: Where should I sign?

I laugh.

Me: Don't you want me to go through the contract first?

Aza: Is he monied?

Me: Who?

Aza: The husband.

Amused, I stare at her.

Me: Yes.

Aza: Is he handsome? I cannot be seen with someone from the wrong turn movie because as you can see I'm beautiful never mind the dirt on my face.

I crack up so hard.

Me: I think I'm going to love you. You're the perfect piece of a puzzle he needs in life. A no push over.

Aza: Good to hear that too.

Me: I think we started on the wrong foot. Let me introduce myself again. My name is Kagiso Mofokeng. A lawyer, business partner and best friend to your husband. We go way back since days of primary.

Aza: You already know who I am.

Me: Now that the formalities are over. Can we discuss the contract.

She nods and we go through the contract.

Me: Do you understand?

Aza: Yes.

She clamps her hands together.

Aza: Where to sign?

I lean over the table and show where to sign.

Me: Congratulations

Advertisement

Mrs Dlamini.

Aza: Sonzeni Emhlabeni Dlamini, right?

I crack up so hard. It's actually Sandile Ethan Dlamini but I'm keeping the name.

AZASAKHE

We shake hands after signing the contract. The T&C's of it are really not bad. If it happens that in 5 years to come I still don't love him he will release me. In this five years together should he cheat I get everything he owns but should I cheat I walk away with nothing. We walk out of the station and immediately shut my eyes as the sun blinds my eyes.

Sihle: Who is he?

Me: My lawyer.

Sihle: You have a lawyer?

Me: I didn't know it until today.

Kagiso turns to us.

Kagiso: There's somewhere I need to take you.

Me: Where?

Kagiso: Get in you will see.

I heavily sigh and I walk to the car. We jump in and he speeds off after jumping in. I could use my bed right just to think of the last couple of days. Everything has been happening so fast and I can't even digest them properly. The fact that I just married a stranger to get out of prison takes the cop. Even if if didn't want to marry him Akhona had already signed the contract binding him on my behalf. He drives through the gates of a beautiful house and parks on the driver way. He steps out and jogs to the backseat and opens the door for us.

Me: Where are we?

Kagiso: Welcome to your new home.

Me: What?

Kagiso: He's a little bit crazy so he bought you a house.

He takes out the keys from my pocket and hands them to me.

Kagiso: Those are your house key and car.

Me: This is too much.

Sihle: What's going on?

Kagiso: Just take them.

Sihle snatches from his grip and makes her way to the door. She unlocks it and screams. I dash Inside.

Sihle: Mntase who lives here?

Kagiso: Your friend does from now on.

She screamers louder.

Sihle: I'm moving in.

Kagiso chuckles.

Sihle: Wait mntase how come you suddenly have such a house because the last time I checked you were broke as me.

I giggle.

Me: Apparently I'm married mntase. Akhona found me a husband in jail so these are the benefits or being married to a prisoner.

Sihle: He's not coming out any time soon right?

She murmured looking at Kagiso.

Kagiso: He applied of…

I cut him off.

Me: He's not coming out mntase. Even if he does it would be years from now.

Kagiso: Actually…

I interrupt him.

Me: It was nice meeting you Kagiso but my friend and I will like to take a shower and explore my new house.

Kagiso: Before I forget, he will like you to have these.

He hands me box and another set of keys. I open the box and gasp as my eyes set on a beautiful ring.

Kagiso: He will like you to wear it to chase away vulture.

I roll my eyes.

Me: Prick.

He smiles amused and raises his hands. I slide the ring on my finger and smile.

Kagiso: Don't shoot the messenger.

Me: It doesn't look bad at all but it will look good once I've done my nails.

I'm so going to enjoy blowing this man's money and by the time he comes out he will be broke. Another scream comes somewhere around the house. We follow the sound and it leads us to the garage. My eyes glisten with unshed tears as they set on the new car with a ribbon on top. The number plate is A. Dlamini GP.

Sihle: It's a BMW X5.

Me: He bought me a car.

I blink rapidly to stop the tears from falling.

Kagiso: He’s crazy and all but he’s crazy in love with you.

I sniff and unlock the car then step it. Sihle jumps in and buckle up. Strapping the seatbelt, I hold the starring wheel and smile. I really made it in life. God why didn’t you give me this signs earlier on in life? I would have longed broke the law years ago if I knew I would be this important in life. I turn the ignition and the car jerks forward and goes straight to the wall. Sihle and I both scream.

Kagiso: Shit! Are you okay?

Me: Yes.

I step on the gas again and the car crashes to the garage door.

Me: Okay, I got this.

The car crashes flies to the wall.

Sihle: (screaming) Aza stop driving.

Kagiso: Move your feet from the gas.

Me: I’m test driving it. How will it know that I’m the owner of it if doesn’t want to be controlled?

I don’t know how to drive but how hard is it to drive a car? Why does everything have be learnt in this life thing?

14

AZASAKHE

I knew something will go wrong after I spend many days in jail. I haven't done my night ritual in those days and now my enemies are showing me flames. My first ever car is wrecked In pieces just in front of my eyes. I should have waited a bit longer before test driving it but I was too excited to just let it go.

Kagiso: Are you okay?

Tears involuntary fall from my eyes as I shake my head.

Me: I should have introduced it to the day walker and night walkers before driving it.

I murmur to myself more than him. A frown covers his face.

Kagiso: Huh?

Me: Now my car is ruined.

Kagiso: The car can be fixed but the question still remains are you okay?

Me: I will never be okay after this. Such a beautiful car in pieces.

Kagiso: You're only lucky you had your seatbelts on. The doctor is on its way to check on you guys.

Me: There's nothing that will cure my broken heart. I just killed the first ever car I've ever owned on my life.

Kagiso: There’s more where it come from. X5 is nothing compared to what he can get you.

The man doesn’t understand that the memories of this car are gone before they can even begin. I don’t care whether it’s X19 or 20. My only problem is that I just killed my first own car. Why do black children have to always struggle? No wonder the Boers took the land from us so easily, we don’t practice witchcraft enough. I wipe the blood of my noise and lean my head on the railing of the stairs. My head feels like it will split into two.

Sihle: What a way to ruin a beautiful car.

Me: Don’t remind me mntase. I’m so hurt.

Sihle: What’s going to happen to the car now?

Kagiso: It will be repaired.

Me: But it won’t be the same. My wall and the garage door have dents.

Kagiso: You know this could be easy if you just pick up your phone and call your husband and tell him all of your complaints.

Me: I’m comfortable talking to you.

Sihle: Aren’t you afraid that he might be realised?

Me: Who?

Sihle: You know who.

Me: Senzeni Emhlabeni Dlamini is not walking out of those jail premises anytime soon.

Kagiso chuckles.

Kagiso: I wouldn't be sure if I was you.

Me: If he was coming out he wouldn't have went through extra miles to make me his wife. The fact that he made me sign that contract with such T&C's and clause it proves to me he will never come out.

Sihle: Aren't you afraid of him? That someday he might come out?

Haibo is this woman deaf? I just answer her questions. It makes me wonder how hard did she hit her head.

Me: How can I be afraid of someone I don't know? As long he knows his boundaries and sticks to them then we should be fine. As long he is in jail I've got nothing to worry about, right?

Kagiso amusedly nods.

Kagiso: Right.

He looks at his phone and walks to the door.

Kagiso: The doctor is here.

I breathe out and close my eyes.

Sihle: Life is really moving fast. Just yesterday we behind bars and today we sitting in this beautiful home owned by you.

Me: It's really moving fast. But anyway you and I are going out this evening to celebrate my situation.

Sihle: You're moving in?

Me: It's my house so I don't see why not. My mother's house will be for Akhona's soccer team. I just need my space and rethink about my life going forward.

Sihle: I understand.

_

_

It's in the evening and Sihle and I are walking inside the doors of a club X for the first time in our lives. I guess today is the first time for everything. We walked away from the accident with a few bruises here and there but nothing life threatening.

Sihle: The bar looks empty

let's go.

Me: Darling I cannot be ruining my reputation and sit at the bar. Have you forgotten that I'm a walking money?

She giggles.

Kagiso: Ladies.

I frown staring at him. I don’t know where did he come from.

Me: Are you following us?

Kagiso: I wish but this is my establishment.

He amusedly muttered. I don’t know what’s so funny about me because the man is always ready to laugh when I speak.

Me: We want to party like rich housewives.

Kagiso: (chuckling) You don’t need to fake it because you are one.

Why is he smart than me? I hate people who are smarter than me especially men.

Me: We are closing down the VIP section.

Sihle: (frowning) Just the two of us?

Me: Yes. Sonxila sibusulele entloko ngembeko mntase. Okhomntu ozobe esingxolela ecaleni kwethu. {We’ll get drunk to the point of knowing ourselves. No one will be making noise beside us.}.

Sihle: Uyayibaxa noko. We don’t need to shut down the whole VIP section. We just need a few drinks to get us in the mood then go home. {You’re exaggerating}.

I should have left her behind. Where has she seen a millionaire who drinks a few drinks just to get in the mood in a crowded space nogol?

Kagiso: I think your friend is right. Let's not forget you were in an accident hours ago.

Me: Speaking about accidents I need to make a claim.

Kagiso: For what?

Me: RAF.

He throws his back and roar in laughter. Why is he laughing? My car is the evidence they need and the bandages in our heads.

KAGISO

I was already on my way out when I bumped into Aza and her friend. I just popped by to check the books. My manager is the one running this place on my behalf because I'm always busy. The court room takes most of my time and the only time I have for relaxing is when I'm sleeping.

Me: Make sure they go home.

I point out to the VIP section.

Manager: Already leaving boss?

Me: Yes. I have to be in court in the morning.

Manager: Address?

I fish out my phone and text it to him.

Manager: I'll deliver them safe.

I turn on my heels ready to walk out but bump into someone instead.

Woman: Opsie! Sorry.

She slurs in her words. I nod and bypass her but she holds my hand.

Woman: Why are you such in a hurry the night is still young?

I remove her hand from mine ready to leave but she blocks my way.

Woman: You spilled my drink. I need another one.

I chuckle. I turn back to the bar.

Me: Which one?

Woman: Make it something strong.

Me: You heard the lady.

I shift my gaze back to the lady.

Me: Happy now?

Woman: I'll be delighted if you join me.

I smirk.

Me: Is that another way of forcing your hand at me?

She smiles.

Woman: Is it working?

Me: Maybe.

Woman: My eyes immediately fell on you when I walked in.

Me: I'm flirted.

Woman: You look like someone who needs to blow up some steam. How about we forgot the drink and meet somewhere in private and release the tension you have?

My lips involuntary curl into a smirk. Now she's speaking my language.

Me: My place or yours?

Woman: Yours.

Me: After you.

I usher her out all the way to the parking lot. I jump in on the car after she does.

BUSISIWE

Guilt has been weighing me down for days now. After nearly being kicked out of the house I made a promise to my mother that I will cut ties with my friends and that twisted her arm a

bit. She's been considering lately and that's how I found myself in this club this evening. She gave me the green light to go out and have fun. I was a bit sceptical at first until she borrowed me her car. I think it's slowly sinking on her that I'm an adult and can take care of myself. Making my way to the dance floor, I bump into someone.

Me: Opsie sorry.

He nods and bypass me. Damn I feel like screaming and pinching myself. I just met the man of my dreams.

Me: Why are you such in a hurry the night is still young?

He removes his hand from mine and walks away again but I block his path.

Me: You spilled my drink. I need another one.

He chuckles and turns back to the bar. A shiver runs down on my spine upon hearing that voice.

Him: Which one?

Me: Make it something strong.

Him: You heard the lady.

I shy away as he cast his eyes back at me again.

Him: Happy now?

Me: I'll be delighted if you join me.

He smirks.

Him: Is that another way of forcing your hand at me?

I smile.

Me: Is it working?

Him: Maybe.

Me: My eyes immediately fell on you when I walked in.

I've been staring since I walked in.

Him: I'm flirted.

Me: You look like someone who needs to blow up some steam. How about we forgot the drink and meet somewhere in private and release the tension you have?

He smirks.

Him: My place or yours?

Me: Yours.

Him: After you.

He closes the door of the backseat and jump in. I attack him with a vicious kiss. He hands run around my body. I drop my hands down and unzips his pants. I slide it inside after unbuckle the belt and hold his growing cock. He grunts as I squeeze it. He helps me out of my dress and lifts his butt a little to drop his

pants. I straddle him, sliding down on that thick shaft. I shut my eyes and moan. He holds my waist and helps me move. He's moans and grunts are the most sexiest thing I've ever heard from a man. I balance my hands on the armrest and take charge.

Me: Mhhh…

He stops me mid thrust and makes me kneel. He slams into me without any warning. I scream holding the door in order I don't bump my head. He thrusts are un rhythmic and I can't keep with them. Tears stream down my cheeks. I could feel myself getting close.

Me: I'm c…

I scream and fall apart. He continues with his strokes chasing his own ending. He stills inside me and grunts. Not once has he said anything, I guess he's not the vocal type of man.

Me: That was great.

I pant out and lie flat on the seat. I'm smiling from ear to ear. I just the most beautiful expression with the man of my dreams and it was epic. At this point I'm sure he will cuff me and make me his wife. He ignores me and opens the door and a few minutes later he opens the driver's seat .

Him: Here that should be enough for a morning after pill and a cab home.

I immediately turn to face him.

Me: What? Babe?

Him: (chuckling) Babe? You’re delusional. You heard me. Pick up your clothes and get the fuck out of my car.

I swallow hard while tears stung my eyes. I thought he will take me to his house and pamper me after that. If I knew he would throw me away like a used gum I would have not looked his way or even throw myself at him. I can’t believe his crushing my dream because in my head we were already husband and wife.

15

THREE MONTHS LATER

NARRATOR

The music stopped playing causing the crowd to hawl out insults.

Sihle: Everyone out.

The crowd mumbled walking to the door.

Aza: Stop being a party popper marn Sihle. Sit down and have a drink.

Sihle ignored her and pushed the crowd to the door and turned to her.

Sihle: And then?

Aza: I was just have a little party.

Sihle: A little party as you say? That didn't look like a little party to me.

Aza: Come on mntase it was not that bad.

Sihle: Don't you get tired of partying? You're said the same thing last week, month in fact that's what you have been doing lately. You've been partying like nobody's business. I'm starting the think the money is getting in your head.

Aza: I’m still me.

Sihle shook her head.

Sihle: You’re losing the plot right now. You can’t party Sunday to Sunday straight up. Yes you have money but it’s not yours mntase. You can’t be spending someone’s hard earning money like this. I get it that you don’t care about him nor love him but at least give him that little respect of using his money wisely. You already have the scandal of Nyan Nyan hanging over you don’t add I blew it on top of that because people won’t forget this time. You’ve made it on TV the first time unknowingly, don’t push it to knowingly this time.

Aza blew out a sigh and placed the bottle of vodka down.

Aza: You’re right.

Sihle: Of course I’m right.

Aza: I’m really changing and I don’t like this person I’m becoming.

Sihle: It’s the money and power getting in your head. What have you done in the past three months productive?

Aza drops her eyes in shame.

Aza: Nothing. I’ve been hosting parties for strangers.

Sihle: Get back in the drawing board and ask yourself what would Aza do? Minus the money and power.

Aza: I've always wanted something of my own.

Sihle: Then run with the idea and stop being usisi madlisa. You don't know half of those people you were partying with. They will suck you dry and dump you the minute you become broke. Search for yourself inside you and find yourself. I don't like the person in front of me.

Aza nodded.

Aza: I will and thank you.

Sihle: That's what are friends for.

She squeezes her hand.

Sihle: Are you sober enough because I want to run something by you?

Aza: I'm a bit tipsy.

Sihle: I have a business proposal for you.

Aza: Shoot.

Sihle: I want to open a coffee shop/internet café back at home. I need an investor.

Aza giggles.

Aza: Let me guess I'm that investors.

Sihle: You got that right. Everything is far from the people. You have to take 2 taxis to get to town in order to do you cv and on top of that you still have to pay for your CV to be printed out. Some of these people don't have that money.

Aza: Tell you what, why don't you draw up a proper business plan so I can know how much you will need.

Sihle: I love fine things in life neh but I'm scared of using money that's not mine. I know the man is your husband but mntase remember that it's his money not yours. Don't let it change who you are.

Aza's eyes soften.

Aza: You're making me emotional right now.

Sihle playfully rolled her eyes.

Sihle: Regarding the investment how about you ask Kagiso to draw us a contract that clearly states should I fail to pay you back you have the right to take the business from me.

Aza: Mntase I can't do that.

Sihle: You can and you will. Getting in business has a fifty percent that it will fail and that's one of the many risks.

Aza: How about I become a silent partner?

Sihle: A silent partner yes but I still want the contract.

Aza: Alright I'll ring him.

She smiles.

Aza: You know you've just given me an idea. Instead of blowing the money how about I invest it.

Sihle: (smiling) Now you're starting to think like my friend. Welcome back Aza.

Aza picks up the cushion and throws it her. Sihle ducks laughing.

-

-

Throwing the popcorns in her mouth, Busi laughed at the meme on Facebook. She scrolled down and paused seeing Aza's post. She breathed out and reacted with a heart on her recent picture. She badly misses her friends and wonders what are they up to in life. It doesn't help the fact that Sihle ignores her every time they are in the same space. She pretends like she doesn't exist and it kills her inside. She resorted to stalking them and every time she sees their posts it's either they are out in a fancy hotel not knowing the hotel is Aza's new house. Her mother's presence breaks her out of her thoughts.

Busi’s mom: I just saw Sihle and Aza being dropped off by a very expensive car . Yazi you did good cutting ties with them because it’s clear they are chasing after older man who have money.

She shakes her head and walks with the grocery to the kitchen. She off loads everything and walks back to the living with a takeaway in her hand.

Busi: I have been looking at their post these recent months and they are always out in a hotel. Sihle might be the one with a blesser because Aza isn’t that person.

Busi’s mom: I’m just telling you what I saw. Stay away from them because the next thing we know you will be fighting with a blessers wife while pregnant. Unwanted pregnancy are not welcomed in here.

Busi: I’m disappointed in them.

She shakes her head. She swallows hard as the possibility of them being with a blesser is to repay him for getting them out of jail. She sighs and rubs her temples. Maybe if she didn’t betray them to hey wouldn’t have resorted to such measures but it was too late to turn back the hands of time. Her nose scrunched up in disgust.

Busi: What is that smell?

Busi’s mom: Oh it’s the cheesecake. I bought two since it’s your favourite.

Bile rises from the pit of her stomach to her throat. She forces herself to swallow the saliva but the smell gets to much for her. She jumps to her feet and rushes to the bathroom. She slams the door behind her and empty the contents of her stomach she had earlier on.

Busi's mom: (frowning) Busisiwe?

She knocked on the door. Flushing the toilet

Busi rinsed her mouth and opened the door.

Busi's mom: Are you okay?

Busi: I think it's an upset stomach.

She wiped her mouth and walked back to the living leaving her mother with a frown.

SANDILE

I hate victims who cry and beg for their lives before I shoot them especially if someone has been stepping on my toes for a very long time.

Kuhle: I'm sorry I will never bother her again.

Me: You should have thought of that before you did that. Wasn't humiliating her enough?

Kuhle: (crying) It was enough please grootman have mercy.

Me: Mercy is something I don’t have especially when it comes to my loved ones.

I cock the gun and pull the trigger. I sigh and shove my gun on my waist then make my way outside.

Kagiso: First day you’re out, you choose to kill somebody.

Me: I don’t want any loose ends. He was getting on my last nerve.

He shakes his head and jumps in the car. I open the door and also step in then he speeds off.

Kagiso: I’ll alert the boys to clean up.

I nod. He smirks stealing glances at me.

Me: What?

Kagiso: Prison has been treating you well. Look at you fat and shit.

I crack up so hard and raise my middle finger. He chuckles.

Kagiso: Beside playing it’s good to have you back.

Me: It’s good to be back.

He drives in after the gate slides open.

Kagiso: Good luck because you will need it.

I clamp the keys and step out with my duffle bag. Dragging my breath, I unlock the door and locate the switch with my fingers then flick the lights on. My eyes roam around the place before I lock the door and look for the master bedroom. The moon is shining up on her as she breathes softly in her sleep. I smile and walk to the bed then caress her face.

Me: Hey, beautiful.

I press my lips on her cheek then walk to the bathroom. I strip naked and jump into the shower. My parole was approved and I haven't told the Mrs that I'm coming out. I wanted it to be a surprise. I just wonder how will she react when she sees me. I close the tap and wrap a towel around my waist then padded back to the bedroom. I should have moved my clothes from my previous to this one. I can't be walking around with a duffle bag like I'm some boyfriend who is having an affair with someone's wife. It was a sudden decision to buy this house and I couldn't take my wife to my old house where I fucked bitches in. I respect her too much to do that. I slide in beside her and spoon her after wearing my boxers. She mumbled inaudible words in her sleep and snuggle closer to me. A heavy sleeper she is. I run my finger on her cheek.

Me: Good night, Mrs D.

I close my eyes and let sleep take over.

16

SANDILE

I haven’t had a good night sleep in years. I slept like a baby even though the Mrs is a fighter in her sleep. If she’s not slapping me with her hands she’s pulling the blankets, regardless of that I still call it a good night sleep. Walking out of the room, I make my way downstairs and walk to the living room. Her nephews and niece are up watching TV.

Me: Morning guys.

They shift their gaze from the screen to me.

Them: Who are you?

Me: I’m your uncle, what are your names.

Child 1: I’m Simamkele.

Child 2: I’m Simthandile.

Me: And the little princess?

Sima: She’s Thembi.

I nod staring at them. They surely really look their father. Even if Akhona wanted to deny them their faces would have made it hard for him. Damn I can’t wait for the day we have our little mini running around the house.

Me: Breakfast?

Them: Yes please.

I smile at their mannerism and padded to the kitchen. My eyes roam around the room until I locate the container of a cereal. Opening the cabinets, I look for small bowls and pour the cereal and milk after warming it up then call them. They thank me and run back to the living room with the food. I pop my knuckles and make breakfast for the Mrs. I don't know if I still got it but I haven't been in a kitchen cooking for a woman in years.

Me: No, no.

I drop the pan in the sink as the eggs get burnt and heavily sigh. Takeaway it is. I need more practice. Breakfast has officially been ruined. I don't want to attempt again because this time I might burn the house. I open the bin and discard the eggs then fill the tap with water and wash the equipment I was using. So much for being romantic. I click my tongue and scrub the pan then open the lid to drain the water the. Rinse the sink. I wipe my hands with the paper towel and walk to the living room.

Me: Still okay?

They nod without sparing me a glance. I chuckle. There's just something about kids that just melts ones heart no matter how tainted your soul is.

Me: Who is older between the two of you?

Simtha: Sima.

I nod and look at the time on my wristwatch. I slide my hands in my pocket searching if I got my keys then walk to the garage. My eyes widen seeing the wrecked car.

Me: The fuck?

I walk around inspecting it then walk back to the house.

Me: Sima come lock the door.

I yell over my shoulder and wait for him close the door and lock it behind before I move my feet to the gate. Scrolling down the contact list, I place a call pressing the remote.

Bullet: Boss?

Me: I need a ride.

I disconnect the call and wait for him. 20 minutes later, he parks in front of me and I jump in.

Bullet: (smiling) Are my eyes deceiving me? Word on the street that is you're out.

I chuckle.

Me: You guys gossip like women.

He laughs.

Bullet: Where to?

Me: My old house.

He nods and steps on the gas while I place an order for her. I really need my gargets back because this phone is useless to me right now.

AZASAKHE

The intercom ringing wakes me up from my slumber. I groan and force myself out of the bed and make my way downstairs tying the strings of my robe. Why are people up this early? I don't know what the time is but I know it's still early for me to be talking and laughing to people. I haven't even brushed my teeth for heaven sake.

Me: Who is it?

Voice: Delivery man.

Me: What? I didn't place an order.

Voice: Is this the Dlamini residence right?

Me: Yes.

Voice: Then I've got the right address.

I place the phone back and peek on the window. My eyebrows furrow when they fall on the delivery man. I pick the remote and open the gate and walk outside.

Delivery man: Good morning, Mrs Dlamini here is your order.

Me: I didn't order anything.

Delivery man: Well this is the right address.

He shoves the package in my hands then turn back to the scooter and drives off. I blow out a sigh and walk inside. My stomach rumbles as I get a whiff of the delicious smell. I smile and make a mental note to thank her. Sihle is such a life saver and I don't know who will I've turned too if she was not in my corner. Simtha passes me on the way to the kitchen with his bowl. Dammit how can I forget the kids? I'm really losing the plot and need to find myself again. Money and power have gotten in my head and that's not who I am.

Me: Who made your breakfast?

Simtha: Uncle did.

He runs out of the kitchen. I shake my head and unwrap the plastic. The first my eyes set on is a note.

"Morning, beautiful. I'm sorry I nearly burnt down your kitchen while attempting to make you breakfast"

I pause blinking rapidly. I force those senseless thoughts on the back of my mind. Dlamini is in jail so there's no way he was out.

Me: What?

"Your man is getting rusty and needs to up his game. Sorry I left before you woke up but I had business to take of. I'll see you

later. By the way you're such a heavy sleeper I could kidnap you in your sleep. I made the kids breakfast" Dlamini.

My blood runs cold. I threw the note on the floor and run around the house like a headless chicken.

Me: No, no

Advertisement

no. He's suppose to be in jail.

I check the doors for any break in but the door was locked when I opened it. I run to my room to check for any clues. The left side of the bed is wrinkled indicating someone was really in here. Tears roll down my eyes.

Me: No, you're dreaming Azasakhe. Snap out of it.

I walk to the bathroom and find his clothes on the laundry basket. I laugh and walk back to the room.

Me: It's just a dream.

I open the closet and guess what? I find his clothes neatly hanged. He shifted some of my clothes to make space for himself. Like a toddler who wants her mother's attention, my tears roll down my cheeks faster than before. I storm downstairs.

Me: Who made you breakfast?

Sima: Uncle.

Me: Which uncle?

Simtha: Uncle.

Me: Did you see him?

Simtha: He was here but left.

No, this is not happening right now. How can Kagiso deceive me? I thought the man was never coming out. In these three months I didn't bother myself googling him because I was sure he will die in prison. I wipe my tears and run back to the room and quickly make the bed. I jump in the shower only one destination in mind.

KAGISO

I pull out the gun and aim it at the door. He causally walks in.

Me: You're such a fool. What if I had shoot you?

Sandile: You wouldn't have.

Me: Normal people knock in other people's houses.

Sandile: What's the point of having a key if I'm still going to knock?

I chuckle.

Me: Shouldn't you be bonding with the Mrs?

Sandile: She’s still asleep. Tell me what happened to the car?

I laugh and narrate the whole story.

Sandile: I was going to teach her how to drive. I knew she can’t drive.

Me: She got excited and wrecked it within seconds she saw it.

Sandile: She’s been reckless with her spending not that I complain.

Me: My job is not to baby sit her. She’s an adult.

I pick up the water bottle and the towel and walk out of the gym. I was burning some steam before he interrupted me. He walks to the kitchen and takes out left overs from the fridge.

Me: Didn’t you eat at your house?

Sandile: I nearly burnt the kitchen attempting to make her breakfast.

I laugh ascending the stairs to take a shower.

-

-

We are discussing business when the intercom goes off.

Me: Hello?

Aza: Open this gate, Kagiso before I climb it.

She threatens causing me to laugh then open the gate.

Me: Guess she figured out that you're out. Someone is in trouble.

I tease walking to the door to open it and walk back to him. He leaps to his feet and pour another shot of whisky. Aza storms in like a mad woman.

Me: (smirking) Aza what a nice surprise to see you. What do I owe the pleasure of this visit so early in the morning?

She dumps the bag on top of the table and places her hands on her waist.

Aza: Don't patronise me, Kagiso. Why didn't you tell me his coming out?

I shift my gaze to Sandile then back at her.

Me: I did but you just didn't listen to me.

She paces up and down.

Aza: (screaming) No, no, you don't understand. That man sneaked in my house and slept in my bed last night.

The fool smirks on the corner. I stifle my laugh.

Me: (calmly) Oh, isn't that what husband and wife do? They sleep together but what do I know because I'm not married.

I muse causing her nostrils to flare.

Aza: I’m not ready.

Me: (amused) Then you will never be ready.

Aza: (crying) He was suppose to stay in jail.

Me: (amused) Well his out.

Sandile chuckles gaining her attention. She whips her head to his direction and stares at him.

Aza: I’ve seen you before haven’t I?

Sandile: (smiling) Maybe.

Aza: You’re cute but your brother is more handsome than you.

I shake my head amused.

Sandile: I’m not a cat and I’m not cute.

He mumbles under his breath and arches his brow.

Sandile: My brother?

Aza: Yes, the one I saw in prison the other day. I just remembered now where I have seen this face.

I laugh while he laughs softly. I guess she didn’t do her homework and I’m not going to be a teacher writing corrections for her. She quickly whips her head my way.

Aza: Do something.

Me: What am I suppose to do?

Aza: I don’t know anything. Senzeni Emhlabeni Dlamini cannot be out.

Sandile: TF?

I burst in laughter. Man I’m loving this.

Aza: Mr we are discussing important business here.

She spits out glaring at him. He raises his hands in surrender then knock down his glass and place it on the table. He stumbles towards her and wraps his hands around her waist.

Aza: (frowning) What are you…

Her words died down her throat as he smashes his lips on hers. She breaks the kiss and slap him. I crack so hard.

Aza: (screaming) The hell are you doing?

Sandile: Aza I’m your h…

He’s eyes widen as he knees him on the balls. I laugh harder.

Aza: Just because I said you’re handsome doesn’t give you the right to kiss me, pervert.

She clicks her tongue and furiously storms out. He groans.

Sandile: (annoyed) Help me up and stop laughing.

Bending down, I clutch my stomach and laugh harder.

17

SANDILE

Kagiso has been laughing none stop and it’s really getting on my nerves right now.

Me: Can we get back to business?

He shake his head and attempts to wipe the tears but they keep falling down. I wait for him to calm down but he doesn’t. Instead he starts laughing all over again. I blow out a sigh and jump to my feet. I pick up my car keys and walk to the door.

Kagiso: Where are you going?

Me: Where I will be taken seriously.

He raises his hands.

Kagiso: Let’s work.

I walk back to the chair and sit down.

Me: I’ve been looking at the numbers and they are quite impressive. Opening that club was really a good idea.

Kagiso: We need to hire new staff especially for the VIP and we also need to expand.

I arch my brow.

Me: Who is going to handle it because you’re a 9 to 5 guy?

Kagiso: You of course. I'm not leaving my law firm to run that club. I've been running one for years now and it's your turn.

I chuckle.

Me: We take turns? Are kids now?

Kagiso: I've been handling that shit for a very long time alone and it's stressful.

Me: I'll see what I can do.

Kagiso: We have new merchandise arriving later on.

Me: Client?

He jumps to his feet and walks to the study and comes back with a stuck of papers and place it in front of me. I scan them with my eyes.

Me: I'll pass by the warehouse to brief the boys.

My phone chimes on top of the table.

Me: Dlamini.

Bullet: Boss you might want to come back home.

My heart skips a beat.

Me: Flopo?

Bullets: It's the Mrs.

I leap up to my feet already having the worst case scenario in my head.

Me: What's happening to her?

Bullet: She's…

He trails off.

Me: Bullet?

Bullet: Eish I don't know how to describe it but just come home. You might want to see this.

I click my tongue and hang up. What's the use of having eyes everywhere when these eyes are useless?

Me: Something is wrong.

He chuckles.

Kagiso: Something is not wrong. I spent a lot of time in that woman's presence to know how she operates. Friendly warning gear up and good luck.

Me: What?

He leans back on the couch and whistles.

AZASAKHE

Stress has found a new place to reside in me. I don't know whether I should be sitting down or laying down. It doesn't help

that the kids are making so much noise adding more to my stress levels. How come have I been so ignorant? I still remember when Sihle asked me what would I do if it happens he comes out and I waved her off and told her he will never come out and Kagiso asked me how sure am I? I should have know from that answer alone that he will be out. Picking up my phone, I place a call.

Nat: Hello?

Me: Hey, can you come pick up the kids?

Nat: I thought you said you will bring them back tomorrow

Me: Yes but I'm not feeling alright.

She heavily sighs.

Nat: Okay, I'm on my way.

I hang up and hold my head. The side effects of a hangover are slowly creeping in on me. I hate disappointing the kids but at this point I have no choice. I was suppose to take them out for a little treat today before they go home tomorrow. That's what I usually do each weekend.

Me: Guys pack up your staff. Your mom is on her way.

Sima: Why?

Me: Because I'm not feeling well.

Simtha: Why?

Me: I'm sick.

Sima: But aunty you look fine to me.

I drag out my breath defeated. Didn't I say I hate smart people so why is he proving that he falls on that gender of men?

Me: I'm sick Sima. I promise to pick you from school on Friday.

Simtha: I don't want to go.

I bite back my tongue from lashing out and walk to the kitchen. I've got bigger problems than arguing with kids. My stomach growls. I didn't even had time to eat his so called breakfast. I freaked out and went straight to Kagiso's after bathing. The plastic is still on the counter where I left it, I pull it towards me and start eating. My taste buds are slowly appreciating the flavours causing me to moan. I pause chowing and click my tongue. For the fact that he bought this food it's not mouth watering anymore. Picking the serviette, I wipe my mouth and open the cabinets looking for bowls. I equally share the food and drink for the kids and take it to them. They smile and thank me. I bounce on my heels watching them eat. Yeyi, such betrayal. Why are these kids eating like there's no tomorrow while I couldn't stomach anything? They should be on my side instead of taking his side. I'm their family not him. I resist the urge to snatch back the bowls. Akhona's children are not loyal

just like their father. The intercom goes off breaking me out of my turmoil.

Me: Hello?

Nat: I'm at the gate.

I press the remote and open the door. My feet force me to pace up and down. My butt is too stressed to be sitting down. She walks in and frowns at me.

Nat: You're not okay.

Me: I think I just need a good night's sleep. I didn't sleep a wink last night.

I lie through my teeth. Dating back yesterday, I slept like a log.

Nat: Did you go to the doctor? It could be serious.

Me: I didn't want to cut their weekend short. I thought I would be fine but as the day progressing whatever it is it's getting worse.

Nat: Please see a doctor. It could be life threatening or much worse.

I fake a smile and nod. She walks to the living room and comes back with the kids and their bags after a while.

Nat: Call me if you need anything. I'll drop Thembi at her mother's tomorrow.

Me: Thank you.

I bid them goodbye then close the door behind them. Now the house is quiet, I don't know what to do with myself. My thoughts are so loud. Opening the fridge, I look for an unknown suspect that is calling on me.

Me: No

Advertisement

alcohol will make you cry.

I place the bottle of wine back.

Me: No, food will comfort you for now. You need something that will last longer.

Slamming the door shut, I march to the living room and switch the TV to a music channel just to tame my loud thoughts. Instead of playing nice music, the TV is playing love jams. Annoyed, I switch it off and walk outside. Another part of me is urging me to walk back inside and Google the man but I don't think I can stomach what I find on the net. I'm too scared to face reality. Denial is on the winning team right now and I'm walking with it. People always say running helps to clear one's mind so I'm trying it. The dress keeps fly around as I run but who the hell cares? Nobody said you only run when you're in your training gear. And for the fact that I'm in the suburbs neighbourhood nobody can be gawking at me like I'm some

caged animal at the zoo waiting for exhibition. I pant out and halt placing my hands on my knees. A honk comes on the gate causing me to raise my head. I run to it and find my neighbour.

Neighbour: Darling are you okay? I've been watching run around the yard.

I spoke to soon about the burbs. I take back my words.

Me: I'm more than okay. Thank you for your concern.

Neighbour: I don't think you're okay. I'm a doctor and I know when a patient needs to be psycho annualized.

Psycho what? Yeyi, is she insinuating that I'm crazy?

Neighbour: If you can just open the gate and let me check you.

Doctor my left foot, I turn on my heels and run faster than before, rounding the house. This time I scream realising all anger building inside me. Bloody children of FW De Clerk! Always ready to save the day for the blacks. I don't need a superhero especially not a white one. They have already stole our land so why should I give them a platform at my house? Colonisation ended years but but they don't understand that. This not the apartheid era where blacks where treated like shit. The whites are always looking for something to oppress the blacks and I'm not going to let her do that to me. In fact I'm going to act more crazy to prove to her that I didn't queue in 1994 to get this house. I cease my movements and pull the

dress over my head and continue with my task at hand. The wind blows her gasp to my ears.

Me: (screaming) Intlanti zalendlu zibiza mna. Yindlu yam le kwaye ndine lungelo lokwenza nantoni na endiyithandayo. Yithi pe ndihambe ngaze ngoku. {The corners of his house are mine. This is my house and I have every right to do what I like. Dare me to walk naked right now}.

I'm so angry. I'm angry at the world, my brother, Kagiso, Senzeni Emhlabeni Dlamini and most importantly myself. I should have taken time to find information on what I'm dealing with.

18

SANDILE

She’s still running around when I arrive. I shift my gaze to the side as someone knocks on the window. I roll it down.

Neighbor: Hello, I’m her neighbor. Are you related to her?

Me: I’m her husband.

Neighbor: Nice too meet you.

Me: I can’t say the same.

Neighbor: Your wife is having a meltdown break down.

I arch my brow.

Me: How do you know because she was fine earlier on?

Neighbor: I’m a doctor.

Me: Right.

Neighbor: People react differently to shock. Has she experienced something traumatic or heard news that shocked her?

Me: Not that I know of.

I lie through my teeth knowing the reason of her behaviour.

Neighbor: Some people snap out of the breakdown and some don't. I would suggest you take her to a psychiatrist.

Me: Not happening. Something triggered her to act like this.

Neighbor: That's always the case and before you know it she will running around these streets naked.

Me: Did your father build these streets?

A frown emerges on her face.

Neighbor: What?

Me: I said did you father build these streets?

Neighbor: No, he did not.

Me: Exactly! As long he didn't build them she can run to the moon and back freely without judgemental eyes staring at her. Instead of advising me what do ungitshela umbhedo. Awusuke la. Usiyangicasula. {You're talking nonsense. Move away from her. You're pissing me off}.

I click my tongue and drive in. I step out of the car and wait for her to come my way and hold her. She thrashes around but I hold her down. Picking her up, I walk to the house and place her on the couch. I know it's a laughing matter considering the circumstances I found her in but I'm more worried than being assume.

Me: Hey

Advertisement

calm down.

She stops fighting and panted out. She raises her head and locks eyes with me.

Aza: You.

I can see the wheels in her head turning.

Aza: Please don’t tell me you’re who I think you’re .

Me: I’m sorry we had to meet like this.

Aza: I…

She trails off jumping to her feet and walk away. I heavily sigh and take back her spot on the couch. Believe me when I say my intentions were not trying to tick her off. She comes back fully dressed.

Aza: What do you want from me?

Her voice is a bit hoarsely.

Me: I want a lot of things.

Aza: What if I can’t give you those things?

Me: Then I’ll wait until you’re able to give back.

She chuckles.

Aza: You're smooth.

I smile.

Aza: But unfortunately I can't give you that.

Me: How will you know when you haven't even tried?

Aza: Who in their right mind marries someone he doesn't know?

Me: I did my homework and I know what I'm dealing with.

Aza: I wasn't given the time to do mine.

Me: Yes you were but you were ignorant.

Aza: Because in my own head I thought it was something that will blow over. I thought you will stay there and I will stay here and life will continue like that. Nobody told me you would be coming out.

Me: I humbly apologize on the way I did things but my heart forced me to take such measures. Inhliziyo ihambe phambili kunomqondo. {My heart took a decision for me}.

She raises her hands.

Aza: Thixo Onofefe! Yinzule kanti le? {Jesus Christ! You're a Zulu man}.

She exclaimed causing me to smile.

Me: I believe we haven't properly introduced ourselves. I'm Sandile Dlamini, your husband and you're?

Aza: You did your homework so there's no need for me to introduce myself, Sandile.

My name rolls out of her mouth so easily. I smile.

Me: Know you know my name and you know my face.

Aza: It still changes nothing to me. Why hide behind my brother?

Me: Like I said my heart won over my mind.

Aza: I don't think I can do this.

Me: Do what?

Aza: You, me. It's just to much for me.

Tears welled in her eyes.

Aza: I was okay with you in there because at some point I knew you were there in the shadows. I was okay with this arrangement because you were not in my face. You guys took a decision on my behalf and it didn't matter whether I refused or not because the contract would have been hovering over my head. You could have easily sued me or my brother for money we don't have.

Her words break in between.

Aza: Why do rich people always feel the need to take away rights of the poor? Do you think we asked to be like this? Do you think we selected poverty from our mother's womb?

Tears stream down her cheeks. I leap up to my feet to comfort her but she shakes her head.

Aza: I will work hard to pay each cent I spent even it takes me years to repay it.

Me: I don't care about the money. I just want you.

Aza: (crying) You have all the money in the world but yet you choose me. Why?

Me: Inhliziyo ikhethe wena mama. Bendisacela ungiphe ithuba. {The heart chose you. Can you please give me a chance}.

Aza: I'm tired.

I nod.

Me: Go to sleep we will talk when you're okay.

She shakes her head and burst in tears.

Aza: No, I'm tired.

I padded to her open my arms for her. She doesn't push me so I take that as an opportunity to embrace her.

Aza: One can take so much but this was the last straw. I would have done everything for brother even it means walking around naked but this time he undermined me and took away my rights. I'm tired of always being the understanding one. I'm tired of always being the one on the firing line. I'm tired of people taking a decision for me like I've got no voice. Everyone do as they please regarding my life and I'm tired.

She releases a heart wrenching sob.

Me: It's okay. Shhh.

I gently stroke her back reflecting on my decision. Maybe I should have courted instead of doing things the way I did. The neighbour was right about the breakdown. She's been bottling this up for a very long time and they are now coming up to strong and she can't handle them. Now I feel bad for the role I played.

19

AZASAKHE

I hold the handle of the cup and bring it to my lips and lean on the counter. He clears his throat to gain my attention.

Sandile: Morning.

I nod and take a sip of my coffee. The events from yesterday are still on my mind. I can’t believe I broke down in front of him like that. He was gently with me the rest of the day but that doesn’t mean I like him. I still hate him as a rich man he is and wife napper he is because what they did with my brother is the same as kidnapping. They kidnapped me into this marriage without my concern.

Sandile: Breakfast?

Me: I don’t eat breakfast unless I’m hangover.

Sandile: Can we talk?

Me: This is your house you can do whatever you want. I’m just a guest who was forced to live in here.

Sandile: You’re being unfair right now.

Me: You don’t know a thing about fairness.

Sandile: I take full responsibility for that but can you just lend me an ear.

Me: No.

Sandile: I won’t take most of your time.

Me: I said no.

I raise my voice half screaming.

Sandile: Why are you screaming because I’m not deaf?

Before I could reply the intercom goes off. I bypass him and walk to it.

Me: Hello?

Neighbor: Hello, neighbor its me your neighbor Millicent. I came to check up on you.

Sandile: Who is it?

Me: It’s the neighbor.

Sandile: What does she want?

Me: How will I know?

Sandile: Buzz her in.

Me: What?

He ignores me and opens the gate and padded outside. I follow behind and watch the neighbour walking the gate to us.

Milly: Good morning.

Sandile: What's so good about it if you keep bothering us?

Milly: I came in peace just to check on your wife.

Sandile: As you can see she's fine.

Milly: I heard her crying yesterday and just now I heard her screaming. Are you abusing her?

Us: What?

Milly: I know victims who are afraid of coming forward. Just say the word and I will make sure he spends the rest of his life behind bars.

We look at each other and burst in laughter.

Sandile: Mama uthini lomuntu? {What is this person saying?}.

Me: Uthini na lo? {What is she saying?}

We mutter in unison still laughing.

Milly: What are you guys saying? You don't gave to be scared.

We shake our head and walk back inside and slam the door behind us, leaving her standing there.

Me: I thought the white neighbour is the most quiet one without any noisy neighbours.

Sandile: Is that…

He trails off and stumbles to the window. He slide the curtain to the side revealing Milly peeking through. Raising my voice, I retort so she can hear me from the other side.

Me: We need to make another sacrifice and this time it needs to be human.

Come think of it I haven't done my night rituals since I moved in here and maybe that's why she's all up in my but worry not I've got a solution for that. The man in front of me quickly whips his head my way and frown. I wink at him. He chuckles turning to her.

Sandile: I almost forgot about that. What are the instructions again?

Me: A human sacrifice.

Milly's eyes widen on the other side.

Sandile: MaDlamini I think we found out candidate.

He padded to the door and opens it. Milly steps back.

Milly: No, no.

She turns on her heels and bolts out the yard. I chase after until I reach the gate and crack up so hard.

Milly: (screaming) Help.

Me: And stay out.

I close the gate and walk back inside. He’s leaning on the door frame laughing.

Sandile: (laughing) You’re crazy.

Me: She’s noisy marn. That should teach her to mind her own business.

He shakes his head and ascend the stairs. My phone rings in the living room. Closing the door

Advertisement

I rush to it.

Me: Mntase.

Sihle: Mntase, Kuhle is dead.

Me: (shocked) What?

BUSISIWE

I force the food down and swallow it. The smell already is making me nauseatic but I don’t want raise any eyebrows. The food only settles for a minute before it threatens to come out.

Banele: Sis are you okay?

I nod picking up the glass of water and chunk it down.

Me: I’m good. I’m already late for work.

I place the cutlery down and leap up to my feet.

Me: Thank you for breakfast mama.

I walk to my room to pack my staff and remove my phone from the charger. The door close shut, startling me. I raise my head and find my mother standing there.

Me: Something wrong?

Mama: I don't know Busiswe, you tell me.

I strengthen my spine to my full height and give her my undivided attention.

Me: What are you talking about?

She squints her eyes and marches to me. Raising my shirt, she pocks my stomach through the vest. I wince stepping back.

Mama: What is this?

Me: (frowning) What is what?

Mama: Umithi, Busiswe. {You're pregnant}.

Me: Ubani? Mna? Asoze. {Who? Me? Never!}.

I protest rolling down the shirt.

Me: Owam wokuqala umntana uzakuba yindlu ilandelwe yimoto. Andiyazi uyithathi phi lonto kodwa mna andimithanga. Owam wokuqala umntana uzakuzalwa emtshatweni. Andilulanga olohlobo lokuza nomntana ndingatshatanga. {I don't know where you got that but I'm not pregnant. My first

born will be born when I’m married. I’m not loose like that to bring a child out of wedlock}.

I kiss her cheek and walk out of the room. I’ve aimed myself for higher things in life. Like a marriage and kids. The man at the club night have crushed my dream but it’s a temporary thing. Only a fool gets pregnant from a one-night stand.

NARRATOR

Gagging, she rinses her mouth and close the tap. It's lunch time and her stomach isn't settled at all. She got a whiff of someone's cheap perfume and it has been lingering on her nostrils. Busi rolls the paper towel and wipes her hands. In her 24 years of living, inyongo is not something she's familiar with. She make a mental note to ask her mother to make me a bile remedy when I get home. She's not a person who usual cleans her stomach but at this point she's forced to do so. Dumping the paper towel on the bin, she walks out of the bathroom and make her way back to the cafeteria. She join the queue and place her order.

Ma Agnes: Busi, what are you have today?

Busi: Can I have something light.

She raises her eyes from the counter and narrowed them on her.

Ma Agnes: Everything okay?

Busi: Ndiphethwe yinyongo.

Ma Agnes: Shame marn. Kutheni ungazami ukrakrayo, ikhala okanye Stameta. {Why don't you try aloe or Stameta?}

Busi: I don't why didn't I think of that.

Ma Agnes: They usually work but I wouldn't recommend you to drink them during the week especially Stameta.

Busi: Thank you. Can I the cheese sandwich with orange juice.

Ma Agnes: That would be R34.

Before she could hand her the money, screams erupt around the building.

Ma Agnes: Kwenzeka ntoni? { What is happening?}

She shrugged her shoulders and turn to find the source of the scream. Two men with tailored suits clinging on them. Confidence and dominance oozes on them with each step they take. Some parents really knows how to give birth shame because both of them are handsome and they know it. One of them looks familiar to her. Squinting her eyes, her stomach flips when she finally remember where she knew him from. Smiling, Busi turns to Ma Agnes.

Busi: Ma Agnes how do I look?

Ma Agnes: (frowning) You look fine to me, why?

Busi: Don't I have any food pieces in my mouth?

She widely opens her mouth.

Ma Agnes: No.

Busi: Do I smell like a person who just vomited?

She exhales her breath to her. Ma Agnes scrunches up her nose in disgust and move backward. She takes that as a yes and fixes her face using the slide door of the fridge as a mirror. Turning on her heels, Kagiso and Sandile passed her like they didn't see her and walk to the table at the corner far away from the others which consists of Aza and Sihle. Busi's feet involuntary move to their table.

Aza: I'm stalking to think you guys are stalking me.

Both men raise their eyebrows amused.

Kagiso: And what will we gain by doing so?

Aza: How will I know what goes through your heads?

Sandile: As much a I love watching you 24/7 but we are not here for you.

Aza: Oh

then why are you here?

Sandile: We're here to see your boss.

Aza: For what?

Kagiso: Curiosity killed the cat you know?

Aza: You should know by now that curiosity is my middle name. Besides a cat has nine lives so what's your point?

Both men chuckled.

Aza: I’m good at keeping secrets. I keep our secret doesn’t that count for something?

Sandile smiled shaking his head.

Sandile: It wasn’t a secret though.

Aza: Only a few people know about it so that makes it a secret.

Sandile: But I didn’t say keep it a secret.

Aza: It’s still a secret.

She claps back causing Kagiso and Sihle to look back and forth between them as the turn it into an argument.

Sandile: Secrets are deeper than that.

Aza: The fact that the media doesn’t know about it.

Busi blinked her eyes confused. Where did Aza know them? What secret were they talking about? Was she the only person confused or Sihle was too? Why was her crush standing close to Sihle and what were they were whispering at each other? Those questions filled Busi’s mind.

Sihle: Are they always like this?

Kagiso: I don’t stay with them so I don’t know.

Sihle: I’m seeing another Aza in him.

Kagiso: That was my first thought we I met her. They are the same and I don't know how will this work because both of them don't like to be corrected. In their minds they are correct.

Sihle: Sounds like Aza. Are you sure they are not twins?

Kagiso snickered.

Kagiso: We would have know that by now.

He cleared his throat to gain their attention.

Kagiso: This is cute but we have to go.

Sandile: I'll see you at home, MaDlamini.

He bent down and kissed her forehead causing Aza to roll her eyes. The man was an attention seeker. Judging by how quiet this place was she could bet with his millions that they were watching them. Busi's eyes widen.

Sandile: Sihle the trouble instigator.

Sihle laughed.

Sandile: Your friend is rude. She didn't even introduce me to you.

Kagiso pulled Sandile away from the table before Aza can clap back. Taking this as her opportunity, Busi rushed after them.

Busi: Hello?

Silence…

Busi: Didn’t they hear me?

She murmured to herself confused.

Kagiso: Seriously?

Sandile: What?

Kagiso shook his head. Their strides were faster than her own. She quickened her step and tapped Kagiso’s shoulder after catching up with them.

Busi: (panting) Hi. Hello. Sorry.

Kagiso sharply turned on his heels and looked at his shoulder and dusted the spot before narrowing his eyes at her.

Busi: (panting and smiling) Hello.

Kagiso nodded.

Rolling the curls of her weave, Busi smiled and dropped her eyes to the floor and wrote her name like a shy person.

Busi: (smiling) Do you remember me?

Kagiso eyebrows knit together.

Kagiso: Should I remember you?

Busi raises her head.

Busi: At the club…

Kagiso interjects.

Kagiso: (coldly) The fact I met you in a club speaks volumes. If I fucked you consider yourself lucky because you're not my type.

Busi's jaw hangs open while her heart drops to the pit of her stomach.

Kagiso: If you're here to tell me you're pregnant than you got the wrong man. If used a condom on you then you should know that I always check if it busted or not after us.

Rage seeped in Busi's bones.

Busi: We didn't use one.

She raised her voice gaining the attention of her colleagues. Kagiso stepped forward, his shoes on her feet causing Busi squirm.

Kagiso: Didn't I give you morning afters or money for them?

Busi: You did but…

Kagiso: Then you should know I'm not the father of your bastard child.

He spat out.

Busi: Who said I'm pregnant? I was just greeting you but I see you think you're all that. There's nothing special about you. You just happened to be a thug in a suit who lacks manners.

She clicks her tongue and furiously turns on her heels. What was wrong with people assuming she's pregnant?

Sandile: What was that all about?

Kagiso: You know how these bitches are. They can't read between the lines that they are just hooks up and nothing more. I bet in her head she saw a future, us running off the sunset and live happily ever after with kids.

Sandile laughs.

Kagiso: I know her kind and that is why I'm always a step ahead of them. I use a condom all the time and give them morning afters and if I don't don't have them I make sure I accompany them the pharmacy to buy them.

Sandile: You've got issues.

Kagiso: I'm just being cautious. I don't want unnecessary kids.

The lift pings and they step in.

BUSISIWE

I close the door of the taxi after jumping out and make my way home. My mood depleted from 100 to 0 after that encounter

with that man. The word pregnant or pregnancy is starting to get on my last nerve right now. I don't pose as someone who is pregnant and neither do I have symptoms of it. The pregnancy fever has passed me before and it still will pass me as long I'm not married. Bending down, I take off my heels and walk barefooted to my room. I heavily sigh as I find my mother in my room.

Me: Mama I had a long day so please don't start.

She leaps up to her feet and throws the packets of pads my way. I managed to catch two out of six.

Me: What happened to privacy in this house?

Mama: Privacy in who's house?

Me: (yelling) You're invading my privacy. What is the point of people to have their own rooms if you will keep snooping around?

She marches to me and slams me to hard causing me to bite my lip. The metallic taste of blood fills my mouth.

Mama: Liphi igazi, Busiswe? {Where is blood, Busiswe?}.

I frown rubbing my cheek.

Mama: Ezi pads bekufanele zihambe nogqomo zwigcwele igazi kwinyanga ezimbini ezidlulileyo. Ndizakubuza okokugqibela. Liphi igazi, Busiswe? {These pads were supposed to leave with

the bin full of blood two months ago. I'm going to ask you one last time. Where is blood, Busiswe?}

I shrugged my shoulders.

Me: I don't know. How am I suppose to go through my cycle if you keep pressurizing me? Don't you know that stress males people skip months? Bendicinga ukrele – krele kanti umuncu. { I thought you were smart but you're stupid}.

How am I suppose to know where did my blood go? Maybe stress from being arrested is holding them back or I'm short of blood. Another slap from her leaves me paralyzed for seconds.

21

BUSISIWE

Mama: Who is the father?

She spits out seething.

Me: I'm not pregnant.

I protest moving away from her as she raises her hand again.

Mama: Suxoka marn. {Don't lie}.

Me: I'm not lying. I'm not pregnant. What do you want me to do in order to prove to you that you're wrong?

Mama: Take off that shirt.

Without wasting any time, I unbutton the shirt and take off the best underneath just to prove her wrong. I still stand with my truth that I'm not pregnant. She closes the gap between us and chuckle.

Mama: Just look at your stomach.

I drop my eyes to my stomach and see it a little bump.

Me: That doesn't prove anything because I just eat.

Mama: You're still denying it even after I caught you?

Me: I stand against my truth. I'm not pregnant.

I fold my arms across my chest and narrowed my eyes at her. She yanks her hands off me and grabs my breast through the bra. I whimper stepping back and shield my chest.

Mama: (yelling) Where is your truth right now? You're pregnant and you just happened to be in denial. I should have known those good for nothing friends of yours will lead you to this. Do you understand that you just threw away your future just like that.

Me: Sore breast and a prudent stomach doesn't prove anything.

I clap back.

Mama: Are you back chatting me, Busiswe.

Me: No but just telling you the truth. I'm tired of being accused of something I didn't do. I'm not a child anymore.

Mama: As long you're still living under my roof then you're a child and you will obey by my rules.

I raise my eyebrows.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Mama: I want you out of my house. I can't stay with another woman.

I gasped shocked.

Me: What? Mama I'm not pregnant.

I say for the umpteenth time and padded to the bed. Picking up my purse, I take out my phone and go straight to google. Maybe I should put her at ease but by showing her the symptoms of pregnancy which I don't have. I'm tired of sounding like a broken record to her because it's clearly we are not getting anywhere.

Mama: Will you leave on your own or should I drag you out?

I raise my head from the phone and look at her.

Me: I'm googling the symptoms to prove your wrong.

She clicks her tongue and stumbles to the closet. She takes out my clothes and throw them on the floor. My heart skips a beat as I read all the symptoms. Unshed tears welled on my eyes.

Me: The internet is lying mama. It does all the time.

She ignores me and continues with her task at hand which is to take out my clothes.

Me: Mama it's lying.

She opens the door and walks out. A few minutes later she comes back with two black bags and shove my clothes on.

Mama: Get out.

I shake my head and move back.

Me: Maybe they have bewitched me. I know my body and I'm telling you that I'm not pregnant.

Mama: Only a fool will believe that nonsense you just spewed with your mouth.

Me: It's the only explanation mama. Think about it, Aza and Sihle are suddenly walking around with older men without any single bump on them. I saw them at work talking to criminals and I suspect they are sleeping with them. Ke ba strata those two.

She picks up the black bags and walks out with them. Tears stream down my eyes as I run after her all the way to the front door. She throws them on the ground and stumbles towards me. She grabs my hand and drags me out of the house. I hold on to the door screaming.

Me: Mama, think about it. They made a sacrifice with my womb.

Mama: And what will they gain about that?

Me: (crying) This. They don't want to see me happy.

Mama: For someone who passed her matric with a bachelor you sound stupid. Get out of my house.

Me: Mama please don't do this.

From the corner of my eye

Advertisement

I see my father's car parking and he steps out and rushes to us.

Tata: What's going on?

The tug of war we were doing ceases. I use that as an opportunity to step back inside.

Mama: Why don't you ask her?

My father turns to me causing more tears to roll down my cheeks.

Tata: Princess what's going on?

I throw myself on him bursting in tears.

Me: They bewitched me.

Tata: Intoni? {What?}.

Mama: Akho bugqwirha bandawo apha. Umithi qha. {There's no witchcraft. She's pregnant}.

Like a someone being burned, my father removes me from his arms.

Tata: Huh?

Mama: Ufika nje besendikhulula. Bendicinga ukuba ndikhulisa umntana kodwa ithe kanti ndikhulisa umfazi lonke elixesha. {As

you arrive I was releasing her. I thought I was raising a child not knowing I was raising a wife all along}.

Me: Mama I…

She interjects.

Mama: Thula. {SHUT UP!}

Sniffing back the mucus, my lips quiver.

Me: Please don't do this to me. I'm still your child. Where am I suppose to go?

Mama: You should have thought of that.

Tata: You brought shame to us.

Me: I'm sorry.

Tata: Sorry is not enough. Get out.

I drop to my knees in front of them.

Me: Please reconsider your decision my parents. I have no idea how this happened. I have nowhere else to go. This has been my home since I was a child.

Mama: That's not our problem. We want you out.

Me: I have no one. You made me cut ties with my friends.

Mama: For a good course not knowing you're already a rotten potato. I told you countless times that stay away from them.

I choke on my tears.

Mama: At least they are street wise and play smart I can't say the same about you.

Me: Then I will have an abortion.

They gasp.

Tata: Uyokwenza lomanyala pha kude kwa. {Do that far away from my house}.

My mother nods in agreement. I thought this will make them happy and get back in their good books. I don't know anymore.

AZASAKHE

I pack my stuff after saving my work and walk out of the room to the security.

Me: Goodman I'm done.

G.man: I thought everyone has left the building. I was about to lock you in.

Me: My supervisor from my department was not in so I had to do the reports. Is Mr Collins still in?

G.man: In his office.

Me: See you tomorrow.

G.man: What does a man have to do in order to get a date with you?

Sihle: That man needs to run as fast as his feet can take him while he still can because this woman is taken.

G.man: I wasn't talking to you.

Sihle: You didn't mention any names so I figured the conversation is open to anymore.

Goodman clicks his tongue and picks up the keys and walks away from us. I giggle.

Me: I thought you already left.

Sihle: I need a lift.

I laugh.

Me: Kodwa mntase uyawuthanda umhlaba owehlelayo. {You love easy things}.

She laughs and waves me off.

Me: I'll ask him to drop you.

Sihle: Have you thought about what we spoke about?

Me: Yes actually and you were right.

Sihle: Of course I am.

I smile shaking my head.

Me: I’m going to speak to him tonight and we can find a common ground. No matter how many times I try to convince myself that I’m not married it doesn’t change the fact that his my husband. He will always be there, whether I like it or not.

Sihle: True.

Me: The contract binds me to him for the next coming 5 years so if you can’t beat them why not join them?

Sihle: As long as I’m getting free rides and sometimes free lunch and shopping I’m not complaining.

We laugh.

Me: Let me hand this to that old man the clock out.

Sihle: You’ll find me outside.

I hand her my bag and walk to Mr Collins office. The door is widely open.

Me: Knock.

Mr Collins: You’re already in.

I giggle as he wipes his mouth. Isn’t he too old to be eating a magnum? My taste buds come alive. As soon I’m out of here my first stop is to treat myself in one.

Me: Counted, signed and delivered.

Mr Collins: Thank you. You can place them on that table on top. I will go through them at home.

I nod and follow his instructions. Instead of walking out my feet force me to stand rooted on my spot and watch him bite the chocolate delicately. Feeling my eyes on him, he raises his head.

Mr Collins: Something wrong?

Me: Awubali ndikumuncele yona kayi one nje kwenzela amazinyo akho angazophuma? {Don't you wish I could suck it for you just once so that your teeth won't fall out?}.

Mr Collins: I didn't catch that and if it's a day off it's a no.

Me: Ngoba? Yilento ndimnyama lento ikwenza ungafuni ukundimuncisa? Nathi siyafikelela kuyo. {Why? Is it because I'm black that's why you don't want me to suck it? We also can afford it}.

Mr Collins: (confused) What?

I turn on my heels and walk out of his office. Sometimes my mouth has a mind of its own. And doesn't the man know I can buy him more that what his having right now? For the fact that he didn't give me a chance to suck it I'm going to generously buy everyone a magnum tomorrow except for him.

22

AZASAKHE

The car parks at Sihle's house and she steps out.

Sihle: (mouthful) Thank you for the ride. Mntase I'll see you tomorrow. Don't forget we are going to Kuhle's hose after work.

Me: Text me in the morning so I can pack something I change into because I will forget.

Sihle: Love you lots, bye.

I wave at her mother on the door as the car drives off.

Me: Can we pass at my house. I need to check up on me.

He nods. I lean back on the chair and bite my magnum. I bought three of them for Sihle and him but he declined my offer. He switches on the radio to bat the awkward silence.

Me: I won't take long.

I murmur stepping out and rush inside after dropping the stick. Knocking twice, I open the door and walk in just as Nat opens the door.

Me: Hey.

Nat: Hi, is everything okay?

Me: Everything is fine. I came to check up on you guys. Is there something you're short of?

Nat: We are still fine. By the way I wanted to run something by you.

I pull the barstool and make myself comfortable.

Nat: I was thinking of renting out the back room so we use that money for grocery and stuff.

Me: That's actually not a bad idea. Who are you and what have you done with Natasia?

She stumbles towards me and snacks my shoulder.

Nat: I'm still your elder.

I laugh.

Me: I really like this Natasia I'm seeing. She's more calm and more thinks for others.

Nat: A girl got to do what a girl got to do especially when you're no longer in your parents shadows.

Me: Have you found a tenant yet?

Nat: I wanted to speak to you first and no I haven't found anyone.

Me: As long as that someone doesn't take advantage of you and turns my mother's yard into a tarven then I'm fine.

I jump to my feet and kiss her cheek.

Me: I’m proud of the person you’re becoming. Kiss them goodnight for me. I have to go.

She nods and ushered me to the door. I wave her goodbye and step in the car.

Me: Sorry I took to long.

Sandile: You didn’t.

I heavily sigh and shift my eyes to him.

Sandile: I can feel your eyes piercing through my skin. Spit it out.

He murmured still keeping his eyes on the road.

Me: I’m just wondering why me.

He excuses his breath.

Sandile: You already know the reason. Why are we having thus conversation?

Me: I want to understand how does it happen? You only saw me once and mysterious fell in love.

Sandile: I don’t expect you to understand because you haven’t through that experience. When you meet the one you just know.

He shrugs turning on the corner of our street.

Me: Maybe that's the problem.

He presses the remote and drives in after it opens and close it. We both jump out and walk inside after it parks. I unlock the door and walk to my room. Opening the closet, I look for the contract and walk back to the living room. I find him taking off his cufflinks and waistcoat.

Me: Do you have a minute?

Sandile: As long as you won't disturb my peace then I'm fine.

I arch my brow.

Sandile: I'm giving you time to digest everything but just know that time will expire and I will also get tired of chasing you and begging you.

Me: There's no need because I want us to talk. We have to find a common ground in order to co exist.

I place the contract in front of him and take a seat opposite him.

Sandile: What is this?

He picks up the envelop and opens it.

Me: It's the contract. I want you to break it down from word to word.

Sandile: (frowning) Didn't Kagiso go through it with you?

Me: He didn’t but he just happens to be the lawyer not someone who married me.

He chuckles.

Sandile: Okay

Advertisement

what do you want to know?

Me: For starters, what happens to my brother’s protection since you’re out?

Sandile: Nothing has changed. It continues until you breach the contract.

I nod.

Me: Understandable. So that also includes the 5 years time limitations you gave me?

Sandile: Yes, if you don’t love me in the next coming five years then the protection also stops.

Again, I nod.

Sandile: What else do you want to know?

Me: What if I don’t want this?

Sandile: Then you’re free to walk away right now. The door is open and nothing is stopping you from doing so.

I swallow hard.

Me: What will happen to my brother?

Sandile: I'm not going to terminate our contract just because you fail to do your part. It will continue for the next 5 years whether you're in or out.

Me: What about the money I spent?

Sandile: Take it as little donations I did on you. Not everyone is lucky at love, right?

The pain in his eyes and the fake smile breaks my heart. Maybe I have been too selfish, inconsiderate about this whole thing. I know the feeling of loving someone only for him or her to disappoint you like that. I have experience that with Kuhle and I thought he was the one for me until he did what he did. May his cheating not rest in peace.

Me: Everyone deserves to be loved.

Sandile: I guess my luck ran out.

Me: Don't say that. You still have me.

My eyes widen in shock. What? Is that my mouth that just uttered that? He chuckles.

Sandile: Do I?

Me: Yes you have.

Sandile: I want you to love me genuinely not because you're obliged to. Not because you're pressured to do so or because of you're brother. I want to be loved openly and I want my woman to be not ashamed of me or what I do.

Me: I never said I was ashamed of you.

Sandile: You didn't have too because if you were not you would have worn your ring everywhere.

Me: I didn't want to get mugged.

He cracks a thin smile.

Sandile: You're not the first person to wear such an expensive ring and beside you were not using a a public transport these months but an Uber.

I smack my lips shut and place my hand on the bridge of my nose. Even a deaf person can hear my excuses and how lame they are. I barely recognise each word that is escape my lips. What really happened to me because I'm not this person? Maybe it's the fact that Kuhle and Akhona have taken me for a ride for a very long time and he happened to come at a time where I was selfish about myself.

Me: I admit I'm guilty and I'm sorry.

He frowns narrowing his eyes at me.

Me: Your money got in my head the benefits it came with. I'm used to be a people pleaser and for the first time in my life I thought why not be selfish just for once.

Sandile: I'm sorry if you felt that was what I was doing but those were not my intentions. Mine were pure and full of love. I saw someone I could build a future with. I don't random pick woman I could cuff but those split seconds I saw you I knew you were the one and did what I did.

Me: You're used to throwing money to get your way and I fell for the trap but that's not who I am. I admit it managed to tickle my sensitive parts but that's not just who Azasakhe is.

Sandile: I know.

Me: What is expected of me?

Sandile: Huh?

Me: If I agree to this and that's a big if.

He smirks.

Me: I said IF.

I emphasize on the words causing him to laugh.

Sandile: I didn't say anything.

Me: You didn't need to because it was written all over you.

He chuckles.

Sandile: Nothing much but just be there for me emotional and physical. I'm not perfect and I have my flows and I don't expect you to be my doormat. I hate women who are push overs.

Me: Hell will freeze the day I become someone's push over.

He smiles shaking his head. Me: I'm willing to give this a chance.

Sandile: (smiling) Excuse me?

I snort rolling my eyes. Me: I'm giving us a chance and should you blow it believe me your family will bury you as a mince meat. He throws his head back laughing. I giggle.

Sandile: Come here.

I leap up to my feet and walk to him. He lowers me to his lap and brushes his lips on mine. I hold what was used to his firm chest and close my eyes. Giving him a chance what do I have to lose?

Sandile: Thank you. Kodwa ke mama intombi iqoma la ithanda khona.

I glare at him causing him to laugh. You can take a Zulu man out of the ghetto but you can't take the ghetto out of him. I can't believe I got married in the interrogation room. Where is my jail wedding ring nogol?

23

TWO WEEKS LATER

AZASAKHE

Assurance was the only thing I needed to know that I was doing the right thing. These past two weeks have been blissful. It only took us that kiss to know that we are really into each other. We promised each other to take things slowly and that also includes intimacy. Pressing my lips, I watch him walk to to towards me.

Me: Hey.

Akhona: You look beautiful.

Me: You don't look bad yourself.

Akhona: I'm see this glow in you.

Me: I'm just happy.

Akhona: And that's all I wanted for you.

Me: My time is limited. I promise I'll stay longer the next time I visit.

Akhona: Thank you for popping by.

Me: I'll also come with the kids.

Akhona: Please do so. I miss them.

Me: And they miss you too. I'm building two flats back at home for them.

Akhona: I hope you're not misusing his money. Don't let it change who you are.

Me: I'm using my salary to build not his money. Since you've got three baby mama's and 5 kids I added two more flats so that the rent goes straight to the kids.

Akhona: Won't it cause conflict?

Me: No, each knows that which flat are they suppose to collect the money from. Natasia will be taking the one that was already there and it's her responsibilities to make sure her tenants follow the rules and so are the others. Thembi's mother has her own responsibility and so Londeka.

Akhona: I like what you did. I'm happy you're talking care of them.

Me: You'll be surprised to hear that the idea come with Natasia. She's the one who gave me an idea and I ran with it.

Akhona: Natasia? As in my Natasia? The coloured woman?

He fires the questions at once making me to laugh.

Me: Yes that Natasia.

Akhona: She's growing up.

I pick up my phone and look at the time.

Me: Bhuti time is not on my side and I'm sorry I came empty handed.

I leap up to my feet.

Akhona: Where are rushing of too?

Me: We decided to make things official. I'm getting married in 2 and half hours.

Akhona: (shocked) What?

Me: I know what's on your mind but it still doesn't change anything. We are just officiating things in front of people and God this time.

Akhona: Are you happy though?

Me: My smile should be your answer.

Akhona: Well in that case let me not keep you. Wishing you all the best little sis.

Me: Thank you for the blessings. I love you.

Akhona: I love you too.

I turn on my heels and make my way inside. My phone rings as I step out.

Me: (smiling) Hey.

Kagiso: It’s not him but me.

Me: Kagiso this relationship is not working for me. What are you doing with my man’s phone ? Please don’t tell me you’re seeing as a potential lover because his already taken.

Kagiso laughs while Sandile yells on the background.

Sandile: Tell him my love.

Kagiso: I love women thank you very much. He wants to know how far are you?

Me: I’m outside the prison.

Kagiso: We are worried about time. Will you make it?

Me: Sihle is already at the hotel and busy with her makeup. When I arrive I’m sure they will be done and attend to me.

Kagiso: Please be on time because he forgot to tell you that he hates people who are not punctual. He just looses his shit when you waste time.

Me: Got it!

I hang up and walk to the car. I never thought I will be getting married 9 months after my mother passed away and a week later my ex was laid to rest. I know his family will be on my case but who the hell cares what they have to say?

SANDILE

I put on my cufflinks and turn to him.

Me: Is she already at the hotel?

Kagiso: No but she’s already on her way.

Mischief flick in his eyes.

Me: Whatever it is just keep it to yourself because you’re about to say shit.

He laughs raising his hands in surrender.

Kagiso: You can still walk away you know.

Me: Not a chance. I’m already married so what’s your point?

Kagiso: You do realise after this the media will be all over you. From your release and your sudden marriage?

Me: I’m aware of that.

Kagiso: The question is Aza really aware of that?

Before I could reply the door opens and Tyson and Ade walks in with a bottle of scotch and glasses.

Ty: I brought my car and a cashed out some cash.

I raise my eyebrows.

Me: For what?

Ty: In case you want to chicken out.

Laughter.

Kagiso: Told him the same thing.

Ade: Don’t listen to this fools, Dlamini. They know nothing about love.

He opens the bottle and hands us the glasses after pouring the drink.

Ty: A toast to the maniac for getting cuffed.

We laugh.

Me: Tsek Tyson.

Kagiso: You can still change your mind.

I raise my middle finger.

Kagiso: On a serious note, I’ve seen you two together and maybe love isn’t that bad. Maybe there’s someone out there for me to. Wishing you and Mrs prosperity and growth.

Ade: To Mr and Mrs Dlamini.

We click our glasses and cringe after knocking down the poison.

NARRATOR

Dressed in her white princess gown

Advertisement

Aza ironed the dress with her hands. Her nerves were shooting skyrocket and disturbing her to enjoy this moment. It was a pity none of her family members were there but her brothers kids counted for something right? She opened the window just to peek outside. Some may say it was too soon for her to her married to him but from her perspective she's been married to this man for three months so what was two weeks later after giving him a chance? Happiness doesn't wait for you to come to your senses but eventually moves to those who appreciated it and that's how she felt. He was some kind of a happy place for her. A safe heaven she can rely on after everything. Love only comes many times but true love comes once and it would been stupid for her to just let it slip it out of her grip. Her phone ring snapping her out of her daze. She smiled turning to it thinking it was her husband but frowned upon seeing Busi's name.

Aza: Busi?

Busi: (shaky voice) H…hi.

The door flies open and the wedding planner walks in.

Planner: It's time.

Aza: Busi I have to go. You caught me on the wrong time.

Busi: Can you lend me some c…

The planner snatches the phone out of her grip and disconnect the call.

Planner: You'll call him or her back later. I need this gig and if I fail your husband threatened not to pay me. Everything has to be perfect.

Aza: (giggling) He was just pulling your leg. I'm ready.

Planner: Then let's go.

She picks up her bouquet and walks out and the planner locks the door behind her. Sucking a deep breath, Aza welled herself to calm down. Her heart kept missing it's rhythmic beats. Stopped walking in front of her bridesmaids which consists of Natasia and Sihle as a maid of honour meanwhile in Sandile side it was Ade and Kagiso as the best man.

Planner: Okay the groom just walked with his team and now my beautiful bride it's your turn.

Natasia: Aza?

She snapped her fingers in her face.

Aza: What?

Natasia: Are you ready?

Aza: My stomach is acting up and I need the bathroom.

Sihle: Intoni? Asoze kaloku. Minca.{ What? Never. Hold it}.

Nat: It's just nerves. Calm down.

Exercising her breath, Aza turned to them.

Aza: I'm ready.

Planner: Ladies you go first and she will follow behind you.

Natasia walked in front with Thembi as the flower girl and Sihle followed after them a while later.

Kagiso: My offer still stands.

Sandile: Shut up.

He chuckles and shifted his eyes to door. Sandile's breath hitched on his throat. There she was walking down as nerves as she was. Her fisted hands were indication enough that she was trying to calm her nerves. Aza counted her steps to beat up time. She raised her head and frowned. Who came with that stupid rule that brides are suppose to catwalk all the way to the front? She so badly wanted to pick up her pace but fought against that. She smiled and take those slow calculated steps of hers. She halted on her steps and turn to look behind her. She sighed in relief. She has reached the middle. At least she was halfway through her journey, just a few more steps waiting for her. Determine to reach her husband, Aza forced her legs to move and smiled locking eyes with her husband. Finally after what feels like hours she reached him and held his hand.

Sandile: You look beautiful.

Aza: I had to do a turn over to make sure if I was marrying the right man. You look handsome.

Kagiso: Shh. The pastor is praying.

They giggled as the guest sat down after the prayer.

Pastor: We are gathered here to witness this beautiful union. Whoever feels like this couple shouldn't be united in holy matrimony speak now or forever hold your peace.

The room became dead silent.

Pastor: Very well then, we may proceed.

The sound of heels clacked outside the room before the door flies open revealing Mamello. Kagiso and Sandile shared a similar look before muttering.

Kagiso & Sandile: Fuck!

NARRATOR

Sucking a deep breath, Sandile turned to Kagiso and he nodded then marched to her.

Kagiso: Don’t cause a scene, please leave.

Mamello: It’s a such a joyous occasion so why should I?

Kagiso: Don’t make me force you because you won’t like it.

Mamello: I’m not going anywhere.

She bypassed him and padded to the front. Kagiso held her arm.

Mamello: Get your filthy hands of me before I cause a real scene here. Don’t forget we have journalists in here and just a scream from me they will write whatever comes to mind first.

She yanked her hand and made her way to the couple.

Mamello: Weeks later without any call or text.

Sandile: Now is not a good time.

He spits out through gritted teeth.

Mamello chuckled.

Mamello: So the go and have fun trip was a way of getting rid of me.

She mimicked his voice.

Mamello: Was it before you knew you were getting out or was it after you were out?

Words got stuck on the roof of Sandile's tongue. Of course the trip was after he was released but the woman doesn't know that because she just woke up with a ticket of an all paid trip to Mauritius in her room. She didn't ask much because she knew it was from her man and it in her mind he was trying to apologize for avoiding her these past months.

Aza: Excuse me.

Mamello turned to her.

Aza: You're blocking the way. I need to pass.

Mamello: Didn't you mother teach anything about stealing people's men?

Aza turned to Sihle.

Aza: Akathethi nam neh? {She's not talking to me right? }.

Sihle: Tuu mntase. {Not at all}.

Aza: Okay.

She nodded and racked her dress up and pushed Mamello out if the way and stumbled to the door. Mamello stagger losing balance.

Sandile: MaDlamini.

He tried to run after her but Mamello blocked his way.

Mamello: You’re not about to disrespect me like that and run after another woman. I gave you my heart a soul for years.

She screamed in frustration.

Kagiso: Aza h…

She raised her hand shutting him up.

Aza: Don’t bother.

Defeated, Kagiso stepped out of the way and she walked out.

Mamello: You’re not about to dump me like a used bubblegum. Who is she and where does she come from?

Aza hummed a song all the way to her hotel room. The planner caught up with her

Aza: Can I have the key.

Planner: The wedding can still continue. They are getting rid of that girl.

Aza: Can I please have the key.

She handed it to her and Aza unlocked the door.

Aza: I need to be alone.

Pity flicked in the planner eyes. She nodded and watched her walk inside. Aza slammed the door and locked it then started undressing still humming. She carefully placed the dress on the bed and slip on her own clothes she wore earlier on. Her jeans, sneakers and top. She carefully unclipped the pins in her head and put on her cap letting her weave to pool on her shoulders then picked up her stuff around the room. Her phone was the last things she picked and frowned seeing more than 5 please call me from Busi and 7 missed calls from her. She dialled the voicemail number and listened to her voice mail.

Busi: Hey mntase, I hope you're okay.

She burst in tears.

Busi: I'm pregnant and my parents kicked me out. I've been staying at a motel for the past two weeks but I'm running out of cash. I need to find another place to stay. Can you please borrow me some cash and I'll pay you back when we get paid. My baby daddy is a cold, self absorbed bastard that doesn't want anything to do with me and this baby.

Aza clapped her hands once as it ended.

Aza: Ingxaki azipheli shame. {Problems doesn't end}.

She threw her phone on her handbag and padded to the door after requesting for a ride. She found almost everyone she knew at the door waiting on the other side.

Sihle: They got rid of her. The wedding can continue.

Aza: Okay.

She turned to Natasia.

Aza: Where are my children?

Nat: (frowning) They are inside. Why?

Aza: Can you please gather all of them and meet me outside with them.

Nat: Where are you going?

Aza: We're are going on a date.

Sihle: The wedding?

Aza: What wedding? At least I know my children won't lie to me like he has.

Sihle: Give him a chance to explain.

Aza: I love you mntase neh but this time let me be control of my life. I love how you've always been there

Advertisement

dragging me to the right path every time I loose my direction but just let me be me for once and do what's best for me.

She kissed her cheek.

Aza: I'll see you guys later. Tell the planner to feed the guest.

She causally walked outside humming.

Nat: I'm worried about her.

Sihle: Same here but there's something that tells me there's just something she's up to.

Natasia gasped.

Nat: You think she will hurt herself and the kids?

Sihle: (frowning) This is not the first time she will make public appearance. Both times were bad. She survived Kuhle's saga and she's will also survive this so no she won't hurt herself or the kids.

Nat: Should I let her take them?

Sihle: (sighing) Yes, Natasia. Those are brother's kids which automatically makes them her's too.

Nat nodded and walk back inside to pick up the kids and walked them outside. Aza opened the door of the cab for them.

Aza: See you later.

She jumped in and the driver speed off. Sandile ran outside.

Sandile: Where is she?

Nat: She just left.

Sandile: Can I borrow your phone?

He dialled her number after receiving the phone.

Aza: Nat.

Sandile: Baby it's me.

Aza: Oh, hello you.

Sandile: Can you please come back so we can talk.

Aza: No, I'm going out on a solo date with my kids so please don't try to follow me or blow up my phone. I need to concentrate on this date because I know they will never lie to me.

Sandile released a sigh.

Sandile: I'm sorry.

Aza: I'm also sorry I left you at the alter. I'm sure all of you were expecting crazy Aza to come to play but I choose my battles wisely and that one just happened to be not mine. I gave you time to speak your girlfriend in…

Sandile: She's not my girlfriend.

He raised his voice.

Aza: Whatever she is then to you in peace so let me have this date also in peace.

She hanged up after that and turned to the kids.

Aza: We going to play and there's no limitations today.

Kids: (cheerful) Yey!

She leaned back on the armrest and breathed out. She will deal with the betrayal later for now she has to be a parent to this munchies and give them her undivided attention.

-

-

Shuddering, Busi stole a glance at her phone. It has been nearly two hours she sent Aza that voicemail and the woman hasn't got back to her. What was she doing that was so important? She raised her head and heard another wrenching scream coming out of the room next to where she was sitting. She squirmed in her seat while her heart skipped a beat. The curtain slides to the side and the woman walks out drenched in blood.

Woman: Did you manage to get the money?

Busi: I'm still waiting for my friend to respond.

Woman: Then that means you will have to wait until the money is in. I can't risk doing an abortion on you only for you to die on me without paying me.

Busi: Please I don't want this child.

Woman: Money first sis. Next.

The woman next to her leaped up to her feet and walked to the room while the one who was inside walked out. Looking at her, Busi saw the snail walk she was taking.

Busi: Is it painful?

Woman: (crying) It's the most painful thing I've ever experienced. Run while you still can.

Busi: I don't want this baby.

The woman cautiously walked to the door with tears running down her face. As of que, Busi heard another scream coming from the room. She trembled in her spot breathing heavily. Her phone pings s message. She unlocked it and saw a bank notification. Tears welled in her eyes. Her brother Bandile had sent her a thousand rand. She called him immediately.

Busi: (crying) Thank you so much.

Bandile: Banele also contributed.

Busi: Thank you.

Bandile: It's the least we can do. I will try to speak to the rents again.

Busi: I'll appreciate that.

Bandile: Later.

He hanged up and Busi shoved her phone on her pocket. Just like the first lady who walked out in tears the second one followed with the same look.

Busi: I've got the money.

Woman: Then come.

Busi walked behind her to the room. Her eyes fell on the bloody bucket full. Was that a head? Her eyes widen.

Woman: It's okay to be scared. Take out your jeans.

Busi's breath hitches on her throat. The room alone made her skin to crawl not to mention the that bucket.

Woman: That's how they come out if you're already far in months. How far are you?

Her eyes were glued to the bucket and she didn't hear the question.

Woman: Lady how far are you?

She raised her voice to gain her attention. Busi snapped out of her daze.

Busi: I'm not sure.

Woman: Take off you clothes.

Following the instructions, Busi's eyes kept shifting to the bucket. She climbed the bed and still kep t her eyes on the same spot.

Woman: If you could just lie down properly. Don't worry it will be like it wasn't here.

Busi: It?

Woman: Yes it.

Busi shook her head and jumped to her feet.

Woman: And now?

Busi: I'm sorry for wasting your time but I can't do this.

Woman: What?

The pure soul of that child on that bucket was calling upon her.

NARRATOR

Mamello: What do you think I am?

Sandile: I told you nicely that was a break up a gift and what did you do?

Mamello: You think you can break up with me then send me to some trip just to get married to someone who is not me. Do you think I'm that stupid?

Sandile: I'm asking you nicely to leave before I lose my shit.

Mamello: I'm not going anywhere until you tell me who is she?

She sat in the front row.

Journialist: Mr Dlamini is the wedding still continuing?

Journalist 2: Mr Dlamini who is the woman who just walked in?

Journalist 3: Mr Dlamini do you have anything to say for us?

Ade: Okay people, Mr Dlamini will release a statement when his ready. Why don't you all go to the reception and have a feast of your lives.

He chirped in jumping to his feet.

Mamello: You might as well cancel everything because I'm not moving from here.

They mumbled something inaudible under the breaths. Sandile shook his head and marched out of the room. Mamello clicked her tongue and tapped the sole of her heel on the floor. She had all the time in the world. If he think he will marry her in her presence then he has another thing coming. Nobody was getting married today especially if she was not the bride. She's been with this man for years and the only she gets a bloody trip to Mauritius only not his surname? She clicked her tongue and continued to sit patiently waiting for the bride to show while the guests were dishing up for themselves.

Kagiso: Seriously? Who pays someone a trip just in the name of a breakup?

Sandile scoffed.

Sandile: I'm not cold like you so excuse me for trying to be nice.

Kagiso: Nice? There's nothing nice about being dumped. You could have made it clear to her that you don't want her anymore instead of that. You gave her the impression that there was still something that might happen between the two of you. She's a liability just like Aza's ex was.

Sandile halted on his steps and turned to him.

Sandile: I maybe playing god with people's lives but I don't go around killing women.

Kagiso chuckled.

Kagiso: If you think this woman is just going to sit back and watch you be with someone else then clearly you underestimate her. A scorned woman is a very dangerous one.

Sandile: It won't get to that trust me.

Kagiso: For your sake I hope not because everything from the contract, to marriage and the parole would all be a waste.

Sandile: What are you trying to say?

Kagiso: You're ruining your own life that's what I'm trying to say. You don't need any one to sabotage you but yourself because that's just who you are.

Sandile: Kg you're crossing the line.

He cautioned but that just fuelled Kagiso more.

Kagiso: Fuck the line. If I don't tell you as your friend then who will? I was starting to let my guard down and relax that my boy was in good hands. I didn't need to go around threatening every bitch you fucked to back off.

Sandile: Wow! So you're the one who has been sabotaging my relationships all along?

He exclaimed devastated and forced his legs to move.

Kagiso: (shouting) That's because I was looking out for you. They were sucking you dry and one of them just happened to betray you.

Ceasing his movements, Sandile whipped his head turning to him.

Sandile: (shocked) What?

Kagiso: Did you actually thought the police mysterious knew where to find the money after the last heist? No, they didn't because someone snitched on you.

Sandile: And let me guess you let it all happen?

He sarcastically muttered.

Kagiso: Do you ever listen to me? I told you that I had a hunch about that security and pulled out on the last minute but did you listen? No, you didn't instead you went on with the mission and ended up in jail few hours later. The first time I saw that girl what did I tell you about her? Didn't I tell you that she's just like the last one, just in it for money not for love?

Sandile: Not every women out there is out to get me.

Kagiso: Exactly! You just become an easy target when you're in these ridiculous relationships of yours because you let your guard down and trust so easily. Wasn't she suppose to be on her trip? Who told her about the wedding?

He fired all the questions at once.

Kagiso: Not everyone sees the good side of a person like you do. Not every woman will love you for who you are. All they see on you is a walking cash cow because of your actions. Not everyone can be bought with money. Love is not about money all the time.

Sandile snickered.

Sandile: (mockingly) Says the expert of relationships. How many relationship have you been on too? One? Two? Forty-five?

Kagiso: You can mock me all you want but at the end of the day you know I'm telling you the truth. Aza didn't need your money but your love. You manipulated the situation by using her brother and left her no choice but to agree with whatever you were throwing at her. She's not just your typical girl you pick on the streets.

Sandile: Don't take about my wife as if you know her.

Kagiso: I didn't need to know her in order to know how her logical mind works. She's very sharp minded and smart. Do you know what she said to me the first time we met?

Sandile: Amuse me.

Kagiso: She negotiated her way out

refusing to sign the contract because she was in with her friend. Someone who isn't selfish like that automatically earns my respect. She spent days in that cell refusing to barge if her demands were not met and that should give you a clue of the type of woman she is. Fix your shit because you're in safe hands there.

He turned on his heels and navigated his way back to the reception. He snatched Ade's glass and knocked down the drink.

Ade: Kg I'm not the one who pissed you off.

Kagiso: That guy pisses me off sometimes.

Ade: Welcome to my world because my younger brother acts just like him.

Hee waved at the waiter and picked two flutes of champagnes and handed Kagiso one.

Kagiso: I need something stronger than this. Where is Ty?

Ade: Phone call.

Still standing on the same spot, Sandile was stunned. Kagiso has never been the one to approve his relationship and never be the one to give him a lecture about a woman his involved with unless it was business. He ran his hands on his face knowing he fucked up. He sighed and made his way to the room he was

assigned to. He looked for his phone and made a call. It rang until it sent him to voicemail. He listened to her voicemail box before he left a message.

Aza: Do you have a death wish? If no then stop call but if the answer is yes keep calling. Choose your answer wisely because my time is limited.

He chuckled at that.

Sandile: I was hoping to talk to you not your mailbox bit it's fine either way. I'm sorry about how things turned out today. I was wrong for not telling you in time but can you please get back to me when you get this. I'm worried about you.

He pressed sent after the voice on the end of the line gave him options and slide his phone in his pocket.

Sandile: Where can you be?

-

-

Hoping out of the cab, Aza paid the driver and made her way inside with the kids. She placed the takeaway on top of the counter and followed the noise of the kids all the way to the living room. She found Natasia smiling and nodding to what they were narrating.

Aza: Hey.

Nat: Hi.

She took of her cap and sat down.

Nat: Cartoons?

The kids nodded sitting on the carpet. She picked the remote and changed the channel then turned to Aza.

Nat: How are you feeling?

Aza: Disappointed and hurt. I didn't expect this from him but then again maybe my expectations were just to high.

Nat: I'm sorry.

Aza: Don't be. You're not the one who broke my heart and trust.

Nat: What are you going to do?

Aza: I don't know. I opened my heart for him and this is what I get in return? When will the public humiliation end for me?

Natasia eyes soften. She stood up and open her arms for her.

Nat: Don't cry.

Aza: I'm not crying. I did that once and I'm not going to do it again especially for a man.

Nat: Where to from here?

Aza: (chuckling) I don't know. I thought going out was going to cool off was going to give me a clear answer but I'm just stuck in

between going back and pretend everything didn't happen and walking away.

A knock come through the door breaking their moment.

Nat: I'll get it.

She broke the embrace and walked to the door. A few seconds she returned.

Nat: Aza you have a visitor.

Aza: If it's him please tell him I don't have an answer for him. I'm not ready.

Busi: Actually it's me.

She muttered padding towards her.

Aza: Much worse.

She mumbled under breath and throw her hands in the air dramatically.

Nat: I'll give you space. Kids let's go.

They grumbled walking away.

Busi: Can we talk?

Aza: The floor is yours.

Busi: I need a place to stay and I heard you were renting out the backroom.

Aza narrowed her eyes to her waiting for that apology but it never came. She chuckled.

Aza: Is that all?

Busi: Yes.

Aza: Unfortunately you can't be a tenant in my yard because the landlord is still in jail.

Busi: (frowning) What? You're here moc.

Aza: No, I'm not talking about my brother but myself. I'm still in that dirty, dark cell you left me in. No let me rephrase because it doesn't sound okay when I use singular. We are still in jail.

Busi: Aza I…

She interrupted her.

Aza: I don't know why would you want to be accommodated by someone selfish as me. The world revolves around me remember? It's always about me, me, me.

Busi's jaw dropped to the floor remembering her parting words to them.

26

BUSISIWE

Rejection is like a slap in the face. I didn't expect that answer from her. We've been friends since I could remember and I thought for the sake of that friendship she would give me the room. She was my last hope.

Me: Please I need this room.

Aza: Like I said we are still in jail.

Me: I'll be a good tenant. I won't bother you nor you will see me. I'll make myself invisible and much as I can. I won't give you a hard time when it's time to pay rent.

My chest tightness as I beg while tears blur my vision.

Aza: You betrayed me once and I give you the chance to do it again. I don't have parents that I can always run to when things get tougher for me.

I drop my eyes shame.

Me: Bendisoyika. Bendicinga sizophelela pha. {I was scared okay. I thought we were going to end up there}.

Aza: Fanele kaloku thina besingoyiki nto. Singomaqinasi kaloku thina. {It's clear we were not scared of anything. We are tougher}.

Busi: Stop putting words in my mouth. I miss you guys terribly. There's no day that I don't think about you and just wonder what are you up too and what's new in your lives.

I snap agitated.

Busi: I had no choice but do do what I did. My parents we…

She interjects.

Aza: My parents this, my parents that. I understand for my sake because I don't have any parents what about Sihle? Did you ever sit down and reflected on your decision?

Me: I…

I trailed off and sighed.

Aza: Exactly! Uyawubona lamnyango ubungene ngawo khaphinde uwusebenzise sis. {You see that door that used to walk use it again}.

Disappointed, I leap up to my feet. My lips quiver.

Me: I hope one day you'll put yourself in my shoes and see that I did what I did because I was scared.

I sniff and stumbled to the door. With each step I take tears roll down my eyes. I abruptly halt on the door thinking she will call me and say she's just pulling my leg. A minute passes with me still standing.

Aza: Is the door complicated for you to open?

I bite my lip to suppress the sob from escaping and walk out. Why can't she understand that I was in a tight corner? I'm sure if she was in my position she would have done the same thing. I did the first that come to mind at that time because of fear. Maybe if my parents didn't treat me like a child and saw an adult in me wouldn't be here. If they were not so strict on me I wouldn't have taken the root I took to get myself out of that cell. Sihle's laughter is the first thing I hear as I approach her gate. Opening the gate, I walk to kitchen and knock. The door opens and her laughter ceases. The smile on her face and her expression turns into grimace.

Me: H…

She shakes her head and slam the door on my face. I turn back and make my way to the gate. I burst in tears walking down the streets after closing the gate. I stand in the middle of the road as my chest closes up on me. A honk makes me rise my head and see a car approaching my way. I wipe my tears and force my legs to move to the pavement. The car slacks down a bit and the window rolls down. I lock eyes with my parents.

Mama: Such a disappointment.

She scrunches her nose and shake her head as my father drives off, leaving me like a total stranger on the side of the road. My

knees weakened on me. I sit back on the pavement and let the floods of gate open. I cry until I have hiccups. It's true when they say when days are dark friends are few.

KAGISO

Being the first born at home automatically makes me the deputy parent to my siblings but I didn't think that also applied to a grown man like Sandile. Sometimes he likes sending his brain on a vacation and use others brains. In simple words he doesn't use his brain at times. I don't know whether he thought Mamello will just applaud him for playing her or just walk away that easily. Of course that gold digger will fight tooth and nails for her spot which doesn't surprise me. Who will just walk away from their cash cow so easily? I don't think Sandile understands the danger of this situation his put himself into. And since he doesn't want to listen to me I'm going to fold my arms

Advertisement

sit back and just watch him ruin his own life. My phone chimes breaking me out of my thoughts. I shift the papers looking for it and smile seeing the caller ID.

Me: {My mother}.

Mme: Moshanyanaka o phela jwang? {My boy how are you?}.

I place the pen down and push the chair backwards then loosen the tie.

Me: After hearing your voice, I'm happy.

Mme: Don't make it sound like you missed me because if you did you would have called first.

Me: You know I'm busy.

Mme: I'm only hearing excuses from you.

I laugh.

Me: Okay you got me there but you know the real reason I don't call you.

Mme: I will preach that until you do me justice and bring me a daughter in law and grandchildren. I'm not getting old.

Mofokeng: Mogatsaka leave the boy alone. He will bring one when his ready.

Mme: Papa emisa ho mamela puisano ya rona. Ha ke u khathatse ha a u bitsa. {Papa stop eavesdropping on our conversation. I don't disturb you when he calls you}.

I chuckle.

Mme: Kana Kagiso ke ntse ke eme ka qeto ya ka. Morali oa MaMolefe o tla ba ngoetsi e kholo. O theohile lefatšeng mme o hlompha baholo. {Kagiso I still stand on my decision. MaMolefe's daughter will make a great daughter in law. She's down to earth and respectful to elders}.

Me: O ya bona hore o qala? Nna le Boipelo re keke ra etsahala mme. {You see you have started? Boipelo and I will never happen Mme}.

The door of the office slightly opens and my PA stucks her head.

PA: Boss do you have a minute?

I nod.

Me: Mme can you hold on for a second.

I place the call on hold and shift my gaze to her.

Me: Something wrong?

PA: There's a woman here who wants to see you.

Me: Who is it?

P.A. I've never see her before.

Me: Tell one of the juniors to handle her case.

PA: She specifically asked for you.

My interest piqued.

Me: Let her in.

She nods and walks out. I switch the call back on.

Me: Mme can we please finish this conversation later. I promise to call you back.

I hang up before she could reply and raise my head the same time the door opens. She keeps her eyes on her feet as she walks in and stops in front to my desk. I leap up to my feet to welcome her.

Me: Welcome to Mofokeng Law firms. How can I assist you?

She raises her head.

Busi: Hi.

Me: You got to be kidding me. What the fuck do you want from me?

BUSISIWE

After my crying session yesterday, I went back to the motel and paid for the night with the money my brothers gave me. It broke my heart to see my parents driving off like that like they didn't know me. Why can't they forgive me? I'm not the first daughter to disappoint her parents and surely not the last. They should be grateful that I made it this far. Some of my age mates broke the record when they did teenage pregnancy but still it doesn't count for something to them. It's not like I killed Jesus or anything. I'm just pregnant. Waking up this morning, I set my mind on finding this child's father so he can also play his role. It wasn't hard to find him and his law firm. His PA was friendly when I told her I need to see him. My heart thuddes on my ribcage as I walk in his office and keep my eye to my shoes.

Kagiso: Welcome to Mofokeng Law firms. How can I assist you?

I raise my head and look at him.

Me: Hi.

Kagiso: You've got to be kidding me. What the fuck do you want?

He bellowed in rage causing me to flinch.

Me: I just need few minutes of your time.

Kagiso: Wasn't the money I gave you not enough?

Me: I…

He interrupts me.

Kagiso: Do you want more?

He walks around his desk and opens his drawer. He takes out his wallet and throws a couple of notes my way. I gasp in shock while my heart breaks.

Me: (frowning) No, I …

Again he interrupts me. Why can't he give me a chance to speak?

Kagiso: What? Is it not enough? Do you need some more? Just name your price.

Tears stream down my cheeks. Looking at the notes on the floor, I resist the urge to storm out of this office and leave them there but that money will be a good use to me in the long run. I sniff and bend down picking the notes on the floor then stood to my full height.

Kagiso: What is your price?

He mutters paging what I assume is a cheque book.

Me: You know what.

I furiously wipe the infuriating tears that keep falling down.

Kagiso: (snapping) What? You're pathetic like a fly following someone's shit.

Me: I hope you won't regret this day years from now on.

I turn on my heels holding my small bump and walk out of his office. I hold the wall for balance and drop my eyes to my stomach.

Me: I guess it's just the two of us against the world.

27

AZASAKHE

I can’t seem to get used to seeing my face all over social media. Again the Nyan Nyan girl made the headlines and this time it’s the gangsters love triangle. My face is splashed all over the news and I can bet with my life that the newspapers are selling like hot fried chips. Journalists taking pleasure on writing about someone’s life without any care. Not that I blame them because it’s their job at the end of the day. Locking my locker my phone rings in my hand.

Me: Hello?

Akhona: Hey.

I smile.

Me: It’s so good to hear your voice. I miss you.

Akhona: I miss you too.

Silence.

Akhona: I saw the news.

Me: That’s my everyday life. Maybe I should charge them for making me famous again.

Akhona: I trusted him.

Me: The feeling is mutual.

Akhona: I’m really worried about you.

Me: I’m fine. I’m used to people gawking at me everywhere I go just like now my colleagues are gossiping about me. I guess each and every man I get involve with will humiliate and embarrass me.

Mr Collins walks in the locker room.

Me: My boss is here. We’ll talk.

I hang up.

Mr Collins: Stuff meeting in five.

Me: Ekuseni apha? {So early?}

Sihle: Ulwimi lwam lusalele for ukuba ndikhumshe mna. {My tongue is still sleeping for me to be speaking English}.

I giggle and follow behind the others all the way to the boardroom.

Mr Collins: Where is Busi?

All eyes turn to us. Sihle and I both shrugged.

Mr Collins: Aren’t you the three musketeers or should I say the Powerpuff girls?

Me: No.

Mr Collins: I like bubbles more than sparkle face.

He giggles.

Mr Collins: I also watch Johnny Test. His scientific sister are my favourite not to mention his dog Dickie. Do you also watch them?

Silence. He clear his throat.

Mr Collins: Never mind that.

Sihle: His weird.

I giggle.

The boardroom opens and Busi barges in.

Busi: I'm sorry I'm late.

Mr Collins: Take a sit we were about to start.

He waits for her to take sit before he addresses us.

Mr Collins: As you know this company is known nation wide. There's a new branch that recently opened in North West and the store needs a manager.

Smiiles fill my colleagues faces. Luke leans over and whispers

Luke: Watch me take that position.

I snort.

Me: In your dreams.

Mr Collins: Looking closely to each one of you, we had to choose someone who has a strong character and a team player. This person shows capabilities of holding down the position. I'm not saying all of you don't have that but some of you it isn't that strong. It's weak and afraid to show it but this person has proved to us that she's the right person.

I lean closely to Luke.

Me: You were saying?

He scoffs.

Mr Collins: Drum roll please.

Sihle: Who do you think it is?

Me: Maybe one of his side dishes.

She burst in laughter while I giggle.

Mr Collins: Congratulations to Sihle Gqoma.

Sihle: Isn't he diabetic?

I choke on my laughter and tap my thigh.

Mr Collins: Jennifer and Sihle care to share the joke?

We look at each and press our lips together containing the laughter.

Sihle: (giggling) It's an inside joke sir.

Mr Collins: Here was I thinking you guys are discussing Sihle's new salary.

Us: What?

Mr Collins: I've chosen you, Sihle as that managerial position.

We look at each other and erupt in screams.

Me: Congratulations mntase.

Sihle: Oh

Advertisement

my goodness I don't know what to say. Did you guys clap hands for me?

Laughter.

Mr Collins: They did give you a standing ovation but you two were in deep in your gossip. That was all everyone get back to work.

Me: Hello, Ms manager.

Sihle: (giggling) Hello darling. I'm happy you're not letting what the headlines are saying to drag you down.

I wave her off.

Me: It's not the first time I'm on the public spot and I'm getting used to it. Forget about that let's talk about your new position.

Sihle: I don’t speak to subordinates anymore.

She teases causing me to laugh. We walk out of the boardroom and find Busi waiting for us on the corridors.

Busi: Congratulations.

Sihle: Thank you.

I slide my hand in my pocket and take out my phone. I heavily sigh when I find another text from him. If it’s not a text then it’s a phone call.

“I never promised you a happily ever after. And I never said I was perfect. I have a past just like every human being. But I still stand on what I said. I love you woman}

Just like the other text, I ignore it and slide the phone in my pocket. It rings in seconds. I hold my bridge nose and text him back.

“I don’t remember saying you were perfect. All I need from you was the truth from the get go. I’m at work so please stop disturbing my peace}

I press send and walk to my department.

-

-

Sihle: You’re not paid to work during lunch time.

Me: Sisi I'm not in your level. I'm not manager like you.

She giggles as I pack my stuff.

Sihle: Lunch is on me.

I dramatically gasp and hold my chest.

Me: Shut the front door. You're buying me lunch? Sifuna ukusibizela isichotho wena. {Don't call the rain upon us}.

We laugh walking out of the building.

Sihle: Where do you want to eat?

Me: You're serious about buying me lunch?

Sihle: Yes mntase. Just take it a little token of appreciation for everything. I smile nodding.

Sihle: So where to?

Me: Any place is fine for me, as long we get served food.

Sihle: Burger King it is.

We make our way to the store and place an order then wait for order on unoccupied table.

Sihle: Mntase ungajiki neh but uK wakho ugqibo ngena. {Don't turn neh because Sandile's side piece just walked in}.

My head automatically whips to the counter and find her placing her order. She's with her two friends who immediately

nudge her to my direction. She stares at me and flips her frontal wig backwards.

Mamello: Imagine him leaving me for an intern because I heard that she's just an intern.

Her friends giggle. Sihle: Don't stoop to her level.

Me: I wasn't going to do so.

Mamello: (louder) I bet she can't afford to buy designer handbags like mine. Friend 1: She's not in your league.

Me: She's raising her voice just so that I can hear her. So immature.

Sihle: (rolling eyes) Tell me about it. I don't know why do we do this to ourselves shame.

Mamello: (louder) I'm thinking of giving her that bag I bought on my trip shame. Friend 2: Which one friend?

Mamello: (louder) The LV one. I'm sure she doesn't know that signature LV stands for Lucky Vilakazi.

Us: Isn't it Louis Vuitton?

We share a look and burst into laughter.

Sihle: (laughing) Lucky Vilakazi.

Me: (laughing) Qaluyiva!

28

AZASAKHE

I have never been that person who confronts side chicks. Kuhle respected me enough to keep his side chicks away from me and until this day none of them have confronted me. And besides confronting a side chick is a thing of the past that is done by kids in high school or primary. The girl wanted my attention the minute she walked in but I didn't give it to. It didn't end on Lucky Vilakazi but she publicly declared that they have been together for years. I ignored her the whole hour I had of my lunch time until I left the store. I expected better from her. For her age she's so immature.

I just knocked off and I'm in Build it looking at my material that I just purchased.

Me: Will this be enough?

Assistant: How many flats are we talking about?

Me: Three.

He goes around surveying them and nod.

Assistant: This should be enough.

I smile and make my way to the counter to pay. My phone rings just as I fish for my wallet. Casting my eyes on the roof, I breathe out and pick it up because I know he won't stop calling.

Me: Hello.

Sandile: Thank God.

He breathed out on the end of the line.

Sandile: I'm losing my mind here.

Me: I know.

Sandile: I'm sorry.

Me: I know. Just like how you have been tailing me since I knocked off.

Sandile: I had to make sure that you're okay.

Me: I'm still in one piece and no part of me has been taken away from what happened.

Sandile: Can I talk you home so we can talk?

Me: Sure.

He exhales loudly.

Sandile: I love you.

Me: See you in a few.

I hang up and take the receipt and fold it then shove it inside the wallet.

Me: When will they be delivered?

Cashier: First thing tommorrow morning ma'am. Please check if you have written the right address because people tend to write not the correct one at times because they are in a hurry.

I go through the slip then nod.

Me: It's the right one. Thanks.

He smiles at me.

Cashier: Can I get an autograph?

I giggle.

Me: I forgot that I'm a celebrity but I haven't reached that level yet. So maybe one day.

He laughs.

Cashier: I'll hold you to that.

I smile and playful roll my eyes and padded to the door. I squint my eyes trying to locate his car and finally find it. His back is leaning on the door of the driver's side. I make my way towards it and halt on my steps when I see another figure. I chuckle and clap my hands once. Is this girl stalking me or I'm giving myself too much credit? I'm a celebrity right now and I don't know why didn't I think of hiring bodyguards. I crane my ear to eavesdrop on their conversation.

Sandile: Don't force my hand please.

Mamello: What is that she has that I don't have?

Sandile: I'm not discussing my wife with you. Stay in your lane.

Frustration laced in his tone.

Mamello: I will keep stalking her until she gives me the time of her day.

Sandile: Don't push me, Mamello because you won't like what I will become.

He threatens. I clear my throat.

Me: Am I disturbing?

Mamello: Yes you are. Can't you see my man are busy grasshopper.

I laugh in TshiVenda then bend down a little.

Me: Ndaa!

Looking at me acknowledging her. Why is she looking at me like I've grown to horns? Did I say something wrong? I should have known it it's not Ndaa but Ahh.

Me: Ahh!

I mentally pat myself on the back for getting it right this time.

Me: I know you aren't talking to me.

Mamello: I'm talking to you.

She screams like a child throwing tantrums. Somebody remind me how old is she again? Because no grown woman will act like this.

Sandile: Baby s…

I raise my hand interrupting him.

Me: I have a suggestion. Why don't we all go back home to discuss this because right now we are getting audience.

Sandile: No, we are not going anywhere with her.

Mamello: You're not going anywhere with him but in I am.

I nod.

Me: I'll take an Uber then.

Sandile: Babe?

Me: You'll find me home.

Mamello: Vele tsamaya straat mate.

She yells. I feel my blood boiling. I refuse to stoop to her level but she's grating my tits right now. I breathe in and out.

Sandile: You're crossing the line.

He cautions.

Me: Let her be. Everyone has a right to have a freedom of speech.

I turn on my heels and make my way back to the store after I remembered that I promised my niece a skipping rope. The assistant who was helping me seemed shocked to see me again.

Assistant: Did you forget anything?

Me: Yes. I need a rope.

Assistant: Huh?

Me: A rope.

He ushers me to another aisle. I pick the one I like and walk around the store and pick up a duck tape then go to the front to pay. When I walk out she's nowhere to be seen.

Sandile: I'm sorting the situation.

Me: I didn't say anything.

Sandile: I know you're mad but can you give me time to explain?

Me: Sure. I need to pass by the pharmacy first.

He raises his eyebrows.

Sandile: Are you sick? I can make a housecall.

Me: No

Advertisement

it's woman's stuff.

I threw the lie knowing men tend to run at that.

Sandile: I'll feel better if the doctor checks you out.

Me: Fine, I need sleeping pills because I haven't been sleeping normally this past days.

His eyes soften.

Sandile: Am I the cause of it?

Me: Maybe or maybe not. I don't know.

I shrugged my shoulders and open the passenger door then hop in. He takes a minute outside then jump in.

Sandile: I'm sorry.

I nod strapping the seatbelt. He sighs and step on the gas after buckling up. He drives for 5 minutes and parks the car in front of the pharmacy. I step out and walk inside.

Cashier: (smiling) Hello.

I find myself smiling at his contagious smile.

Me: Hi.

Cashier: Prescription please.

Me: I don't have one. Can I have sleeping tablets.

Cashier: (smiling) Struggling to sleep?

Me: You have no idea.

He chuckles and turns to the pills behind him.

Cashier: These are strong. Do not take more that two.

Me: Thank you.

I pay and walk back to the car.

Sandile: Anywhere else before we had home?

Me: No.

He nods and connects his phone on the Bluetooth. He increases the volume and a in seconds Jimmy Dludlu is blasting through the speakers with his annoying voice. I sigh and shift my gaze to the window. 20 minutes in this car feels like forever. I brace myself for the rest of remaining ride.

-

-

I unlock the door using my key and walk inside. He follows behind me.

Sandile: I'll fix you a bath.

Me: No. I'll start cooking. Why don't you shower first.

He furrow his eyebrows.

Sandile: Are you sure?

I nod. He wraps his arms around me and pecks my lips then walk upstairs. I padded the the kitchen and place my bag on the counter then wash my hands. Opening the fridge, I take out the meat and there it in the microwave to defrost then wash the fill the kettle with water. Pap and meat should be fine. I turn on the stove then wait for both items. The microwave pings. I throw my ingredients in the pot then add oil and stock cube and reduce the heat a little. The water finally boils. I empty the kettle and add salt and wait for it to boil again. 45 minutes later, he walk in the kitchen and holds me from behind.

Sandile: The aroma is inviting. I hope it will test good as it smells.

I playfully place my hand on my chest and gasp.

Me: I'm offended.

He smiles and plants a kiss on my neck.

Sandile: I'm kidding.

Me: Food will be ready soon.

Sandile: You know we need to talk right?

Who said things needs to be fixed by talking?

Me: It's water under the bridge my love.

Sandile: Aza…

I interjects breaking the embrace.

Me: Please go and set the table.

He thinned his eyes.

Me: What?

Sandile: You're acting strange and too calm for my liking.

I giggle.

Me: Not everyday you see me crazy.

I help him set the table just to beat time then walk back to the kitchen. Filling the bowl with lukewarm water, I place the dish cloth on my shoulder and crawl to the living room.

Sandile: (shocked) What's going on?

Me: (softly) Bab' Dlamini ngikulethe amanzi ugeze izandla. { I brought you water to wash your hands}.

Silence. I raise my head and find him staring at me with a look I can't comprehend.

Me: Ngabe kukhona inkinga baba? {Is there a problem?}.

He opens his mouth and close it like a fish out of water. Why is he shocked? Christmas comes once in a year. Somebody tell this man to wash his hands. My knees are hurting.

29

AZASAKHE

I place the bowl on the floor and jump to my feet. I don't know why would he assume I'm up to something.

Me: I'm just being nice to my husband or is it a problem?

Sandile: I didn't say that.

That frown on his face deepens.

Me: Suit yourself then.

I pick up the bowl from the floor ready to walk back to the kitchen but he holds my hand and dips his hands in, staring at me. I smile and hand him the dishcloth then go back to the kitchen. He's hot on my heels.

Me: Something wrong?

Sandile: You think I'm that stupid. I know you dragged the food.

Me: What?

I crack up and clap my hands then wipe my imaginary tear.

Me: You give me too much credit.

I wipe the plates.

Sandile: I'm not eating that.

He protests.

Me: Haike you might as well go to bed hungry because I did cook.

I place his piece of meat on my lunch box and the two reaming ones in my place. The generous me cooked 3 pieces of chicken because I know men love their meat and chicken is not my favourite meat unless it's fried and he choose to reject that. Doesn't he know Christmas comes once in a year? When he really needs this mana from heaven he won't get it from me. I walk back to the living with my roof and start eating. He pulls the chair and sit down, watching me eat.

Me: Want some?

Sandile: No.

I lick my fingers and nod.

Me: The secret recipe was love but you missed it. Maybe my cooking skills are not that good. Maybe sis Lucky Vilakazi cooks better than me.

Sandile: (confused) Excuse me?

Me: I bumped into your girlfriend earlier on she was bragging about how many years you guys have and her designer bags.

I laugh crushing the bone.

Me: All I long I thought LV was a international brand.

Sandile: (frowning) Who doesn't know that?

I crack up so hard.

Me: According to your girlfriend it's a local brand. (Mimicking her voice) Lucky Vilakazi. I was so embarrassed on her behalf.

I laugh but he doesn't. My jokes are not dry so why is he not laughing? I'll take that as he didn't get the joke.

Sandile: Are you done? We need to talk.

I spit out the bones and wipe my mouth.

Me: Did you give her the dress because it's clear I was not suppose to where it but her.

He glares at me.

Me: Okay, I'm listening.

Sandile: I have a past.

Me: Everyone does have one. What I expected was to be told that there's someone else.

Sandile: You didn't give me a chance to do so.

Me: You had a whole three months in there to deal with it. If you really wanted to do sort it out we wouldn't be talking about it right now and I wouldn't have known that there's someone

else. I’m actually curious to know how is this going to work because clearly you don’t want to let that woman go. Stop making excuses for yourself.

Sandile: She’s already in the past.

Me: According to you not her. Does she know that you’re seeing her as the past?

Sandile: I’m sorting it out.

Me: Isimanga!

I exclaim clapping once picking up my plate and leap up to my feet.

Me: I’ve got your ring but the question is do I have your heart or she does?

Sandile: I don’t love her anymore if that’s what you think. I just care about her.

Me: Your problem is that you’re too soft on her and she won’t stop until you become firm on her.

I walk to the kitchen and clean the utensils I used for cooking then walk back after I’m done. He’s staring into space when I walk in. His phone breaks him out of his thoughts. He looks at it then flip the screen. I shake my head.

Me: I know it’s her calling. You don’t have to ignore her calls.

It rings again. I pick up the remote and switch on the TV. Browsing through the channels, I settle for Out daughtered. I smile like an idiot looking at the Busbies on the screen.

Sandile: I'm hungry.

I glance at him then shift my gaze back to the screen. The generous coupon had expired but let me revive them for him.

Me: Anything specific?

Sandile: I'm already ordering in. No offence my love but I don't trust you right now.

I laugh.

Me: None taken.

I don't trust myself either in this situation. His ring tone again. Lord give me strength because I can't hear what Danielle or Adam is saying anymore.

Me: Answer it or I will.

Sandile: You wouldn't dare.

He threatens.

Me: Clearly you don't know me. Dare me.

He furiously picks up the phone and storms out of the room.

Sandile: What.

I take that as an opportunity to dash to the kitchen. Taking out the tablets, I crushed three using the back of the knife and run to check the coast.

Sandile: I don't know how many times must I tell you it's over. Why can't you get it?

He retorts yelling. I pick the whisky bottle and run to the kitchen with it. My heart thuddes in my ribcage at what am about to do. My head keeps looking at the door as I pour the powder in the bottle and shake it. I raise the bottle higher to check underneath if it doesn't show.

Me: What if he doesn't sleep?

I pick another pill and repeat the process. Picking up the wet dishcloth

Advertisement

I wipe the bottle clean then rush to the living room and place it back on it's place with the dishcloth still holding it. Still yelling outside, I sigh in relief and walk to the kitchen to clean my mess. I hear the door slam shut and pick up my bag and padded to him. I find him pacing up and down the living room with that very same bottle of whisky. I lean on the door frame and watch him drink straight from the bottle making my job easier.

Me: I'm going to bed.

I announce my presence and he ignores me. I shrugged and stumbled to my room. Filling the bath tub with water, I add some salt and take that we'll deserving bath after stripping naked. I clean the tub after stepping out and padded back to the room. I throw on my nightdress after moisturizing my body and step out of the room to check on my subject. I find his body on the stairs. I assume he was trying to climb them. Skepsel sabantu shame! I shake my head jump over him and stumbled towards my bag. I take out the equipment then turn to him. Dragging his heavily body on the stairs, I wrap the rope around him and use my teeth to cut the tape. I wrap the piece of tape on his hands and legs and cut one for his mouth. I skip the room to the kitchen to look for a scissor and cut the rope around his body and cut another one for his feet and hands. He might break free from the tape only and he might also break free from the rope and that's why I'm doubling them. I pant out and catch my breath after tying the rope.

Me: (singing) Angisoze nga Retire-a

Mina kuwe,ngizo stuck-a×2

Noma bezama ukusi devide-a

Khululeka musa uku worry-a

Soqala phansi soRewind-a

Imizwa yakho ngizoy Massage×2

Aw lena impi yothandooo

Aw lena impi yemizwaa×2

Bengicela nje kini ningay'lamuli

lendaba,ningay'lamuli lendaba

eyabantu ababili×2

I bend down and peck his lips.

Me: Good night.

I check if the doors are locked and walk to my room after picking up my bag.

Me: Wathinta umfazi. Wathinta imbokodo.

He thought he dodged a bullet but Womandla will always be smarter than his gender.

30

BUSISIWE

They say the early bird catches the fastest worm hence at 7:30 am I'm outside the clinic waiting for doors to be opened. My shifts starts at 9 and I'm hoping by then that I would be done. The doors finally open at 7:45 and we pray before the nurses start with their shifts. I'm number 15 which is not bad but knowing how government clinics and hospitals are it can turn bad. My feet constantly taps on the floor inpatient. I don't want to give Mr Collins a reason to fire me. I've been running late this few days because I sold my phone to the landlord of the motel so I can keep my room. I'm slowly down grading from the lifestyle I'm used to a very poor one. I also had to sell the little jewellery that was on my bag when my mother kicked me out. I wish I had access to my house because the rest of my jewellery is back at home. I leap up to my feet after my name is being called and walk to the counter.

Receptionist: You can queue over there for bp the follow the rest of the line.

I nod picking up my folder and walk to the other.

Lady: You can go through. We've already been there.

I fake a smile and walk inside.

Me: Hello.

He places his phone on the table and narrowed his eyes at me.

Nurse: Hello, what are you here for?

Me: Ndiyagula. {I'm sick}

Nurse: Obviously, but with what?

Haibo! Ins't his job to check my BP only? I smack my lips shut and make myself comfortable on the chair. He cracks a thin smile.

Nurse: On the scale please.

I kick off my shoes and climb the scale. He goes on doing the normal check up and hands me my folder after I'm done. I walk out of the room and find the corridors empty.

Voice: Next.

I push the door and stumbled in.

Me: Hello.

Nurse: Hi. How can I help you.

Me: Ndizohlukuhla.

Believe it or not I've accepted this baby isn't going anywhere. At first I hated the idea and I still blame my mother for this. If she didn't become so firm at me I wouldn't be here today but after what the jerk threw money on my face I prepared myself

mentally and physically. I just hope he will stay on his horse and we don't cross paths someday.

Nurse: Is this your first time?

I nod. She smiles and offers me a sit. She cracks jokes here and there to make me feel like and I could feel myself relaxing. My tears glisten with unshed tears as her personality reminds me of Sihle.

Nurse: Oh, nono are you crying? Pregnancy does that to people.

She cooed softly. I laugh through the tears.

Me: You just remind me of someone.

Nurse: Is it a good or bad thing?

Me: It's a good one.

I didn't know I missed my friends until now. I watch her do her do so effortlessly and with a killer smile indicating that she really loves what she does. If I didn't know Sihle I would say this lady was her sister. I call the next one after walking out and padded to the dispensary. I blow out a sigh as I find another queue again. A light tap on my shoulder forces me to turn my head.

Woman: Sorry sisi to bother you but don't you know anyone who is desperate for a place to stay?

Me: Yes.

Woman: I'm renting out one the shacks in my yard.

I never saw myself living in a shack but at this point I'll take anything.

Me: How much is your rent?

Woman: R700 a month.

I chew my bottom lip nodding. It's a reasonable price that I can afford.

Me: What about the toilet and water?

Woman: The toilet is outside and there's a tap outside too for all the tenants.

Me: Does it have an electricity?

Woman: Yes. Why are you asking so many questions? Do you know someone?

Me: That someone is me. I need a place to stay as soon as yesterday.

Woman: Give me your numbers so I can direct you.

I chuckle.

Me: I don't have a cellphone. Out of desperation I sold it.

The lady at the dispensary calls my name.

Woman: Do you have a pen so I can write you my address?

I open my bag and tear a page from the notebook and give it her then walk to the window to pick up my medication. I listen to the instructions then walk back to her.

Woman: This is my address. When can I expect you?

Me: This evening.

She smiles.

Woman: I guess I'll see you later.

Me: Before we part way what time is it?

Woman: 8:23.

Me: Thank you so much. You've lifted a burden off my shoulders.

I confidently walk out of the clinic to catch a taxi to work. I slip into my thoughts and start counting my blessings. I still have the money from that jerk and I can use it to buy myself blankets and mattress when I knock off. The motel landlord has to pay me back my money because I didn't stay the whole month like I promise and I will use it to pay the rent. A smile curves on my lips for the first time since that night we stole Kuhle's things. The light also shines brighter to those who lost hope. I'm starting to believe that saying that goes there's a light at the end of the tunnel.

AZASAKHE

I pack my lunch in my bag and padded to the stairs. I had the most peaceful slumber of my life. At some point I thought my conscious will keep me awake the whole night but it didn't. I guess I don't have one. I find him on the same position I left him in.

Me: Ndiya emsebenzini ngoku kwaye ndizakubona ngorhatya. Ungakhathazeki wena mntu wam sizoyilungiss lento ibengathi khange ibekhona. {I'm going to work and I'll see you later. Don't worry my love we will fix this and it will be like it never happened}.

I ascend the stairs and pick up a throw the walk back to him. A honk on the gate come through. I cover him up and just like last night

Advertisement

I peck his lips.

Me: That's my ride.

I collect my stuff and press the remote then walk out of the house then lock it. I cease on my steps and frown as I see the curtain from next door moving. Are those binoculars? SMH! This woman doesn't learn doesn't she? Raising my hand, I wave at her.

Me: Millicent ndiyakubona ngapha kwekhethin. {Millicent I can see you behind the curtain}.

She quickly closes the curtain. I might as well add more bricks on that material I bought so I can have higher fence than this. I'm starting to understand why Nigerians have higher fences at their house. It's because of noisy people like Millicent. I jump in the cab and lean back. A phone buzzes on my bag. I open it and find his ringing.

Kagiso: Dude I've been trying to call you from last night.

Me: Good morning to you too Kagiso. Unfortunately my husband cannot take your call right now.

Kagiso: Oh, morning Mrs Dlamini.

Me: I can pass the message if you like.

Kagiso: No, I'll call him later.

Me: You were ready to eat him alive when I picked up. Surely it was important.

Kagiso: It's nothing important but business.

Me: Tell me something. Where they living together?

Kagiso: Who?

I snort.

Me: You're smarter than that so please don't patronise me.

Kagiso: Yes.

Makes sense.

Me: Is he living a double life?

Kagiso: I can’t answer for him neither can I answer that because I don’t know.

I scoffed.

Me: Oh, come Kagiso. Sonke siyayazi ukuba ningumtya nethunga. {We all know you’re like tooth and nail}.

Kagiso: Like I said I can’t answer for him.

Me: On a scale of 1-10 how crazy is he?

He laughs.

Kagiso: What’s with the 3degree?

Me: I just want to know what I’m dealing with.

Kagiso: You’re both on 20.

Me: I’m not crazy.

I protest.

Kagiso: (chuckling) I never implied you were.

Me: I’m trying to understand him better. He’s soft on that girl.

Kagiso: Yes his a softy. I’m cruel not compared to him. Whatever you do don’t unleash his ruthlessness.

Me: Too late.

I whisper under my breath.

Kagiso: I didn’t get that.

Me: I was talking to the cab driver. I have to go.

Kagiso: Tell him to call me.

Me: Will do.

I hang and throw the phone on my bag. He can be ruthless all he wants but he hasn’t meet Azasakhe yet.

31

AZASAKHE

How do people keep up with living double lives? Isn't it another 9-5 job on it's own? Men are really skilled on that and I must applaud them playing the game without raising any eyebrows. The rule of the income statement and balance sheet says whatever you do on the left you should do it on the right, so what's stopping me from living that double life?

Sihle: Aza.

She snaps her finger in my face.

Me: Huh?

Sihle: Where are you?

Me: Meaning?

Sihle: You've been zoning out the whole day.

Me: Sorry mntase, I have a lot on my mind.

Sihle: Want to talk about it?

Me: No, it's nothing I can't handle.

Sihle: If you say so. You're quite popular today.

I snap my eyebrows.

Me: Why do you say so?

Sihle: Your phone has been buzzing in your locker. Are the journialist bothering you again?

Maybe I should have switched off that phone but then again those who know him will be suspicious especially Kagiso. Didn't I mention that I hate smart people? Kagiso is smart for his own good.

Sihle: You're doing it again.

Me: Sorry, eish I'm not sleeping well these days.

Sihle: Nightmares?

Me: My mind refuses to shut down but I bought sleeping pills and I will start using the today.

I use the same lie I used on that man when he asked about the sleeping pills.

Sihle: I hate those because they can be addictive. Avoid overdosing.

Me: Trust me it's only temporary. It won't get to that. Anyway enough about me and my endless problems. When are you leaving?

Sihle: On Monday I'm suppose to be reporting for duty so this Friday so I can settle in.

Me: Did the company provide you with accommodation?

Sihle: Yebo, yes.

Me: That’s better because looking for accommodation is like looking for a job especially when you’re new in town.

Sihle: It’s only for three months and after that I’m on my own.

Me: Even better. I’m going to miss you.

Sihle: Same here. Starting a new place, new job with a different position, new friends feels like moving in a new town to start a new school.

She heavily sighs.

Me: Yours truly is inviting you to a sleepover at my house this Thursday. I can’t let you leave without…

I trail off as Busi stands in front of the table we are sitting on.

Busi: Hi.

Us: Hello.

Busi: Can I seat?

Sihle: Sure.

She pulls the chair and makes herself comfortable.

Me: As I was saying I can’t leave without pampering you. I want you to remember me when you try to befriend someone else that there’s only one me.

She giggles.

Sihle: Only you can do that but no one can take your place boo.

I smile and catch Busi wiping her eyes.

Me: Are you going to sit there and cry without apologizing?

Sihle swiftly turns to her.

Sihle: Wena ufuna impama eshushu ezakwenza uspine. Kwenzela ingqondo izobuyela indaweni yayo. {You're craving a hot slalp that will make you spin. So that your brain can shift back in place}.

She laughs through her tears.

Busi: I missed you guys.

We gawk at her.

Busi: Okay, I'm sorry I was selfish. Ela qhalo lithi intaka ikha ngoboya benye kungona ndiliqondayo ukuba lithetha ukuthini. { I Now I understand what that idiom that says a bird build with another's feathers}.

She bites her quivering lip.

Busi: You guys might think I'm not genuine but I am. I'm really sorry and I don't want you guys to accept my apology because you think I want something in return. No

Advertisement

I don’t want anything but just my friends back. Again congratulations on that promotion Sihle.

She leaps up to her feet and walks out of the kitchen.

Sihle: I’m conflicted on that one.

Me: Same here.

She drags out her breath and jump to her feet.

Sihle: Let me get back to work and so should you.

I giggle and playfully roll my eyes.

Me: As you wish Mrs Collins.

Sihle: Eww, sies marn, Azasakhe.

She playfully gags causing me to laugh.

-

-

I close the door and lock it after the uber dropped me off at the gate.

Me: Afternoon hubby. How was your day?

Silence.

Me: Not that you have asked or you can answer for yourself but mine was very productive.

I kick off my shoes and walk barefooted to the stairs and sit next to him.

Me: Your phone might as well be a call centre telephone. Kagiso called in the morning and I think he will call again. Your girlfriend on the other side has been blowing your phone the whole day.

As of queue, the phone rings again. I fish it out and shake my head then turn to him. It's a video call this time.

Me: See what I mean?

Personally, I believe a phone is a private thing whether it's isjolo or marriage. Kuhle used nag me about how secretive I am with my phone. He would want to go through my socials because his Insecured ass knew he was cheating. As long I bought this phone with my money no man will tell me what to do with it. A heart break starts the minute you go through your man's phone. I believe at the back of your mind you know that his cheat but you just want proof to back your allegations. Paging his phone is a result of a heart break. You've always wanted to see what his doing when you're not around and those texts, pics, phone calls and money transactions were just waiting for you to see them. Men are not smart when it comes to cheat and I will never put myself through the heart break of paging his phone. A phone is another devil in this world that end relationships. Placing the ringing phone on the stairs, I search

his wallet on his pockets and take out his smart card ID. I cross my legs and register the new sim card I bought and do a swim swap. 24 hours is very long time but I need to contact Kagiso before he comes suspension using this new sim card. The phone again. I breathe out knowing she won't calling and answer it. I place the phone between us on the stairs and shift to the rail on the other side.

Mamello: Why have you been ignoring my calls? I hope you slept on what you sad yesterday and thought things through. You're not leaving me for that girl.

I yawn bored and bring my knees to my chest.

Mamello: Why am I looking at the ceiling? Sandile?

I drag my finger to the end button and end the call. She calls immediately. Again I answer.

Mamello: (screaming) Did you just hang up on me? Sandile.

Don't her vocal chords hurt from that scream?

Mamello: (screaming) Sandile.

I kneel on the stairs and face her bloated face on the screen.

Me: Yhuu uyayenza into yongxola marn. {You surely can make noise}.

Mamello: Why are you answering his phone? Give the owner his phone back.

She bellowed in rage.

Me: Actually my husband can't talk to you right now.

Mamello: His not your husband's yet bitch. I'm going to be Mrs Dlamini not you.

Me: Okay.

Mamello: You're so pathetic. You're just another flavour his crazy about. There's nothing special about you. He always comes back to me in the end.

Me: Okay.

I swear I can practically see steam seeping out of her ears.

Mamello: You're not in my level lala and you will never be. Didn't you mother teach you anything about stealing people's men?

She giggles.

Mamello: Opsie forgot that mommy dearest is six feet under. The worms are turning her into their bitch.

I close my eyes and well myself to calm down. Breathe Aza. Don't give her the reaction she's looking for. My breath escalate with each second her annoying voice screams over the phone.

My family is a no go area. I don't care whether you're the president of this country and God himself. Keep my family out of you mouth. Flipping my eyes open, I pick up the phone and turn it to the instigator of this. Her screams ceases. She gasps.

Mamello: (shocked) Sandile? Babe?

Me: Doesn't he look peaceful?

Mamello: What did you do to him you crazy bitch?

Me: Why don't you come and find out yourself? Take a pen and paper and write this address done because I'm going to call it out once.

She shuffles around the room she's in. I patiently wait for her and call out the address.

Me: Got that? See you soon.

I hang up before she could reply and turn to him.

Me: Guess who's joining the party? Your little girlfriend. It will be one big reunion.

I leap up to my feet.

Me: Give me my flowers while I'm still alive because I'm a genius.

I walk to my room and strip naked. I jump into the shower and let the water untie the knots in my shoulders. I swear I wasn't

going to touch that girl but she crossed the line. I was going to be a teacher at Sandile and he would have been a student. After I was done with him he would have willingly broke things with her and never looked at her direction again but who am I to deny another learner a space in my school? I lotion after stepping out and pick up sweats and vest. I throw them on and tie the laces of my sneakers then ascend the stairs. I pause on the corridors leading to the kitchen and open the pantry. I take out the spade and walk back to stairs and lean on the spade.

Me: I'm sure you'll be up when our guest arrives and I cannot wait.

32

NARRATOR

Mamello steps out of the cab and pressed the buzzer. Her heart pounding in her ribcage. She didn't think Aza was that crazy. She knew Sandile could never dump her like that. Surely he was blackmailed or threatened by Aza for them to break up. She tapped the buzzer again. Inside the house, Sandile stirred up from his slumber. He tried to move but body was restricted with the duck tape and the rope.

Sandile: MaDlamini.

His words were muffled by the duck tape on his mouth. Aza turned on locked eyes with him.

Aza: Oh, you're awake. I was starting to get worried.

She heard his screams and she padded to him and remove the tape.

Aza: You were saying.

Sandile: What the fuck is going on? Why am I tied up on the stairs?

Before she could reply his phone ring again. Aza's eyes lit up seeing the caller ID.

Aza: Your girlfriend is outside. And she's the one who's ringing the intercom like the crazy woman she is.

Sandile's eyes widen.

Sandile: Babe I…

Aza placed the tape back on his mouth.

Aza: Shh. I have to take this.

She pressed the green button.

Aza: I assume you're the one on the gate.

Mamello: You crazy bitch. Open the gate.

She screamed on the end of the line causing Aza to flinch.

Mamello: The police are on their way.

Aza: Let them come. I'm waiting for them.

Aza tapped her foot on the floor. Sirens rang in the air and a few minutes later, the intercom goes off again.

Aza: Hello?

Officer: This is police open up.

Aza: What for? Did I do something wrong?

Officer: We got a tip off that you're keeping this lady's boyfriend hostage in your house.

Aza: I’m not keeping anyone here against his/her own will.

Officer: Open up.

Aza: Do you have a search warrant?

Officer: No but…

She cuts him off.

Aza: Then I don’t see why should I let you guys in. You’re trespassing in my property.

Officer: If you don’t have anything to hide, open the gate.

Aza: Babe tell this people that you’re fine.

She stumbled towards him and removes the tape.

Mamello: Babe?

Sandile: What the fuck are the cops doing in my house?

Officer: Sir are you okay? Is she threatening you?

Sandile: Why wouldn’t I be okay? And no she’s not threatening me.

Mamello: Sandile why are you lying? I saw you being tied up to the stairs.

Officer: Is this true sir?

Sandile: Mamello why are cops outside my gate?

Aza: Officer this lady is wasting your time. My husband broke up with him last night and now she's making up things. Kidnapping and holding my own husband are serious allegations.

Officer: Haibo sisi you called us for such nonsense? They dumped you so what? You're not the first woman to fall for a married man and get dumped.

Mamello: Sandile is not married to her.

Aza: Dlamini please deal with your mess.

Officer: Msandi is that you?

Sandile: Whoever it is yes it's me.

Officer: It's me Thula.

Sandile: Eita ntwana. Fede?

Officer: Nix mfethu. Hai this lady really wasted my time. Sisi go home.

Aza: And for those mere allegations I want to open a case against for deformation of character.

Mamello: What? That is absurd. I saw what I saw.

She protested whole Thula open the van and jumped in.

Mamello: You're just going to walk away without checking if his really okay?

Thula: He said his okay. If you keep disturbing people's peace you might find yourself on the back of the van.

He stepped on the gas and drove off.

Mamello: Open this gate.

Aza: As you wish.

She placed the receiving phone back on his place and picked up the remote. She walked to the corridors with the remote and took the duck tape and remaining rope. She pressed the remote, opening the date and padded to Sandile.

Sandile: MaDlamini untie me so we can talk about this.

She ignored him and cut the duck tape. Sandile thrashed around trying to free himself but he was weak. She closed his mouth with the tape and picked up the spade. Unlock the door, she stood behind it and raised the spade. Mamello knocked on the door twice before turning the handle. She found the door unlocked and walked in. She gasped widen her eyes.

Mamello: What did that crazy woman do to you?

Aza waited for her to walk in and hit her on her head with the spade. She fell on the floor, face first. She sighed placing the spade on the floor and dragged her to the stairs. Just like she did with Sandile

Advertisement

she tied him on the stairs and close her mouth. Padding to the kitchen, she took the left overs from yesterday and warmed them up. Aza poured water on the glass and walked to the stairs. She removed the tape from him and helped him drink the water.

Sandile: (sighing) Is this really necessary?

Aza: You forced my hand.

She picked up the spoon and started to feed him.

Sandile: I need the bathroom.

Aza: Eat first so you can regain your strength.

He chuckled.

Sandile: You're the most generous kidnapper I've come across with.

Aza: There's only one me.

He smiled.

Sandile: It didn't have to reach here babe. I was going to sort it out.

Aza: You were slow and I had to take matters in my own hands.

Sandile: I don't like seeing this person you are.

Aza: Your problem you think you've figured me all out. Japanese say people have three faces.

The first face, you show it to the world.

The second face, you show it to your close friends and family.

The third face, you never show anyone. It is truest reflection of who you are.

Sandile: Ngisuthi. Ngiyabonga. {I'm full, thank you}.

She wipes his mouth and makes him drink the water.

Sandile: Can I go to the bathroom now?

She places the plate on the stairs and unties him.

Aza: Can you walk?

Sandile held the rails and stood to his full height.

Sandile: My muscles are a little bit stiff.

She nodded and helped him ascend the stairs all the way to his room. Opening the bathroom door, she stood outside.

Sandile: I probably take a lot of time. Ngingcolile nje.

Aza: Just remember in order to get outside you'll have to pass through me first.

He chuckles.

Sandile: Noted!

He slowly walked inside and close the door and took a leak. He stripped naked and adjusted the water and jumped in after finding the right temperature. He sighed and stood under the tap. He stepped out after he was done and threw on the same attire as her and walked to the study. He opened the safe and took out his gun. Emptying all the bullets, Sandile closed the safe and went downstairs to look for her. He found her texting someone. He pressed the gun on her head. Sweat ran down Aza's spine. She slowly turned to him and raised her hands.

Aza: You wouldn't shoot me.

Sandile: Correct but I might injure you.

Aza swallowed the thick saliva accumulated her mouth.

Aza: What about your girlfriend?

Sandile: I'll handle her. Now can we have that conversation?

AZASAKHE

He just had to flip the whole script on me. And I hate every minute of it. I swear to God if I hear that word conversation I will blow up.

Me: You've been handling this girl since I could remember. You're starting to sound like a broken record right now.

Sandile: Sit.

Me: I think I will stand.

Sandile: (Snapping) Sit your tiny ass down.

My tiny what? I really don't have a friend. All along I thought I had a butt kanti ndinamaqhekeza engqela? I'm holding auditions for new friends because Sihle is not a reall friend. Smacking my butt, it slightly jiggle from the sweats instead of jiggling for a while. I'm offended. I bend down and start doing squats.

Sandile: What are you doing?

Me: Inye. {One}.

I hold the couch rising up. Nobody told me squats also requires someone's breath.

Me: (panting) Zimbini. {Two}.

Jesus! Why did you deprive me something to sit on? No wonder my butt becomes so numb at times. It's because I'm sitting on my bones instead of meat.

Me: Zinta…

He cuts me off.

Sandile: Seat the fuck down, Azasakhe.

I pause mid squat and narrowed my eyes at him. Maye! The world is really ending. Since when am I Azasakhe to him? What happened to babe? MaDlamini? I pull myself to the couch and seat down.

Me: (panting) So what do you want to talk about?

He pulls the coffee and sit in front of me, the gun on his lap. I frown seeing his attire. Seems like I didn't get the memo. Are we twins now?

Sandile: We are revisiting that conversion we had before we gave each other a chance.

I cross my legs and place my hand under my chin.

Sandile: I think I've been cautious with you and you just showed me that I don't need to be cautious anymore.

Me: (confused) Huh?

Sandile: I'm moving in the main bedroom.

Me: What's wrong with your room?

Sandile: I wasn't asking you but tell you.

Me: Over my dead body.

Sandile: That could also be arranged. In fact let's put that to the test. You're going to go upstairs and move my stuff from my room to the main one.

Me: I'm not your maid.

I spit out.

Sandile: I never said you're one but at times you tend to forget that you're my wife. Unless sengishovwa uwe. {Unless I'm fucked by you}.

My imagination runs wild and I find myself giggling before it turns into a full blown laughter.

Sandile: Are you done?

I bite my lip to suppress the laughter from escaping my lips.

Sandile: Your problem is that you don't take me serious. I'm that person who issues out a command and actions happens after that.

I fold my arms across my chest. Defiance is my middle and he happens that he doesn't know that.

Sandile: Clearly you don't know me.

I call him a bluff. He will not shoot me or will he? He chuckles darkly and picks up the gun. He caress my leg with it over the sweats and places his finger on the trigger. I jump to my feet widen my eyes. My heart pounding in my chest.

Sandile: Glad I didn't have to use violence on you. You're too precious for me but keep forcing my hand.

Chills runs down my spine. I swallow hard.

Me: I…

Sandile: Shut up. I'm still talking.

If my eyes were not widen enough the first time now they are ready to fall out of my sockets. What happened to those hours he was in his slumber?

SANDILE

My head feels like it will split into two. My stomach has been churning forcing the bile to come but I keep swallowing to force it down. I knew she was crazy but I didn't think she was this crazy. Who ties people on the stairs and goes on with her day like she didn't do anything? I must give to her. I underestimated her. She's dangerous ASF.

Aza: Are you goings to threaten me with a gun every time I defy you?

Me: Maybe.

Aza: You said we will be having a conversation but I only feel threatened.

I lowered the gun.

Aza: Thank you.

She breathes out and takes her spot back on the couch.

Me: We started on the wrong foot again. All of this is unnecessary

Aza: What is unnecessary?

Me: The drugging, tying and all the other shit you've been doing. I did eat any thing so how did you drag me?

Aza: You didn't eat but you did drink something.

I place my thumb on my cheek and my remaining fingers on my forehead and chuckle staring at her.

Me: You drug my whiskey?

Aza: Yes.

Me: Do you know how expensive that bottle is?

Aza: I wouldn't know because it's not my poison.

Me: At least tell you threw it away.

Aza: No I haven't.

Me: Why the hell not?

Aza: Didn’t you just say it’s an expensive so why should I throw it away?

A smirk graces my lips. Am I staring at myself or my wife?

Me: You know all this could be resolved with talking right?

Aza: I’m done talking. It’s now time to take action. I’ve been talking but don’t take me seriously.

Me: But I do.

Aza: No you don’t. If you did that girl wouldn’t be tied on my stairs right now.

I follow her line of gaze. I almost forgot about her. She’s still passed out.

Me: I was going to sort it out.

Aza: When?

Me: I was working on it.

Aza: Do you know what I hate the most in this world?

Me: (smiling) Men?

She giggles.

Aza: Men come after lies. I hate lies with passion.

I arch my brow.

Aza: You were living with her.

I heavily sigh.

Aza: Was it an apartment to what?

Me: Neither.

Aza: A house? Where is it?

Me: It’s in…

She cuts me off.

Aza: Is she still living in it?

Me: No.

Aza: Good because if she was going to be homeless from now on. Where does she stay?

Me: In one of my properties.

Aza: How many are they?

Me: I lost count on how many are they.

Aza: So let me get this straight

you purchase a whole building for her?

Me: No, she arrived after I purchased those properties. She was a student when I met her looking for a place to stay.

Aza: She has to go.

Me: Done what else?

Aza: Why does Kagiso say you were living with her?

Me: We were living together but as time goes by it wasn't working for me anymore.

Aza: Why?

Me: She took over my house like she owned it.

Aza: That's because you gave her the impression to do that. Are there any other expenses of hers you're paying?

Me: Yes.

Aza: What is it?

Me: Her car.

Aza: From today onwards she will start navigating her way to the rank. We are taking that car back.

Me: Baby I…

Aza: No, Sandile. If you want this to work you will let her go. Choose.

Me: Choose what?

Aza: It’s either me or her. There can only be only one in your heart. I’m not going to be second best. If you know that you want me and you also want her then let me go or let her go.

Me: I want you.

Aza: Then let her go.

She raises her voice.

Aza: We found love in hopeless places so don’t think you’re doing me a favour by with me.

She snapped at agitated.

Aza: So what’s it going to be?

Me: What?

Aza: You know what it doesn’t matter anymore because I’m choosing myself. You found me in peace and I will leave with that little dignity and peace I still have.

She leaps up to her feet and removes her ring. My heart skips a beat.

Aza: Good bye Sandile Dlamini.

Me: You just took your ring off.

I jump to my feet.

Aza: I’m sure it will fit her.

Me: Put your ring on.

Aza: That I can't do. Hai wena how will men look my direction if I have a ring on?

Excuse me, men are doing what? I didn't hear what I just heard. Probably the wax is blocking my hearing senses. She attempts to walk away but I hold her hand and pull her to me. Her back on my front. I lean on her ear and firmly whispered.

Me: Don't you ever take your ring off.

Aza: I'm young and still need to quench my thirst and this ring of yours is blocking my path.

My bloody boils.

Me: The only person who will be quenching your thirst is me.

I turn her around and crush my lips on hers. She places her hand on my chest opening her mouth. I smile pulling out and slide my hand in the pants. I wait for her to react or anything instead she opens her legs inviting me in. A muffled scream coming from the stairs made to rise my head. I find Mamello looking at me with tears rolling down her cheeks. Sliding my hand further more on her mound, I keep my eyes on Mamello while Aza releases a soft moan. Fucken horny woman.

Me: All you had to do was asking my love.

34

NARRATOR

Screaming and crying on the tape, Mamello glared at him and his lips curved upwards. He wasn’t going to do what she thinks he was going to do right? Sandile muzzled her neck while she murmured something he didn’t quite catch.

Sandile: What was that?

His eyes didn’t leave her face when he answered her.

Sandile: I'm going to fuck you.

Aza’s mouth slacked open.

Sandile: I’m taking you hard, rough.

She stopped breathing.

Sandile: And fast

Her breath came in sharp pants. She gazed at him in pure lust. Sandile pulled the vest of her head and unclipped her bra. Sandile took the nipple in between his fingers and squeezed it. Aza gasped closing her eyes. She sensation alone sending a different kind of feeling to her abdomen. Wait... was those butterflies in her stomach or excitement? She couldn’t quite differentiate between the two. She locked her teeth and fasten her jaw from releasing those moans.

Slowing and sensually, Sandile pulled down the pants. He whisked her up and laid her own the couch. He pulled down the her underwear cusing Aza's eyes to fly open. She might be in need to quench her thirst but in public. Did he forget that they have a guest? She tried to push him off but he slapped her slit. The sensation sent pain and pleasure on her.

Sandile: My rules here sweetheart.

His authoritative voice did something to her. Aza roughly shifted her gaze to him and her breath caught in her throat as he took her lips. The kiss was rough, searching and sending the right signals to her pussy because she clenched her thighs together mid-kiss while her hands touched his bare chest. The muscles were hidden by the meat he accumulated and she wonder how did he look when he had muscles? She pooled more on that thought. Sandile broke the kiss and looked at her lips. All swollen from that hot kiss that sent blood to his dick. His thumb grazed those pouting lips of hers and she parted them to take his thumb in her mouth. He groaned as she sucked and he could imagine that mouth sucking him into oblivion.

Taking his cock into that pretty mouth and him coming over her face. He breathed as he removed his thumb. Good dammit behind all the craziness was a seductress when she wants. He stepped out of his boxers and Aza nodded taking took in all of him. Veins and the girth and the length. Fuck! When is he

pumping in on her again? She wasn't about to be shy on that organ and neither was she about to be apologetic about gawking at him. He belongs to her. He was hers and vice versa. A beat skipped or was it two beats? Neither the less she was like a kid who was about to be bought a candy by her mother. Months she hadn't had some while she living with a man under her roof and that man was her husband. Was that normal? Definitely not. Sandile got on top of her and her breathing jinxed up as she felt his heavy erection on her thigh, hot and long and she licked her lips.

Sandile's hands settled on her waist and he squeezed it as he brought his mouth on her nipples, his tongue licking around her jaw before sucking those nipples.

Sandile: Mmm

He whimpered, his tongue and mouth doing wonderful things to her breasts. He moved one hand from her waist and used it to squeeze her nipples with his rough hand, making her moan louder at the roughness her exercised on her boobs. Her scent filled him and he looked at her cunt. All pink and wet. His mouth covered her pussy lips and she softly breathed out his name. His tongue licked her for the first time and he felt her tense as she breathed out his name again.

Aza: Saaandile.

Sandile: Talk to me.

Aza: We have a guest.

Sandile: I know that baby.

He licked again and her breathy moans turned into full blown moans and she held onto the headboard instead as she closed her eyes.

Sandile: But don’t pretend it doesn’t excite you.

He slid his tongue into the slit and she let go of the squashed cushion as her back lifted off the couch and he used his hand to push her down. He ate her out as she writhed above his head.

Sandile: How does it feel?

Aza: Goo… Like yessss.

She couldn't even say formulate anything smart with that sharp tongue of hers. He chuckled.

Sandile: Which one is it?

Aza: Good!

As her toes curled, she scratched the surface of the couch with her toe nails and she moaned his name out loud. Aza felt like she was floating yet being sparked by something as her pussy twitched and she remembered screaming his name as she temporarily blacked out for a few seconds before she came

back and she could still sense his head in between her legs. She couldn’t speak as she waited for the dizziness to disappear. The word orgasm sounded unfamiliar on the tip of her tongue. When was the last time she had that?

Her brain was to fuzzy to try and put everything together. She kept her eyes closed and felt his lips on hers, kissing her and she kissed him back. He squeezed her sensitive breasts and she moaned into the kiss, trying to ignore how heavy his erection was on her thigh. Sandile lifted her legs as he settled between her thighs. She looked at him as she licked her lips. Dropping her gaze down at his erection

she swallowed. Wait… Was that excitement redacting over her or butterflies in her stomach?

Sandile: Look at me.

They locked eyes and she calmed down as he kissed her lips softly and her heart pounded. He rubbed the tip on her glossy slit and she moaned into his mouth.

Sandile: Be mine.

Aza nodded breathing heavily.

Sandile: Words sweetheart.

Aza: Yes.

Sandile rubbed the large head of his dick on her slit and he groaned. It felt so good and he couldn't wait to sink right into her.

Sandile: Yes what?

Aza: Yes I'll …

His cock slowly slid through the fold and Aza gasped at the intrusion.

Sandile: You were saying?

His deep voice sounded in her ear as another intrusion. He rubbed himself on her again and she whimpered. He slowly slid right back into the slit.

Aza: Ahh! Oh! Oh!

He held her waist as he stopped, just to make sure she was okay?

Sandile: You're doing good.

That twitch causing him to grin. She was more than okay. She was stuffed by his delicious cock. He sucked on her neck as his grip tightened on her waist and he went in slow as she gasped.

Sandile: Who do you belong to?

His eyes on Mamello's face as she felt like air was knocked on her lungs. Why was Sandile doing this to her?

Aza: Yours.

He french kissed her and pulled out. A whimper left Aza's lips at that emptiness.

Sandile: I can't hear you. Whose wife are you?

Aza: Yours.

He finally slammed into her filling her to the absolute hilt and she gasped. Mamello swallowed the pain down as he kissed her face. She felt like she could die in that moment. She closed her eyes, the wetness in her eyes running down her face. Why was he hurting her like this? Sandile caressed her cheek as he pushed her hair back before he kissed her. She opened her eyes and his eyes were on her. So attentive to her and reassuring yet filled with desire. All that desire for her. Their eyes remained connected as his speed increased and he thrust in and out of her. The moans that followed were from her as the pleasure and pain made such a nice combination while he groaned in her ear and that sexy hoarse voice of his was just music to her ears. Her moans got louder.

Aza: Aaaa! yessss!

His nails dug into her hips as he pulled her more into him and she hissed in pain and pleasure. The mix went together so well.

Sandile: That's it, baby.

Biting her lip, Aza's sensitive nipples brushing against his hard chest and that only intensified the pleasure. There was this one spot and she could fell him hitting it every time as he thrust in. Just like he promised, fast, rough and hard. Her toes curling and her hands itching to grab onto something. Her body feeling electrified. He tapped the spot again and she screamed again. This time in pure pleasure as he growled in her ear. That growl sent her overboard.

Her vision went hazy but she could still hear him, more like in the background.

Sandile: Let it all my love. Let them all hear how you cum on your husband's dick.

Aza spasmed as her muscles clamped on him. The intense wave of the orgasm left her body to It's own. Trembling and shaking as he moaned her name and came inside of her, spilling everything that was on his sack.

Sandile: Fuck!

He growled like a wounded animal and breathed out. His heart continued to pound on his chest.

Aza: Get off me you're heavy.

He smile raising his head. And here he thought she was fucked into oblivion.

Sandile: I’m sated.

Aza: Be sated somewhere else.

He slide out and bent down to peck her lips then picked up his boxers on the floor. He threw them on and marched to the stairs. Picking up the throw, he threw it on the couch and Aza used it to her body. He nodded after she got the message and turned to Mamello.

Sandile: Get the fuck of my house. I don’t want to ever see you again. This town isn’t big for the both of you.

Mamello screamed on the tape. Sandile removed it off.

Mamello: (screaming) Where am I suppose to go?

After all the live porn she was subjected to his kicking her outike an old bubblegum?

Sandile: I don’t know and I don’t fucken care.

He untied her. Mamello used the railing of the stairs to leap up to her feet.

Sandile: Leave everything that belongs to me on those stairs right now.

Mamello: Please I…

Leaning on her ear, he interrupted her.

Sandile: Contact me or my wife I will blow your brains off.

Goosebumps covered Mamello's skin. She knelt in front of him.

Mamello: Please don't do this.

Sandile: Get out now.

He roared at her causing her to jump to her feet ready to walk out but he held her hand. Hope rose in Mamello's eyes.

Sandile: My belongings please.

Opening her bag and handed him the keys, tears filled Mamello's eyes. She thought her tears were dried out. He ushered her to the door and pressed the remote. Mamello walked out of the house feeling her knees weak. She gasped for air filling her lungs as much as she can. The pain was too much for her to handle.

Sandile: Mamello?

That little hope again came back as she turned on her heels to face him.

Sandile: You have until midday tomorrow.

Mamello closed her eyes and let the tears roll down. She walked to the gate and a minute late she was out, it slam shut and the door followed. She cried taking out her phone to call one of her friends meanwhile Sandile nodded walking back to his wife. He didn't even feel any ounce of regret in him. That needed to be done. He pulled the throw off her and behold her

naked glory was still uncovered. Who said he was done with her? Submission was the goal now on and the woman was definitely not going to work tomorrow because she will be sore in the right places.

35

KAGISO

Me: Alexa lower the volume.

I yell over the music and pick up my ringing phone.

Me: Mme?

Mofokeng: Mora ke nna. {Son it’s me}.

Kagiso: Dumela papa. Ke hobane’ng ha u letsa bosiu? Ho na le bothata? { Why are you calling at night? Is there a problem?}.

Mofokeng: Ke mmao. {It’s your mother}.

I frown.

Kagiso: Molato ke eng ka yena? {What’s the matter with her?}.

Mofokeng: O itse o lorile ka ngoana. {She said she dreamt about a child}.

Kagiso: (frowning) Ngoana? Ke ngoana oa mang? { A child? Who’s child is it?}.

Mofokeng: Le nna ha ke tsebe. E re ke u fe mohala a tle a u hlalosetse. {I also don’t know. Let me give you the phone so she can explain to you}.

I hear a shuffling on the end of the line before my mother comes to the speaker.

Me: Mme?

Mme: My boy.

Me: Are you okay?

Mme: I had dream about a child.

Kagiso: Ke ngoana oa mang {Who's child is it?}.

Mme: Ha ke tsebe. Ke ne ke nahana hore o ka re bolella. {I don't know. I thought you might tell us}.

Kagiso: Ga ke na ngwana Mme. Hobaneng o sa botse Dineo le Mpho? {I don't have a child Mme. Why don't you ask Dineo and Mpho?}.

Mma: Ekaba emong wa kgaitsedi tsa hao o imile? {Could one of your sisters be pregnant?}.

Kagiso: Ke ntho e ka etsahalang. {It's a possibility}.

Mme: I will have a chat with them in the morning.

I chuckle.

Me: You woke me up just for that?

Mme: The dream wasn't clear but I could see myself carrying a child.

Me: It's definitely not me.

Mme: Your sister can't give me grandchildren before you. Or is there a problem down there.

My eyes widen. I hear my father scolding her before he comes on the line.

Mofokeng: On a serious note though son is everything okay with…

He trials off and sucks in a deep breath.

Mofokeng: You know. Just shout so I can send you a concoction.

I laugh.

Me: Papa wee I'm the most active young man. My weapon is working just fine. I just happen to be a bachelor who doesn't want kids or a wife.

Mofokeng: Kagiso you need-

I cut him off.

Me: I know I need to expand the Mofokeng name but not now. Maybe someday but not now.

Mofokeng: Okay but we are one phone call away if you have anything problem with your weapon. There's nothing to be ashamed of.

I cover my face laughing.

Me: Dad I'm fine. Do you want me so send you a picture to show you that it's still working?

Mofokeng: Nxaa!

He hangs and I throw my head back laughing. I have two missed calls from Sandile. I will call him first thing in the morning. I place the phone on the bench and pick up the weights.

Me: Alexa volume.

Panda by Designa blast through the speakers.

NARRATOR

Blowing out her nose, Mamello wiped her tears. Her friend narrowed her eyes waiting for the whole explaining because sis waltz in here crying.

Mamello: He…

She trailed of as the pain choked. She burst in tears.

Friend: Did you get mugged?

She shook her head.

Friend: Are you hurt?

Again Mamello shook her head making her friend's eyeshadows snap together. If it was neither of those above so why was she crying?

Friend: Then what happened Meme?

Mamello: He kicked me out.

The friend rolled her eyes. What was new to that? She couldn't count how many times they have kicked her out by that man.

Friend: It's the first time so why are you crying like you're a widow?

She snapped irritated. The woman woke up her from her slumber only to utter such nonsense?

Mamello: She had sex in front of me with.

Another sob came from her. Widen her eyes

the friend sat next to her. Now that's the hot gossip she can wake up for.

Friend: He did what?

Mamello: I call him and she answered his phone. My foul mouth got in the way and she gave me an address. I didn't hesitate to go there and called the police on the way but they didn't help me with anything because they left before they could search the house. She didn't want to open the gate and he also said they were fine.

Friend: I don't think I understand. So how did he end up having sex with her in front of him?

Mamello cried as the image flashes in her mind. She narrated everything and cried in between the narration.

Friend: Meme didn't you say you're married to this guy? If you are he can't treat you like that. You have rights to that house and everything he owns.

Mamello: We are not married.

Friend: (confused) You showed us a ring and said it was your engagement ring. When Lona asked you about the wedding you said you guys got married via the magistrate because of the paparazzi.

Mamello: (crying) I lied.

The friend's jaw slacked open.

Mamello: I thought at some day he will make his wife. I thought he loved me.

Not knowing what to do or say the friend sat down digesting everything.

Friend: So what are you going to do?

Mamello: I don't know but what I know is that I have until midday tomorrow to get out of this town.

She wiped her tears.

Mamello: Can you please borrow me cash tomorrow so I can go to town and withdraw what I have left.

Friend: What you have left? He took the cards back?

She nodded biting her quivering lip.

Friend: Meme weren't you saving?

Mamello: I never thought it would come to this. I saw myself as his wife so I didn't I need to save.

The friend shook her head disappointed.

Mamello: Can I sleep here for the night?

Friend: Sure.

Mamello murmured a thank you and made her way to the bedroom she usually used. That man was cruel but she couldn't hate him despite what he did. She was still madly in love with him.

Her friend tucked her feet on the couch and picked up her phone from the table and made a call. Lungi answered on the second ring.

Lungi: Namesake.

Friend: Iyho guess who is here.

Lungi: Who?

Friend: Mrs Dlamini.

Lungi furrowed her eyebrows on the end of the line.

Lungi: What is she doing there?

Friend: Apparently hubby is not hubby.

Lungi: You’re not making sense.

She narrated everything Mamello just told her.

Lungi: (laughing) What? All along she bought herself the ring? Where is my truth?

Laughter.

Friend: (Mimicking Mamello) Ke ngwetsi ya Dlamini.

Lungi: Mjolo always scams people. Did she think she was special?

Laughter.

Friend: I knew they won’t last.

Lungi: Do you remember that day when she said LV stands for Lucky Vilakazi?

Friend: (laughing) Please do not remind me of that. I was so embarrassed on her behalf.

Laughter.

Lungi: That what happens when you're a varsity drop out on the first year to chase after money that is not yours.

Friend: It doesn't end there. He had sex with that lady in front of her.

Lungi laughed on the end of line and paused unable to breathe.

Lungi: Servers her right. She thought she was the next thing after sliced bread.

Friend: She thought she farted strawberries.

Lungi erupted in laughter.

Lungi: Do you remember her saying Champagne is championship?

Laughter.

Friend: (wiping her eyes) Sis was like (mimicking her voice) Hey waiter, I want the most expensive bottle of championship. She has a tendency of screaming when she is about to embarass you.

She laughed.

Lungi: Stupid that one. Where are her rich friends because we remind her of poverty?

Friend: And I was like do restaurant sell championship games now?

Lungi laughed on the end of the line unable to breathe. She paused catching her breath and started to laugh all over again while her insides were sore. Talk about counting your chickens before they hatch.

36

AZASAKHE

A cellphone rings somewhere around the room. I crack one eye open and find him answering it. I roll over and lay on my side then close my eyes. I can’t hear a single thing his saying not that I was eavesdropping but people are sometimes loud when they speak but not him. He raises my leg and slide back in. I moan as he presses a kiss on my neck.

Sandile: Sleep.

I nod sighing and let sleep take over.

°°°

My eyes roam around the room before I jolt up from the bed. The bedroom door opens as I rush to the bathroom. I open and slam the cabinet looking for the toothpaste.

Sandile: Morning.

Me: Why didn’t you wake me up?

Sandile: I called in sick for you so there’s no need for you to be panicking.

I breathe out and continue to brush my teeth. I walk out after I’m done and find him sitting on the edge of the bed. He smiles biting his lip.

Me: What?

Sandile: I'm just appreciate my assets nothing more.

I drop my eyes to my body and roll them. Of course he will appreciate them more because I'm still in my birthing suit. My mind seems to be fuzzy this morning because the real me would have noticed such.

Sandile: I brought you breakfast.

I padded to the closet and look for my robe.

Sandile: Why are you covering up? I like seeing you like that.

Me: It's a bit chilly outside and I'm cold.

Mischief flicks in his eyes before he curved his lips into a smirk.

Sandile: I'll warm you up.

He wiggles his eyeshadows. I shake my head and walk to the bed. He pulls me to his lap.

Sandile: What's wrong?

Me: With what?

Sandile: You. You're not your usual self.

Who becomes vibrant in the morning? Definitely not Azasakhe.

Me: I'm just tired.

Sandile: Is that all?

Me: Yes.

He squints his eyes.

Sandile: Are you sure or there's something else bothering you?

Me: What you did last night I hated it.

Sandile: Which part?

Me: There was no need for you to use me as your scapegoat when you kicked her out.

He scoffs.

Sandile: Don't pretend like you didn't enjoy it.

Me: Actually I didn't. Never mind that I was caught up in the moment but at the back of my mind I'm asking myself what if you do the exact same thing to me?

Sandile: I would never hurt you like that.

Me: I'm sure you said the same thing to her.

I roll my eyes and pick up the tray on the side of the bed.

Sandile: Babe look at me.

I shift my gaze to him. He leans over and brushes his lips over mine.

Sandile: You're the only one in my heart and the only one I want. If it comes to that shoot me.

I cup his cheeks.

Me: Don't tempt me because I won't hesitate to shoot you.

He smiles.

Sandile: I know you would do.

He carefully takes the tray from my grip and start feeding me. Random kisses are thrown here and there until I finish eating.

Sandile: (smirking) You're much calmer than most days and I love this new you.

Is that a new thread of bragging that I don't know about? So what if I'm to dickmatised

it's not a sin moc?

Me: You're being cheesy on me and I don't like it.

He laughs.

Sandile: Just say that you hate being vulnerable.

Correct but I won't boast his ego by admitting to that. It's like a switch was flicked in me and my normal self is on the back of my mind watching all of this happening and I hate it. I hate being not in control of my emotions. I woke up feeling my soul

connected to his on a very deep level. I feel him in me regardless of him being beside me.

Sandile: MaDlamini.

Me: Huh?

Sandile: You got lost in your head. What's in your mind.

Me: A lot.

I jump to my feet.

Me: Did you manage to get hold of Kagiso?

Sandile: Don't change the subject.

Me: I'm not.

I protest padding to the bathroom. I close the lid of the tub and fill it with water. He holds me from behind.

Sandile: You know if I knew the trick to tame you was that I would have done that a very long time ago.

Amusement laced in his tone.

Me: Hahaha I'm not laughing.

His laughter boom around the walls causing butterflies to fill my stomach. I bend down to close the tap with him still caging me in his arms.

Me: I need to bathe.

He unties the belt of the robe and let it pool it of the floor. My breath hitches in my throat as his hands ran all over my back before they settle on my boobs.

Sandile: Are you sure you still want that bathe or something else?

Why does his voice sound so husky? I dart out my tongue and lick my lips.

Me: Something else.

Sometimes my mind can be my mouth. He bends me down and separate my legs with his knees. I hold the tub in anticipation and gasp standing on my tip toes as he fills me in.

Sandile: Where do you think you're going?

Me: Babe you're in too deep.

Sandile: Am I? I didn't notice.

Sarcasm drips in his tone like venom. He slide out and I breathe out. He slams back in knocking out the breath I just caught.

Sandile: Don't disappoint me by be a coward.

I curl my toes unable to think of a smart retort and mew like a cat. What did I say about my mind being foggy this morning? I can't seem to think anything right. I can't keep up with his stroke. I remove my hands from the tub and pinch my nipple

while my left slide to my clit. I'm exposed to him and I can feel each and everything he gives me. My throat dries out while my knees fail me making me lose my balance. My body flies over the tub and I fall with a thud on the water.

Sandile: (screaming) Baby?

I gasp widen my eyes trying to comprehend what just happened. I could feel the water filling every hole in my body drowning me. Hands drag me up from the tub and I gasp emerging. Was I the one mewing? What the hell is wrong with me?

Sandile: (alarmed) Fuck baby are you okay?

I gawk at him and nod. The love spell and mist have been cleared from my eyes. If he thought he can drown me then he thought wrong. The water just baptised me to see things differently. I can see right through him. I'm not about to be a victim of sex sent me to the ER.

37

AZASAKHE

I wipe my mouth after chunking down the water and open the bin to throw the paper in. I'm not ready for children yet and we haven't discussed the depth of our relationship. I can't bring those mean humans in this environment while I still know I'm uncertain about him. And now his sulking because I killed his future child or children. I would jump over the bridge when I would wake up to find myself with a little bump in me the next day. God will have to forgive for being a double murder but I'm not ready to bring them in this environment we are subjected ourselves in too. There's no communication and trust between us and it will remain like that until we find a common ground.

Opening the sliding door leading to the backyard, I find him hopping with that same skipping rope I used to tie him up. If I didn't buy it what was he going to use?

Sandile: Are you done being a murder?

I laugh in disbelief.

Me: Are you done sulking?

I clap back.

Sandile: You could have talked to me instead of doing that nonsense.

The voice on the back of my head says I should remind him this is my body and I'm allowed to do so but I'm going to say so because I really want us to work.

Me: We never discussed kids.

He pause and glare at me.

Sandile: What do you think we're doing here, Azasakhe?

I'm standing and you're skipping like a full baptised ZCC member.

Me: We are talking.

Sandile: No, I mean around this walls. What do you think we are doing?

Me: You're being unfair on me.

I'm never taking a day off during the week in the near future. They only result in quarrels.

Sandile: Are you being fair on me or is because I'm a man my feelings are not important?

I want to jump in that pool and let myself frown because I know he didn't just use that line on me.

Me: I have never disregarded your feelings before.

Sandile: Really?

He arches his brow and continue to skip.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Vele he should continue skipping because his emotional blackmailing me right now.

Sandile: Just that.

I turn on my heels and walk back inside. This conversation was not fruitful and I thought we can talk about it like to grown adults instead of sulking like a baby. I pick up my phone to browse through social media and find missed calls from Sihle. She answers on the fourth ring.

Me: Mntase.

Sihle: Do I need to book an appointment to talk to you now?

My eyebrows knit together.

Me: I don’t understand.

Sihle: Ulizinyo lenkukhu sisi. {You’re a chicken’s teeth}.

I laugh.

Me: I was just busy with something.

Sihle: I wanted to confirm if we are still on tonight.

Me: It totally slipped my mind.

Sihle: Thought as much.

Me: We are still on mntase but I'll have to change the venue.

Sihle: What's wrong with your house?

Me: Someone is wrong in my house.

She giggled.

Sihle: What did you do to him?

Me: What makes you think it's me. It could be him.

Sihle: Okay what did he do?

Me: A lot of things. But I'm not counting.

Sihle: Send me the details after you have done. Later.

She hangs up. I book us spa then place my phone on top of the counter then make my way upstairs. I pick the laundry basket and change the bedding. I walk back down and sort the clothes according to their colors. He walks in all drench in sweat and takes out a bottle of water and disappear out of my sight. I shake my head and remove the belt from his jean. My phone beeps and I set the machine. It's a text from unknown number.

"You might have won this round but I wouldn't be comfortable if I was you. Watch your back"

I wasn't aware I was in a competition.The wheels in my head are already turning.

Me: Babe.

I walk out to look for him. I found him about to ascend the stairs.

Me: Your girlfriend just texted me.

Sandile: What?

I hand him the phone and he clenches his jaw.

Sandile: Where is my phone?

I shrug and watch him and storm to the living room. I follow him.

Me: You're not in contact with her right?

Sandile: Of course not. What do you take me for?

He cast his eyes on the screen and furiously types something then he places a call.

Sandile: Fuck his not answering.

Me: Who?

Sandile: Your bodyguard.

Me: Excuse me, did you just say bodyguard?

He nods dialling him again.

Me: Why wasn't I aware of this?

Sandile: Because you weren't suppose to know.

He snaps at me. You know what let me go back to my laundry because I blow things out of proportion. Danger is part of the package and I don't know why it surprises me. This is the same sneaky man who married me in jail. Another texts comes through. It's a screenshot this time.

"Chatting with him this morning just strengthen what we have"

I thinned my eyes looking at the screenshot. It's a call log and the minutes of the call. I breathe out and look at the number.

Me: What's your phone number again?

I yell.

Sandile: It's in your phone.

Me: Just call it out.

He calls his out and I feel my stomach dropping. So while I was sleeping he was talking to her again behind my back despite of what happened yesterday?

Sandile: I'm heading to the shower. If bullet calls back tell him it's urgent.

He yells again and a few minutes I hear his footsteps on the stairs. My hands are trembling. I place the phone on the counter and excuses my breath. I just asked him if he was still in contact with her and he said no. I pull the barstool ready to seat down but end up standing. I could feel tears threatening to

escape my eyes but I promised myself I won't cry for another man ever again in my life. I pace up and down not knowing what to do with myself.

Me: What to do?

I untie my air from the hairband and let it loose.

Me: What to do?

I scratch my head suddenly feeling the dandruff itching on my sides. I was ready to pour out my heart and soul in this relationship. The L word was on the tip of my tongue and I was ready to just throw it away.

Me: No, it's not love but long wena sdenge. {It's not love but long you idiot}.

I click my tongue and march to the pantry and take out the cooking oil. I storm to the bedroom and find the fish still swimming in the shower. I pour the oil the floor and walk back downstairs. Where is that belt? Oh, found it. I roll it on my hand after picking it up and dash back. Closing the toilet

Advertisement

I sit on top of it and wait for him to come out. He opens the door and pause seeing me.

Sandile: Did you miss me?

I smile sweetly and nod.

Sandile: Please pass me the towel.

I hide the belt behind my back and jump to my feet. Carefully ducking the oil, I pass him the towel and wait for him to step out.

Me: We would never lie to each other right?

Sandile: Yes. Baby we've been through this before.

Finally the fish takes the bait and he he slips and falls on the floor. I take that opportunity to swing the belt on him.

Me: Then why are you lying?

Sandile: (squirming) Fuck, what am I lying about?

Me: Didn't you say you're not talking to her.

Rage blinds my vision. I turn to him. He tries to stand and take the belt from me but he slips back on the floor.

Sandile: I'm not.

Me: Then why did she call you this morning?

He rolls on the floor trying to shield his body.

Sandile: You went through my phone?

Me: So it's true you spoke to her?

Sandile: Fuck.

He groans in agony.

Me: (screaming) Answer me.

Sandile: She called me.

Me: Why didn't you block her?

He stands again and holds the shower door for balance this time and pulls me towards him using the belt. I trip on my feet but he holds me down.

Me: I'm not about to be taken for a ride by you or anyone else. This is the last time I'm talking to you about this girl.

I yank my hands off him and carefully jump the slippery floor and storm out. The sound of the beeping washing machine makes it to my ears. I descend the stair and throw the clean ones in the basket and throw in another loud. I click my tongue and pick up the kettle and fill it with water then storm back upstairs with it. I find him on the balcony yelling over his phone.

Sandile: I don't care where you are bullet but take care of that girl. She's a thorn in my life.

He disconnects the call and turns on his heels. He widens his eyes.

Sandile: Baby please don't do this.

Me: What do you think I am?

Sandile: I understand you're angry.

Me: I'm seething.

He swallowed hard nodding.

Sandile: Which is understandable but please put the kettle down.

I take a step forward and he takes one back.

Me: Do I sound like radio that is on repeat on you?

He quickly shakes his head.

Sandile: No, of course not.

Me: Then why?

Sandile: She's the one who called me.

The binoculars again.

Me: (screaming) Voetsek what are you looking at Millicent?

The curtain slams shut. Good for her.

Me: Why didn't you block her?

Sandile: I did.

I click my tongue and take another step while he takes one back. His eyes pops out of their sockets when his back hits the

railings. I open the kettle and splash the cold water on him. He screams jumping to the other side. Where is he going? Is he trying to be the new Spiderman?

Sandile: Uyasangana yini, Azasakhe? Nkosi yam nangu umfazi engibulala ngiphila. Ufuna ungenza inyoka. {Are you crazy, Azasakhe? My lord this woman wants to kill me while I'm alive. She wants to make me a snake}.

He's reaction makes it so hard for me not to laugh.

Sandile: Ngiyasha. Ngiyazizwa ngophela ngaphakathi. Iskhumba sam siyaxebuka. {I'm burning. I can feel myself bleeding on the inside. My skin is peeling off}.

I walk towards him and he screams jumping off. I laugh and shake my head. What is sex? Sex is a tool used to destruct unfocused people. I hear a agonizing scream. Oh, shit did he just break his leg?

38

KAGISO

I got a call that I need to rush to the hospital by Aza. I wasn't expecting such when I walked in.

Me: What happened to you?

He blows out a sigh.

Sandile: Aza happened.

Me: I don't think I'm following. What did she do?

He narrates everything and by the time his done I'm rolling on the floor in laughter.

Me: On a serious note why are you still talking to that woman?

Sandile: She called using a different number.

Me: I told you to sort her out a long time ago but you kept giving her chances. Tell me why is she still alive? Woman like her don't give up no matter how much you try to scare them. The only language they understand is death that you mean business.

Sandile: Bullet is on it.

Me: You better kill her this time because she will do far worse that what she already did.

I chuckle.

Me: I saw the Mrs on the corridors and she looks beyond herself.

Sandile: As she should. That woman just brings the worst in me.

Me: Remember her ex? She was arrested with her friend for beating him.

Sandile: You mean friends.

I frown.

Me: Weren't they two?

Sandile: They were three.

Me: Who is the third one?

Sandile: Remember when we went to her workplace to buy that company.

I nod.

Sandile: The lady who wanted to talk you by the elevator but you brushes her off.

Me: That crazy woman who keeps stalking me?

Sandile: She's stalking you?

Me: She was but stopped when I paid her off. She was getting under my skin and every time I saw her I just blow up.

Sandile: Well she’s the friend.

Me: They are not close.

Sandile: It’s another story for another day. I’m just keeping her alive because she’s her friends.

Me: You see this energy you’re having on her should have been the energy you put on that woman.

Sandile: I’m sure by the end of today her family will be crying for her.

Me: That’s your problem. Why do you trust people to do the job for you instead of doing it yourself? What if Bullet betrays you?

Sandile: Bullet will never do that. We…

I cut him off.

Me: We come far with him. Yes, I know but you don’t know what tommorrow holds.

Sandile: I would have done the job but that crazy woman decided to break my leg.

I laugh.

Me: Stop provoking her.

Sandile: She should also stop provoking me.

I shake my head and raise my hands in surrender. I'm not going to get involved because this could back fire in my face someday. I know they will eventually fix things in there own way and where would that leave me

Advertisement

the mediator? I just wish they could sit down and talk like normal people do not that nonsense they keep doing. I'm sensing to bull in one kraal kind of vibe on them and it never works. I just hope they fix their issues because they do look good together.

SANDILE

Kagiso left after the nurse walked in to check my vitals. The door opens and the she devil walks in.

Me: What fuck are you doing here?

She swallows hard and closes the door.

Me: Are you here to finish me off?

Aza: That's not true. I would never hurt you.

Me: Funny enough I'm the one with a cast in my fucken leg.

I hiss at her causing her to flinch.

Aza: I don't know what came over me. I'm sorry.

Me: Inkinga yakho awungihloniphi. {Your problem is that you don't respect me}.

She rushes to my side and hold my hand.

Aza: That's not true.

I yank my hand off her.

Aza: I'm taking responsibility for my actions and I'll take care of you until you're back in health.

Me: As you should. Who did you think will take care of me?

Aza: I will take leave at work. Please forgive me.

Tears roll down her cheeks.

Me: Just because I don't retaliate the way you don't doesn't make me stupid. My mother never raised a woman abuser.

Aza: (crying) I'm sorry.

Me: If it was me who did this your would be crying abuse or what is it because I'm a man?

She cast her eyes to the floor shaking her head.

Me: If I say I will handle it I will do so at my own times. I don't fucken need your insecurities to come out to play every time. I need you to trust me to handle my shit. I need to fucken trust me as your man, your husband to hold down my household.

She bites her quivering lip nodding. She sniffs and wipe the tears that escape her eyes.

Aza: (softly) I trust you. Me: Do you?

She slowly nods. Me: Don't turn me into something I'm not because I would hate to lose you.

Aza: I'm sorry. Me: If you don't mind, I would like to take a nap or will that also be a problem?

She gulps the tears shaking her head.

Aza: I'll see you later. Me: Don't bother. Close the door on your way out. I close my eyes and wait for her footsteps to fade and the door follows after that. When I love I love deeply but that doesn't mean I will turn a blind eye abuse. If I don't stop it now it will continue until she kills me. I get that she's angry but what she did is unforgivable. I am a man and need my respect. A man in my calibre needs all the respect a wife can give and I'm starting to question myself if my decision was the right one. Was it worth losing someone who respected me over someone who doesn't? As much as Mamello was annoying at times but she gave me that respect I needed as a man. The question still remains though. Was Azasakhe worth it?

39

NARRATOR

Busi walked around Pep admiring baby clothes. The baby fever was slowly sinking on her and she loved each and every minute of it. She smiled seeing the little socks and vest. It was too early for her to start buying clothes and besides she didn't know which gender she was having. One hand on the items while the other one went to hold her stomach. 5 months more to go before she could welcome this bundle of joy. She placed the items down and walked to the counter. Luckily for her the was no queue so she walked straight in and purchased the some sweets and chocolates. Her sweet tooth was her worst nightmare these days because she had to feed her cravings. She walked out of the store opening the packet of Maynard's and three two in her mouth. She crushed the slip in her hand ready to throw it but bump into someone.

Busi: Sorry.

She murmured raising her head and locked eyes with Kagiso. She clicked her tongue.

Busi: If you think I'm stalking you just know that this is not your father's mall. It's a public place and I have every right to go to any public place just like you.

She pushed him out of the way and marched to the taxi rank leaving Kagiso dumbfounded. He shook his head and continue walking making his way to the parking lot while Busi navigated her way to the taxi rank. Seeing that man just makes her blood boil. Who does he think be is? She clicked her tongue and jumped in the taxi and sat in the front seat.

°

°

Aza paid the driver and stepped out of the cab.

Aza: Please wait for me. I won't be long.

Driver: You'll find me waiting on the parking lot ma'am .

She her way to Sandile's room and found him sleeping. She placed the bag she packed in top of the chair and kissed his lips. Sandile flipped his eyes open and looked at her swollen eyes.

Aza: Hey.

Sandile: What are you doing here?

He coldly muttered causing Aza to swallow hard. The man was still Angry which was understand. She was wrong for overreacting. Maybe if she gave him time to explain they won't be here now.

Aza: I brought your toiletries.

Sandile: Where is my phone?

Aza: The screen cracked.

Sandile: How many times will you keep breaking my things?

Aza: Sorry?

Sandile: Firstly it was my car, my leg and now my phone.

Tears welled in Aza's eyes.

Aza: I'll replace your phone. Your car might take me years to repair it but if you give me time I'll eventually repair it. I'll take care of you until your leg is back in shape.

Sandile breathed out.

Sandile: I never said replace them.

Aza fakes a smile while a tear rolled down her cheek.

Aza: You didn't have to but I got your statement loud and clear.

Sandile: Don't put words in my mouth.

Aza: I'm sorry.

Sandile: Stop saying that because you're not.

Aza: I really am. I didn't mean for what to happened to happen.

Sandile: What were you intensions? We're they to kill me?

Aza widen her glossy eyes.

Aza: What? No, I'll never do that to you.

Sandile: Yet you did. That's attempted murder.

Aza: The kettle was not hot. The water was cold.

Sandile: You expect me to believe that?

Aza: Because it's true.

Sandile: Maybe this marriage wasn't blessed from the get go.

Aza: What?

Sandile: I'm questioning myself if you're the right woman for me.

Aza held his hand.

Aza: Don't make this one mistake question my love for you.

Sandile: You love me?

Aza nods vigorously causing him to chuckle bitterly.

Sandile: You don't know the meaning of love wena. People who love each don't do what you did to me.

Aza: Baby it was a mistake.

Sandile: A mistake that will never happen again.

Aza's heart missed a beat.

Aza: What is that suppose to mean?

Sandile: Just that. You're old enough to understand everything. I don't have to break it down to you.

Aza tucked her quivering lip and closed her eyes

Advertisement

just letting the tears to fall on their own. She turned on her heels walking to the door but stopped midway and furiously turned to him.

Aza: So you're just going to give up on me just like that?

Sandile: You gave up on yourself first so who am I?

Aza's heart shuttered in pieces. She bit her bottom lip nodding.

Aza: I see. Maybe you didn't love me in the first place.

Sandile: Don't ever question my love for you. Maybe you're the one who didn't love me. Let's not forget you didn't even bother investigating me when I proposed this marriage. Maybe you're also just like the rest of them, in it for money.

Aza gasped in shock.

Aza: I love you. I'm not with you because of your money.

Sandile: I won't dispute you because you're the only one who knows the truth and your God.

Aza: (gulping the tears) If you want to break up with me or divorce me just say so and stop using lies.

Sandile: You make me question myself as a man and if you would ever give me a chance to be your man.

He chuckles.

Sandile: You know Mamello used…

Aza cut him off.

Aza: Oh so this is what this is all about? Are you in love with that girl?

Sandile threw his back on the pillows laughing.

Sandile: Here you go with your insecurities.

Aza: Call me insecure all you want but I'm starting to think you're the one who didn't love me. What was the motive behind you marrying me? If you're not setting the record straight with that woman then it's fine. Like you said earlier I'm old enough to understand so I'm removing myself from this equation. You can stay with her and go as far as marrying her. I'm not desperate for love nor am I desperate to have your last name beside my name. She can wear that dress I wore, the ring or even better you can buy her expensive ones according to her taste. I'm not about to beg you to love me right if you can't. I love you enough to let you go. In fact I don't care what you do next because all you do is take decisions on my behalf. You can use the contract to control me or whatever but I don't care.

Sandile: Be careful sweetheart for what you wish for. You're brother's life is on the palm of my hands. I could just end it with just one phone call.

He snapped his fingers. Tears rolled down Aza's eyes.

Aza: Who are you?

A smirk graces Sandile's lips.

Sandile: Your husband what do you mean?

He chuckles.

Sandile: This is who you wanted right? So deal with it.

He shifted his eyes to the window. Aza walked out of the room holding her tears. She jumped in the car and closed the door.

Driver: Anywhere specific?

Aza: Home.

He nodded and started the car. Aza leaned back on the armrest and let the tears flow freely. Tyres screeching before a red GTI blocks their path.

Aza: What's going on?

Driver: I don't know.

A man stepped out of the car and rushed to the cab. The driver rolls down the window and stucks his head out.

Driver: What’s going…

His words died on his throat as a bullet goes straight on his head. Blood splashes all over the car causing Aza to scream. She rushed to the other side and open the door. The man ran around the car and shot her on her leg. Aza dragged her leg crying. The adrenaline pumping on her. The man ran over and shot her twice on her back. He ran back to the car as she falls and drove off while screams filled the air.

NARRATOR

The ambulance finally arrived at the scene. Blood was everywhere and those who was close by fan describe the scene as a tragic one. The police also arrived to question the witness and nothing tangible were they coming out with. Each witness states the same thing that everything happened so fast and buy the time they started to notice what was going gun shots rang in the air and like every normal person who hears gun shots they either run or lie down. Unfortunately the driver died on the scene while Aza was still in the table fighting for her life. With two bullets on her back and one on her leg, Aza was in a very critical state inside the theatre. The doctors were cautiously trying to remove the bullets from leg. The machine started to beep.

Doctor 1: Blood. We need blood.

He screamed over his team as the patient in front of him was losing a lot of blood. The nurse rushed over with the blood and the machines beeped again.

Doctor 2: Cardiac arrest. We need to revive her now.

Another doctor yelled.

Doctor 2: Charge the defibrillator now.

The nurse did as instructed while the doctor carefully turned her body around. At that point they didn't care about the hole in her leg nor the infection she may catch. Her life was much more important than that.

Doctor: On my count.

The nurse nodded her heart skipping her a beat.

Doctor 1: Charge.

Aza's body jerked on the table.

Doctor 1: Again.

He placed the machine on top of her chest and tried to revive her.

Doctor 1: Charge at 120.

As per instruction the nurse switched the machine to the requested number.

Doctor 1: No, no, come on woman. Don't die on me.

He turned to his team and screamed in frustration.

Doctor 1: Charge again.

Aza's body jerked followed by a flat line on the machine. They waited for a few minutes for the heart to revive it's like it normally does on other patients but sadly it didn't.

Doctor 2: Time of death. 16:46pm.

The whole mood changed into a sombre on after that statement. Losing a patient should be a norm to them but it still wasn't.

Doctor 1: Did they manage to get hold of her family?

Nurse: The police have her belongings. I'm sure by now they have alerted them.

He nodded in defeat.

SANDILE

Two in this hospital and it's frustrated the hell out of me. Being stuck in one places drives one crazy. Prison was much better than being here because I was able to move around but sadly I can't move because I have a huge fricken cast on my leg. I haven't seen that infuriating woman since she stormed out of here and I'm glad she gets the idea that I need space to think. Sometimes being alone just exercises one's brain and gives it a chance to make decisions. This back and forth between us is not normal. I don't know how does she expect the society to respect me if she my wife fails to do so. I can't be respected by outsiders while my wife fails to do so. It will be saying a lot about me as a man.

Peace and respect is what we man look for in a home and the rest shall follow. I can't be shouting people the whole day over

business deals and get home to another business deals. The two should be separated. If I'm at work there's something showing it and if I'm at home I'm expecting to walk in a peaceful environment and respectful partner. The door opens breaking me from my thoughts. Kagiso walks in looking like his carrying the whole world on his shoulders?

Me: And nou? { And now?}.

He keeps a straight face and narrow his eyes at me.

Kagiso: When was the last time you spoke to your wife?

Me: Two days ago. Why?

Kagiso: Did you sort things out with her?

Me: We were neck and neck with each.

Kagiso: You're not answering the question. Did you or did you not sort things out with her.

Me: This is not the courtroom and I believe I'm not in the witness box.

He grimace nodding.

Kagiso: The police are here to question you.

I arch my brow.

Me: Regarding?

Kagiso: You'll find out.

He makes his way to the door and opens. The police walks in and we exchange greetings.

Officer: Mr Dlamini, do you know this woman?

He muttered showing me a picture. I frown looking at Kagiso for answers but his face is not giving any.

Me: That's my wife.

Officer: When was did you see her or talk to her?

Me: What's this all about?

Kagiso: That was two days ago.

He chirps in.

Officer: Does your wife have any enemies?

Me: Not that I know of. Why?

The officer drags out his breath.

Officer: There's no easy way to say this but your wife was shot two days ago.

My eyes widen while my heart pounds in my ribcage.

Me: What do you mean she was shot?

Officer: It doesn't end there.

My breathing pattern changes in seconds. I could feel each heavily breath I release.

Me: What's the worst?

Officer: She died in theatre while they were still operating her. The driver of the cab…

My mind shuts down on me. I can see his lips moving but I can't hear a word his uttering. The heavy breath is the only thing my ears are hearing. I keep shifting my eyes back and forth between them then close them. Maybe this is a dream and I will mysterious wake up from. Actually it's a nightmare I'm having in broad daylight. I should stop sleeping during the day but that's the only thing I can do in this place. Their medication just knocks me up every time I take them. I don't know whether that's how they are suppose to be but I don't like them. It lives me in a vulnerable state.

Officer: Mr Dlamini are you still with us?

He breaks me from my turmoil.

Me: How sure are you that is her? My wife is home.

What the fuck is this? Azasakhe is probably at work.

Me: You've got the wrong woman.

Officer: Wasn't she the one you identified on the picture?

Me: Yes but I know my wife. She's at work.

Officer: Sir, I und…

Me: Voetsek marn. I'm not going to urge with you about this. She's not dead.

Officer: You needs to identify the body.

I click my tongue.

Me: Now I need to identify the body? Didn't you just say she's dead?

Officer: Just to be sure and be on the safe side.

Me: You're getting on my nerves right.

Officer: Sir

I'm just doing my job.

Me: Job my left foot. Entlek vaya before I lose my shit.

He sighs.

Officer: Condolences to you and the rest of the family.

Me: Voetsek.

I roar at him and click my tongue. He shuts the door behind.

Kagiso: Are you fucken kidding me right now?

He bellowed catching me off guard. I even forgot he was in the room.

Me: What?

Kagiso: Didn't I tell you to handle that woman from the onset.

Me: Wa thoma ekere? {You're starting}.

Kagiso: Don't give me that shit. You risked someone's life over your selfishness.

Me: Vaya mfethu. Uthoma go mbora yanong. {Leave. You're starting to bore me right now}.

Kagiso: You know what. Fuck you. I'm glad she's died so she can be at peace.

I clench my jaws pulling the pillow and throw at him.

Me: Fuck you, Kagiso. Do you hear me? Fuck you.

He throws the pillow back and marches to the edge of the bed and punch the cast. The pain shoots straight from my heart. I grunt in agony.

Kagiso: Ska mphaphela saan, ketla go thuba ka klapa nou.

He slides his hands in his pocket and walks to the door.

Me: Fuck you, Mofokeng.

He abruptly halts on his steps and slowly turns to me with a smirk dancing on his lips.

Kagiso: Says the weakling. You've lost touch with reality. You're weak Dlamini and it makes me wonder weren't you someone's bitch inside?

Rages seeps in me. He chuckles.

Kagiso: Stricked a nerve, huh? I knew it will do the trick. Pull your fucken socks up because you're becoming a liability right now and please don't make me shoot you because I would hate to lose a friend and a brother. Ketlo jeka, ketlo betha round hape are so fetsi nna lewena and I hope by the time I come back you will be back in your senses.{I will come back}.

He turns whistling and walks out of the room. I breath out cupping my face. One thing I know that Aza is not died. They've got the wrong woman and I hate to admit it that dickhead was right. I am weak.

41

NARRATOR

Getting in touch with reality was a bit difficult for Sihle. She couldn’t believe when they broke the news to her and it felt like she was watching a movie. She breaks down every time her mind takes her back to their last conversation. She was ready to be pampered and have fun with her friend not knowing it was the last time she will ever speak to her. If it was up to her she will prolong their conversation just so she can hear her voice again. Instead of going to the church to bury her best friend, Sihle was sitting on top of the bed listening to their voice notes. A very difficult week she had and she was hoping by now that maybe just maybe the doctor were wrong. She was hoping to get that one phone call that might say she slipped into a coma or she was still alive but in a very cricket condition. She would have taken that not to walk in that church and sing hymns then go to the grave yard which be her final resting place and leave her there just like that. This was not the ideal life she was hoping for. She just got a new job for goodness sake and this was suppose to be a happy time for her. She looked at their pictures on her phone and burst in tears. None of them was suppose to bury each other. Maybe years to come from now on but not now. She was not ready and she will never be ready.

°

°

Nobody has a time frame for life and death. If there was a guarantee on what day will a person die then everyone would have tried to prevent it. Sitting on the back row at church, Busi closed her eyes as the past went on about how it was God's plan. Wasn't God suppose to be the one who created them so if that's the case why was he taking away his own creation? All human beings were created according to his own image so why was he so cruel? Busi couldn't understand how this powerful God Christians do such thing? She was starting to question him as a whole. If he was really the one who gives and takes why was he inflicting pain on his own creation? She used the damp tissue to wipe her cheeks and sniffed. She didn't get a chance to say goodbye nor fix their relationship. She wishes she could turn back the hands of time and do things differently. She placed her hand on her bump and saliva filled her mouth when Kagiso made his was to the stage. She jumped to her feet and rushed to the bathroom to empty her stomach. That man's presence was upsetting her. If it was up to her she wouldn't see him. She flushed the toilet and walked out to rinse her mouth and hands. She paused on her steps seeing her mother and pretended like she didn't see. She did her business and padded to the door.

Busi’s mom: Is this how I raised you? You don’t greet your elders anymore?

Busi: Hello.

Busi’s mom: Greet like you mean it.

Busi blow out a sigh and faked a smile turning to her.

Busi: Hello, mama. Uyaphila?

Busi’s mom: You see why I was protecting them from you? She was gun down in daylight. I’m sure the wife of that man hired a hitman for her because she was building her happiness on someone’s tears. You can’t take away a husband from his family and expect to live a happy life after that. No tears fall in vain.

Busi: I’m not in your house nor in your personal space so what do you want from me?

Busi’s mom: Whether you’re not in my house or not I will always protect you because I brought you to this world. You’re my responsibility.

Busi: I stopped being your responsibility when you kicked me out. I fend for myself so don’t make it seem like you’re doing me a favour because you’re not.

Busi’s mom: Is this how you talk to me this days Busiswe?

Busi: Yhoo mama you're exhausting seriously. I don't bother you nor do I ask for anything from you. I've accepted that according to you I'm not suppose to make mistakes. I'm suppose to be straight like a ruler without any flows. Tell me mama which person in this life we are living in is perfect? You're not perfect. Tata is not perfect so is Banele and Bandile so why are you making it like I'm tge first person to be pregnant. At least it's not a teenage pregnancy and you should be happy.

Busi's mom: (scoffing) Happy? Are you hearing yourself?

Busi: Loud and clear. I'm sick and tired of you trying to dictate my life. I'm old enough to make my own choices and mistakes. I will make many of them so that I can learn. Nobody has a right to judge me.

Her mother gasped in shock.

Busi: Yes and that includes you. Only God has the right to do so. You're human and has the same flash I have so what gives you the right to judge me? Please let me bury my friend in peace and let me live my life in peace because I'm not bothering you nor your family please keep the same energy.

She walked out of the room. Tears rolled down her eyes. The first thing her mother would say was that? She expected some comfort from her and some words of encouragement not what

just transpired. What kind of mother rejoices over someone's death

especially if that death was her daughter's friend? What if it was her in Aza's shoes? Would she be rejoicing the manner she was doing right now? She found the mourners making their way to the cemetery and joined the queue.

°

°

Swaying her waist from side to side, Mamello danced to the music blasting through the speakers. Her archenemies was did as she couldn't be more happier. Isn't life just great when your foe just mysteriously dies. She sipped her wine and leaned back on the couch. That woman thought she was smart but she just proved to me smarter than her. Sandile forgot a particular card on her and she didn't it with her on that day he took the cards away from her. She picked her phone and made a conference call to her friends.

Lungelo: Hello?

Lungi: Meme.

Mame: Hey girls how are you?

Lungelo: Good. Did you hear that Sandile's wife was gun down.

She faked a gasped.

Meme: What? When?

Lungi: A week ago.

Meme: Oh my goodness. What is happening to this world.

Lungelo: Meme I'm going to ask you this and please be honest with me.

Meme: (sceptical) Okay?

Lungelo: Did you have a hand in this?

Mame: (gasping) What do you take me for? I would never take away someone's life like that. I may be a lot of things but I'm not a killer. I expected better from you.

Lungi: Meme don't take this the wrong way but we just wanted to know.

Meme: I'm disappointed in you guys. As my friends you should know me. I called you guys about to tell you that I'm settling very well in here and the first thing you do is accuse me of murder?

She yelled on top of her voice.

Lungelo: I'm sorry but I had to be sure.

Meme: Wow, thanks for the lack of confidence in me.

Lungi: Meme i-

She clicked her tongue and disconnected the call. Well nobody knew she was the killer except her and the hitman she hired. Now it was time to go back and console a broken widow. Wasn't life just a game? You win some today and you lose some tommorrow.

SANDILE

Kagiso: Don't you think she would have shown up by now?

Me: I know she's not died. She's hiding somewhere.

Kagiso: So we must pretend to bury a whole casket with a bloody doll? You're playing with people's emotions right now.

Me: I know what I'm doing okay?

He raises his hands in surrender.

Kagiso: I don't know why do you keep refusing to except that she's gone. You're just in denial.

Me: Nobody's body just goes missing at the morgue just like that.

Kagiso: So what's your plan?

Me: Her brother is still in my custody.

Kagiso: Fuck no.

Me: Fuck yes.

Kagiso: Don’t you think you’ve hurt her enough? Even in her death you still want to keep taking from her.

Me: She’s not dead and the only person who can make her come out of her hiding place is her brother.

He shakes his head.

Me: This is the weak me dealing with it. They think they can play me and just walk away just like that? No, not me.

I roll the sleeves of my shirt and walk inside the warehouse.

Kagiso: You have lost your damn mind.

He yells after me. I find my victim tied on the chair looking buttered and all.

Me: Where is she?

He screams muffled by the tape. I padded to him and remove it.

Me: Where is she?

Akhona: (wincing) Who?

I punch his jaw and his head falls to the side.

Me: Let’s try again. Where is she?

Akhona: (groaning) Who?

Me: Don’t fuck with me boy. You know exactly who I am talking about. Where is your sister?

Akhona: She’s dead.

I punch him again.

Me: Let’s go again. Where is your sister?

Akhona: I don’t know. She’s been buried today so I don’t know what do you want from me.

Tears stream down his cheeks.

Akhona: I trusted you with her life.

I pull the gun from my waist and cock it.

Me: I’m going to ask you one last time. Where is she?

Akhona: She’s been buried as we speak right now.

Me: Very well.

I pull the trigger and sigh after he takes his last breath. I look around.

Me: Clean this mess. And make sure you send this picture on her phone. I know she will come out of hiding.

The boys nods. I turn on my heels and walk out. I’m not about to be played by a bunch of amateurs. I’ve been in this game for far long enough to smell a rat from afar. I know she will come running after she sees those texts because nobody just disappears into thin air after being declared dead.

42

SEVEN YEARS LATER

BUSISIWE

Junior: Mama look at me.

Me: Get down from there.

I yell rinsing his school shirt and drop it on the basket with other clothes. It's been seven years and during this year's I had the ups and downs of life. My first happy moment after Aza's death was the birth of my son. He's the apple of my eye and I would do anything for him.

Junior: Mama look.

He attempts to jump from the tree but slips and fall on the ground. I drop the basket I was picking and rush to him.

Me: Junior.

I hold his hand trying to make him stand and he cries louder.

Me: Okay.

I rush to my room and pick up the towel and dash back outside.

Landlord: What's going on?

Me: I think he broke his arm.

Tears fill my eyes as he continues to scream.

Me: Mama is here baby. Everything will be okay.

I wipe my tears and look at my landlord.

Me: Please help me strap him on my back.

She carefully picks him up and I strap him on my back as tall as he is. I hate that he took that man's height. And like any denied child he looks just like his father.

Me: Please lock my door. I'm rushing to the clinic.

I sniff walking out of the yard.

Me: It's okay baby. Just hold on a bit.

I bend down to remove the thorn from my flip-flop and continue with my journey. I've got pegs crossing all over my chest making a line. My legs have a mind map because of the water and my boobs are not in the bra but who the hell cares? I don't care about my appearance because my son comes first. I barge in the clinic and rush to the reception.

Me: My son broke his arm.

Receptionist: Sorry my sister you will have to stand in the queue just like everyone else.

I turn to look at the line and turn back to him.

Me: Please bhuti. He broke his arm.

Receptionist: I’m sorry my sister but my hands are tied. It’s the policy an I don’t want to lose my job

I burst in tears running out of the hospital. Junior hadn’t stopped crying either adding more to my frustrations. I flug a taxi and jump in.

Me: Sorry bhuti I didn’t bring my wallet.

The car abruptly halts.

Driver: That’s not how I work sisi.

Me: (crying) My son broke his arm and my first priority was to find him help. I can give you my address. I will pay you back I promise you.

I plead with him wiping my tears.

Me: Please.

He turns back to the road and he brings the engine to life.

Me: (sniffing) Thank you.

SANDILE

I crouch down and open my arms for my daughter. I caught her and spin her around causing her to giggle.

Me: How is my little princess doing?

She giggles. The nanny walks in the room panting.

Nanny: I’m so sorry sir. She out ran me when I put her dress on.

I chuckle.

Me: It’s okay.

Nanny: Sbahle come.

Sbahle: Daddy auntie said I’m going to be a flower girl.

Me: Yes my love. But if you don’t go with auntie you might be not that flower girl.

She slides down and run out.

Nanny: Sbahle stop running.

She closed the door and runs after her. I shake my head amused and pick up my waistcoat. My phone rings just as I slip it on.

Me: Eita.

Kagiso: I’m outside.

Me: Thank you.

Kagiso: Don’t thank me yet. I still don’t agree with your decision.

Me: We talked about this.

Kagiso: I still don’t fucken understand why are you marrying that bitch.

Me: Watch your mouth because that's soon to be my wife. I don't expect you to understand anyway.

Kagiso: What's to understand?

Me: I'm doing this for my daughter. I want her to grow up in a loving home.

Kagiso: You can still do that while you're cooperating with her. Or better yet just say the word and I will make it happen.

Me: You're not about to kill the mother of my child.

Kagiso: You're scared to do it. You won't have her blood on your hands nor you have any conscious.

Me: I'm not doing this with you.

Kagiso: Fine. Don't say I didn't warn you nor give you options.

Me: It's already late.

Kagiso: Give a high five for about to attend the most boring wedding ever.

He sarcastically muttered causing me to laugh.

Me: I still I have a life. What about you?

Kagiso: I like my bachelor days and my one night stands thank you very much.

He hangs up after that. I throw the phone on top of the bed and button the waistcoat. It's been 7 years since I lost her. I went to a killing spree for weeks but nothing came out tangible about that shoot out. The killer was a hired contractor who choose to die instead of revealing his clients name. It was stupid of me to think that killing her brother might be a way of her trying to back at me. It was stupid to trying to settle the score with her but how do you do so when that person is dead? I grimace shaking my head.

Me: Time to get married.

I lost one chance of love and maybe just maybe this is my second shot at love.

JENNIFER

I tuck my feet under the fleece and pick up the popcorns.

Mhloli: It's my turn to pick up the movie.

Me: No.

Mhloli: Babe you did the last time.

Me: Fine

as long it's nothing to do with guns.

He holds my chin and cages his lips with mine.

Mhloli: I know my love.

He caresses my cheek and pecks my lips.

Mhloli: Chick flicks, romcom or horror?

Me: Anything is fine.

Mholi: Let me see.

He goes through the channels. My phone rings as I wait for the movie.

Me: Who is it?

Mholi: Your father.

I thank him after he hands to me and answer it.

Me: Tata.

Tata: He just got married today.

Me: Well good for him.

Tata: What do you mean good for him? You're just going to sit back and watch this all happened?

I jump to my feet and walk outside.

Me: What do you expect me to do?

Tata: Are you telling me you're okay for being a step mother two children?

Me: Actually yes. I love my life the way it is.

Tata: Azas…

I cut him off.

Me: Don’t you ever call me with than name. That woman died 7 years ago.

I disconnect the call and exercise my breath before walking inside.

Mhloli: Everything alright?

Me: Everything is fine my love.

I peck his lips and lay my head on his chest then he covers us with the fleece.

43

JENNIFER

I take off my muddy shoes and walk barefooted to my room. I told Mholi countless times that his yard needs a paving. I can't be coming back home to the muddy shoes every time I go there. I walk out of my room dragging my slippers and find my father in the living room.

Me: What are we watching?

Tata: The only thing you should be asking me is what is your next move.

I screech leaning back.

Me: I thought we spoke about this.

Tata: No, you were screaming over the phone and I couldn't hear a thing you were saying.

Me: I can't go back.

He brow curve up.

Tata: There's a difference between can't or won't so which one is it?

Me: Won't. My whole life is here and I love what I have.

Tata: Oh snap out of it already.

He snaps irritated.

Tata: Your brother died because –

I interjects.

Me: Don't you dare say it's because of me. If he didn't sold him to him they would have never met. He died and I also died so what?

Tata: You're not dead that's the difference.

Me: To you but the rest of the world I am.

I clap back snapping. I don't know why are still talking about this because every time it leads us to a disagreement.

Me: Look, I'm not disregarding the fact that he died for me but have you ever sat down and thought about the what ifs?

Over the years I've learnt to be selfish about myself. I've pleased people all my life and I can't be doing that again. I love my brother and his children but I think it's for the best I stay away from them.

Tata: So you're going to sit back and do nothing?

Me: That's exactly what I'm going to do. Life moves on and people also do so. They have forgotten about me so why should I reinsert myself again in their lives? It will only hurt them and open old healed wounds.

He drags out his breath and shakes his head.

Me: I love being here. I love having you and Mhloli. I love his two children and I love waking up at the crack of dawn to help you with your clients. I love waking up at the wee hours of the morning and accompany you and your clients to the mountains or river to do their rituals.

I chuckle.

Me: I know I hated the sound of that drum but as the years went by I've learnt to love it also.

Tata: In other words you're telling me you love chasing after my livestock?

Me: That's exactly what I'm saying. I love this little life I have created for myself and I'm selfish about it. I'm selfish about my peace and happiness. That only language we understand with that man is nothing but hurting each other. Okay, let's say I go back what do I do?

Tata: You claim what's yours.

I smile shaking my head.

Me: No Tata. Claim it then what? Will it bring me peace? Most definitely not; beside Mhloli is the man for me. I love him.

He scoffs.

Tata: What can he offer you except letting you okay stepmom to his children?

Me: I don't care about his wealth. All I need is his love. He may be a herdsman but it still doesn't change anything. And besides five years from the clause has passed and the seven years they agreed on has also passed so nothing is binding him to that man. That contract is useless to me right now and I don't see why should I disrepute people's lives just because of a mere paper.

Tata: That mere people that gives you rights over him. He can't marry someone else while you're still alive.

I leap up to my feet.

Me: I'm going to bed.

I'm done trying to convince him because this conversation is not fruitful at all. I'm no superwoman and if he once stepped in my shoes he would understand that. I close the door and look for my nightdress. The same reason he run away and left my mother to take care of us while we were still young is the same reason I'm also living it behind. Langelihle Ndlovu, is the man who gave me life after my father. At this village they know him as Mkhulu Ndlovu because he ran away from his calling and choose a western path thinking it will help him but no the underground gang wanted him here practising ubungoma.

Those people don’t know X-rays and bone marrows that he thought were the one. The dude went to school

Advertisement

sat on a desk and listen to lectures go on and on about science only because he was running away from his roots. How foolish of him thinking he can run away forever. I’m not quite surprised that his only son chose to be a criminal. Akhona was following on his footpaths because as his record is not quite clean. From running away from his roots to become a doctor not just that an ordinary doctor but a mob one. In the under world they know him as Goldfinger. A mob doctor who happens to be a diamond stealer so yes ladies and gentlemen my brother was not wrong from being wanting to be a criminal. His father paved that way for him and he was just following his footsteps. Want to know what happened to me years ago? Let take you down to memory lane.

{FLASHBACK 7 YEARS AGO}

NARRATOR

At Empangeni, Babu Ndlovu walked his last client for the day out.

Ndlovu: Iyobonana.

The client nodded and walked out of the premises. He closed the gate and made his way back inside. Shutting the door, his phone rang in his pocket as he closes the kitchen.

Ndlovu: Ndlovu.

Caller: Goldfinger.

His eyes widen while his heart accelerated. He hasn't heard that name in years.

Ndlovu: Who is this?

Caller: You real question should be what do you have?

Ndlovu: What do you have?

Caller: Your daughters life is at stake.

Ndlovu: I don't understand. What do you mean?

Caller: She's in the hospital fighting for his life as we speak.

Ndlovu: What the fuck happened to her?

The caller chuckled.

Caller: I didn't take you as someone who would swear considering your current state.

Ndlovu: What happened to Azasakhe?

Caller: She was shot. It's not looking good for her.

Ndlovu: Send me the details. I'm on my way.

Caller: You know in our world information costs.

Ndlovu: I'll cover the cost.

Caller: Now you're speaking my language. I'll send you the details.

The line went dead after that. Ndlovu marched to his bedroom and took the suitcase from on top of the wardrobe and packed his clothes. He sat down on the edge of the bed to book a flight for himself. His mind was making out scenarios. The only reason he left his family was because he had his demon's he needed to fight alone not to mention living the gang he was in. He didn't want to be a mob doctor for the rest of his life so the only way out was to fake his death. Fezeka who is Azasakhe's late mother knew the reasons why he mysteriously disappeared on them. He didn't just abandoned them but circumstances forced him to do so.

°

°

Ndlovu walked out of the airport and flocked a cab after landing. It's been years he hasn't been in this place and he could feel the rush of the city irritating him.

Driver: Where to?

He handed the driver the piece of paper with the hospital's name and leaned back on the armrest. The drive to the hospital was a quick one due to the lack of traffic. He paid the driver and walked inside the hospital.

Ndlovu: I'm looking for Azasakhe Khali.

The receptionist went through her computer.

Receptionist: Who are you to her?

Ndlovu: Her uncle.

He lied through his teeth.

Receptionist: She's still at the theatre. Third floor.

She pointed him on the elevator. He thanked her and made his way there and sat on the benches waiting. Over three hours the doctor finally walked out and he jumped to his feet.

Ndlovu: How is she?

Doctor 1: Who are you?

Ndlovu: I'm Azasakhe's uncle.

Doctor 2: At last we found her family. Sir there's no way to say this but your niece is…

Nurse: (screaming) Doctor, she's awake.

Doctor: What?

Nurse: There’s a heart.

Both doctors run back inside and indeed her heart was pounding on the heart monitor. The doctor placed the stethoscope on her chest and found that heart beating. The nurse were done cleaning her and they were ready to call the family and break the news to them while preparing to move her to the morgue. Over another hour they walked out of the room and found Ndlovu waiting.

Ndlovu: How is she?

Doctor 2: She’s a fighter.

Doctor 1: She was died when we walked out of that room. I don’t know what happened but whatever it is it’s a miracle.

Ndlovu gawked at them.

Ndlovu: Can I ask for a favour?

Both doctors frowned.

Ndlovu: Can you pronounce her dead. My niece is not safe in here and I’m afraid the person who tried to kill her might come and finish her off.

Doctor 1: (shocked) You want us to lie to the rest of the family?

Ndlovu: If that’s whatever it takes to keep her safe. So yes, lie to them.

Doctor 2: They will want to see the body.

Ndlovu: You'll have to switch of the fridges in there so she won't freeze to death.

Doctor 1: That's absurd.

Ndlovu: I'm begging you. It's a life and death situation. If her killer mjght know she's still alive then she's good as dead.

{END OF FLASHBACK}

So that's how I am alive today. I wasn't expecting my father to come to my rescue. In my own head he was dead because I didn't know him. Waking up to find that prick killed my brother tore me apart. It wasn't the pain in my body that made me lose weight but the pain in my heart. He took a lot in me and as the years accumulated, I find myself wanting nothing to do with him. I hate him with passion.

BUSISIWE

I tie Junior’s shoe laces and help him down the bed.

Me: Ready to go?

He nods walking to the door. The doctor laughs.

Doctor: Looks like someone is ready to go home.

She teases amused.

Me: The only thing he misses is climbing trees.

She laughs again as we walk to the door.

Doctor: Try not to climb any trees Junior, okay. Your arm needs to heal.

Junior: Mama can we go home now.

Annoyance laced in his tone.

Doctor: (amused) Leave before he drags you out.

Me: I understand his frustration. It will take him time to get used to the sling in his arm.

Doctor: That it will. Bye for now Junior.

Junior: Bye.

We make our way to the exit.

Me: You scared me yesterday. Don’t you ever do something like that again.

Junior: I won’t.

Me: That’s what you keep saying. Junior let’s not forget you don’t keep your promises. I’ve never broke both my arms until today. You have a record of breaking your arms.

He giggles. I side eye him and shift my gaze away from him. I don’t want him to notice that I’m not angry at him. Maybe it’s something to do with his father’s side of the family but with each day his getting naughty. He broke his right arm when he was just 2 and now 5 years later it’s his left one.

Me: It’s not funny.

The fool in him continues to giggle. I shake my head flagging at taxi.

Driver: Where to my sister?

Me: Town.

Driver: Hop in.

We jump in and close the door.

Junior: Does my teacher know I’m in the hospital?

Me: I haven’t called her. I will call her later on.

Junior: Please don’t mama.

Me: Why not?

Junior: I'm tired of school.

Me: You're only in grade 2 and already you're telling me you're tired of school?

Junior: But the assistant wants us to draw if the teacher is absent or sleep. Mna ndidiniwe kulala. Ebusuku umntu uyalala. Nase mini eskolweni siyalala siphinde futhi xa sibuya eskolweni ilanga selizotshono kufuneka siphinde silale futhi. Hai mna ndikhathele kulala. {I am tired of sleeping. At night a person sleeps. During the day at school we sleep and again when we come back from school the sun is ready to set and we must sleep again. Hai I'm tired of sleeping}.

The whole taxi erupts in laughter. I wasn't aware that the others were also listening.

Driver: That's how it is my boy. You're lucky because in your generation you're sleeping. During our time we were running from the whites at schools. There was no time for sleeping. Sleeping was only for the dead ones.

The other passengers nod in agreement.

Driver: I hear almost half of the generation of today complaining about school and I sometimes ask myself if what have happened to us was still happening even today how will they survive.

Passenger 1: True. There’s this thing of technology they are abusing.

Passenger 2: Don’t even go there. I threw my daughter’s phone against the wall weeks back. Instead of her studying she’s on TikTok.

Passenger 3: What is this TikTok because my kids are misusing their data for that. I buy them data every month so that it can help them when they have projects that needs researching instead of going to the library.

Passenger 2: Whoever came with that platform messed up with our kids mind. My daughter said she wants to be a TikTok star after I broke her phone and doesn’t need school.

I shut them out as they go on and on. Parents tend to forget that each generation born now won’t be the same as them. During their times they were struggles here and there depriving them the chance of going to school. Today’s generation depends on their rights and forget that on those rights they are accompanied by responsibilities.

°

°

I throw the toiletries in the trolley and walk to the counter to pay.

Junior: Mama you forgot my snacks.

Me: Who said you deserve any treats? Children who disobey their parents never get any treats.

I tease.

Junior: But I've been a good child. I listen to you everyday.

I arch my brow.

Me: Really now?

Junior: Yes.

Me: Wasn't I the one who told you to not climb trees?

Junior: But what are the tree for if we can't climb them?

I laugh.

Me: You know what just go and get those snacks.

Junior: (cheerful) Yes.

He runs to the snacks aisle.

Me: Stop running.

I mutter under my breath releasing a sigh. That boy will be the death of me.

Cashier: Next.

Me: I'm waiting for my son. You can pass.

I stand on the side while the person behind me passes. I stand on my tip toes looking for him.

Me: Sorry, I'm just going to look for him.

I retort to the next person and stumble to the aisle we went through. I freeze on my steps while my breath accelerates at the scene in front of me.

KAGISO

I'm in town doing grocery shopping. My PA could be the one doing this for me but I don't trust anyone. In my line of work you don't trust anyone even if you've know that person for years. Don't get me wrong or anything. I trust that fool Dlamini with my life even though his decisions are questionable. I sometimes wonder what really goes in his head. I just wish I could be a fly and just get inside his head just to see how his thoughts are and connect any wireless wire so his internet can come back. He thinks right here but as a person your brain allows you to explore further beyond the right now situation. Maybe it's me who doesn't understand the concept of love but I doubt it will make me that foolish like he is right now. Who marries a woman just for the sake of having a child with her? You marry for love not for the sake of a child unless of course you love that person.

Walking in the snacks aisle I find a kid with a sling around his arms crouching in front of the boxes of biscuits.

Me: Hey buddy

Advertisement

are you undecided?

He nods.

Me: Which one do you like?

Junior: I love them both.

The answer piques up my interest. I said like and he changes that to love.

Me: I said like.

Junior: I know.

I arch my brow and cross my hands over my chest.

Me: Then why are changing that?

Junior: Because like is the same as love. I love both of them but I know my mother can't afford to but them both so I have to choose one.

I feel a tug in my chest. I furrow my eyebrows. I've met different kids and none of them have ignited that feeling in me so what's special about this one?

Me: How about I pay for both?

What? I keep stunning myself. Did Dlamini get in my body or what because this is not me. He leaps up to his full heart and turns to me.

Junior: Really?

Fuck, no. My heart stops momentarily. The radio that was playing on the background fades away while my breath becomes shallow. I could hear each breath I release through my ears. If my mother didn't love to embarrass me whenever I go home with the family album I wouldn't know how did I look when I was a kid. This kid standing in front of me is a duplicate of how I was growing up. I open my mouth to ask him who he is but words gets stuck on the roof of my tongue. I release another shaky breath and bend down as my chest tightness. Fuck, I can't breath.

Junior: Mr are you okay?

No, I'm not. I'm fucken hyperventilating kid.

45

KAGISO

I open my mouth forcing air in my lungs as much as I can. The child is still looking at me.

Junior: Mr are you okay?

I shake my head grunting. Fuck I can not have a panic attack right.

Junior: Are you sick?

I groan breathing heavily. The temperature on this room seems to be on maximum than before.

Me: Help.

I force the words out wheezing.

Junior: Huh?

Me: Help.

I repeat again but my voice is not audible like I projected.

Junior: Oh, you mean I must take two?

He smiles and pick two boxes of biscuits and turns to me. If it was any other day I would be rolling on the floor in laughter but the circumstance doesn’t allow me to do.

Voice: Junior let’s go.

I raise my eyes and they lock with her blazing ones. If looks could kill I would be dead right now. I stagger gasping for air. Shit! I remember this woman. My knees weakened causing me to fall on the floor. The memory replaying itself on my mind like it was just yesterday. I remember how desperate she was to talk to me but I never gave her the time of the day.

Junior: (smiling) Thank you so much sir.

She furiously makes her way to us and drags him away.

Me: Help.

She ignores me and drags the boy away from me. I greedily gulp as much as I can. I can't die now especially after I have seen my boy. Fuck I didn't I had one until now.

BUSISIWE

My brain keeps sending a message to my feet but my legs are suddenly paralyzed. Shock can sometimes kill a person. At the back of my mind I knew someday that this day would come but I wasn't prepared for it to be today in all days. I snap at out of daze after seeing Junior walking towards him. Rage seeps in me. What is he doing with my son?

Junior: Mr?

I force my feet to move towards him.

Me: Junior let's go.

Junior: Mama he’s dying.

Me: Let him die in peace.

I hold his other arm and drag him. The items he was holding falls on the floor. He yanks his hand off and runs back to the aisle. I follow behind.

Junior: Wait mama, my biscuits. He said he will pay for them.

He will what? Over my dead body. I snatch the biscuits in his grip and throw them back on the shelf and drag him.

Junior: But mama I want the biscuits.

Me: Take the Simba’s instead.

Junior: No, I want the biscuits.

He firmly muttered holding the shelf.

Me: We can buy scones from-

He cuts me off.

Junior: No, I want those biscuits.

He points the out. Labor pains were still messing up with my head because it’s the only explanation I have on why I named my son after him. Whatever demon possessed me wasn’t thinking straight at that time. I close my eyes and exercise my breath. I open them and crouch in front of him.

Me: I will buy you that big truck you wanted.

Bribe always works with kids.

Junior: No

Advertisement

I don’t want it anymore. I want the biscuits.

Frustration builds up in me. Who’s child is he because children are easily bribed.

Me: You will go to school next week.

I bargain.

Junior: I was going to go to school anyway. I want the biscuits mama.

I strengthen my spine standing to my full height and blow out a sigh.

Me: I will buy you a new phone.

What? I must be out of my mind but at this point I’m desperate. I don’t know what that man said to him but I want to keep the distance as far as possible.

Junior: Mama that’s a lie.

I resist the urge to scream. Maybe I’m coming too strong on him. Let me try another approach. I smile and caress his cheek.

Me: Did mama tell you how beautiful you are.

A smile forms on his face while his eyes lit up.

Junior: Really.

Me: Yes, you're the most handsome boy I've ever met.

Junior: Thank you mama.

Me: Let's go home my boy. What do you feel like eating today? KFC? Fish and chips? Liver and bread? Name anything my baby mama will make sure you get it.

Junior: I want ikota.

Me: (smiling) Then we are having them as supper tonight.

Junior: Plus the biscuits right?

My smile drops. Thixo wase Nazareth! I thought he forgot about that. The whole point of bribing him was to make him forget about those.

Me: No.

He shakes his head and runs back to the aisle. I breathe out and follow behind him and find him surrendered by a crowd.

Packer: Sir breathe.

He gasps for air.

Packer: Slowly.

He does instructed.

Packer: Somebody call the ambulance.

The rascal I call a child taps his shoulder.

Junior: Hey Mr, you said you will pay for my biscuits. Wake up.

Me: Junior.

I muttered through gritted teeth. The packer raised his eyes.

Packer: Ma'am do you know him.

Me: (sternly) No, I've never seen this man in my life.

Kagiso wheezes on the floor.

Packer: (alarmed) Sir breathe.

I'm bitter as hell and I want him to die right there.

Junior: A promise is a promise Mr. Wake up.

Can the ground open up and swallow me right now. Not that I care about him or anything he's ready to kick the bucket and the only thing this child cares about are biscuits, seriously?

SANDILE

My phone rings after I step out of the car.

Me: Babe?

Meme: Our flight leaves in 2 hours.

Me: I know baby but I can't just leave without checking him. I'm his next of kin and vice versa since his family is far away.

Meme: Call his family or something baby.

She yells on the end of the line.

Me: Baby I understand your frustration but that will take time. Let me just check on how he is and I will get back to you.

Meme: I don't like this. What if his doing this on purpose?

I snicker.

Me: And why would he do that?

Meme: He never liked me in the first place.

I walk to the reception.

Me: Hold on.

I switch the phone to hold.

Me: I'm looking for Kagiso Mofokeng.

Receptionist: Are you related?

Me: Yes.

He calls out the number and I walk to the elevator and press the floor.

Me: Baby you were saying?

Meme: Baby let's face it. Your friend doesn't like me.

Me: That's not true.

Meme: You don't see the way he looks at me. It's pure hatred.

Me: You're exaggerating things. Look baby let me check on him and will talk.

I disconnect the call and step out of the elevator. I walk to the room and find the doctor about to walk out.

Me: Doc how is he?

Doctor: Just a minor panic attack.

Me: A panic attack? Kagiso is a health freak.

Doctor: He was under a lot of pressure. He must avoid stress.

Me: I'll make sure he does.

She nods and walks out. I fish out my phone and stumble to the window placing a call.

Meme: That was quick.

Me: I'm afraid we will have to postpone the honeymoon.

Meme: What?

Me: I can't leave while his like this.

Meme: You got to be kidding me. This is our honeymoon. We are newlyweds.

My nostrils flare.

Me: The fucken honeymoon can be postponed. Kagiso's life matters.

Meme: Baby that's not I was saying.

Kagiso: Fuck.

I turn to find him clutching his chest with one hand and the other pulling the sheets away.

Me: We'll talk.

I hang up and and turn to him. He pulls the drips and jumps to his feet.

Me: Where the hell do you think you're going?

Kagiso: Home. I've got pressing matters to attend to.

Me: Dude, you had a panic attack.

Kagiso: I’m fine. Where are my clothes?

Me: You’re not fine. What the hell is going on?

Kagiso: I need to find my son.

Me: (shocked) Your what?

JENNIFER

I took a afternoon nap just to shut off my thoughts. The rents are nowhere in sight. I could use this free time to just listen to my thoughts. My father has been pressurising me about going back and it’s starting to annoy me. There’s nothing for me there and all my life crumbled right in front of my eyes. The sound of the counter banging breaks me out of my thoughts. I raise my eyes and find my Mam Zodwa staring at me.

Me: Ma.

Zodwa: Your father is calling you outside.

I groan.

Me: My day ended hours ago.

I was just brewing myself a cup of coffee. I went to bed early yesterday but my mind refused to shut down. I tossed and turn the whole night.

Zodwa: You’re still a child in here.

Another groan slips out of my lips.

Zodwa: Tell me mntanam, what is your game plan? Is this how you want to spend the rest of your days?

Me: I was tired.

I cover my mouth yawning.

Zodwa: I'm not talking about that. I'm talking what is your direction? What are you going to do with this situation?

Me: To tell you the truth mama

Advertisement

there's something in me that wants revenge. Just to show up and choas havoc in his life but at what cost? It's not like he will feel all the pain he caused me. His might be a temporary pain while mine is still going on for years. He took away the only person I consider as a family before you guys came along. He gunned me down after threatening me. It wasn't even hours before he issued those threats and I was almost killed.

Zodwa: What if it's not him who did that?

Me: What if it's him who did it? My question is what was his main goal? What was he hoping to achieve when he married me? Why marry me and kill me afterwards?

Zodwa: It doesn't make sense at all but let's not forget you're not dead.

I mentally roll my eyes.

Me: He and the rest of the world don't know that.

Tata: Azasakhe.

He yells outside.

Zodwa: Go before you make him mad.

I drag out my breath and drop the spoon on the cup. I don't know how many times I've told him to stop calling me with that name. Dragging my feet, I make my way outside.

Me: Tata.

Tata: Let's have a walk.

Me: Let me change my shoes.

I walk back inside and rush to my room. I kick off the slippers and slip on my sneakers then make my way outside after tying them.

Me: Where are we going?

Tata: Just around the village.

I close the gate after we stepped out and walk down the road. If it's not morning walks it's the afternoon ones. I know the purpose of walking is just to clear ones mind and just to stretch the legs but that's not my kind of thing and he doesn't understand.

Tata: Do you know why I haven't taken matters in my own hands?

Me: No.

Tata: Because I have much faith in you.

I snort.

Me: I don't know why don't you strike him with lightening.

Tata: I'm not a witch and I won't turn one now. I've been doing this for years and I wasn't given my powers to use them to bewitch people. I was given them to help people.

Might as well consider him useless moc. Why give someone powers just to help and not bewitch? Maybe that's why I was not trusted with this gift because they knew I was going to misuse it. I was going to strike everyone with lightning if I had such power.

Me: Where are we going with this conversation?

Tata: I heal people.

Me: I know that.

Tata: And that's what I'm doing to do with your husband.

Me: Huh?

Tata: I'm going to heal him.

My eyebrows furrow. He has totally lost me right now. The only healing that man needs is a bullet between his eyes.

Tata: Let’s go back.

My frown deepens. I thought by now I would know the purpose of these walks but each day he throw me deeper in confusion. He speaks in riddles and expects me to understand it.

Tata: You’re going back.

I halt on my steps as my jaw slack open.

Me: What?

Tata: The car is ready and your bags are packed.

While I was sleeping they were going through my stuff? Wait… are they kicking me out?

Tata: I have a something that they may like.

Me: Who is they?

Tata: You know who I’m talking about.

I squint my eyes.

Me: You’re not selling me out are you?

Tata: Not you but something else.

Me: You want me to sell them umuthi?

I throw my head back and laugh. My enemies would also roll in laughter. Is he trying to embarrass me perhaps?

Tata: I forgot you're stupid at times. I'm not talking about umuthi but diamonds.

I choke on my spit and cough hysterically. Did I hear him correctly?

Tata: Uyalunga.

I slam my hand on my chest.

Me: You want me to do what?

He slides his hands in his pocket and keeps walking.

Me: I'm not going to do that.

I protest.

Tata: I'm not asking you but telling you.

He sternly muttered leaving no room for discussion.

Tata: Asambe.

I'm too stunned to move.

Tata: Suit yourself.

He walk away leaving me behind. I watch him until he disappears on the road. That man didn't just order me or did he? The sound of a dog barking makes it's way to my ears. I turn

back and find my archenemies charging towards me. The dog picked a bone with me when I started to call it with a wrong name.

Me: Voetsek dangerous.

I pick up a stone and throw it just to scare it but it becomes vicious. It charges towards me. I turn back and run the opposite direction. It's hot on my heels. Tears blur my vision.

Me: (crying) Mama.

I attempt to jump a big pothole but slip and fall inside with my head. Stars dance in my vision. I thrash around rolling on the mud trying to escape the vicious teeth.

Voice: Danger.

The dog ceases and runs back to the owner.

Mbuyi: (laughing) I told you to stop calling him with the wrong name. He's name is danger by the way.

He scratches it's head and make his way home. I click my tongue and leap up to my feet. I'm covered in mud from head to toe. I swear to God if I had the powers my father had I would have strike him with lightning, just a pity that I don't have them. I close the gate after I walk in and find Mam Zodwa sweeping the yard.

Me: Mam Zodwa it's me.

She screams upon seeing me and rushes inside. Bending down, I slip of the shoes ready to walk in but gets a slap on the back.

Zodwa: Go back to the sender tokoloshi.

Me: What?

Zodwa: Stop talking. We didn’t kill you

The broom bangs my head. I try to escape but she holds me down.

Zodwa: You will tell me who sent you. Today you will know me.

What? I always knew her vision was not that good but I didn’t think she was that blind. Can’t she see it’s me?

BUSISIWE

I close the lid of the pot and hand Junior his food.

Junior: Thank you.

I close my eyes and wait for him to pray.

Junior: God bless our food in Jesus name amen.

Me: Amen.

We dig watching TV.

Me: I spoke to your teacher and you're going to school tomorrow.

He huffs.

Me: And she gave the whole class a project of growing a bean.

Junior: A bean?

Me: Ewe imbotyi. {Yes, a bean}.

Junior: (confused) Njani? {How}.

Me: The instructions are in your DBE book, on page 67.

He leaps up to his feet and places his food on top of the chair and walks to the wardrobe. He takes out his DBE on his school

and pages it then hands it to me. I read the instructions then nod.

Me: Remind me to buy beans in the morning.

He nods and takes back his book. A knock comes on the door.

Me: Who is it?

The knocker doesn't respond but instead knocks again.

Me: Ngubani? {Who is it?}

The silence again then the knock.

Me: (annoyed) Ungubani? {Who are you?}.

Silence.

Me: Hlala apho phandle ke. {Stay outside then}.

For the umpteenth time the knock comes again. I spit my bone and leap up to my feet and stumbled to the cupboard. I place the plate on top then wipe my hands and walk to the door. My nostrils flare after seeing the knocker. I step back and slam the door on his face. How dare he show up here? How did he find me nogol? Wasn't he suppose to be dead by now? He was fighting a loosing battle with his breath for goodness sake earlier on. He knocks again and I ignore him. I pick up my plate and walk back to the bed and sit on the edge.

Junior: Mama someone is on the door.

Me: He’s knocking next door.

He furrow his eyebrows and cast his eyes on his plate. Good. That man can stand there until the moon shows up. I didn’t bother him for years so why is he bothering me? Junior jumps to his feet and padded to the door.

Me: Uyaphi? {Where are you going?}

Junior: Kukho umntu emnyango. Ndiyovula. {There’s someone on the door. I’m going to open}.

Me: Hlala phantsi.

Junior: Mama…

I cut him off.

Me: Hlala phantsi.

I sternly muttered jumping to my feet.

Me: Uqale nini ukuqaqadeka ngoku? {Since when are you disobedient?}

I click my tongue and furiously open the door. I push him and step out then close the door.

Me: What do you want?

Kagiso: You know what I want.

Me: And what exactly is that?

Kagiso: I want access to my son.

Me: Excuse me, did you just say son?

I throw my head back and laugh.

Me: A son? You doing have a son kaloku wena.

He breathes out.

Kagiso: I just want access to him.

Me: Yeyi, ndoda ndini sufuna ukundidika ebusuku. Awunamntana wena ngoku ngomphi lo umfunayo? {Don't annoy me at night. You don't have a child so which one do you want?}.

Kagiso: I understand you're angry.

Me: You don't understand anything.

I seethe out.

Kagiso: Please, I just want to see him.

Me: No.

Kagiso: Please.

Me: (screaming) I said no.

Kagiso: I didn't mean to upset you.

I click my tongue and march back inside. I open my purse and look for my wallet then walk back inside.

Me: How much do you want?

Kagiso: (confused) What?

Me: How much do you want?

I yell out opening my wallet and take out the notes and throw them on his face.

Me: Is that enough or do you want more?

He swallows hard and cast his eyes on the floor where the notes are before looking at me.

Me: (screaming and crying) What are you waiting for? Just take the damn money and leave us alone.

Kagiso: I just want to know him.

My lips quiver while tears roll down my cheeks.

Me: He doesn't want to know you.

Kagiso: You can't speak for him.

He spits out.

Me: I'm his mother and I know what is best for him.

Kagiso: I'm also his father.

Maye! Ndiyalingwa na?... Am I being tested?

Me: I’m his mother and father.

I clap back. He blows out a sigh.

Kagiso: Emotions are high right now and I understand where you’re coming from. I don’t want to take him away from you.

I spit on the ground.

Me: Hell will freeze the day you take him away from me.

Kagiso: You’re angry and I understand that. Our last encounter wasn’t nice. I was rude and-

I cut him off.

Me: I don’t want you and I will never want you. You’re just a one night stand I had on a parking lot so please stay in your lane.

He slides his hands in his pockets and narrowed his eyes at me. My chest bounces up and down. I’m boiling. The door from next door opens and my neighbor peeps his head out.

Neighbor: Makhi

Advertisement

everything okay? I heard some screams and someone crying.

I sniff and wipe my tears.

Me: Everything is fine. He was just leaving.

I spit out and shift my gaze to him daring with my eyes to say more.

Neighbor: Shout if you need help evacuating him.

Kagiso: Ska mphaphela saan. F'tsek.

He hisses at him. The neighbor rushes inside. He heavily sighs and turn to me.

Kagiso: I brought him this.

He picks up the plastic on the floor which I didn't see when I walk out and hands it to me. I peek inside and find the snacks. I throw the plastic on the floor and stamp on it. Bloody fool. Who is he to bribe my son with snacks?

Me: Leave.

Kagiso: I will go. I just want to see him and say goodnight.

Me: He's sleeping so leave.

Junior: Baby shark do, do do, do, baby shark. Mommy shark do, do, do, mommy shark.

He sings on the other side of the door throwing me under the bus. Kagiso's lip curve into a smirk. Jesus you really gave me a child with that one. Can't I turn him back and find another child in his place?

NARRATOR

Meme stirred up in her sleep and remove Sandile's arms around her.

Sandile: Where are you going?

Meme: To the kitchen. I'm thirsty.

Rolling on his back, he closed his eyes nodding. Meme kicked off the blankets and bent down pretending to be looking for her shoes but instead she pulled out a black plastic. Carefully, she opened it and took what was inside.

Sandile: Babe what's that?

Her heart skipped a beat. She quickly closed the plastic.

Meme: I was just looking for my shoe and found this plastic over here. I think the nanny or Sibahle mistakenly placed it here.

Sandile: The nanny doesn't enter our bedroom nor does the cleaner.

Meme giggled nervously.

Meme: Did I say the nanny? Maybe I'm the one who missed placed it. Oh, now I remember I bought Sibahle something and

hid it under the bed because she was here when I was unpacking.

She giggled leaping up to her feet with the plastic.

Meme: You know how curious your daughter is. Let me quickly sneak this on her room.

Sandile: What did you buy? Let me see.

Her eyes widen as he drags his body to lean on the headboard.

Meme: No, baby I don't want to ruin the surprise. You can't keep a secret especially when it comes to her.

He smiles.

Sandile: Hurry up then.

She made her way to the door but stopped on her tracks.

Meme: Remind me again baby, when are we going for our honeymoon?

Sandile: Soon baby.

Meme: Which soon? Tommorrow soon? Next week soon or next month?

Sandile: Soon my love. I'm trying to make sure Kagiso is in good condition first.

Meme breathed heavily. That name again. First it was the stupid wife now it's the best friend? Why couldn't this man listen to her just for once?

Meme: Kagiso is old enough to take care of himself.

Sandile: I know that but his a work freak. He loves his job and it's stressing him. The doctor said he must avoid stress.

Meme: That doesn't mean we should put our lives on hold because of him. He must find a hobby or something.

Sandile: Why are we discussing this at night?

Meme: I'm trying to understand why should everything stand still because of one person who is a none factor in our lives.

Sandile's eyebrows snap together.

Sandile: (confused) What do you mean a none factor?

Meme: I mean his all over our business like a bad rash. Every time you have to take a decision you go through him first. I said we must sell the businesses and move to another country you went and told him that.

Sandile: I'm not comfortable in living in a foreign land and it has nothing to do with him. He is my business partner, lawyer and a friend.

Meme: The are many good lawyers I know out there and you can find yourself one. You can still make new friends and business partners too.

Sandile: No.

Meme: Baby can't you see that Kagiso is holding you back?

Sandile yawned in his hands.

Sandile: Holding me back how?

Meme: He doesn't want you to prosper. He's jealous of you and your success.

Sandile chuckled.

Sandile: That's ridiculous.

Meme: It's true my love. Just think about it. How many businesses are do you own that he has equal shares on just like you?

Sandile squint his eyes thinking. He's mind was a bit fuzzy from waking up. Why where they discussing this anyway?

Meme: See what I mean? You've got no answer for my question. I don't like this guy and I don't think I will ever like him. Why can't we sell the club?

Sandile: I can't sell it. I have to consult him as my business partner and lawyer before I take such drastic changes.

Meme: Exactly what I mean. You can't do anything without consulting him first. These are your businesses not his. You need to cut him off before he sucks you dry and discard you after.

Sandile: Baby, stop worrying your pretty head about such things. He will never do something like that.

Meme's nostrils flared.

Meme: You know what, fine. I didn't want to tell you this but your so called trusted friend had been making advances at me.

Sandile: What?

He jumped off the bed nearly tripping on his two feet.

Sandile: When?

Tears of deception welled in her eyes.

Meme: (breaking voice) This other time. I didn't want to tell you this because it will break your friendship.

The tears stream down her cheeks. She blinked and watch his chest bounce up and down.

Meme: He even touched me inappropriate.

Sandile closed his eyes trying to calm himself down but it was not working. He flipped them open and they were bloodshot red.

Sandile: Oh, hell no. Not with my wife.

He paced up and down.

Sandile: I trusted him and this is what he does to me?

He poked his chest.

Sandile: Me, Sandile. I thought we are brother's for life.

Meme: I'm sorry.

He ceased his movements and marched to the closet. He came out a few minutes later all dress up and picked up his phone on bedside.

Meme: (alarmed) Where are you going?

Sandile: Where do you think?

Meme's heart thuddes on her ribcage.

Meme: No

baby he will deny everything.

Sandile: He doesn't know me. You're off limits.

He stormed downstairs, passing on the study to take the house keys to Kagiso's house and his and. He took his car keys and made his way to the garage. He opened the garage down and jumped in then sped off after opening the gate. Meme chuckled

dusting her hands. Now the little pest was about to be out of the picture.

She skipped the room and went to the balcony and took the little pot she hid behind the pot plant and went back in the room. She closed the doors and stripped naked then open the pot. The black dark brewing water greeted her. Sandile's name and surname was written in a piece of paper and black and red strings were tied on in then on the middle the needle piercing on it. She took out her ingredients in the plastic which consist of his underwear, a condom full of his semens. She threw the underwear inside and poured a potion of the semens and tied the condom nicely for the remaining semens not to spill. What was the last ingredients again? Oh, yes her saliva. She spit on the pot and stirred everything up using the hem of the underwear.

Meme: Sandile Dlamini. You will listen to me and you will do exactly what I tell you. I'm your wife and your first priority should be me not anybody else. I command you to listen to me not anyone else. I'm your Messiah and know what is best for you. Kagiso is becoming a nuisance in our lives and he needs to go just like that woman. Kill him if you have too. Today his life is ending and ours begin on a new chapter that his not part of.

The control string was slowly slipping away and she needed to gain it back. She did it once and she will do it all over again.

°

°

Arriving at Kagiso's house, Sandile pressed the remote and drove in. He parked the car on the driveway and jumped off making his way to the door. He unlocked it and went upstairs. He barge in on his bedroom cocking the gun and found the room empty. He stormed to the bathroom and it was also empty. He clicked his tongue and marched down the stairs making his way to the study and found it also empty. There's only one place he didn't check, he went to the house gym and also found it empty.

Sandile: Where could the coward be?

He slide his hand on his pocket and placed a call.

Kagiso: Ya.

Sandile: Where the fuck are you?

Kagiso: I'm busy.

Sandile: Where?

Kagiso: I don't report to you or anybody else for that matter.

He hnag up after that statement. Sandile furiously ran his hand on his face frustrated. Where could he be because he knew he was not in the office.

°

°

On the side of the road, Kagiso threw his phone on the passenger seat and placed his head on the starring wheel. If it means to sleep on his car parked on her street just to see his son then so be it. He pushed the chair backwards and closed his eyes waiting for morning. He came out to strong to her and maybe he needs to change his approach. Just as he falls deep in his slumber his phone rang. He opened his eyes and picked it up. Looking at the caller ID, it was an unknown number.

Kagiso: Sure.

Caller: Someone sent me to you and said you're the right man I could contact.

Kagiso furrowed his eyebrows at the feminine voice.

Kagiso: Depends what do you want and who is that person?

Caller : The name could only be bought.

Kagiso: What do you want then?

Caller: I need a place to crush for a couple of weeks.

Kagiso: How much do you have?

Caller: Millions.

He chuckled.

Kagiso: What are you looking for exactly?

Caller: I need information.

Kagiso: About?

Caller: About a certain somebody. His movements, where does he stay. Is it the same house or it’s a new one. How many cameras does the house have, their angle and I need to walk in and out of the house without being seeing.

Kagiso’s eyes widen catching up on the that statement. He jumped on the sitting up.

Kagiso: Fuck, you’re back.

Jen: And I also need a gun.

49

KAGISO

The light blinding my face wakes me up from my slumber. I shield my eyes from the sun and adjust the seat while picking up my phone with the other hand. The time reads 06:00am. I yawn and moving my head from side to side to ease the stiff neck. I can't believe I spent a night in here but I'm desperate. Last night didn't go well and I'm hoping I can try again today. My phone chimes causing me to shift my eyes away from the road. It's the unknown number again.

Me: A pleasant surprise to be called by you so early in the morning, Mrs D.

Jen: She died years ago.

I chuckle.

Me: You know I thought I was dreaming but then again your call just confirmed that it was not a dream but reality.

Jen: Let's stop with the causalities and get straight to business.

Me: Straight to the point, damn woman you're on a mission.

Jen: I didn't die 7 years and wake up 7 years later to be wasting people's time.

I laugh.

Me: Where are you?

Jen: I just arrived in the city of Gold, where it all began.

Me: When?

Jen: This morning.

Me: Give me a few hours to get you a place to stay.

Jen: I hope it won't be anywhere far. I need to be close to them.

I arch my brow.

Me: What are you suggesting?

Jen: A couple of blocks away from him.

Me: Rental or purchasing?

Jen: I don't have money for neither of that.

Me: No, you don't but he has.

She laughs on the end of the line.

Jen: Weren't you suppose to be rooting for him? I expected to be hunted by him by now.

Me: I'm not a snitch.

She chuckles.

Jen: But you did snitch years ago.

I snicker.

Me: There’s a difference between the two.

Jen: How so?

Me: You wouldn’t understand.

Jen: Fine but either way I owe you my life. Thank you for saving me.

Me: It was nothing. You earned my respect and that’s what we do in our circle. We protect each other even it means protecting you from your spouse.

Jen: Thank you.

Me: It was nothing.

Jen: I need the lay out of his house. How many cameras do they have?

Me: Plenty except the bathrooms, main bedroom and the garage.

Jen: Which angle are they all facing?

Me: Let’s meet over breakfast and discuss this?

Jen: Nah, we don’t know who maybe watching.

Me: True. I’ll call the estate agent and ask for any rentals near him and we can meet over there.

Jen: Fine by me. But I'll keep using the burner phone just in case. Don't call me I will call you.

I throw my head back laughing.

Me: F'tsek.

She giggled.

Jen: I've always wanted to say that line and finally I've said it.

I laugh.

Me: I thought you would have changed by now but you're still you.

Jen: Nothing can change me. My appearance can change and voice but my mind is still the same.

Me: (chuckling) Crazy as fuck.

Jen: I'm hanging up now. You're stepping over your boundaries.

Amusement laced in her tone as she threatens.

Me: Bye Mrs Dlamini.

I tease.

Jen: (laughing) Usile wena utsho ngendlebe ezibhakubhaku ingathi ubhaka ukunya.

I turn the view mirror to my direction and run my hand on my left ear while holding my phone with the other hand.

Me: (offended) My ears are not big.

She burst in laughter.

Me: You're full of shit woman.

I click my tongue laughing and hang up. I toss the phone on the passenger seat and shift my gaze to look at my ear again but my eyes fall on them walking to the stop sign. Strapping the seatbelt

Advertisement

I bring the engine to life and drive towards them rolling down the window.

Me: Hi.

She turns to look at me and her face transform to rage in seconds. She claps his hand and picks up her pace dragging him with her.

Me: Can I give you guys a lift.

Busi: No.

Junior: Yes.

They mutter in unison. She glares at him.

Me: I'm going on the same direction as you. I don't mind dropping you off.

Busi: No.

Junior: Mama please.

Busi: I will beat you so hard. Didn’t I say stop talking to strangers?

She whips her head on my direction and if looks could kill I would be died by now.

Me: I don’t mind dropping you off.

I kill the engine and step out of the car. As if I fuel her more, she crossed the street and rushing away from me. I also cross the street following them.

Busi: Where are the damn taxi’s when you need them?

She mumbles under her breath snapping but I heard her.

Me: Busi.

She sharply turns on her heels.

Busi: (snapping) Don’t you ever call my name again with that filthy mouth of yours

Me: Okay, I didn’t mean to upset you but I just want to talk.

Busi: Oh, now you want to talk?

Sarcasm drips out of her mouth like venom causing me to flinch.

Busi: How convenient of you.

She drops her eyes to our son.

Busi: Close your eyes.

He furrow his eyebrows.

Junior: Why?

She clenches her jaws and spits out.

Busi: Don’t make me spank you because you will go to that school crying. Close your eyes, Kagiso Junior Bangani.

The boy huff and closes his eyes. She clamps my hand and drags me further way from the boy.

Me: (smiling) You gave him my name?

Busi: There’s nothing special about you nor your name.

I blow out a sigh as she stops.

Busi: Let’s get one think clear mister, that boy over there is my child. He doesn’t know you and doesn’t wish to know you so stop disrupting his life.

Me: I just want to know him.

Busi: He doesn’t wish to do so.

Me: You’re not being fair right.

She laughs hysterically.

Busi: You want to talk to me about fairness? How about you start by telling home how you rejected him then come back and tell me about fairness. Stay away from me or my son. This better be the last time I see you parked outside my street stalking us or a restraining order may come your way.

Me: If that's what it takes to see my son then fine. I will keep sleeping here.

Busi: I don't know why you keep saying you have a son. Ndoda awunamntana kaloku wena. Ulibele ukuba abakho abantwana ngo morning after pill bonke? Ungazondinyela wena ekuseni. {You don't have a child. Did you forget that your children are morning after pills all of them? Don't shit on me so early in the morning}.

I drop my eyes in shame. She clicks her tongue and walks away. I sigh crossing the road and walk to my car. Jumping in, I pick my phone and connect it on the Bluetooth then call my father.

Mofokeng: Are you dying?

I weakly chuckle.

Me: That's not the case papa.

Mofokeng: Yanong ke eng? {Then what is it?}.

I heavily sigh.

Me: I can’t tell you over the phone. Can you guys please come this side.

Mofokeng: What’s going on?

Me: Eish it’s best if you come and see it.

Mofokeng: What did you do?

Me: Papa I can’t say it over the phone.

He breathes out. Mofokeng: Okay.

Me: Thank you. I’ll book you guys a flight.

Mofokeng: I wonder what did you do.

The line goes died after that. I exercise my breath and call my PA. PA: (alarmed) Sir is everything alright.

Me: Everything is fine. I just want you to cancel my meetings for the day. I’m not coming in.

PA: Oh, I thought it was something I did. I’ll get right on it sir.

Me: Thank you.

I hang up and drive away. I could feel the tug in my heart as the car passes them on the road but the stubborn woman rises her head up high and walks with confidence like she wasn’t about to be late at work.

50

SANDILE

After what my wife told me I couldn't sleep. I'm trying to understand how can my own friend do such a thing from me? I considered this person as a brother so I don't understand the level of disrespect his showing me. Wherever he is he should thank his lucky stars or else his family would be preparing a funeral for him. The bedroom flies open and incomes my lovely wife with a tray on her hands. I smile sitting up.

Meme: Morning honey.

Me: (smiling) Morning, what did I do to deserve such a treat?

She places the tray on the bedside and kisses my lips.

Meme: You've been the best husband a woman can have. You protect me from our enemies and make sure they never see the next day.

I fake a smile and clear my throat.

Me: That smell delicious. What's in there?

She giggles and peels of the lid.

Meme: Just brunch nothing fancy.

Me: Thank you.

Meme: No, baby I should be thanking you not the other way around. You're flawless, loving and kind. I wouldn't have asked for a better father to our daughter and a better husband to me.

I smile like retard and sneak my hand on her thighs and caress them.

Meme: (smiling) What are you looking over there?

Me: What's mine.

Meme: What are about breakfast?

Me: It can wait. I'm hungry for something else.

I pull her face towards mine and crush her lips with mine. She snakes her hand around my neck and pull me down with her. I lay on top of her breaking the kiss and trail kisses down from her jaw. I hold her nipples through the fabric of her pyjamas top and pinch the buds. She moans throwing her head back. I roll the top to reveal her smooth skin. Goosebumps covers her skin as I blow air on her right nipple and open my mouth to take it in. She gasps clutching the bedspread. I use my free hand to roll the bud in between my fingers and continue suck. My tent grows with each expression she does. I pull down her shorts and my mouth waters when I found her bare. I part her legs and settle between them then rub myself on her. She squirms opening her eyes.

Meme: I want all of you.

Me: Then take all of me.

She bites her lip and slide her hand on my boxers. Her cold hands come in contact with my dick causing me to take a sharp inhale. She pulls the briefs down and rubs the precum around using her thumb.

Me: Mhhh…

Meme: Does it feel good?

I nod shutting my eyes. She keeps rubbing until I feel her mouth clamping on me. Fuck, I love my wife.

JENNIFER

The gate opens followed by a car driving in. I rush to the window and pull the curtain on the side. I breathe out as Kagiso steps out and makes his way to the door. I've been paranoid since the car drove in this neighbourhood earlier on. Of course only he knows that I'm here. I walk to the door and open it.

Kagiso: (smiling) My, my, look at you.

I playfully roll my eyes.

Me: It's been like what? 16 years?

I tease walking to his embrace.

Kagiso: Good to see you alive a kicking.

I break the embrace and step back. He walks in and closes the door.

Me: It’s good to see you too.

Kagiso: You look different, I could barely recognise you.

Me: It’s the wig and the contact lenses I have on. They are making my eyes burn.

I mutter wiping the tear that escape my eye.

Kagiso: You know I didn’t believe it when you rang but now seeing you here it slowly sank in that you’re really here.

Me: I also didn’t believe it myself.

I blow out a sigh.

Me: My father kicked me out because I’m wasting my life away.

I nonchalantly spit out rolling my eyes causing him to laugh.

Me: If it wasn’t for him I wouldn’t be here. He forced me to be here but if he didn’t take that first step for me I wouldn’t also be here. He forced me and I willingly got my ass in that car and let the his driver to drive me here.

Kagiso: So what’your game plan?

Me: For now I still need to study my subjects and see what I can come up with. I don’t have a plan yet but I know I will have one before the rest of the day.

Kagiso: I've asked someone to draw up a lay out of the house. What do you need from me?

Me: I'll let you know if there's more I need. Right now I just want to soak myself in a hot bath and sleep. The drive was long.

I yawn.

Me: My day will start tomorrow.

Kagiso: Let me not waste your time. I also have a lot of shit I need to deal with.

He cast his eyes on his wristwatch.

Me: Going somewhere or did you promise Mrs that you'll be eating out tonight?

I tease wiggling my eyebrows.

Kagiso: There's no Mrs.

Me: You don't come across as someone who has bedroom problems to me.

He throws his head back and roar in laughter. I frown.

Kagiso: The last time I laughed like this was when you're still alive.

I laugh.

Me: I'm not dead yet.

Kagiso: (amused) No, I've got no bedroom problems. I recently found out that I have a son with your friend.

My frown deepens.

Me: Sihle? I thought she married Mr Collins son.

Kagiso: No, your other friend.

My jaw slack open.

Me: Busi and Kagiso sitting on a tree –

He cuts me off.

Kagiso: It's nothing like that.

A smirk graces his lips.

Kagiso's: So you've been keeping tabs on us?

Me: No

my father is the one who kept me in the loop. So what's your story with her?

He drags out his breath.

Kagiso: It's a very long story and I don't have time right now. I have to fetch my parents from the airport.

Me: Do share when you have time and I want all the juicy details. How you two met, how was the relationship and how old is your son.

He smiles shaking his head.

Kagiso: Let me bounce. I'll pass by later to drop off grocery.

Me: Later it is then.

He walks to the door and walks out after opening. I close the door then lean on it. My phone beeps indicating a message.

"I wanted to call you but the signal is bad. Your father told me he sent you to deliver muthi to his client. When are you coming back? I miss you" Mholi.

My eyes soften.

"I have to make sure that the client follows the instructions and see if it's working before I leave so I don't know when I will be back. I miss you too"

I press send and ascend the stairs to unpack.

-

-

It's been four days since I came back and the last time I saw Kagiso was when he came to drop the grocery. He said the lay out sketch will be ready the next day but it's been three days now and there's still nothing. At some point I understood that from his busy schedule he probably forgot. I open the sliding door leading to the balcony and breathe out the morning fresh

air. This what I have been doing every morning and today I took the initiative to disturb my subject peace.

Caller: Sorry to put you on hold Miss. Is this afternoon okay with you.

Me: Definitely. At what time?

Caller: 3 o’clock .

Me: Perfect. I’ll be there.

I smile concluding the call from the shooting range and bite my lip. Just as I was about to walk back in, my eyes caught my subject jogging towards the direction of the house.

Me: Shit.

I run back inside and skip two steps, running to the door. I open it and ran to the small gate leading me to the other street while my subject rounds passes the gate. Closing the gate, I walk to the street and wait. Just in time, she jogs towards me and I pretend to stretch my legs catching my breath. She stops beside me.

Meme: Morning.

Me: Good morning.

Meme: My neighbor’s only jog earlier than this time.

Me: Meaning?

Meme: I’m the only one who jogs at this time so in other words it’s my first time seeing you here.

Me: Do you know everyone in this neighbourhood?

She giggles hooking her leg on her arm.

Meme: Not precisely but I know a new face when I see one.

Me: I recently moved in.

I use the pad of my thumb to wipe the tears. Three days later, my eyes are still burning. I thought I would be used to the lenses by now.

Meme: Where is the rest of the family? Kids, husband or boyfriend.

She slaps her mouth.

Meme: Oh sorry did I come to strong on you? I just caught the I so that’s why I’m asking.

Me: No, no. I’m a widow.

The words slips out of my mouth before I can catch them causing me to frown. What the hell?

Meme: I’m so sorry.

Me: It’s okay.

Meme: Why don’t you come to my house for dinner this evening?

Me: I don’t …

She interrupts me.

Meme: Take it as welcome to the neighbourhood gesture. Plus I found a new jogging partner. Oh I can’t wait to tell my husband.

She squeals gushing. Oh, if you only knew bitch.

Meme: Race you back.

She runs ahead. I shake my head and run after her. It doesn’t take long before we reach outside he gate.

Meme: (panting) This is my home.

Me: I won’t forget it. See you later.

Meme: Wait … I forgot to ask your name.

I turn to her smile sweetly.

Me: Jen.

Meme: Just Jen nothing else?

Me: Just Jen.

Meme: Mine is Meme short for Mamello.

As if I care but I bite my tongue.

Me: I won’t forget it. Later.

Meme: Bye Jen.

I run down the street to my house. I don’t know why did I even agree to jog the opposite direction of my house. I live two streets away from them. And where the hell I’m I going to get dark clothes to represent my widowering period?

Me: Good one Jen.

I shake my head continuing with my task at hand. But regardless of everything the fish took the bait and now we are in motion. Instead of looking at a sketch of a laying out I will be looking at the lay out from inside.

BUSISIWE

I drag my feet to counter.

Me: Ma Agnes can I please have a glass of water.

Ma Agnes: You look like you're carrying the whole world on your shoulders.

Me: That's what happens when you have a man who is forcing himself and his family in my child's life.

Ma Agnes: You do realise that you have to put your differences aside with that man because Junior will need his family some day.

Me: I'm hoping it won't come to that.

Ma Agnes: The boy will need his father some day. What if they have rituals they do in that family and you know nothing about? Yes he hurt you but don't turn into this vile person just to settle a score. Be the bigger person and put your child's needs first. Each and every child deserves a father. Abandoned or not if that's the case at least the family has to know.

Me: Why should I be the bigger person?

Ma Agnes: Because you've been through a lot. No one can take away the fact that you're his mother but give him a chance to know his father too.

She places the glass of water in front of me.

Me: He doesn't deserve to know my son.

Ma Agnes: Your anger is justified but think about your child. This is about him not you or the father. You both have to put your differences for that boy. You grew up knowing your father so please sisi don't deprive him that part of his family.

Tears burn my eyes.

Ma Agnes: I can see you're getting emotional. It's upsetting you which is understandable but don't be selfish.

I pick up the glass sniffing and bring it my lips.

Ma Agnes: Be the bigger person for your son. Harbouring hate over the father is okay but don't show it when you're around Junior. Don't make him inherit your battles because he was not there. He didn't to be caught up in between you two.

I wipe my face and take another sip.

Me: I'm not ready.

Ma Agnes: You will never be ready. Remember this is not about you nor him. It's about that boy you created. Give him a healthy mother not this angry person.

Me: I'm not angry.

Ma Agnes: You're always angry. Set yourself free from those bondages and just live. Be free and be you. When was the last time you went out and lived your life?

Me: (sniffing) My life ended when I fell pregnant. I've been living for my son nothing else.

Ma Agnes: See what I'm talking about? Call that man and set boundaries then live Junior with to and have a night out by yourself. Even if you're going to the movies.

Me: I usually watch a anime with Junior.

She shakes her head.

Ma Agnes: Junior will be with his father and his more than capable of taking care of him. Call him and set that meeting. Be firm with your rules.

I breathe out.

Me: I don't have his number.

Ma Agnes: You don't have one or you just don't want to call him?

Of course I have his number because his been blowing my phone but I don't want to call him. I'm not ready. She takes out her phone and hands it to me.

Ma Agnes: Call him because I know you won't .

I blow out a sigh and unlock my phone then go to the call log. I copy the last number that called me go hers. It rings thrice before he answers.

Kagiso: Mofokeng.

I shift my gaze to Ma Agnes who gestures I should speak.

Kagiso: Hello?

Another sigh slips out of my lips. It's now or never.

Me: You can come over on Saturday so we talk about Junior.

Silence. I frown removing the phone to check if his still on the line then place it back.

Me: Hello?

Kagiso: Thank you.

Me: Sharp.

I hang up and Ma Agnes smiles.

Ma Agnes: See that wasn't hard, wasn't it?

I mentally roll my eyes.

Ma Agnes: Give them what they give you. If they can't respect you there's no need for you to respect them. But always remember this is not about neither of you. It's about Junior.

Me: I'll keep that in mind.

Can Saturday not come. I'm not ready and I don't think I will ever be ready.

NARRATOR

Kagiso steps out of his car and makes his way to the door. He places his knuckles on the door ready to knock but door flies open.

Jen: Look what the cat dragged.

Kagiso narrows his eyes at her.

Kagiso: And then?

Jen: I'm honouring an invitation.

Kagiso: Dressed like this?

Jen: Well I can't just waltz in my enemies house dressed like my normal self.

Kagiso: (shocked) What?

Jen: You took to long so I had to have other alternatives.

Kagiso’s blows out a sigh and rubs his temples. If it not his baby mama who doesn’t want to see him then it was his parents breathing down on his neck. Stress has found a permanent resident in his life.

Kagiso: I’m trying by all means to keep the peace and make everyone happy. My mother is forcing me to drag Busi to court and take Junior from her and I don't want that. That would be hammering the last nail in her coffin. That woman has been through a lot.

Jen: I’m not good at giving out people advices but whatever is going out your family first.

Kagiso: What about my son?

Jen: I’m not taking about your parents but your baby mama and son. They are your family right now and you’ll have to protect them from your parents.

Kagiso: I’ll keep that in mind.

Jen: Anyway how do I look?

She twirl in front of him causing him to chuckles.

Kagiso: Your outfit gives me Goth vibes. What’s going on?

Jen: I meet the Mrs earlier on and we jogged together. She didn’t recognise me.

Kagiso: You look different from the last time. It's been years and I don't think she may be the person to recognise you.

Jen: That's why I love the power of make up.

Kagiso: You can hide your face but you can't hide your voice. Try to change the tone from time to time.

Jen: I don't think he will remember. Like you said, it's been years and in their minds I'm dead

Kagiso: It's just a friendly warning. I brought the sketch and we can quickly run through it.

Jen: Where is it?

He opens his suit jacket and takes out a folded paper then unfold it. He makes his way to the living room and place the sketch on top of the table. She follows behind him.

Jen: What am I looking at?

Kagiso: We have two camera's outside. One it's facing the street and one is facing the house, from the gate until the driveway.

He points out on the sketch.

Jen: This is all outside?

Kagiso: It's big but that's just how big the yard is.

Jen looked at the sketch trying to memories it.

Kagiso: Should I move to the next?

Jen: Yes, please.

Kagiso: Inside the are cameras everywhere except for 3 place.

Jen: Which are?

Kagiso: Inside the garage

Advertisement

the main bedroom and of course the bathrooms.

Jen: This is a lot. How many floors does it have?

Kagiso: It’s a three story high mansion.

Jen: This is will probably take me days or even weeks to memories.

She pulled the chair and sat down.

Kagiso: I have his keys and he has mine.

Jen: I still want to torment them first before I can make the big reveal.

Kagiso chuckles.

Kagiso: Just tell me when.

Jen: You’ll be the first to know. Let me go and pose as a widow.

She blinked rapidly.

Jen: Okay I still have some leftover tears from these years.

Throwing his back, Kagiso burst in laughter.

Kagiso: Let's go. I'll drop you closer.

Jen jumped to her feet and fixed her ironed her skirt with her hand. She's walking in the lion's den willingly and someone will say she's losing it and maybe she is.

—

Mamello wiped the cutlery and place it on top of the table. She rushes to the kitchen as the oven chimes. She bent down taking out her grilled chicken and place it on top of the sink to cool off. She skipped the room to place the napkins beside each plate. She smiled admiring her work as her husband walked in the room.

Sandile: (frowning) You really went all out on this one. Didn't you say that dinner set is reserved for special occasions?

Meme: It's a special occasion baby.

Sandile: I don't understand what's the fuss all about. She's just a widow.

Meme rolled her eyes. Of course he won't understand anything because his a man. They never understand anything until you point it out to them.

Meme: It’s special because she’s a young widow who never gave up on life. I admire her courage for picking up herself and live her life. Not many people are courageous like her. They give up on life because they better half left them too soon. I want her to feel welcome and know that she’s not alone whatever she’s going through.

Sandile: She must be really special for her to receive such words from you.

Meme: She’s a strong woman. There’s just something inviting about her I can’t pinpoint. You’ll see it when she’s here.

The intercom goes off causing Meme’s eyes to lit up. She was like a baby who just received a dessert after a meal full of veges.

Meme: That must be her.

She padded to the receiver and seconds later she opened the gate.

Meme: Let me welcome her properly.

Placing the receiver back on it’s place, she giddily opened the door and stood there. Sandile shook his head pulling the chair and made himself comfortable. He has never seen his wife so excited about hosting a stranger. Not that the woman host people more often but what was so special about this one? He snapped out of his daze when the woman in question walked in

the room with his wife. Her eyes were roaming around the whole room like she's looking for something or she was lost.

Meme: Jen meet my husband. Baby this is Jen the lady I was telling you about.

Sandile leap up to his feet and extended his hand.

Sandile: Please to meet you.

Jen shifted her gaze from the structure of the house to him and locked eyes with him after already spotting the first camera. Sandile blinked to clear the mist in his eyes. Fuck was he dreaming or he hallucinating? This woman looks just like her beside the make up and the color of her eyes. He could feel his heart pounding on his ribcage.

Jen: The feeling is mutual.

Sandile: Your voice sounds familiar. Have we met before?

He thinned his eyes studying her. Jen's heart skipped a beat. Didn't she put more make-up? Panic rose in her and she found herself taking more unnecessary breaths. No, no, no. She couldn't fail on the first day. There's a lot at stake. Dammit Kagiso did mention something about the voice but she didn't think he still remember how her voice sounds like.

Meme: Stop being ridiculous baby. How will you know her? She just moved in.

She giggles breaking the awkward trance they were in.

Jen: (clearing her throat) I don’t think we have.

Sandile sat back in his chair studying the guest his wife invited, unaware the woman was doing the same thing on the side of the table.

NARRATOR

She could feel his eyes piercing through her skin but she doesn't pay him no mind. She's not here for him yet and he needs to take a chill pill. His time is still coming.

Meme: Do you have any allergies?

Jen: No.

Sandile calmly place his hands on either side of the table. Maybe he was overthinking everything. If she says she doesn't have allergies then that means she's not the right woman. Azasakhe was allergic to peanuts.

Meme: Perfect. I made this sauce I saw online. It contains peanuts.

Jen faked a smile nodding. Oh, she was so dead but she will deal with her allergies after.

Meme: Let me bring the food.

She walked to the kitchen leaving the two alone.

Jen: You have a lovely home.

She broke the ice looking around.

Sandile: Thank you. My wife is the one who chose it.

Jen: She has quite a taste.

Sandile: I could say that.

Nodding, Jen slide her hands in her pocket to fish out her phone. She needed something to destruct her hands from grabbing the knife and stab him to death. She unlocked her phone and start playing a game. Sandile watched every move she does. She was not filling up his checklist. Aza would have probably made her presence know from the onset and her module of phone wasn't that one.

Sandile: Your name is Jen in short. What's the full name?

Jen: Just Jen.

Sandile: You know I swear you look just like my wife. Her second name was Jennifer but she hardly use it just like me. I hardly use Ethen.

He chuckled causing Jen to raise her eyebrows.

Jen: I know that people sore eyes are not the same but I don't look like your wife.

Sandile: No, I don't mean my current wife.

Jen: Oh, you have a current and un-current wife? Interesting.

She placed her phone on top of the table pretending to be interested.

Jen: You're into polygamy?

Sandile: No. I can't handle two wives under the same roof.

Jen: Then what does your statement mean?

Sandile sighed and lean back on his chair.

Sandile: She's late.

Jen: My goodness. I wasn't aware; I'm sorry.

Sandile: That's why when you walked in I asked you if we have met before.

Jen: Do I look like her?

Sandile: Not in so many features but your voice is the same as hers.

Jen: If I may ask what was her name?

A smile formed on his lips.

Sandile: Azasakhe. A spitfire who was fierce.

Jen nearly rolled on the chair on her back laughing. It was amusing to her to listen to him think she was dead.

Sandile: How's life without your husband?

Jen: It gets lonely at time.

She paused the game as her fake tears come to play.

Jen: I’m so sorry. I get upset whenever someone ask me about him.

She burst in tears.

Jen: I miss him dearly.

Sandile jumped to his feet and rushes to the kitchen. Jen ceased her crying and looked around the room, searching for another camera. She couldn’t walk around the room because she will be caught on tape. She picked up the glass of water and took a sip meanwhile in the kitchen Meme looked at her husband.

Meme: And then?

Sandile: I was just making conversation with her.

Meme: (frowning) Okay?

Sandile: I asked her how is life without her husband and she’s crying.

Meme widen her eyes.

Meme: What? Baby that’s insensitive.

Sandile: I was just making conversation.

Meme: You don’t ask people such things.

She wipe her hands with the dish cloth and dump it back on the sink.

Sandile: Help me console her.

Meme shook her head and padded to the living. Upon hearing the footsteps, Jen started being hysterical.

Meme: I'm so sorry.

She opened her arms for her and caged her in.

Jen: Everyday I try not to think about it.

Meme glare at her husband and shook her head.

Meme: It's okay.

Jen: I take everyday one day at a time but if people keep reminding me that how will I forget?

Meme: I'm sorry.

Jen: What did I do to deserve such cruelty in this world? Why are people so insensitive?

She fired all the questions at once and sobbed out loud.

Meme: I'm sorry

Jen.

Jen shook her head and break the embrace. Leaping up to her feet, she wiped her tears.

Jen: It doesn't help that your husband thinks I look like his late wife.

Meme’s eyes popped out of her sockets.

Meme: (shocked? What?

She quickly whipped her head to the man in question and find him staring at them. Years later, they were still talking about that damn woman. Wasn’t her death enough?

Meme: What is she talking about?

She spat out through gritted teeth.

Sandile: I just told her that she sounds and looks like Azasakhe.

Meme: That woman’s name again, Sandile. What does it have to take you to understand that she’s dead?

She screamed on top of her lung while Jen took a step back. Okay, she was just dodging a peanut sauce not knowing she opened a can of worms.

Meme: What do you want from me in order for you to see me.

Sandile: Nothing.

Meme: (screaming) Why are mentioning her name? Didn’t I warn to stop saying her name in my house and in my presence?

Jen mentally smile bouncing on her heels. If they knew she also reciprocated the same feelings towards them. And it looks like the Azasakhe topic was quite a sensitive one on both partners and she couldn’t wait to use it to her advantage.

Sandile: I'm sorry.

Meme: (screaming) No, you're not sorry. You just choose to disrespect me all over again.

Sandile: Baby that's not true.

Meme: It is true. If you respected me you wouldn't even mention that whore's name in my house.

Jen: (smiling) Damn this Azasakhe lady seems like a legend for her to shook up your whole marriage even in her grave.

The couple both glare at her. Was that too soon? Sometimes she needs to bite her tongue and keep her trap shut.

Jen: When I grow up I just want to be just like her.

She happily clapped her hands.

Jen: I got lost in my head. I think I should go.

The couple nodded.

Meme: I think you should.

Jen: Thank you for the invite though. Maybe next time I can host you when I'm in a better space. I was looking forward to that peanut sauce.

She made her way to the door and walked out while Meme opened the gate for her. She watched her disappeared in the darkness and turned to her husband.

Meme: So in every woman you're looking for her?

Sandile: No.

Meme: (crying) Will I ever be enough for you?

Sandile: You are baby. Don't ever doubt that.

Meme shook her head as he tried to embrace her.

Meme: I need to be alone right now. You will see where you will sleep for the night.

Sandile: You're kicking me out?

He muttered in disbelief.

Meme: I can't think when I'm in your presence.

Sandile: Baby I'm sorry.

Guilt latched on him. How did things escalate so quickly?

Meme: (screaming) Leave. Just leave Sandile.

He breathed out and covered his face with his hands and walked to his study to pick up the keys. He walked out a few minutes later and Meme watched him drive off. She burst in tears falling back on the chair. Wasn't her remedy not working anymore or did she need to renew it? She wiped her tears and raised her head to the clock at the wall. The time read 18:45pm. 4hours and 15 minutes until the witches hour and she will try again to see if it will work the next day.

--

Arriving at her house, Jen kicked off her shoes and walked barefooted to the fridge. She took out the leftovers and throw them on the microwave placing a call.

Kagiso: That was quick. Is the dinner over yet?

Jen: I didn't even start at all. I'm sad but on the bright side I dodged a bullet because the fool wanted to feed me peanuts.

Kagiso: What's wrong with peanuts?

Jen: I'm alleergic to them.

Kagiso laughed on the end of the line causing her to scoff.

Jen: Who makes peanuts a sauce as a dinner sauce?

Kagiso: (amused) People who eat peanuts apparently.

The microwave beeped and she placed the phone on top of the counter after switching it to loudspeaker. She carefully took out her food and wince as the container burnt her fingers.

Jen: It turns out Azasakhe is a sensitive topic on them. Ndishiye ooxam bephaxulana pha. {I left them fighting over her}.

Kagiso: (amused) You do realise that "this Azasakhe" you keep referring her to as a third party is you?

Jen: Did I tell you that I hate smart people?

Kagiso's laughter boomed on the end of the line.

Kagiso: That's why I'm this country best lawyer.

Jen: Mxm. Anyway will be possible to switch off the camera in there?

Kagiso: I can switch them off for you. I have the power to do so and he also does to my house because we trust each like that. Except that we don't watch the footages of each other's house's unless of course it's a must.

Jen: Good, because I need to get inside tonight.

Kagiso: Isn't that too soon?

Jen: It is for Jen but for Azasakhe is not. The woman has been dead for years and it's time for her to come out to play.

Kagiso: I don't like the sound of that but what do you have in mind?

Jen: (smirking) It's time for the Dlamini's to meet Azasakhe's ghost.

He laughed.

Kagiso: I'm not following but whatever is good luck. When?

Jen: I have about 4hours and 4 minutes from right now.

53

SANDILE

I don’t know whether I’m thinking too much into this but there’s just something about that Jen woman. She reminds me so much of her but at the same they don’t pose the same traits. I drive in after opening the gate and close it. I step out of the car and walk to the door. Laughter is the first thing my ears catch on. Motherfucker is playing happy family white whoever is in there after making advances on my wife. I should have brought my gun but my mind was all over the place when I drove off from home. I wasn’t aware I was driving to his house. The door opens after I knocked revealing his mother.

Mme: (excited) Santile ngwanaka is that you?

I chuckle.

Me: In the flash Mme.

She engulfs me in her arms.

Mme: How are you?

Me: I’m good. When did you arrive?

Mme: Just a couple of days. Come in.

She widely open the door for me and I walk in. Following the noise, I find his father and him on the dinning table about to eat.

Me: Dumelang.

Mofokeng: Oh, morwa. How are you?

Me: I've never been better ntate, how are you?

Mofokeng: As you can see I'm strong as an ox.

I shift my eyes to Kagiso.

Me: Eita.

Kagiso: (bored) Sho.

Mme: Let me get you a plate. I've been demanding Kagiso to take me to you but his been preoccupied.

I raise my eyebrows and stare at him.

Me: Is it?

Mme: Yes. Did you know about his son?

Me: (shocked) What son?

Kagiso: My life doesn't revolve around fools Mme. Who knows what will they do with such information?

I chuckle blinking at the jab.

Me: So after you touched my wife and made advances on her this is the shit you can say to me?

Kagiso: Did she tell you that?

Mofokeng: What's going on?

I stare down at him, challenge him.

Me: Kagiso is stabbing me in the back.

Mofokeng: Kagiso is that true?

Kagiso: I've rather hit on a woman who is in a mental institution than that grasshopper you call a wife. She's not in my league nor will she be my taste. If that's what tickles you don't think everybody will find it funny.

He muttered still maintain eye contact. I lock him on the staring contest.

Mme: And then?

He breaks it as his phone rings.

Mme: What did I say about cellphones on the dinner table?

Kagiso: It's important Mme it can't wait.

He jumps to his feet and picks it.

Kagiso: Mofokeng.

He walked a little further away.

Kagiso: I'll send the driver to deliver them to you.

Mme: What was that all about?

Me: It's nothing we can't handle Mme.

Mofokeng: Whatever it is don't allow a woman come between you two.

Take about double standards. Why can't he give that advice to that pervert he calls a son?

Mme: Are you staying for the night?

Me: Yes.

Mme: Joy.

She squealed like a child.

JENNIFER

The phone rings twice as I pull the sheets off the bed.

Tata: MaNdlovu.

Me: Hey.

Tata: Is everything okay?

Me: Everything is fine. I was just checking on you.

Tata: My cattle misses you.

I laugh balancing the phone with my shoulder and head.

Me: I miss everything except for that.

Tata: Are you winning though?

Me: So far so good everything is still going according to plan.

Tata: You're up against evil forces mntanam. Something you will never see with your own naked eye.

Me: (frowning) I'm lost, tata. What are you talking about?

Tata: That woman is evil. Dlamini has turned to her own personal puppet. Whatever she says go.

My frown deepens.

Me: Njani? {How?}.

Tata: She's using something to control him. His ancestors are pleading with me to save him before it's too late.

I snicker.

Me: They should plead with me not to kill him.

Tata: You never take anything I say about him seriously.

I can already imagine him shaking his head in disappointment.

Me: That's because he deserves everything coming to him. You cannot put a hit on someone you claim to love then kill her brother in the process.

Tata: I’m not going to comment on that because everything about him falls on deaf ears on you. Let’s not forget you’re also not a saint in all of this.

I pause walking and lean on the railing of the stairs.

Me: I was doing just fine before he came along.

I spit out.

Tata: No one is disputing that but you also have to take responsibility for your own actions.

Me: Let’s just agree to disagree on that one.

Tata: Fine but keep in mind that you’re not dealing with a normal person but a puppet. Her own personal alive zombie.

Me: She should improve whatever that she’s doing because clearly it’s not working.

Tata: Meaning?

Me: That man still talks about Azasakhe.

Tata: Usho wena slima? {You mean you fool?}.

I roll my eyes.

Me: Jen is a lady who loves her peace and space. She’s all about family but don’t mistaken her quietness with stupidity because she’s a bulldozer when pissed.

Tata: And Azasakhe?

Me: She's a fun person to be around with. She's bubbly and loves her family. She will die for them and the people close to her. She's a little bit crazy though.

Tata: Do you want my honest opinion on that?

Me: Yes.

Tata: Both have similar personalities and I know you don't suffer from multiple personality disorder. You're just suppressing yourself from feeling pain. Facing you past is not easy and hence you choose to make it like you've got personalities. Whether you're Jen or Azasakhe it doesn't matter because it's who you are. Refrain from using using yourself as a third person because it will become a habit and they do die hard. Yes people know that you're dead but don't let it consume you and blind you. You're one person not two or more just one.

Me: I'm not suffering from DID.

Tata: You didn't have to say so but your actions were going to lead you there. I'll be with you in spirit on whatever you're about to do.

The line goes dead after that. I look at my phone and shake my head then walk down the stairs sliding it on my pocket. My dad can be exaggerating at times and I don't know what's the fuss is all about. I'm not suppressing any feeling but just hate being

addressed by my first name. Pain is lingering on that name and I'm not that person anyone. The bubbly out going person is gone. The light and spark deemed in her eyes when she woke up to find her brother gone and running away from her killer.

The Intercom goes off and rush to it.

Me: Hello?

Driver: Miss Jen, Mr Mofokeng sent me.

Me: I'm coming.

I walk to the door and make my way to the gate. The driver steps out and hands me the set of keys.

Driver: He said I should also give you this.

Me: Thank you.

I take the note and walk back inside unfolding it.

"The M13 is for the front door. The cameras will be off exactly at 12. Don't be late;" K

I squash the note and shove the keys to my pocket and walk to the kitchen. Closing the cabinet, I walk back to the bedroom with a scissor and a tomato sauce. I sit on the edge of the bed and place the equipment beside me and pick up the sheet. Throwing it over my head, I size my eyes and start cutting it accordingly. I nod in satisfaction and collect the waste from the

floor and dump it on the bathroom bin. I take out my phone and set the alarm for thirty minutes before the witches hour and collect the blanket from the floor and throw them on top of the bed. I place the tomato sauce on the beside and shove the phone under the pillow and slide underneath the blankets. I'll smear the sauce before I leave and buy a new shit tomorrow.

NARRATOR

Jen walked out of her house carefully holding the sheet while her mouth was full of tomato sauce. She had to improve and also cut off a small piece for her mouth in order for her to talk. She closed the gate and walked down the street. She could have worn the sheet but she didn't want to to scare people because you might not know who is watching on the road. Kagiso gave her the green light that the cameras were off and she didn't want to waste any second. Opening the gate, she closed it behind her and walked to the door fishing for the house keys and opened the door. She punched in the security code. Meanwhile in the bedroom, Meme stripped naked and opened her plastic containing her ingredients. She carefully unwrapped the condom and dumped the semen inside the pot and spit inside. She rubbed her vagina and stirred the pot using the finger she just rubbed herself with.

Meme: Sandile Dlamini you're slipping away from me. You do as I say no questions asked. I want you to forget that woman Azasakhe.

Just saying her name felt like acid on her tongue. It burnt her.

Meme: She's not your wife but I am. I want you to forget her and everything that has to do with her.

--

Grunting, Bab' Ndlovu blew air in the bag and shook it.

Ndlovu: Nginibiza bonke bo. {I call upon on you}.

Gatsheni,

Boya benyathi, obusonga busombuluka Mpongo Kazing'elwayo,

Nina bakwaNdlovuzidl'ekhaya, ngokweswel'abelusi, Zaze zeluswa intombi uDemazane,

Nina bakwakhumbul'amagwela,

Nina bakwaDemazane Ntombazana,

Nina bakwaS'hlangu Sihle Mthiyane,

Ngokuthiy'amododa emazibukweni,

Nina bakwaMdusi,

Ndlovu!!!

He burped shaking the bag.

Ndlovu: Nayi ingane yenu

uAzasakhe. umvikele njengoba ehamba endaweni yokudlala kasathane. { Here is you child, Azasakhe. Protect her as she walks in the devil's playground.

The smoke of the impepho filled the hut.

Ndlovu: Nani bo Dlamini.

Sibalukhulu,

Malandela ngokulandela izinkomo zamadoda Jama kaSjadu,

Nkomo zidla ekhaya ngoba zeswele abelusi

Mdlovu, Magaduzela, Magwenyane,

Nkosi, Mzizi, Mdineka, Nyanya, Msuduka inkonekaz'evele ngobusw'emgedeni.

USamkethe, esinembay'emaLangeni,

UMswazi kaSobhuza

Sgwinya mkhonto notho lwaso

Wena owaFodo ka Nombewu kaNomagaga

Wena wase Dlebe

Mfolozi emnyama inkethabaweli, Nyanya Mabonel’empunzini, Mlangeni wena ka Miso (Misizwe)

Mgoqo ovimbe’sangweni nansi impi, izwe lafa ngathi Na??? Ngonyama

Kungani nivumela ingane yenu ibe inkundla yokudlala yalowo wesifazane? Ngiyaqonda ukuthi unamaphutha akhe kodwa usadinga ukuvikelwa nokuqondiswa yini. Ngicela ungamhlaneli uma ekudinga kakhulu. {You too the Dlamini’s. Why are you letting you child be that woman's playground? I understand he has his own faults but he still need your protection and guidance. Please don't take your backs on him when he needs you the most}.

He burped throwing the bones on the floor and shook his head looking at the bones.

Ndlovu: Yimpi le. {It’s a fight this one}.

--

Jen looked around the house and carefully tiptoed to the stairs. She placed her gloved hand on the railing and took one a time. She frowned hearing a noise coming from one of the bedrooms. People were asleep by now so why were they awake? She passed the second bedroom and the door was ajar. There laid the princess in her sleep. She closed the door and followed the noise. Inside the main bedroom Meme become louder and

louder which second shutting off from reality causing her not to hear the door opening. Jen widen her eyes. Jesus Christ what did she just walked in? The moon was sitting right on top of the simmering pot. Whatever it was inside it was boiling. From her spot on the door, Jen could see clearly the naked woman.

Meme: You will do as I say. You will listen to me. I'm your wife and I know what's best for you.

Tongue tied, Jen slowly throw the sheet over her head carefully not to stain her hands with the tomato sauce.

Meme: I hope this is the last time I'm using this on you. You keep forcing my hand Sandile and I don't know why. We were cruising just fine until you mention that woman's name. Azasakhe is forbidden from coming out of your mouth. You will forget her and everything that has to do with her. She's dead and long forgotten. The only thing left in her body are bones that are being eaten by worms. Forget her and remember me as your wife. The only woman in your life. The mother of you child.

She spat again and rose up to her feet. She sighed and closed the pot and made her way outside. Jen stood in her spot waiting for her to finish whatever she was doing. She didn't expect such a thing and now she understood her father when he said he will heal him. He meant healing from her claws. Pity latched on her making her to grimace. No, she shouldn't be

feeling such. A killer will always be a killer whether under a spell or not.

She walked to the couch and sat down as Meme continued to shove the pot behind the pot plants and walked back inside. She closed the door and locked it, pulling the blinds shut. Just as she turned her eyes fall on the figure sitting on the couch. Her heart skipped a beat. Breathing out, she slowly walked to the side lamp to turn it on but the figure spoke.

Jen: I wouldn't do that if I were you.

She slurred on her words due to the tomato in her mouth and some spilled on the sheet. Meme froze on her steps and turned to face her. The tomato rolled down on the sheet and she screamed.

Meme: Ghost.

Jen leaped up to her feet and like a predator setting a trap for her prey she took her calculated steps towards her. Meme's heart drummed so hard on her ribcage making it hard for her to breathe. Her knees weakened while her bladder released a hot liquid between her legs. She screamed as the "so called ghost" neared her. Jen spilled the sauce on the sheet and stood beside her trembling frame.

Jen: Boo.

Meme’s eyes rolled on the back of her head collapsing on the floor as her whole body shut down from fear.

Jen: Did you just faint?

She laughed.

Jen: Classic. I haven’t even done anything yet and already you’re spoiling the fun.You’re such an embarrassment to strong, resilient, fierce womanhood.

She shook her head and walked out of the room. She took off the sheet and made her way to her house after locking the door and gate. She will be back after two days to continue with her tormenting. For now let the woman think she’s crazy. And her pot she will not touch it because she still wants to drive her insane.

54

JENNIFER

I’m standing on the balcony with a cup of coffee waiting to see if my subject wil be jogging this morning. My phone rings as I lean on the railings. I rush inside to pick it up.

Me: Hey babe.

Mholi: When are you coming back? I miss you.

I giggle.

Me: Soon my love. I just have to make sure the client is okay before I leave.

God will strike me with lightning for lying to this poor soul and hate it.

Mhloli: Can that be soon? I miss holding you in my arms.

Me: I also miss being in there and also you inside me.

He sucks in a deep breath.

Mhloli: That’s a very dangerous thing to say especially when you’re far.

Me: I’m just a woman who misses her man.

The device in my hand vibrates. I remote it and find an incoming call from my dad.

Me: Babe can I call you back later. My dad is calling.

Mhloli: I'll hold you to that. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

I hang up and answer his call.

Me: Why didn't you tell me I was walking into a witches clan?

Tata: Sawubona nawe MaNdlovu.

I heavily sigh at his calm voice.

Me: Sorry dad I'm just spooked.

Tata: Spooked about what? I told you but you never listen.

Me: I didn't think it was that deep.

I don't know how did I manage to hold my ground after what I walked in. My mind kept playing the scene over and over again even though I was inside the comfort of my own house.

Tata: That's your problem and it will be your downfall. Always pay attention to what people say even though you might think it's not important. You might not know when you will need it.

Me: I hear you.

Tata: You didn't take anything right?

Me: I was too scared to think of taking something. Should I have taken something?

Tata: No, you did good. I don't want you to touch her things.

Me: Am I safe?

Tata: It's not going to be an easy one but for now you're still safe. Promise me you will call before you do anything or go back to that. Call so I can ask for guidance and protection.

Me: I will, but witchcraft? People still use that in this day and age?

Tata: They still do and as the years go by the become advance and more dangerous. Dlamini is blinded by the spell his under in. She's using the spell to make him think she loves her but he doesn't. It was never love to begin with.

My jaw slacks open. This is bigger than I thought. Why couldn't he cut her off in time? I click my tongue as my blood boils. Witchcraft or not that woman's days are numbered.

BUSISIWE

I got a call from Juniors teacher yesterday requesting for a meeting. I've been trying to crack my skull on what could he have done. I've been asking him what he did but I'm not winning.

Me: Are you didn't get in any fight?

Junior: (annoyed) Mama I already told you I didn't do anything.

Me: Then why am I summoned?

Junior: I don’t know.

He slide his uninjured hand on his pocket and stare at me with his eyebrows knitting together. His posture had just to look like his father. By that look I know his annoyed to the point of not answering anything I say. I nod and turn on my heels walking inside the premises of his school. He picks up his balance and leaves me behind. I follow behind him and knock on the door. His teacher smiles opening the door.

Teacher: Someone decided to be late today.

She teases gawking at him.

Junior: She made me late.

He grumbles walking to his desk causing the teacher and I to laugh.

Teacher: He hates being late.

Me: Tell me something I don’t know.

I playfully roll my eyes.

Teacher: Let’s steo outside and talk.

My heart pounds in my ribcage as she closes the door.

Me: Is there something wrong?

Teacher: (smiling) I can see you're anxious but relax. It's actually good news not bad ones.

Me: Okay.

Teacher: I don't if you have noticed but your son is smart for his age. He's a fast learner and quickly catches up on things. The two days he was absent we were spelling and I called him aside so that he can write his own spelling alone. I was surprised that he got a total on those words. They are simple to us adults but to them kids they are difficult.

Me: So what are you suggesting?

Teacher: If he keeps on going like this he will finish school before his agemates. When the school reopens I'm sending him on the next grade.

Me: What?

Teacher: (smiling) He's the best student I've ever had and I hate to lose him but I have to. I don't want to hold him back.

Me: Wow.

Teacher: Shocking I know but please don't treat him differently.

I nod at her as she walks back in class. Urgh Junior just had to be Kagiso's son with everyone. I know wasn't that smart in school. Two days from now on I will be meeting him and his family and I don't think I will be ever be ready.

SANDILE

I blow out a sigh and step out of the car. I left before everyone can wake up

Advertisement

hoping to catch my princess before she goes to school. I don't know what I'm about to walk in but I'm hoping Meme's mood has improved.

Me: Morning.

Nanny: Morning sir.

Me: Has Sibahle left for school yet?

Nanny: Her school starts at 7:30 sir and now it's 8:06.

Me: Right.

She walks to the kitchen while I make my way to the stairs. I push the door open and find the blinds still shut. I walk back out.

Me: Sis Thenjiwe where is my wife?

I yell standing on the corridors. She rushes out of the kitchen and stand on the last step.

Thenjiwe: I haven't seen her this morning sir. I thought she was having a late morning.

I frown and fish out my phone and call her. The phone rings inside the bedroom.

Me: Thank you, Sis Thenjiwe.

I walk back to the room and march to the blinds to open them but pause on my steps seeing her lying on the floor.

Me: Babe?

I shake her and my frown deepens when I notice she's naked.

Me: Mamello?

She groans rolling on her back.

Me: Meme.

She opens her eyes and shift them around the room before she screams jolting up to her feet.

Me: (alarmed) Baby?

Meme: Ghost.

Me: (confused) Huh?

Tears fill her eyes as she looks around the room.

Meme: A ghost was here.

Me: A what?

Meme: A ghost. It was standing right over there.

She points to the couch.

Me: Have you been watching a horror movie?

She shakes her head crying.

Meme: I know what I saw.

Me: I'm not disputing that but where is it now?

Meme: I don't know. Maybe it flew back where it came from.

I shake my head.

Me: Baby you're not making any sense right.

Her nostrils flare.

Meme: I'm telling you I saw a ghost.

She snapped raising her voice and wiped her tears.

Me: If that's the case then why is the floor wet and why are you naked?

She opens her mouth and close it like a fish out of water.

Me: Did the ghost also strip you off or did you pour water on it in shock?

Meme: That's not water but pee stlaela ke wena.

Me: (frowning) You peed on yourself? It must have been a battle moc.

She glared at me and storms to the bathroom.

Meme: You’re useless shame. A person can die in your care. I just told you I saw a ghost and your first reaction is to ask me stupid questions.

She clicks her tongue and slams the door. I stand rooted on my spot confused.

Me: What the hell is going on?

The question still remains though, why is she naked?

55

TWO DAYS LATER

BUSISIWE

I kick start my day by doing the laundry and cleaning around. It's that big Saturday whereby I will be meeting Kagiso and his family to discuss the way forward. If it was up to me this day wouldn't have came but we don't always get what we wish for in life.

Me: Is the milk finished?

He nods scooping his cereal and shove the spoon on his mouth.

Me: Finish up so you can buy one for tomorrow.

I wipe the counter and lower the heat on the stove. He leaps up to his feet and dumps the bowl in the basin.

Junior: The money.

I stumbled to the wardrobe and take out my bed then hand him the cash. He walks of as I close the wardrobe. I climb on top of the bed and slide the curtain to the side and open the window. He walks back minutes later.

Junior: Kabo's mother is asking will you be taking the chicken again this morning?

Me: We are sorted on that department for this month so no.

Junior: The eggs?

Me: No.

Junior: But you just had the last eggs today.

Me: I will buy them on the store. I was just doing her a favour by support her side hustle but now uyaphapha. Her prices are ridiculous.

Junior: Should I tell her all of that?

I laugh.

Me: No just say I won't be taking the meat this month. And come back to wash that bowl.

He grumbles walking to the door.

Junior: But mama I have one hand.

I giggle.

Me: A hand that is close to healing. You're going to fool me.

He walks back and picks up his bowl and walks outside with it. He comes back after rinsing it and wipes it.

Me: Can I change the channel? I haven't been watching 90 Days fiancé in days.

A rule we applied on each other because we were always fighting for the remote. Whoever wants to watch the TV while is still on the others channel you have to ask before changing.

Junior: Yes.

I fix the pillow and lie on the bed changing the channel.

Junior: I'm going to Kabo's house.

Me: Close the door on your way out and please don't play to far.

Junior: Yes ma'am.

He walks out and closes the door behind. I increase the volume and dump the remote beside me. A knock comes through the door.

Me: Come in.

The door cracks open revealing Kagiso and his parents. I blow out a sigh and look at the time. Ain't they a bit early? I thought we will be meeting in the afternoon. I switch off the TV and jump to my feet. We exchange greetings as I give them plastic chairs to sit while I sit on the edge of the bed.

Kagiso: These are my parents. Mme let papa this is Juniors mother.

Mofokeng: Nice to meet you.

I nod. He’s mother shift her gaze all around the room and scrunch up her noise in disgust.

Mme: You’ve been raising our son in this tin?

Me: Excuse me?

Mme: Why don’t you just do the right thing and give us the child.

Kagiso: Mme.

He cautions at her.

Me: Didn’t you say we were going to talk about what was best for Junior?

I mutter ignoring that rude woman.

Kagiso: I apologise for that.

Mme: No, Kagiso. Let’s not forget how did the child come about.

Again I ignore her.

Mme: Are you not going to offer us anything to drink?

Me: Did you come with anything or you just came empty handed?

I click my tongue and shift my gaze to man I made a child with.

Me: So what do you think is the way forward?

Kagiso: I thought you might have something we can work on.

Me: Okay since the schools are about to be closed how about you take him for the whole holiday.

Mme: And he never brings him back.

She chirps in grating my tits more. I close my eyes and exercise my breath then flip them open.

Me: I'm being polite by welcoming you in my house and…

She cuts me off.

Mme: You call this a house?

Me: (snapping) Yes I call it a house because at least I have a roof over my mind unlike other people.

She chuckles clapping her hands once.

Mme: I don't see anything we should be talking about here. Instead we need to take our son and save him from this poverty.

Kagiso: Mme that's enough.

He hisses at her while his father glares at her.

Me: You want to talk about poverty?

Mofokeng: Can we not do this please.

Me: No, I’m not about to be disrespected in my own house. If my memory serves me right your precious son didn’t want anything to do with my child.

Mme: Because you were trying to trap him with a baby and he saw through you.

Kagiso: Mme.

He muttered in a reprimanding tone.

Me: If I want to trap him I would have made means to ruin his career by running to the press and tell him how much his a deadbeat. I can already imagine the headlines The famous lawyer Kagiso Mofokeng doesn’t support his own child.

I clap back.

Me: I would have made his life miserable if I wanted to but I didn’t.

Mme: How much do you want?

Me: Excuse me?

Kagiso: Mme.

His deep voice bounces around my shack.

Mme: How much do you want so you can give us sole custody of the child.

Me: You think my child is for sale? After spending sleepless nights with him you think I'm just going to give him away just like that? Who the hell do you think you are?

Mme: He deserves way better than what you give him. He can afford to take care of him unlike you.

Tears fill my eyes.

Me: I gave birth to that child all alone. I was right in this very same shack when I gave birth to him without anybody else. I used to strap him on my back each day when I got to work and hide him behind the boxes in the kitchen at work because I couldn't afford to hire a nanny.

Kagiso's father shakes his head while pain reflects on his son.

Kagiso: Busi t…

I interrupt him wipe the tears off.

Me: No

Advertisement

allow me since as it seems like I'm not fit enough to take care of my own son.

I spat wipe another set of fresh tears.

Me: Nobody came through for me. I breastfeed him until 6months full because I couldn't afford the formula. My salary all went through his nappies, rent and transport. Food?

I chuckle bitterly and bite my quivering lip.

Me: I used to cradle that big stomach and go to work without eating anything the previous day and go to sleep again without anything so don't you dare in my space and sit there telling me I'm not enough to take care of my own son. If I wanted Kagiso's money I would have made means to get it.

Mme: You could have aborted or used the money he gave you to buy morning after pill.

Kagiso: Mme.

He roars at her startling us. The door opens and Junior walks in. He pauses on his steps and looks at the guests.

Mofokeng: (smiling) He really looks just like you.

He turns to me.

Mofokeng: You really did a great job by raising him. Thank you.

I sniff nodding and look at my son through my wet lashes

Junior: (frowning) Are you crying?

I drop my eyes and quickly wipe my cheeks.

Me: I've got something in my eye.

He marches to me and cups my face then raise it.

Junior: You're crying mama.

Me: No, I'm not.

He wipes my face and leap up to his feet. Walking to the door, he opens it and turns to the guest then point out his index finger outside. Jaws drop to the floor so as mine.

Kagiso: Thank you for your time.

He jumps to his feet and takes out his wallet shaking then place some notes on top of the table. He walks out with his parents and the hooligan I can a child picks up the notes.

Junior: Mr you forgot this.

He throws the money outside and slam the door on their face. Shock revisit me as he clicks his tongue. I've never seen him like this before.

56

KAGISO

I’m slowly losing my cool with each step I take. My mother hasn’t stopped talking.

Mme: She’s already poisoning the child against you.

I slide my fist in my pocket and walk to the car.

Mme: The level of disrespect.

She clicks her tongue.

Mme: I thought she was smart enough to know that we can take that child away from her. In fact we are taking that child.

Mofokeng: Shut up. Shut the hell up mosali ke wena.

Me: Thank you.

Unlocking the car, I step in and release my clench jaw.

Mofokeng: You’re busying making noise as if you’re getting paid for it.

He clicks his tongue. My knuckles are losing their color as I hold the starring wheel hard in frustration.

Mofokeng: Instead of asking for forgiveness in that girl you’re busy adding more fuel to the already burning fire.

Mme: I must ask forgiveness, for what?

Mofokeng: Didn’t you hear anything she said about how she raised that boy? Where was your son that you’re protect so much when she slept with nothing in her stomach?

Mme: He gave him money so why didn’t she buy morning after pill or do an abortion?

Mofokeng: Heelang!

He exclaim in shock.

Mofokeng: Sometimes your thinking level capacity shocks me.

Me: Papa thank you for coming but I will take it from here.

He nods leaning back on the armrest.

Mme: Take it from here? No, my boy that girl only wants your money. Why is she only coming out now that she has a child with you?

Me: Papa talk to your wife.

Mme: I know girls like her. They only want money and nothing else. What does she want vele? Recognition that she’s your baby mama? Poverty is lingering all over her and I won’t be surprised if she uses the baby card all the time to get her way. You’re stupid my boy if you think you can co-parent with her. She will forever be a thorn in your life and brings you nothing but drama even if you’re married. She will cheat our child bofebe fela because that’s what she knows.

Tyres screech on the road as the car abruptly halt in the middle of the road. I unstrap the seatbelt and turn to her.

Me: I've been quite because you're my mother. I love you and respect you but you will not speak about the mother of my child like that.

Mme: Heelang are you shouting me your own mother?

Me: When it comes to my child I will move mountains for him. Let's not forget that I'm also at fault her just like she is. 7 years I've been living in a mansion eating everyday sometimes throwing away the food because it is spoilt while my own son slept without eating.

Mme: She should have brought the child to you if she saw she was struggling.

Me: Dump the child so that again you can find fault on that too? Mme I'm not going to do this back and forth with you. Thank you for coming but I will take it from her.

Mme: I …

I cut her off.

Me: I'm done talking. Maseru awaits for you guys.

I turn back to the front and strap back the seatbelt and step on the gas. Silence fills the air and I can hear my thoughts again. I see a lot of myself in that boy. From his looks to his own

personality. If I let my mother continue with her disrespect I'm scared of his outburst because from just what he did today shows that he will do move than what he did for his mother. The gate slides open and I drive in. Mme is the first one to storm out of the car after I park it on the driveway.

Mofokeng: Forget about your mother because all her children are under one roof. What is your plan?

Me: I will take anything she gives me.

Mofokeng: Good. Don't forget to be humble to her. She gave you an heir and raised him all alone.

Me: I was thinking of buying them a house and maybe move Junior to a private school.

Mofokeng: Don't do things behind her back. Talk to her before you make such drastic decisions because it will seem you're throwing your weight and status on her.

Me: She comes from a privilege family so money isn't an issue even though her family cut her off after Junior.

Mofokeng: Even so talk to her. Women are very sensitive people.

I blow out a sigh rolling down the window.

Me: I will.

Mofokeng: When are you paying the damages?

Me: I wanted to sort things out first with her before doing that.

Mofokeng: Don't demand her to change Junior's surname or make any other demands. You're in a doghouse and my boy you will have to beg your way out.

Me: It's a difficult task. I was surprised to get her call.

Mofokeng: That should show you how much she loves her child. A woman who's been through what she went through and is still willing to give you a relationship with you son is respected by me. She earned my respect for just that and raising my grandson single hearted.

I smile.

Me: She's a remarkable woman.

A smirk curves on his lips.

Me: What?

Mofokeng: You're falling for her?

Me: (shocked) What? No papa. I'm just…

He chuckles cutting me off.

Mofokeng: You're just what? There's nothing to be ashamed of.

Me: I'm not ashamed. She's my baby mama.

Mofokeng: So what? There’s no one in this world who will love your child like his own mother. I’m not saying force a relationship with her if you’re not feeling anything for her but if there is fight for her my boy.

Me: You’re getting old and seeing things that are not there.

He laughs opening the door.

Mofokeng: Mark my words. Junior’s mother ke ngoetsi ea ka. {She’s my dautghter in law.

He closes the door after he steps out and stand on the window.

Mofokeng: I see so much of you in Junior. The arrogance radiates from him miles away.

I laugh.

Me: He wouldn’t be my son if he was not arrogant.

He chuckles walking inside. I take out my phone and dial her number. It rings once before she answers.

Busi: Kagiso.

Me: Hey

Advertisement

I’m sorry about what happened.

Busi: It’s fine.

Me: I promise you that was not my intention. I wanted them to plead my case

Busi: And she just had to take it far. Is it because I'm disowned that makes her think I want your money.

Me: Of course. She was just being over protective over me.

She snorts.

Busi: I forgot I gave birth to a walking millioner. Maybe I should start demanding child support.

An unfamiliar laughter which normal people call it a giggle escape my lips.

Me: Maybe you should.

She also giggles on the end of the line.

Busi: 20K is the price.

I laugh.

Me: Damn that's a very price and I'm sure I can afford it

That cute sound of her snort reaches my ears.

Busi: Your arrogance.

I laugh.

Me: You're not the first one to tell me that. My father just said the same thing about me and Junior.

Busi: Sometimes he shocks me to the point I ask myself if he's a child or an adult.

Me: He's smart.

Busi: Talk about smart, he's teacher told me he will be skipping a grade because…

Me: He's smart. He wouldn't be a Mofokeng if he was not smart.

Busi: Oh, please don't make it sound like I didn't contribute anything.

I laugh opening the door and throw my legs on the ground while my body still remains seated.

Me: What did you contribute?

Busi: I contributed his existence.

Me: Nah, it's nothing compared to what I contributed. Woman have you seen how I look?

I brag smirking causing her to burst in fit of laughter.

Busi: Junior is that you talking?

I laugh while she giggles.

Busi: I'm also good looking myself.

Me: Who told you that?

Busi: I don’t need someone to tell me that because I know.

Me: That you are. A combination of good genes.

Busi: Yea.

Me: Do you guys need anything?

Busi: No we are fine for now.

Me: You will let me know if you need anything right?

Busi: Yes. I have to go.

Me: Busi?

Busi: Yes.

Me: Thank you for giving such a precious thing.

Busi: Keep that in mind.

The line goes dead after that. I smile leaping up to my feet and turn to close the car only to find my father on the window on the other side.

Mofokeng: (mimicking my voice) Maybe you should demand child support.

He bats his lashes and giggles.

Mofokeng: Woman have you seen how I look? He wouldn’t be my son if he was not smart and arrogant.

I furrow my eyebrows.

Me: You were eavesdropping?

Mofokeng: I came to look for my phone and guess what do I find? My son laughing like a struck teenager.

Me: I was not.

I protect. He amusedly raise arch his brow.

Mofokeng: Is it? Then why do you have that stupid grin on your face? Wipe that drool off your jaw.

Opening the door, he picks his phone and walks away after closing it.

Me: What?

I shove my face on the side mirror and indeed my teeth are out in full display but there's no drool.

Me: Where is the drool?

I yell after him locking the car.

Mofokeng: It's in that shitty grin you had. (Mimicking my voice) A combination of good genes. If that isn't love then I don't know my boy.

I chuckle shaking my head. His reading too much into this.

57

BUSISIWE

Junior: Mama where are we going?

Me: Somewhere.

Junior: Where is that somewhere?

Me: You will see.

Junior: I hate surprises.

Me: I know.

Junior: Good.

We are on our way to my parents house. After concluding the call with Kagiso I came to a decision mending things with my family. I took Ma Agnes advise and if I can give Kagiso a chance to be part of his son's life then why not also extend the same courtesy to my parents? Opening the gate, I close it after we step in and padded to the door. I pop my knuckles and knock on the door.

Junior: I don't think there's anyone inside.

I'm also hoping for the same thing but my wishes and hopes are short-lived as the door opens revealing my dad.

Dad: Princess is that you?

Junior: (snorting) Princess?

He giggles beside me and I glare at him. He shoves his fist to stifle his laughter.

Me: Yes dad it’s me.

He opens his arms for me and I walk to his embrace.

Dad: I miss you.

Me: I miss you too.

He breaks the embrace and cups my face before he plants a kiss on my cheek.

Dad: Who is this?

Me: This is your grandson, Junior.

Dad: He’s such a handsome boy.

He smiles opening the door widely for us.

Dad: Your mom went to her stokvel thing and she will be back later. Will you wait for her?

Me: No.

Dad: How have our been?

Me: I’ve been living.

Dad: After you left everything wasn't the same. Both your brother's moved out and it was just your mother and I. The house went quiet. I could see she also misses you but pride was clouding her better judgement.

Me: I also missed you guys.

Dad: I'm really ashamed for what we did. I don't have enough words to express how sorry I am. Will you forgive your old man?

I smile nodding.

Me: It's all in the past now.

Dad: How old is he?

Me: Seven.

Dad: You've done a great job with him. Is his father present?

Me: Recently found him.

The front door opens and shuts.

Dad: That must be your mother.

I hold my breath waiting in anticipation as she makes her way where we are. She stands behind the couch we are sitting on.

Mom: I didn't know we had guests. Afternoon.

Dad: (smiling) Come have a seat. We have important guests.

Mom: Okay.

She rounds the couch and seats beside my dad then raises her head. A gasp slips out of her lips.

Mom: Are my eyes seeing correctly?

My dad nods smiling.

Mom: Busiswe is that you my baby?

Me: It’s me mama.

Mom: I’m sorry.

She leaps to her feet and kneels in front of me then places her head on my lap.

Mom: Ndicela uxolo sana lwam. {I’m sorry my baby}.

Tears blur my vision.

Mom: Uxolo. {I’m sorry}.

She sobs out loud making my own tears to roll down involuntary.

Me: Mama.

Mom: Uxolo. {I’m sorry}.

I look at the ceiling with tears streaming down. I expected that vile woman she was years ago and I was waiting for her with my own responses.

Me: I forgive you.

I hold her hands and pull her to her feet then engulf her in a hug.

Me: I forgive you. I forgave you a very long time ago.

Mom: I made a terrible decision and I've been regretting everyday. I was pretending that I was okay but deep down I wasn't it. I should have been a mother to you and forget about the society. They will always talk no matter what and I learnt it the hard way.

Me: I'm sorry too for my shortcomings.

She sniffs breaking the embrace then smile.

Mom: Is that him?

I turn to my son smiling.

Mom: Hello my grandson.

She pinches his cheeks. Boredom flicks on Junior's face. He hated people who treat him like a baby.

Mom: Please sleepover. I'm going to cook your favourite.

Me: I didn't close the window so I don't think we can.

Mom: Please just for today. I just found you again and I don't want to lose you again.

Me: Can we?

Junior: As long there’s food and TV then I’m good.

They laugh.

Me: Okay

Advertisement

let me call my landlord.

I punch his number smiling. For the first time in years after my son’s birth my heart is at ease.

SANDILE

Home is suppose to be a place I could enjoy being in but lately my house has turned to a war zone. I didn’t help the fact that she kicked me out last night and now she’s been banging every door.

Me: You know the poor door didn’t d anything to you right?

Meme: At least it’s not a hypocrite like someone I know.

She spits out side eyeing me.

Meme: I’ve never seen a useless man like you. Your whole wife just told you that she saw a ghost last night and instead of you consoling me you ask me stupid questions.

She half screams.

Me: Don’t you dare raise your voice at me. I’m still the man in this house.

She scoffs.

Meme: A useless one at that.

She clicks her tongue and throw the dish cloth on the sink and march out of the room.

Meme: Why is it not working? You were suppose to be under my control. I control you.

Me: What?

I follow behind her.

Me: What do you mean you’re in control and you control me?

She widen her eyes.

Meme: Did I say that? It must have been a slip out a tongue.

She closes the gap between us and run her manicured hand on my chest.

Meme: I’m just frustrated that no one believes me.

Me: And that doesn’t give you the right to talk to me like you’re falling from the mountain. I’m still your husband.

Meme: I’m sorry I will do better.

She kisses my lips and walks upstairs.

Me: Sibahle.

I yell ascending the stairs and open the door to her room.

Me: What is my princess up too?

Sibahle: I'm drawing a picture of us.

Me: Daddy was hoping for an ice cream date with her favourite girl but I see you're busy. Sorry for disturbing.

I pretend to be hurt walking to the door. She drops her pencil and jumps off the bed.

Sibahle: I'm free now.

I laugh.

Me: Le me fetch my keys and wallet.

Sibahle: Race you to the garage.

She runs out of the room.

Me: That's cheating.

She turns her head and stucks her tongue out then continues running. I smile shaking my head and walk to my bedroom.

Meme: Sandile Dlamini why are you not listening to me?

Me: What are you doing?

I furrow my eyebrows slamming the door. She jumps startled and the turns to me.

Me: What is that you're holding?

Meme: It's nothing baby I'm just frustrated.

Me: So why are you talking alone?

Meme: It's a new pot plant. I named it after you and it's frustrating me that it's not growing like the other ones.

Me: Let me see.

Meme: What? No, baby it's just a pot plant. Don't worry yourself about it.

Me: If that's the case I want to see this plant that is named after me.

I skip the room to the balcony where she is and snatch the pot from her. She snatches it back.

Meme: I told you there's nothing to see.

Me: Why are you hiding a plant? It's needs the sun to grow.

I snatch it back ready to open it but she also snatch it.

Me: What is your problem?

I hold the pot and try to snatch it but her grip tighten around it.

Meme: Give it back.

She muttered through gritted teeth.

Me: It’s just a plant.

I pull it towards me the same time she pulls it. It slips out of our hands and she screams freaking out while dropping to her knees.

Meme: No, no, no.

Me: Are those my boxers?

She sharply turns with her eyes popped out.

Meme: I…w…l…

Words get lost on the roof of her tongue as she stutters. She looks at the floor then back at me.

Meme: No, they are not. It’s a fabric that looks like them.

She nervously giggles.

Meme: What do you think I would do to your boxers baby.

I thinned my eyes on her.

Me: Let me see.

Her eyes widen further more.

Meme: What?

Me: It’s a fabric right?

Meme: Yes.

Me: Then you wouldn’t have a problem of me seeing it.

I take a step forward but she takes one back.

Meme: I told you it’s just a fabric.

She snaps agitated.

Me: Don’t you dare raise your voice at me.

I threaten snatching the item in her hand. She raises her hand and slaps me so hard.

Meme: (screaming) I told you it’s a fabric. What are you trying to prove?

I blink rapidly to clear the fog out of my eyes while my breath escalates. I could feel my blood boiling. My pupils delight. She clicks her tongue and picks up the items on the floor. In my years of living I have never raised my hand on a woman but this one she’s pushing me.

Meme: You’re getting out of hand. I don’t know since when don’t you listen to me.

My hand find the back of her neck and I pin her on the floor. She screams wiping the floor with her face.

Me: Who do you think you’re talking to?

Meme: (screaming) Baby please you’re hurting me.

I click my tongue and place my knee on her back and pick what’s on the floor.

Me: The fuck is this?

Meme: Baby please don’t do this.

She cries thrashing around on the floor. My eyes set on the piece of paper with red and black strings. My full name and surname is written in the middle and the needle piercing on the middle. I knit my eyebrows.

Me: What the fuck is this?

Meme: It’s nothing. I was praying for us.

Me: When you look at me do you perhaps see a fool? You think I will believe that?

Meme: (crying) It’s the truth baby. I promise you.

A dark chuckle escape my lips.

Me: You’re using witchcraft on me, Mamello?

She swallows her cries. I clutch her dress shirt and raise her to her feet.

Meme: It’s not what you think. Baby I can explain.

Me: Ungisebenzisela umuthi?

She shakes her head with tears streaming down her cheeks.

Me: Ungisebenzisela umuthi, Mamello?

I repeat roaring at her. She jumps startled.

Meme: I’m not a witch.

Me: Okay so you’re not willing to talk?

She wiped her tears nodding.

Meme: I’m not going to admit to anything I didn’t do.

Me: That’s how we will play it?

She brings her arms across her chest and cast her eyes to the balcony.

Me: Okay.

I march to the door and take out the key.

Meme: What do you think you’re doing?

I ignore her and shut the door behind me and lock it. She bangs on the other side.

Meme: (screaming) Sandile open this door.

I storm to the study and open the safe after stepping in. I take out my gun and shove it on my waist then walk back to the room and lock it behind me.

Meme: Baby I can explain. I was using it to grow the plant.

Me: Do you think I’m stupid?

Meme: I never said you were.

Me: Good.

I take out the gun and cock it then close the gap between us. She trembled on her skin.

Me: Let’s try this again.

Tears roll down her face.

Meme: I’m sorry.

Me: About what?

Meme: Everything.

I caress her face with the gun.

Me: What is everything?

Meme: I was using muthi to control you.

Me: Start if from the beginning. What did you do?

Her lips curve as she cries.

Me: The hard way it is.

I place my fingers on the trigger.

Meme: (screaming) I’ll tell you everything. Please don’t shoot me. I’m so your wife and the mother of your child.

Me: Keep my daughter out of your filthy mouth and start talking.

Meme: After you dumped me I didn’t take the rejection quite well so used other measures to keep you.

Me: (firmly) Don’t fuck with me. What did you do?

Meme: I found a witch doctor that can help me keep you. He said I should bring something of yours in order to keep you. I went back to home and took your underwear and went back it with it to him. He told me to come back the next day and everything will be sorted. I went back the next day and he told me everything was in good hands. I didn't ask him what he did but he told me it will take a while for the potion to work out and it did.

Me: Continue.

She sniffs.

Meme: You started fighting with her until her last days on earth.

She spits out, scrunching her nose in disgust.

Meme: After her death you started to notice me more and I knew it was working.

Me: Ungifakele isichotho?

Meme: It was only for you to hate each other and fight all the time. I'm sorry but you were madly in love with her and I knew I didn't stand a chance. I had to up my socks and take it to another level.

She looks at me through her wet lashes.

Me: I'm all ears.

Meme: (crying) Please don’t make me say this.

Me: Fine.

I raise the gun and fire the first shoot.

Meme: Thusang!

She screams as the bullet goes straight to the window of the balcony. It shutters to pieces and they scatter on the floor.

Me: The second one goes straight to your head.

Meme: I went back to him and he gave me something else.

Me: And what is that exactly?

Meme: A pot brewing with potion. I had to write your name and tie the strings around the paper and shove the needle in the middle. The old boxers were no longer working I had to take a new set for it to work out and …

She trails off.

Me: And what?

Meme: Please don’t make me say it.

Me: (roaring) And what?

Hiccups fly out of her mouth.

Meme: I had to make you drink some of the potion.

Me: What was inside that potion?

I pace up and down agitated.

Meme: (crying) Please.

Me: What was inside?

I mutter through gritted teeth. She gives me her puppy eyes that used to melt my heart but not anymore.

Meme: Your nails

my spit, my discharge and your sperms.

My eyes widen while my stomach churns. Bile fills my mouth in seconds.

Me: (shocked) Excuse me what?

Meme: I'm sorry. You were slipping away from me and I had to get you back.

I rush to the bathroom and empty my guts out. Fuck I don't know what kind of food were containing my own nails, her spit, her fucken discharge and my sperm. Another wave of nausea rushes through my throat forcing something out of my mouth.

Me: Fuck.

I stagger flushing then make my way to the sink to rinse my mouth. I padded out and find her going through the drawers.

I’m a bit dizzy but at this point I don’t care about that. How dare she makes me her alive, talking and walking puppet?

Me: Pray.

Meme: (shocked) What?

Me: Pray to god to send you back to earth and not let you die.

She runs to me and throws herself on the floor wailing and hold my knee.

Meme: Baby please forgive me.

Me: Voetsek.

Meme: I’m sorry. Remember we said forever to each other. Those were your own vows.

Me: That was before I knew I was marrying a witch.

Meme: Please I have a child with you. Think about her.

Me: I’m think about her and she will be better off without you. Now pray.

I place my fingers back on the trigger.

Me: Pray bitch.

Meme: (crying) Morena mpholose ho bolawa ke matsoho a monna wa ka. {Lord save me from being killed by the hands of my own husband}.

Just as I was about to pull the trigger my phone rings. She breathes out loudly as I take it out.

Me: Dlamini.

Caller: Mr Dlamini I'm Sharon from home affairs. I'm calling you regarding your marriage certificate.

Me: Okay, what about it?

Sharon: I'm afraid we can't file for your marriage certificate because according to our system you're already married. You second marriage will fall into customary law.

Me: Yes I was married but my first wife is late.

Sharon: You might be mistaken sir because from our system she's still very much alive.

Me: (shocked) What?

59

SANDILE

I've been pacing around trying to make sense of what the caller was saying. It has to be a mistake but I still remember but pieces of that day of her burial. The was no body and now I'm starting to think whatever this evil woman gave me was working for on that time. Any normal sane person would have made a follow up on that but I didn't . Fuck she blinded me to the point of seeing no shit. I rush to the bathroom again as my intestines twists and turn on me. I don't think I will ever trust anyone with my food especially women. I raise my head and stare at my reflection and on the mirror after rinsing my mouth. My eyes are bloodshot and the reflection staring back at me I could barely recognise it. I take my phone out and place a call. The phone rings unanswered.

Me: It's me get back to me as soon as you get this message. It's urgent.

I conclude the call and slide the phone back in my pocket. Rage seeps in me. Since when am I a toy? I click my tongue and storm back to the bedroom.

Meme: Hello. Yes please help me. He will kill…

She jumps startled when I take the phone from her and end the call.

Meme: I’m sorry.

She screams sobbing.

Me: What else did you do because I have a feeling that was not all?

Meme: That’s all I did. I swear.

Me: You think I’m playing with you wena ngiyabona.

I grab her by her neck and pull her to the balcony. Her face dangling on the railings.

Meme: I’ll tell you. I’ll tell you.

I pull her off.

Meme: I lied about Kagiso making advances on him.

Me: What?

Meme: He was starting to be suspicious and I just had to take him out. You trusted him more than you trusted me.

I chuckle in disbelief. Satan is that really you? Because if that’s the case welcome the earth.

Meme: You relied on him with every decision you took. The businesses and the legal advice.

Me: Make me understand this, you got between me and my best friend?

She nodded sniffing. The back of my hand collides with her cheek making her gasp.

Meme: I'm sorry.

Me: (chuckling) Oh, you will be.

I grab her neck again and push her to the railings and press it harder, chocking her in the process. She coughs hysterically clawing my hands with her nails.

Meme: (raspy voice) Sandile you're killing me.

I press it harder than before. She stands on her tiptoes slapping my hand. I clench my jaws and ignore her hands. Her body slowly gives up the fight and I pull her away. She widen her eyes gasping.

Meme: (coughing and crying) I'm sorry.

Me: You will be.

My phone chimes as I attempt to choke her again.

Me: Dlamini.

Kagiso: What could be so urgent than your stupidity?

I walk back to the room and lock her outside.

Me: The DHA called me and they say Aza is alive.

Silence.

Me: Did you hear what I said?

Kagiso: How?

Me: I also don't know.

Kagiso: How sure are you that she's alive?

Me: The lady who called me told me that.

Kagiso: (bored) Why would the DHA call you anyway?

Me: For my marriage certificate. What the fuck is your problem? I just told you that my wife is alive?

Kagiso: What do you want me to do? Cheer up and clap hands or perhaps should I scream after the almost gunning me down in my own house?

He hisses on the end of the line. I rub my temples sighing.

Me: Look

Advertisement

I'm sorry about that. I just had a revelation and she just confessed some weird shit she did to me.

Kagiso: I knew it.

Me: The bitch fed me my own semens and her discharge.

My stomach turns again. I rush to the bathroom.

Kagiso: Fuck.

I can hear some shuffling on the other side of the line before he bust the door to what I assume is the bathroom. I place the phone on the floor releasing some fluids then wipe my mouth. I pick my phone going through the sink after flushing.

Kagiso: You should have kept that particular detail to yourself. Fuck my stomach can't take it.

He yells before puking his lungs out I weakly chuckle rinsing my mouth.

Kagiso: What did I say about her?

I roll my eyes.

Me: Okay you were right and I was wrong.

Kagiso: I told you countless times but you don't listen.

Me: Geez I heard you.

I heavy sigh.

Me: I knew the was no body but I went on with life and forgot about everything.

Kagiso: That's the power of witchcraft.

I clench my jaws tighten the phone in my hand.

Me: I'm think of putting out a bounty head for her.

Kagiso: That’s a big risk.

Me: What choose do I have? It’s my only shot.

Kagiso: Good luck on that because you will need it.

I furrow my eyebrows.

Me: Meaning?

Kagiso: Don’t you think if she wanted to be found she would have already found you? It’s been years and I think she doesn’t want to be found.

Me: This is my wife we are talking about. I can’t just pretend like she doesn’t exist while she does.

Kagiso: Mhhm... I hear you.

I don’t know whether it’s me but his acting weird.

Me: Mme mentioned something about you having a son. What’s that all about?

Kagiso: I also can’t believe it. He looks just like me.

I can practically see the smile on his face.

Kagiso: Handsome as fuck.

He brags causing me to laugh.

Kagiso: Baby mama told me his skipping a grade because his too smart for it.

Again he brags. I snort.

Me: Of course that big head of yours isn't carrying a whole bucket of water.

He burst in laughter while and I join him.

Kagiso: Tsek saan.

I chuckle.

Me: I have to meet him.

Kagiso: You should.

A knock comes from the bedroom door.

Sibahle: Daddy what's taking you so long?

Me: Shit I forgot I promise the princess an ice cream date now she's demanding her time.

Kagiso: Don't make her wait.

Me: How old is your son and what's his name?

Kagiso: Seven and KJ Mofokeng. An elder to princess Dlamini.

I chuckle. Sibahle is five.

Me: Lucky bastard.

He laughs hanging up. I shake my head walking out of the bathroom.

Sibahle: Daddy?

Me: Okay, I'm coming. Don't break my door.

I pull the shirt over to hide the gun and march to open the door.

Sibahle: Seriously?

She places her hands on her waist like a mother ready to scold her child.

Me: Give me five to pick up my things.

Sibahle: Okay, I will wait here.

I chuckle walking back to the room and pick my key and phone and walk out.

Meme: (screaming) Sandile please don't leave me here.

I ignore her and lock the door behind me.

Me: I'm all yours now your majesty.

She giggles dragging me down the stairs. I will deal with that witch later for now I have a date with my favourite girl.

JENNIFER

My phone rings as I plan for my next move on the Dlamini residence.

Me: Kg.

Kagiso: Change of plans. He knows that you're alive.

Me: What? How?

I fire the questions at once. He narrates the whole story and by the time his done I'm beyond shocked. In fact I'm terrified as my mind takes me back to that day when I found her stark naked at midnight.

Kagiso: Aza?

Me: I'm still here just shocked.

I balance my phone with my shoulder and clap once.

Me: But that doesn't change the fact that he ordered a hit on me. If he can out a bounty over me then what'ss stopping him?

Kagiso: There's a difference. A bounty is for whoever has information on you gets that certain amount he offers or whoever brings you to him alive gets the cash.

Me: I see. Well how about I change his plans and bring myself to him.

Kagiso: (chuckling) That's a dangerous game you're playing at.

Me: You only live onces as a human being so why not get burnt at times. Spread the word to your friends and bring a plus one. Jen is hosting a poker night tonight.

He chortle.

Kagiso: Do you even know how to play? They will be suspicious by getting an invitation from an unknown woman.

Me: No, but the likes of you will be playing because that's your field and I'm just a host. And that's why I have you in my corner. You will convince them to come on my behalf.

Kagiso: You're one crazy woman.

Me: I'll take that as a compliment thank you very much. Now if you will excuse me I have a party to plan. Later.

I hang and call my dad.

Me: Why didn't you tell me that girl is the one who tried to kill me?

Tata: Sawubona nawe MaNdlovu. Ukahle?

I breath out.

Me: Hello Tata. I'm fine.

Tata: Good, what were you saying again?

I repeat my question.

Tata: Inkinga yakho awulaleli. I've been telling you the same thing over and over again.

Me: But you never told me that.

I protest. If he did tell me that then my ears were to busy to listen such.

Tata: You never listen to anyone.

Me: That's fine because I'm ending it all tonight.

Tata: What do you mean?

Me: I'm hosting poker for them tonight. He knows I'm alive and word on the street is that he wants to put a bounty over my head so why not save him all the trouble?

I think my shooting skills from the shooting range will come I handy this evening. I might need to get messy because people tend to react differently when they see a ghost.

NARRATOR

Kagiso just had to ruin Sandile's plans. The man extended an invitation for a poker night to him and his wife which confuses him. It doesn't need a powerful sangoma to throw his or her bones to confirm that he hates Mamello. He was quite clear on the invitation that he must bring a plus one and everyone know her as his wife and it will be odd if he comes alone. Bringing Sibahle along with him did cross his mind but Kagiso shut that thought before he can voice it out leaving him with no choice but extend that invitation to the witch. He unlocks the door after his ice cream date with his daughter calling the nanny.

Nanny: Sir.

Sandile: I know you're off on weekends but can you come over tonight. We are going out and need a babysitter.

Nanny: Okay sir at what time?

Sandile: Around 8.

Nanny: I'll b there.

He thanks her and disconnect the call. He looks around and find Sibahle already glued to the TV. He kisses her cheek.

Sandile: Daddy and mommy will be stepping out for the evening. Please behave.

Sibahle nods still looking at the screen. He walks upstairs and unlocks the room. He marches to the balcony and unlocks it. Upon hearing the door, Meme jumps to her feet waking up.

Meme: Baby you're back.

Sandile: Get ready we are going out.

Meme: Where are we going?

He ignores her and walks to the bathroom to take a shower.

*

*

Jen: To the left.

She orders the delivery man.

Jen: No, a little bit to the centre.

The delivery man grunts.

Delivery man: Where exactly?

Jen: Centre of the left. Don't you know anything about visions?

She shakes her head and walks to the door as a car parks outside. Kagiso jumps out and meet her halfway.

Kagiso: I see we are already in work.

Jen: Of course. Did you bring what I asked?

Kagiso: I know I will regret this but I did.

He walks inside and she follows suit.

Jen: I said to the centre of the left.

The pushes it to the left direction annoyed.

Jen: Perfect.

She squealed like a child and padded to the kitchen. Her eyes lit up when they set on the guns on top of the table.

Kagiso: Do you even know how to use one?

Jen: I've been practicing at the shooting range.

Kagiso: Good. Are they done?

Jen: Yes.

Kagiso picked up the guns and walk to the poker table in the middle of the room.

Kagiso: Knife please.

Jen ran to the kitchen and come back with the knife. Kagiso took the knife from her and bent down and pasted the first gun under the table with a sellotape.

Jen: Let me help you to beat time.

She took her potion and got to work. 5 minutes later they were done.

Kagiso: This is yours.

Jen: Thank you. The table is set and now the only thing missing are my guest.

Kagiso: You do know that you owe me right? I had I dig in my own pockets to host this.

Jen: Send me the cheque. I have some savings I have.

Kagiso: Or better yet I'll send it to Dlamini.

Jen: Good the food and drinks are on the way.

Kagiso: Cigars?

Jen: On the way.

Kagiso: Looks like you have everything under control. Let me run.

Jen: Don't forget to bring your plus one.

Kagiso: Don't have one. You will he my plus one.

He shuts the door behind him and runs to the car while Jen stumbled to the bathroom. Tonight had to be perfect.

—

Dressed in her high slit dress, Jen walked down the stairs admiring her living room. The alcohol and everything that was missing on the list arrived 30 minutes later and that completed

her list. She was a bit worried about the delay a bit. The front door opening breaks her out of her thoughts. She took the remaining steps down and met her first guest.

Kagiso: (chuckling) Take about dressing up to fuck up people.

Jen: You also look good.

Kagiso: You look nervous.

Jen: I am. I have one shot to do this and if I mess it up it will fail.

Kagiso: Too late now if you think of turning back because your first guest is here.

He muttered hearing the intercom ringing.

Jen: Be the perfect host.

Kagiso: What? I didn't take as someone who will chicken out.

Jen: I need to call down first. I'm too nervous to face anyone right now. I really didn't think things through this time. Oh my god I'm freaking out.

She slipped off her heels and pace barefooted on the living room. Kagiso amusedly watched her. The intercom rang again.

Jen: Oh my goodnes, they are really here.

Kagiso: You do know they won't disappear right?

Jen: The I'm disappearing.

She picked up her heels and ran upstairs. Kagiso laughed making his way to the receiver.

Kagiso: Yes.

Sandile: Where you still hitting it?

They both chuckled and Kagiso opened the gate for them. He shifted his gaze to the stairs and find Jen peeking on the stairs. He shook his head and picked up a bottle of scotch on the table.

Kagiso: It will come your nerves.

She took the bottle from him and made her way back to her spot and opened the bottle. The door bell rang and Kagiso nodded to her and went to open the door. She swinged the bottle in her mouth and cringe. The taste was bitter as hell but it was the only way to gain her confidence back. She didn't come all this way to give up on.

Sandile: What took you so long?

Kagiso: Just had to make sure things were in order. Feel at home.

He opened the door widely for them.

Meme: Hi.

Kagiso ignored her and shifted his gaze to the stairs.

Sandile: Something wrong?

Kagiso: No, where are the others?

Before Sandile could reply two more cars drove in. Ade, Tyson and their plus one's made their way inside.

Ade: Kg, my man why did I have to bring the Mrs with me? Look at this heaven?

Zozo: Thank you for inviting us Kagiso. My husband just lacks manners.

Laughter.

Swazi: Where is the food? I came for food.

Ty: Babe we just got here.

Swazi: So what? My stomach has already been here before we got here.

Laughter.

Kagiso: Ladies let me not keep you. Please help yourselves in the kitchen.

Swazi: Uyabona wena. Ngizokuthengela umakoti.

She marched to the kitchen leaving them in laughter.

Ty: My wife loves food and she's not apologetic about that.

Kagiso: She's a free spirited person.

He ushers them to the table.

Sandile: What’s the occasion?

Kagiso: None. Just hanging out with my people.

Sandile: You brought us our favourite drinks all for nothing.Are you dying because something is up?

Kagiso snorted taking a seat facing the stairs.

Kagiso: I have a son I need to raise so I’m not the dying type.

He picked up the cigar and the lighter. Smoke filled the room after lighting it. Sandile thinned his eyes trying to read him but he was closed off showing no emotion.

Kagiso: Are we here to stare at each or play?

Ty: You took the words right of my mouth. Let’s play.

He picked up a cigar and filled his glass with his own poison and the two remained suit.

Ade: I’ll start the game.

The game started and Sandile kept his eyes on his friend. He could tell something was going but he didn’t know. Somehow he couldn’t shake off that nagging feeling that keeps telling him that Kagiso was up to something.

Kagiso: Dlamini are you going to play or just stare at my face?

Sandile: What are you up too?

Kagiso: Not everyone is going to backstab you in the back like you know who.

Sandile: I'm finding hard that you invite us to a house that we all know nothing about and you emphasised on the message we must bring out plus one's . Where is yours?

Kagiso: (smirking) Oh, she will be here.

He leaned back and circulated his finger on the glass then knocked it down.

Kagiso: Nothing beats a good old Jack Black.

Ty: You can say that again.

He murmured also chunking his glass down.

Ade: Family and business really keeps us busy. Thank you for bringing us together again Kg.

Kagiso nodded.

Ade: I would like to propose a toast.

Tyson groaned.

Ty: Here we go again. I blame your wife for constantly inviting you to these tea parties of hers. Not everything has to be toasted to.

Laughter filled the room. Ade raised his middle finger making them to laugh some more. While in the kitchen Swazi and Zozo laughed sitting on the high chairs.

Swazi: Sky is growing up.

Zozo: He’s such a cutie.

Swazi: A naughty one at that. I suspect his sister is the one teaching him that.

Zozo: Plus Voilet is naughty.

Swazi: I find her one morning on top of the counter eating a cereal inside the box.

Zozo giggle.

Zozo: Hai ingane zakho we oe. {Your children}.

Swazi: I get so frustrated at times because I want to swear at them. Yini abo Scarlett

Advertisement

Voilet nabo Sky?

Zozo laughed picking her piece of meat.

Zozo: I’m fine with my two rascals. I know his father has been hinting for a third born but that daughter of his is already driving me crazy.

Swazi swallowed.

Swazi: I told him his too old to be making babies at his age. Sky is our last born.

They both giggled while Meme watched them from the patio. She was sitting alone eating her food. It was clear that they were friends. She jumped to her feet and padded to the living room. With each laughter they were sharing it felt like they knew her shenanigans and they were laughing at her. She tapped Sandile's shoulder.

Sandile: What is it?

Meme: I want to go home.

She whispered with tears filling her eyes.

Meme: They are laughing behind my back.

Sandile: I'm still busy.

She pressed her lips and swallowed the sob.

Meme: Sandile I want to go home.

She raised her voice and the whole room become dead quiet.

Sandile: What part of I'm busy can't you hear?

Ade: Should we give you guys room?

Swazi: For what? We want to hear hawu.

Tyson shook his head. Weren't they in the kitchen so when did they get here. Kagiso pushed his chair back and jumped to his feet. He padded to the stairs and offered the woman ascending his hand while the others are still focused on the back and forth of the Dlamini's. Heels clicking on the tiles made the others to shift their gaze to the new woman on the room. Kagiso cleared his throat to gain their attention.

Jen: Who wants to leave my party without the host arriving in it?

Sandile's heart drummed on his chest. He slowly turned to face them.

Meme: (shocked) Jen what are you doing here?

Jen: No, no darling look carefully.

She took off her wig and the lenses in her eyes ruffling her hair. Meme gasped shocked.

Meme: No, no, you're dead.

Jen: You wish.

Meme turned to Sandile with tears running down her cheeks ruining her make-up.

Meme: I killed her. Why is she alive?

Swazi: (shocked) Tyson. Asambe mkhulu wam bengekakubulali nawe nkosi yam baba wo Scarlett, Violet nabo Sky. {Tyson. let's go my grandfather before they kill you my lord, father of Scarlett, Violet and Sky}.

Zozo: Baby I think we should also leave.

Sliding her hand to her to her thighs, Jen took the gun from the lingerie gutter and pointed it at the Dlamini's

Jen: The party just started.

Where were their manners, who leaves after the host just walked in the room? Ade, Tyson and Sandile took their guns out too while Kagiso calmly went back to his seat. Swazi screamed.

Swazi: Nkosi yam ngizofa ngiphethwe amasimba. Umntu ebengazi ukuthi udla okokugcina.{My god I will die in pain. A person didn't know she will be eating for the last time}.

She murmured bending down to rub her stomach.

NARRATOR

All eyes turn to Swazi.

Swazi: Yini?

Jen: There's a bathroom just down the passage. Help yourself out.

Without wasting any time Swazi rushed to the bathroom leaving the room intense.

Zozo: I think I'll see if Swazi is okay.

Jen: Good idea.

Zobuhle also left the room breathing heavily. What was going on? Was it a setup but if it wasn't Kagiso wouldn't betray them like that or would he? Who was that woman? Those unanswered questions filled Zozo mind as paces on the passage. Meanwhile in the living room Jen took her calculated steps to the table and the man moved with her still pointing out their guns.

Jen: Now, now boys don't tell me you're about to shoot a host in her own home.

Ade: How is that you're alive?

A smirk curved on Jen's lips.

Jen: I’m a cat. I’ve got nine lives.

Ty: So leg me get this straight you’re the one who invited us here?

Jen: Finally someone gets it.

She threw her hands in the dramatically.

Mem: You’re alive?

It came almost as a whisper. She was in disbelief. Didn’t the hitman say she’s dead because if that’s the case then what is the meaning of this?

Jen: Of course I’m alive. Why does it surprise you? You should have done a thorough job. Next do it yourself and do it thoroughly but it’s a pity there won’t be any next times.

She shrugged her shoulders shifting her eyes to the men on the table. A beat or two in Sandile ’s chest.

Sandile: MaDlamini.

Jen gasped and turned to Kagiso.

Jen: Ah, he speaks. For a second I thought he was muted.

Kagiso chortle.

Sandile: You knew about this?

He muttered staring at his friend. Kagiso just shrugged taking a sip of his drink

Kagiso: There's a lot I know. Depends what are you asking.

Sandile: Don't insult my intelligence. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

Kagiso: Maybe or maybe not.

Again the man shrugged causing Sandile's nostrils to flare.

Jen: A little birdy told me you're looking for me so I thought why not save you all the trouble and just come to you instead.

Meme: The ghost. It was you isn't?

Jen: What ghost?

Meme: It was you. I know it was you.

She half screamed.

Jen: Why are you making noise? I'm sure everyone in this house can hear you properly. Nobody suffers from deafness right?

Ade chuckled nodded. Never have he seen such in his life.

Sandile: Azasakhe.

Jen: Ufile. {She's dead}

Sandile: MaDlamini.

Jen: Ubhubhile wangcwatywa. {She's dead and buried}.

She calmly muttered drawing patterns on the table with the gun. The men in the room shifted their guns her way. She rolled her eyes.

Jen: Seriously? Are we going to play or what?

Sandile: Put the gun down.

Jen giggled.

Jen: You give me too much credit. I just want to play and I don't know why are you all paranoid. It doesn't look good on you guys.

She sasses shaking her head. On the corridors, Swazi walked out of the bathroom and found Zozo pacing.

Swazi: I'm leaving. I don't want to fall victim to whatever is about to happen. I'm just hoping it won't affect my husband.

Zozo: I'm curious to know.

Swazi: I'm also curious but my life comes first. My kids still need me.

Zozo: Do you think we should leave our husbands behind?

Swazi rolled her eyes.

Swazi: They have been doing this before we came along. They will take care of themselves but what about us. If it happens

someone mistakenly shoots and the bullet lands in one of us I know I will die right there and there.

Zozo giggled.

Swazi: What? I can’t handle pain mina. Angiyona insimbi.

She padded to the kitchen and used the kitchen door to sneak out. Zozo laughed following behind her. In the living room the tension was thick it can be cut out with a knife.

Sandile: Put the gun down, Azasakhe.

Jen: If it makes you feel better.

She retort placing the gun down . Sandile jumped to his feet and leaned over the table and took the gun.

Jen: (sighing) Can we play now?

Sandile: What are you up too?

Jen: Sandile Dlamini always thinking the worst.

She shook her head.

Jen: I want to play that’s all.

Sandile: I’m sure you didn’t just disappear for seven years and come back seven years later just to play a game.

Jen: That’s what exactly what I want. Just to play.

Sandile: Gentleman I think it’s time you guys leave. This is beyond you and it’s beer my wife and I.

A rude snort rolled out of Jen’s lips.

Jen: Gentleman I believe I’m the one who called you guys here. So I decide who goes and who stays. He can make the rules in his house not in mine and for the love of god refrain from calling me your wife while your real wife is in the same room. I have enough enemies to last a lifetime so don’t create another’s for me.

A game of staring contest was being played by the audience in the room Kagiso who sat quietly in his chair with his drink in hand was enjoying each and every single minute of it. Meme on the other hand was not. The woman was boiling thinking of way of killing her again. How did she survive? Oh, she felt so stupid for trusting a snake and also dining with her in her own home.

Jen: How did it feel to dine with me?

Her voice snapped Meme out of her thoughts.

Meme: You’re evil. How can you trick and play with people's emotions like that?

Jen: I also trusted you as a sister wife but you just had to fuck me up.

Her famous head shake came to play.

Jen: So greedy. Don’t you know we as female have the most population than men? So if you don’t want to share why are you in this world?

Sandile: What?

Jen: Not now Bab Dlamini. Please don’t interfere because this is between my sister wife and I.

Sandile: Udakiwe. Sister wife yokunuka. I’m divorcing her.

Jen: Nobody is getting a divorce here. As the first wife I welcome you Mamello to our household. Please be merry sisi and kill us all if you have too we are your subjects.

Kagiso bursted in laughter while Sandile glared at him.

Sandile: Usangene ngempela kemanje. {You’re real crazy}.

He clicks his tongue.

Meme: I’m not sharing my husband with you or anyone else for that matter.

Jen: Nc,nc, nc. This is the greed I’m talking about. I’m offering a very generous offer but you still refuses.

Mamello: You’re crazy if you think I’m going to let you waltz in my marriage and chaos havoc.

Sandile: What marriage? There’s no marriage here. You’re an evil

despicable woman.

Meme eyes glisten in tears.

Meme: You're hurting me with your words.

Sandile: I despise you with everything in me. I just wish I knew before hand of how evil you're.

Meme: This me Sandile your wife you're take about too.

Sandile: I'm fucken aware who I'm talking too.

Meme: You're doing it again.

She closed her eyes and let the tears flow before opening them again.

Meme: Why did you come back? We were fine before.

She screamed staring at Jen.

Jen: He brought me back by wanting information about me. And please for the last time Bab Dlamini don't interfere.

Sandile raised his hands in surrender. Her wish was his command.

Meme: You're lying.

She protested wiping her tears.

Meme: You only came back to ruin our lives.

Jen: Just like how you ruined mine. Why should I let you be happy after you ruined my life? I don’t owe you anything and I don’t know you, you also don’t know me. Into esidibanisileyo yindoda e ibingeyoyakho nam ingeyoyam. {What brought us together is a man that is neither mine or yours}.

Sandile furrowed his eyebrows. That last statement confused him.

Meme: If his not mine who does he belong to? You?

Jen: No, darling he doesn’t belong to me either. He belongs to himself and the rest of the world.

She drags out her breath.

Jen: We are not here for small talks but to play.

Meme: Only one of us will walk out of this alive tonight.

She threatens staring at her. A daring stare.

Jen: Absolutely! Now can we play.

Meme: And that person is me.

Jen: Absolutely!

Meme opened her mouth and closed it as words get stuck on the roof of her tongue. Was she mocking her? How dare she?

Meme: (yelling) You’re mocking me.

Jen: Absolutely! How dare am I?

For the first time Sandile found himself smiling.

Meme: Stop talking.

Jen: Absolutely!

Meme breathing pattern changed while laughter echoed in the room.

Meme: Are you going to let her mock me?

Sandile: This is between sister wives so where do I fit in?

Meme: So you're going to sit there and do nothing?

Sandile: Like I said it's between sister wives. I was given a strict instructions not to interfere.

Meme clicked her tongue.

Meme: You're useless.

Jen: Darling, I'm giving you 10 seconds to walk out of that door and run.

Meme: I'm not scared of you Azasakhe.

She snapped agitated. How dare she threatened her? Jen chuckled.

Jen: You should be. I have this song that comes to my mind right now.

Meme scoffed.

Meme: And what would be that song be? I will fight you tooth and nails if I have to because I'm not going anywhere but you're and this time I'm going to make sure of it.

She jumps to her feet and picks up Ade's gun from the table. Sandile and Tyson pointed theirs to her while Kagiso slide his hand under the table to take his.

Meme: I'm give you 10 seconds to walk out. Run and never look back.

Jen yawned.

Sandile: Mamello put the gun down.

Meme's sharply whipped her head to him fuming.

Meme: After everything we've been through you're just going to run back to her and dump me again?

Sandile: She's my wife.

He spits out.

Jen: Didn't I warn you not to keep say…

Sandile: Shut up!

Jen: Okay.

Meme: One of us has to go and that person should be her. She's a intruder.

Jen: Are you done?

Meme: I'm still talking to my husband bitch.

Jen shrugged sliding her hand under the table and pulled the gun and cocked it still under the table.

Jen: (singing) Bad Jenny, bad Jenny

What you gonna do,

What you gonna do,

What you gonna do,

When she comes for a you?

She pulled it and pressed her fingers pulling the trigger. Meme gasped shooting back

Sandile: No!

He rushes to Jen's side but it was already late. The bullet on Jen's shoulder while she falls on the floor with a thud. Blood oozed out from her forehead staining the living room.

Jen: Don't tell me she's dead just like that? Why is she weak?

Kagiso: You're shot.

He announced looking a her shoulder.

Jen: Who? Me? Asoze!

Kagiso amusedly nod knowing once the adrenaline wears off she will talking a different story.

Sandile: Are you okay?

He chipped her face.

Jen scrunched up her nose.

Jen: I'm kicking and screaming.

She removed his hand from her face while he engulf her in a hug.

Sandile: I don't know where I'm going to start explaining for my actions.

Jen: You can start by giving me space. You're squeezing too tight.

He breathed out breaking the embrace. Staring at her, it felt like she will disappear again. A gun shot went off and Sandile clutched his knee in pain.

Sandile: (growling) What is that for?

Jen: That's for taking a second wife without my permission.

She hisses and padded to the stairs. She needed to call her father so he can prep her on how to bury the body.

Jen: Why is my dress covered in blood and why is my shoulder hurting?

Laughter.

Ty: She’s only feeling that after everything?

JENNIFER

Flipping my eyes open, I'm met by Mam Zodwa crying. I turn to the window and the sun is out to play. Is it my funeral already? I watch my dad as he console her. Judging by how hysterically she's crying, I can bet on my last cents that it's that time when the casket is being lowered to the ground. Sighing, I close my eyes and smile. Heaven I welcome you with open arms.

Zodwa: Is she going to be okay?

Why is her voice still audible in my ears? I crack one eye and find them staring at me. What is going one? Wasn't I suppose to be on a one way trip to heaven? Where is God? I need to have a woman to man conversation with him. He needs to tell me why are earth people still staring at me? I left them on earth for a reason.

Tata: She will be.

His voice is very much audible and clear.

Tata: Azasakhe.

I open the second eye and lock eyes with him.

Me: I'm not dead?

Tata: Do you look like you're dead?

Irritation laced in his tone.

Me: Kanti why was Mam Zodwa crying? Wasn't it that part where they lower my casket?

The share a look before shifting them back to me.

Zodwa: Are you okay sisi?

I nod.

Zodwa: How are you feeling?

Me: I feel…

I trail off as I feel a sharp pain on my right shoulder. I wince sitting up. She position the pillow behind me.

Me: I'm in pain.

Tata: Drink.

He shoves a cup in my face. I scrunch up my nose as I get the whiff of the smell.

Me: What is this?

Tata: It will numb the pain.

I take the cup from him and knock it down. I shudder handing back the cup.

Tata: Good girl.

Me: What did you make me drink?

Tata: It will speed up your healing.

Me: When did you arrive?

Tata: A few hours.

My stomach growls.

Zodwa: I'll make you something to eat.

She walks out of the room.

Tata: You're careless.

Me: I didn't die.

Tata: I don't think you understand anything. You just live in the zone and not think about the people around you.

I drop my eyes to the sheet and clean my nails.

Tata: You don't live for yourself only but there are people who care about you and love you. Mntanam you're the only child I have with in this world and I don't take that for granted. We've lost so many years so please don't make me relive those moments again.

My eyes soften.

Me: I'm sorry.

Tata: You're only what I got in this world

Advertisement

apart from my grandchildren. Akhona left me something which are his kids what about you? Don’t y ever scare me like that.

He engulfs me in a hug. I blink trying to stop the tears from falling.

Me: I love you tatam.

Tata: I love you too ndodakazi.

He plants a kiss on my forehead. The door opens incomes a limping Sandile.

Sandile: Sanibonani.

My dad nods leaping up his feet and stumble towards him then stand in front of him.

Tata: You and I need to talk.

Sandile: I’m aware.

Tata: Good because you know your crimes.

Sandile cast his eyes to the floor nodding as he walks out of the room leaving us.

Sandile: Hey.

Me: Get straight to the point. We are not about to play hey and hi here. What do you want?

He limps his way to the bed and sit on the edge.

Sandile: I'm sorry.

Me: Story of your life. You're always sorry.

Sandile: I mean it this time. I know I should have tried harder looking for you but I was also blindsided by what she was using on me at that time. Amaphutha ngiwenzile. Ngikuphile inhliziyo ebengithembisele ngeke ngiyiphule. Ayidle ishiyele mama. {I made mistakes. I broke your heart that I promised I will never break. I'm sorry}.

Me: Do you know what's heart breaking in all of this?

He shakes his head.

Me: Waking up in a coma only to find your brother dead.

He drops his eyes.

Me: I can't even show my face to his kids knowing exactly what I did. They may believe that he was killed in jail but I know the real reason and it's killing me inside.

My parents have been preaching forgiveness. They say I must forgive myself because the circumstances were beyond me at that time but I don't think I can.

Me: That's what's heart breaking.

I breathe out and close my eyes.

BUSISIWE

Dinner with my parents last night was fun. It was like I never left in the first place.

Me: Are you done?

Junior: Yes.

Me: Let's go.

I lock the door after picking my handbag. I greet my neighbors and walk to my father's car. We are going to church and we will be meeting my brother's there.

Mama: I'm so excited about today. I can feel it it's an anointed Sunday.

She murmured as we jump in.

Dad: We've got all our children in our roof so what can be more anointed than that?

He chirps in speeding off our street. I haven't been in the house of the Lord in years as I can safely agree with them that it really is an anointed Sunday. The prodigal daughter finally found her way back home. He finds a spot and parks the car then step out.

Mama: Eyomnikelo. {For the offering}.

She hands Junior a R20 note as we walk inside.

Me: Is he not late for the Sunday school?

Mama: He is but he will pay when the whole congregation pays.

We tiptoe and take out seats as the pastor prays.

Pastor: Amen.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor: Page 16.

The choir starts to sing Siyakudumisa Thixo and we follow. I spot Sihle on the front row. I wave at her smiling. She smiles back and blew a kiss my way. Her and I do talk from time to time but after Aza's death we just fell apart. Each person was consumed by her own grief than mending our friendship. I breathe out and sing along.

Mama: (whispering) Junior is blending with the others.

I follow her line of gaze and spot Junior sitting with the Sunday school group.

Me: He looks so lost but with time he will get used to it.

Mama: True.

My heart feels easy, in content. I don't know to do describe this feeling but I'm just happy. I don't know how can I thank ma Agnes for knocking some sense to me. She's been my pillar of strength through out these years. A mother figure I found along the way. I'm smiling from ear to ear as the service goes on. The

pastor preaches about the power of forgiveness and it felt like he was talking to me. Like he knew my story before yesterday the day that change my life.

Pastor: It’s time for my favourite part of the church which is paying the offering.

He playfully muttered. The whole room laughed while he smiles.

Pastor: I’m playing bazalwane. God will take back his gift from me but we have to pay our dues. Choir can we have a very powerful song that will move abazalwane from their seats.

The song starts and we walk to the front to pay. Walking back, I find Junior sitting on his seat, eating ikota.

Me: Where did you get that?

Junior: (licking the sauce) I bought it.

Me: With what money because I know I didn’t give you one.

Junior: Gogo gave me one.

My ears must be deceiving me because I know he didn’t just say that.

Me: For offering.

I half yell.The singing stops.

Junior: I didn’t see the pastor giving out his share. He said he’s a leader leading us to the right way but he didn’t lead the offerings.

Me: Where is the remaining change?

Junior: I bought this.

He picks up his ice guava beside him and shakes the plastic. My eyes pop out of their sockets while gasps echo in the room. Can the ground open and swallow me.

Junior: Church is another quick rich pyramid scheme.

I’m beyond palpation and the gasps multiply. Who is this child because kids from his age don’t know that? I slowly sit beside him shrinking myself on the bench and whisper.

Me: What is a pyramid scheme?

Junior: I don’t know. It’s a cool word I heard from the TV.

He shrugged licking the dripping sauce from his fingers before turning to me.

Junior: Mama can you please buy me a pyramid scheme?

Where are my sunglasses when I need them? I’m never coming back here again.

63

SANDILE

My heart is heavy as make my way to living room where her parents are. I clear my throat to announce my presence and they stare at me.

Me: You asked for my presence.

The woman who I've come to know as Aza's stepmother leaps up to her.

Zodwa: I'll go and check on Aza.

She bypasses me and ascend the stairs.

Ndlovu: Seat.

I limp to the couch opposite him.

Ndlovu: I'm sure you have a lot of questions.

Me: Everyone knows you're dead. Does it run in your family to fake your deaths?

He laughs.

Ndlovu: You out of all people know how the game is. In order to survive you kill your enemy before they kill you. In my case I was their enemy and they were baying for my blood. I had a girlfriend, a son and a daughter. A whole complete family I had to ditch because they didn't understand. I've operated on them

for year and they just couldn’t understand how could one of them die in my hands. I had the experience and they expected a miracle every time I operated on them. On that day my luck ran out and someone died. They couldn’t understand that.

Me: So you faked your death.

I completely his sentence causing him to nod.

Ndlovu: They found out I wanted out and thought I killed one of their own on purpose. I had to leave everything behind and start afresh leaving my kids and their mother behind. It was not easy but I had to do it. They grew up thinking I abandoned them but I didn’t. Circumstances forced me to do what I did.

Me: Word on the street is that you stole something from them.

He smirks.

Ndlovu: I wasn’t going just go exile with nothing after working so hard. If I had to use my bank account they would have found me and killed me so the diamonds were a better option for me.

Me: If I may ask do you still have them?

Ndlovu: What do you think?

I chuckle.

Ndlovu: Enough about that, why are you letting women play on top of your head?

I breathe out.

Me: I didn’t know what she did until it was too late.

Ndlovu: That’s because you adapted this modern way new amateurs use these days. You know the first day you walk out of prison you were supposed to be cleansed.

Me: It slipped my mind.

He shakes his head disappointed.

Ndlovu: People like you know the procedure so how can you forget? Now I understand why your ancestors just watched that woman play with you. It’s because you turned your back on them first.

I rub my temples.

Me: What do I need to do in order for them to continuing protecting me?

Ndlovu: You need to be cleansed. There’s a dark cloud hovering all over you. You’re lucky because you were skating on thin ice.

Me: Death?

He nods.

Me: Fuck.

I run my palms on my face.

Ndlovu: Kumele ufuthe, uchathe, ugabhe, ugeze.

Me: (shocked) Ngichathe? I don't mind steaming and the other things.

Ndlovu: Idliso kumele liphume lonke angisho?

Me: This is a lot.

Ndlovu: Don't worry I will guide you. You also need to go home. Unyathele emagcekeni akoDlamini just to show them that you still remember them.

Me: You're suppose to hate me because I killed your son. Why are you helping me?

Ndlovu: I see the unseen and hear the unheard.

He jumps to his feet and walking out then stop on his steps.

Ndlovu: Ngiyayifuna ilobola yam. Indlovukazi yam doesn't come cheap.

I laugh while he walks away.

BUSISIWE

I'm on my way home. The service is still on and I couldn't just sit back and continuing praising God after what my son said. I've never been so embarrassed in my whole life. My parents probably understand why I left early and they don't need any explanation. I just know there's going to be that one Christian

who will want to hold a prayer and fasting for us after that because they think my son is the devil's advocate. As we approach our yard, there's a car parked on the side of the road. Kagiso steps out as we reach it.

Kagiso: Hi.

Me: Hey.

Kagiso: I called first but you didn't pick up.

Me: It's on silent. We were in church.

I mumble going through my bag and take out my phone and switch it from silence to normal.

Kagiso: Is it out?

Me: Excuse me?

Kagiso: I'm asking about church. Is it out?

Me: No, it's not. We had to leave early because Junior called it a quick rich pyramid scheme and said the pastor must lead the tithes because his a leader.

He throws his back and burst in laughter.

Me: Don't laugh because it's not funny.

He amusedly nods holding his laughter.

Kagiso: I'm sorry but the boy is right. The priest is suppose to pay first before the whole congregation can pay. He needs to lead by example. How do you lead people while not following your own rules?

Me: Of course you will agree with him because his your son.

He shakes his head.

Kagiso: Even if he was not my son I will still going to agree with him. Pastor's make money through tithes and some of them don't even pay their tithes.

Me: They have a calling from God. I don't see the reason for them to pay.

Kagiso: Before that calling remember they are humans first. Greed, deception and all these things we go through they also experience them too. Don't hold them on the high power because of few verses they quote from a book we don't even know who wrote it. Who said everything the Bible is saying is right? Who said God was once alive and walked in this earth too?

Is he trying to confuse me because it's working? Somebody please find me.

Kagiso: Nobody has seen God and people say what is written in the Bible was what was happening on that time. How come

there’s no single person from the lineage of Moses, Samson and the others? Who appointed pastor’s as pastor’s? Nobody

Advertisement

but people are following them like swans on a pond. What if pastor’s are magicians and magicians are the real priests but people misunderstood and interpret everything wrong? Mme used to say the scriptures in the Bible were once written in some stones back in the days and that’s how the Bible come about so my question is where are those stones now? Ain’t they suppose not be in a museum as part of history collection?

My jaw slack opens. Damn he’s good and now I know why his the best defence lawyer in this country.

Me: Do you always argue against everything?

A smile lurks on his lips.

Kagiso: Not always but as a person you just have to question what you’re given. What is your name?

I frown.

Me: You already know my name.

Kagiso: No, what is your name?

Me: Busiswe.

Kagiso: Who told you that it’s your name?

Me: Huh?

Kagiso: Confused?

I slowly nod.

Kagiso: Let me rephrase my question maybe you will understand it better. Who told you that or who gave you that name?

Haibo what kind of question is that?

Me: My parents.

Kagiso: What if it's not your real name? What if your name is Victoria let's say?

Is this man indirectly calling me stupid? Of course my name is Busiswe.

Me: I'm not a Victoria but Busiswe.

Kagiso: Neither did I say you're a Victoria but I said what if your name is Victoria?

Me: For the last time my name is Busiswe not Victoria.

Kagiso: That's the name your parents gave you not what you got it for yourself.

If confusion was a person it would have been me right now. I don't understand a word he's saying right.

Me: But your name is also Kagiso.

Kagiso: Yes the name I was given from birth.

Me: If that's the case what is your name?

Kagiso: I go out with a lot of names. The advocate, Mofokeng or Kg but the one I prefer is Kg. It's that I gave myself and comfortable with, not something I was spoon fed by my parents. I'm my own individual self and that includes everything. It's the same as being called by a wrong name. Instead of someone saying Busisiwe that person says Busiswa. Wouldn't that irk you?

Me: It's annoying.

Kagiso: Exactly! Sometimes challenge what you're given and your mind.

It's confirmed he's calling me stupid.

Me: Okay.

I nod even though I don't understand shit on what he said.

Kagiso: You look confused and those were not my intentions. I apologise.

Me: We learn new things everyday.

Kagiso: Forget about that. What are you guys doing later on?

Me: I was going to cook and iron our uniform. Why?

Kagiso: Please join me for lunch and dinner.

Me: I don’t know.

Kagiso: Please.

Me: Fine, let me call him.

I turn on my heels making my way to my house. My head is buzzing with what he just told me. Walking in, I find Junior watching cartoons.

Me: Let’s go.

He sides eye me jumping to his feet and switch off the TV.

Me: What?

Junior: Nothing.

I close the window and switch on the light then lock the door after walking out. We walk back and find him inside.

Me: Do you know who that is?

Junior: Yes.

My heart skips a beat. I’ve never touched the subject of his father and he has never asked me about him before.

Me: How do you know who he is?

Junior: He looks like me.

Me: You haven’t answer my question.

Junior: (irritated) He has a big head like me but looks older. Isn’t he not my brother?

Kagiso: I don’t have a big head.

He protests frowning.

Junior: Can I get in the car now?

Me: Yes.

I open the backseat and we jump in. I wait for the car to move but it doesn’t. He stares at us through the view mirror.

Me: What?

Kagiso: I don’t have a big head.

Tyhin thixo! We are still on that? Wasn’t he the one who was telling me my name is not my name minutes ago so what is this? He better be not his son because I will walk out of this car. One Junior is enough already. Just for peace sake, I mutter.

Me: Okay.

He squints his eyes looking at mini him beside him while Junior does the same. Are they communicating?

Junior: I don’t like you.

He breaks the ice still staring at him. Kagiso's lips twitch before a full blown smirks lurks on his lips.

Kagiso: Neither do I.

Junior: I'm glad we understand each other.

Kagiso chuckles stepping on the gas. Sometimes I consider myself slow because what just happened? Did they just threaten each?

Junior: Can I borrow your phone?

I take it out and unlock it for him. He goes straight to temple run and rotate the phone before playing.

Kagiso: Stimorol?

He offers shoving the gum in my face.

Me: No, thank you.

Junior: Yes, please.

He takes one and hands him back the rest.

Junior: Thank you.

He tosses it on his mouth and chews loud making a balloon in the process. There's a reason I don't buy him gum and that balloon is one of them.

Kagiso: Your mastication is loud.

Me: Huh?

Kagiso: Gums are masticated quietly.

Junior: I know.

He muttered not sparing him a glimpse then do the balloon again.

Me: What is mastication?

The slow me just had to ask in case it's a new word for nuclear weapon so I can get out of this car now. You will never know with ama 2k and their slangs.

Junior: It's chewing mama.

I giggle at his response.

Me: What is mastication?

I enquired staring at the older version of him.

Kagiso: Just what he said.

I quickly whip my head to Junior then back at him slowly shifting away from him. My English teacher is to blame for this. She taught us Englixho instead of English. I knew the day she asked the whole class what a pin is and later translated it to Xhosa so that we can get the idea what she means was the day our future was doomed on the English literature.

Kagiso: What?

Me: (alarmed) Yeyi, Kagiso, take your son with you. I can't be living with your forefathers in my roof. I wanted a child not your whole clan of ancestors.

The nurses better tell me where did my child go to because this is not him. First it was the father asking if my name is my real name and now it's the son telling me chewing it's not chewing but mastication. What the fuck bazalwane? It's going to be a long night.These two mastication big heads will drive me to the mental institution.

Kagiso: (protesting) I don't have a big head.

Fuck I didn't just say that loud or did I?

Them: Yes you did.

They muttered in unison. Let me shut my mastication before I chew them.

64

TWO WEEKS LATER

BUSISIWE

Sihle: Are you excited about tonight?

Me: A bit nervous and excited.

Sihle: Just enjoy yourself. Don't let nerves stand in your way. Who knows maybe Langa might be your soulmate.

I giggle at her response and collect my lunch box from the table and walk to my locker. It's Thursday and sis had a date with her colleague this evening. I'm finally back in the dating game after so long. These two weeks brought father and son together. He picks him up in the morning for school and sometimes drops him later when I knock of. Kagiso's world just brightens up when his with his son. They are the same and like to compete with each other. Yes, as old Kagiso is he competes with his own child. Lord don't get me started with the type of English they speak. Mine is a regular one that everyone understands. Theirs just need a dictionary and I've resorted on using my mother tongue when I speak to them. They both understand what I say.

Sihle: Did he say where is he taking you?

Me: No, but I will find out tonight.

Sihle: You might want to bring condoms with you.

Me: What for? It’s not like I open my legs on the first date.

Sihle: You might not know where the night might take you. Lust is a very dangerous thing mntase.

Ben: Who is lust on who? I hope they are not lusting over you baby.

He mutters walking in and bends down kissing her lips.

Me: Benjamin I’m still here you know.

He breaks the kiss smiling and turn to me while Sihle blushes.

Ben: As far as I remember I’m the CEO of this company so I can do anything and everywhere.

I snicker.

Me: You’re such a big bully.

He sticks out his tongue causing me to roll my eyes.

Me: Let me get going before and do what I’m getting paid for before someone reminds me of that.

They laugh.

Ben: You’re so petty.

Sihle: Busi has a date tonight so she’s knocking off early.

Ben: Early as when?

Sihle: Now.

Me: Thank you big Ben. You're so kind.

Ben: I didn't give you the green light.

Me: My manager just did.

I laugh walking away while Sihle giggles.

Sihle: (yelling) Have fun.

Ben: I expect you here tomorrow bright and early.

He yells after making me giggle.

--

Knocking off, I pass by at Clicks to buy the condoms and catch a ride to Kagiso's company. I know I won't need those condoms but just like Sihle said lust is very dangerous. I greet the reception and jump in the elevator. If I remember correctly his floor number is the last one and I press it. It's my first time coming here. I walk out on his floor and the PA smiles upon seeing me.

PA: KJ's mother right?

I slowly nod.

Me: You know me?

PA: Who doesn't?

Whoever made me famous better give me my royalties.

Me: Can I make an appointment? I need to see Kagiso.

PA: You don’t need one.

Me: Oh.

The oak door leading to his office opens and he walks out with two of his colleagues.

Kagiso: (smiling) Hey.

Me: Hi

Advertisement

are you busy?

Kagiso: We are on our way to court but for you I can spare some few minutes.

He leads me inside his office and closes the door.

Me: I got a date and need a babysitter.

He frowns staring at me.

Me: Did you hear me?

He places the items on his hands on top of the desk and slide his hands in his pocket. The stare intensifies.

Kagiso: I heard you.

Me: I’l understand if you can’t.

Kagiso: Where is he taking you?

Me: Why?

Kagiso: I need to be sure in case you don’t come back.

Me: I don’t know.

He nods turning on his heels and padded to the wall and press a button.

Me: Where are you going?

Kagiso: Six nine.

I watch him walking further away and scowl. Why is he acting weird? I settle on the visitors chair looking around the office. It’s big and spacious. He comes back minutes later and pushes the chair off the desk and settle between my legs.

Kagiso: Ore bari ea hau ke mang kana? {You say your fool is who again}.

Me: He’s a colleague of mine.

Kagiso: Name?

Me: Langa.

He nods still staring at me.

KAGISO

Hell will freeze the day I let another fool take my baby mama out.

Busi: Langa.

She gushes before blushing. I should be the one making her feel that not some moron.

Me: Does he drive?

Busi: Yes.

Me: Car modern?

Busi: A blue Honda Fit.

Me: Registration?

Busi: I don’t know.

Me: Height?

She thinned her eyes biting her lip looking me up and down.

Busi: You’re taller than him so he is a few inches shorter than you.

Damn right I’m taller than that moron. My hand finds her lips and remove it in between her teeth and run my thumb on her lower lip. Her eyes follow my movements and her breath accumulates as I run my thumb. Yes baby, only I can make you feel like that.

Busi: I should go.

She jumps to her feet knocking off her bag in the process. The items inside scattered on the floor. I bend down helping her up.

Busi: I got it.

She mutters picking the items in a hurry. I ignore her and collect those close to me and pause seeing the box of condoms. She snatches the from my grip leaping up to her feet.

Busi: Thank you.

I nod clenching my jaw. Who does this Langa moron think is? He's going to chew my baby mama while I'm still alive? Over my dead body.

Busi: He will pick me up at 7 so you can pick Junior up at 6:30.

I turn on my heels and padded to the cabinet. I take the bottle of whiskey and open the cap.

Busi: Did you get that?

I swing the bottle in my mouth and drink straight for the bottle. I cringe at the bitter taste but that doesn't stop.

Busi: Kagiso.

I give her a thumbs up still knocking down the bottle.

Busi: You're the best baby daddy ever.

Fucken remember that when that moron doesn't show up for the date. The door opens and shuts after she her. I click my tongue and place the bottle where I found it and march to the desk to call my PA.

PA: Sir?

Me: Get in here with your notebook.

I disconnect the call and remove the blazer remaining with the waistcoat. Removing the cufflinks, I shove them in my pocket and roll the sleeves to my elbows then unloosen the tie. The door opens again.

Subordinate: Sir we are going to be late.

Me: You have the notes so take over it.

Subordinate: (shocked) Sir?

Me: I didn't fucken stutter did I? You've been on this case from day one. Go to court and represent us.

I roar at him. He quickly rush out whole my PA stumbles in.

PA: Sir?

Me: Langa. He drives a blue Honda Fit and works at Coca Cola. I want to know everything about him from what his doing now until his day ends.

PA: Is she a new client?,

I stop pacing and sharply turn to her.

Me: It’s a he.

I spit out and click my tongue.

Me: Setlaela seo se nahana hore se ka inkela mosali oa ka ho intša. Ha a mpone ebile ha a ntlhompha. O ne a lokela hore ebe o ile a kopa tumello ea ka pele. {That fool thinks he can take my woman on a date. He doesn’t see me and respect me. He should have asked for my permission first}.

I vent out pacing. PA: (shocked) You have a woman in your life?

I halt turning to her. Me: I’m talking about Junior’s mother.

She smiles nodding.

Me: Doesn’t he have Mxit? I’m sure there are a lot of women he can choose from there.

I bitterly spat. A giggle stop my venting.

Me: What? PA: You’re jealous sir.

Me: (scowling) Excuse me? Who is that?

She laughs. I’m not jealous but trying to protect her from vultures who want to use her and there’s nothing wrong with that. The audacity of him thinking he will tap it.

NARRATOR

What she calls it as her best dress is settling on top of the bed after ironing it. She slips on her robe and make her way outside to discard her bath water. Walking back, Busi lotions her body and slips on her dress. A smile forms on her lips as she do the finishing touches of her make up. Junior walks holding his ball.

Busi: Kagiso will be here any minute. I've already packed your bag and the only thing he needs to do is to re iron your uniform.

Junior brows puck up.

Junior: Where are you going?

Busi: I'm going out.

Junior: With who?

Busi stops applying the lipstick in her lips and looks at him. As far as she can remember she's an adult here and doesn't need a father to police her decisions. It's her father's job to do that not Kagiso and definitely not the child she gave birth too.

Busi: With a friend.

Her phone beeps. She closed the lipstick and takes her phone. She smiles reading the text from Langa.

“I thought I will keep it a secret and just surprise you but I’m giddy. The night is ahead of us at Flora’s restaurant”

“Flora’s restaurant it is then”

She tosses the phone on the bed after texting back.

Junior: Aunty Sihle?

Good lord! Sh was still in the interrogation room?

Busi: No.

Junior: Then who?

Busi: You wouldn’t know all my friends even if I tell you.

Junior: You don’t have any friends.

Busi glares at him. Why is he smart again?

Busi: I’m an adult here and you’re not going to put me in a hot spot.

Junior: I…

Busi cuts him off.

Busi: Before everything remember I’m your mother.

Junior smacks his lips shut.

Busi: Where are you going?

He ignores her and walks outside.

Busi: Don’t play to far.

She yells after him, admiring herself on the mirror. He’s sulking and a part ofheru understands him because she has never went out at night. It’s always been the two of them and it might take time for him to get used to the set up especially if she allows Langa in her heart and space. She picks up her phone to look at the time and it reads 6:25. Kagiso was probably five minutes away to pick his son up and Langa will be here at seven. She marched to the door and abruptly halt on her steps. Usually at 6 o’clock Junior was inside. She will make it an exception just for today since she’s secretly bribing him.

__

Outside, Langa sat in his car waiting for 7 o’clock. He was not a punctual person so he figured he can be early instead. He rolled down the window and breathe in the fresh air. He was nervous and hopefully the date will go well. He has been rehearsing all afternoon on which questions he needed to ask her. A brilliant black Audi A8 L 60 parks behind him and Kagiso’s steps out of the car calling her.

Busi: Hey.

Kagiso: I’m outside.

Busi: I’m coming.

He hangs up and looks around the street. He clicks his tongue when his eyes set on the car infront of him. Opening the door of his car, he leans on the seat and takes out his gun from the dashboard and shoves it on his waist and walks to Langa's car after closing the door. Langa watches him until he stands on the passenger door knocking.

Langa: Can I help you?

Kagiso nods and indicates the door. Langa leans over and opens the passenger door. Jumping in, Kagiso closes the door and turns to him pulling the gun from his waist. Langa trembles on his seat.

Langa: My bra if you want the car you can take it.

Calmly, Kagiso places the gun on Langa's chin. Tears formed on Langa's eyes while his heart pounding on his ribcage.

Langa: Please don't kill me.

Kagiso: I'm going to say this to you and I hope you will hear it loud and clear.

That chilled voice sent shivers down Langa's spine. He quickly nodded.

Kagiso: I don't share period and I won't start now. What the fuck do you think you're doing with my woman?

Tears stream down Langa's face. The cold metal on Langa's chin rose.

Kagiso: I ask a question and you answer.

Again Langa nodded.

Kagiso: Then answer my question.

Langa: I asked her out on a date.

Kagiso: O entse eng? Ua tseba hore ha u mpone. {You did what? You know you don't see me}.

Langa: I'm sorry. I didn't know she was taken.

Kagiso: Now you know. What are you going to do about it?

Langa: I'll leave and I will never bother her again. I'll even delete her number on my phone.

He takes out his phone and scroll down his contact list and delete her number with his trembling hands.

Kagiso: Laitaka I'm glad we are on the same page. Now get the fuck out of here before I blow your brains out.

Langa turned on the ignition while Kagiso slide the gun back to his waist and steps out of the car. He stumbled to his car and lean on the door. Busi appears the same time Langa speeds off.

Busi: Was that Langa?

Kagiso: (frowning) Who?

Busi: The guy… never mind. I'm sorry we took to long. Junior is sulking.

Kagiso: Eita.

Junior nodded and jumped in the car with his bag.

Busi: Please iron his uniform. He sleeps at 8 o'clock sharp not a minute after. What else am I forgetting?

She bit her lip collecting her mind.

Busi: Oh, yes he eats. A lot.

Kagiso chuckled.

Kagiso: All men do.

Busi: Will you guys be okay?

Kagiso: We will be fine. Go and enjoy yourself.

Busi: Thank you.

She smiles at him and opens the backseat and cupped Junior's face.

Busi: I love you okay?

Junior nodded trying to escape her hands.

Busi: I want you to see it.

Junior: You're going to be late.

Busi: I'm not leaving until you said it back.

Junior heavily sighs and force a smile.

Junior: I love you too.

Busi smiles pecking his face.

Junior: Mama.

He cautions causing her to giggle. She closes the door and turn to Kagiso.

Busi: Again thank you.

Kagiso: (smiling) Anytime. You look gorgeous by the way.

He jumps in the car and speeds off. Busi smiles stumbling to her house to pick her purse and lock the door. If he can dish out that compliment then that means she nailed the look. She stood on the side of the road waiting.

Busi: Maybe his still stuck in traffic.

She murmured to herself and fished out her phone.

"Hey to save you from the nightmare of traffic you will find me at Flora's"

She pressed send and flogged at taxi.

Busi: Town?

Driver: Yes my sister.

---

30 minutes sitting in the restaurant, Busi looked around.

Busi: Where are you Langa?

Waiter: Are you ready to order ma'am?

Busi: I'm still waiting for my date?

Waiter: Have you tried calling him perhaps?

Taking her phone

Busi placed a call but his line didn't even ring.

Busi: It's not ringing.

Waiter: It's clear what's going in here sis. He stood you up.

Busi: No, Langa wouldn't do that to me.

Waiter: Just think about it.

He walked to the next table while Busi tried to call him again.

KAGISO

I collect the takeaways from the floor and padded to the kitchen to dump them. As per his mother's request Junior went to bed at 8. We do get along but the problem is that it's weird to have someone who is like me. My teacher used to regard me as

smart back in my school days and I never did. I knew I was smarter than the other pupils but I never held on to that. People exploited me for my brain and I started to act dumb just so I can fit it. Making friends was the most difficult thing because they were not genuine with their friendship. I don't want that for my son or any of my children in the near coming future. Children were not part of my plans but all that changed after that boy sleeping upstairs. I would lay down my life for him and that's how much I love him. My phone rings breaking me out of my thoughts.

Me: Hey, how is the date going?

Busi: Can you please come pick me up?

I smile.

Me: Now?

Busi: Yes now.

Me: Pin me the location. I'm coming.

Busi: Okay.

I pick up my keys and punch in the codes of the alarm then make my way to the garage. Pressing the remote, I drive out and lock the gate behind me.

Me: Flora's restaurant in places? How cheap.

I scoff placing the phone on the glove compartment and speed off. Arriving at the restaurant, I find her standing outside. Her back on the window of the restaurant. I honk and she rushes to the car.

Busi: Thank you.

Me: Anything for you.

She straps the seatbelt and looks outside the window as I drive back home.

Me: You don't look like someone who went on a date.

Busi: I don't want to talk about it.

Oh, that's music to my ears. I switch on the radio and side eye her. She's beyond pissed and I'm loving that. As long it's not directed to me. She's the first one to jump out of the car after I park it on the garage and I follow suit.

Me: This way.

I usher her inside and disable the alarm.

Me: Are you okay?

Busi: No, I'm not. Where is my son?

Me: It's way past his bed time remember?

Busi: Oh. Can I have a glass of water?

Me: Feel at home.

I padded to the lounge and switch on the TV. Her footsteps approach my way and she stands in front of the TV blocking my view.

Busi: Can you believe Langa stood me up?

Me: He did?

I pretend to be shocked. The thought of rocking up with Junior in that restaurant crossed my mind but it would have been obvious on her that were trying to sabotage her date. I wouldn't minded driving the whole night from one restaurant to the other to just check if she's there.

Busi: He did and didn't give have the guts to call me and tell me his not coming anymore.

Me: He's a looser.

Busi: A very big one at that. I can't believe I took my time dressing up and it was all for nothing.

She click her tongue and slams the glass on the table. The reaming water spills on the floor but guess what? I don't mind.

Busi: What do men really want? I didn't ask him to take me on a date but his the one who asked me. Getting my hopes up all for nothing.

Me: You don’t stood up a lady especially a beautiful one at that. I don’t care what his excuses might be but it’s rude period.

Busi: Exactly my point. A simple text to cancel the date would be fine. I sat there like a an idiot waiting for him.

Me: Maybe he chickened out.

I shrugged looking at her. The dress is sculptured on her body like it was made from her. Over the years she gained weight probably from having my boy. Her hips are wide on the dress. Baby mama is damn fine. How come didn’t I see that before? I kick my lips and place the cushion on top of me as my dick jerks.

Busi: Chickened out after his the one who court me? Do men really use their brain?

Me: I’m offended because you’re al counting me in that category.

Busi: Oh, pigs will fly the day you become like him. You’re true gentleman.

I smirk spreading my arms on the couch.

Busi: I’m going to call him and give him a piece of my mind.

My drops while my eyes widen.

Me: No, you’re not going to call him.

Busi: But…

I cut her off.

Me: Men don’t like desperate woman and right now you might look desperate in his eyes.

Busi: But I’m not desperate.

Me: Think about it. He courted you and after stood you up. Do you think he will look at you the same way before? He will think you’re after him.

Busi: Yazi unyansile. {You’re right}.

Me: Move on to the next one which is me.

Busi: (frowning) Huh?

My heart thudded. I chuckle.

Me: I’m reading the slogan of that show.

I lie through my teeth gesturing to the screen behind her. Fuck, I can’t believe I just said that.

Busi: What do you suggest I do?

Me: Move on. Don’t let him think you’re desperate for his attention. You’re very beautiful woman and and any woman would be lucky to have you by his side.

That will only happen when I’m dead.

Busi: You’re right.

Me: I’m always right sweetheart.

Busi: Tommorrow I’m not going to look his way. In fact I will walk with my head held up high to show him that I’m over what happened today.

I smile.

Me: That’s my girl.

Busi: Men are trash.

I thought we established a reputation so what is this now? If that’s what it takes to had you under my roof then I might as well help you with your men are trash campaign.

Busi: Which room is Junior sleeping in?

Me: Third on of the left.

Busi: I’m going to check on him.

I watch her swaying her hips from side to side and like she’s feeling my gaze on her she stops on the stairs. Shit! Is she deliberately torturing me because if that’s the case it’s working.

Busi: Kagiso.

Me: Huh?

Busi: You’ve changed over the years and I pray you find the right woman.

She continues ascending the stairs after that statement. I’m already looking at that good woman and I don’t think anyone else can fill in her shoes. I drop my eyes to my boner and shake my head.

Me: Cold shower it is buddy.

JENNIFER

Zodwa: Azasakhe, Dlamini hasn't eaten.

She mutters walking in my room.

Me: I've already eaten.

She places her hands on her waist and glare at me.

Zodwa: Azasakhe.

I blow out a sigh.

Me: Fine.

I jump out of the bed and walk out of the room after putting on my slippers. When I volunteered myself to be my father's assistant it didn't mean that helping hand is also extended to my enemies. I pick up the plate from the counter.

Zodwa: Add another piece of meat for him.

I look at the plate in my hands then back at her.

Me: This meat is fine. I had one piece in my plate.

She shakes her head and opens the drawers and takes out a fork. She opens the pot of what I assume was the one cooking the meat and takes out another piece. I gasp in shock.

Me: Mam Zodwa I had the smallest piece kanti there are some left?

Zodwa: Women don't eat too much meat.

Says who? That person better come here and tell me that to my face. I love my meat just as the same way I love my coffee in the morning.

Zodwa: Wait.

I pause on my steps on the door and turn to her. She plugs the kettle and wait for the water to be lukewarm and pour it on the basin. I frown as she hands me a dry dishcloth.

Me: Is this necessary?

Zodwa: Yes.

She snaps placing the cloth on my shoulder and open the door and push me outside. After that happened two weeks back I packed my bags and went back to the village. The fast city life is not for me anymore. My purpose was to make my enemies miserable until the end their lives but it didn't go according to plan. Even though Mamello is dead I'm still not satisfied. I feel like death came to early for her before I could do anything. Senzeni just had to dodge a bullet again. When my father offered to guide him through healing I didn't think that meant seeing his face everyday and taking care of his ass. Yes, he lives with us in my room outside. I built that room for a perhaps so

just imagine my shock when I came back only to find that I have to give it to him. Me the owner of that room haven't slept in it. When I left for Joburg it was still under construction. Opening the door, I walk on and widen my eyes. There he stood all naked in his glory.

Me: I'm sorry.

I walk out and slam the door behind. I don't know why did I forget that I just came here few minutes ago with his bath water. If they weren't treating him so special I would have remembered. All my father's patients have their own room even the initiates but no not Sandile fucken Dlamini.

Me: Tata.

I scream walking inside. I bump into him on the corridors.

Tata: Kuyasha yini? {Is it burning?}

Me: Couldn't you heal him at his house.

He drags out his breath and walks in the living room and I'm hot on his heels. He pulls his pants before sitting.

Tata: You know the reason why I can't assist him at his house.

Me: Then he must look for someone else.

Tata: I don't do a half job on people and I won't start on him.

God I have to wash my eyes to un-see what I saw.

Tata: What happened?

Words get stuck with n the roof of my tongue.

Me: He’s making me uncomfortable.

I retort bouncing on my heels. Where is the complaint box? I need to file for a complain.

Tata: Is that all?

Me: Yes.

It’s the shortest explaining I could come up with for what I saw.

Tata: He will be out of your hair soon.

Me: How soon?

If looks would kill I would be dead right now.

Me: I need a time frame so I can throw a mother of all parties after his departure.

He shakes his head.

Tata: I’m sure the nearly death experience you suffered walked away with your brain.

He sarcastically muttered and knowing him it’s another way of him saying I’m crazy.

Zodwa: Azasakhe.

She yells from the kitchen. What have I done now?

Me: When am I have a sibling?

I mumble under my breath stumbling to the kitchen while my father chuckles behind me.

Me: Ma?

Zodwa: I understand you don't respect him when it's just the two of you but don't do it when other people are around.

Me: He couldn't open because he was bathing.

Zodwa: Warm it up for him. Men hate cold food.

Opening the microwave, I place the food and set the timer. I swear to God if I hear the word men again I'm going to throw myself in front of a moving train so that I won't survive. Mam Zodwa might as well just give up because she's been trying to teach me how to be a "good wife" ever since that man came here. The microwave pings snapping me out of my daze. I take out the food and wipe the cutlery then walk outside with the tray. He opens the door after my knock. The fool is grinning from ear to ear.

Me: Your food.

Sandile: Thank you.

I walk to the door and abruptly halt.

Me: When are you leaving?

Sandile: Soon.

He picks up the bucket full of his bath water and walk to the drain to discard it then walk back.

Me: There's no time frame that is soon so when is that soon?

Sandile: Soon.

I walk back inside and start doing the dishes. If this is their way of driving me crazy it's working. I hate not knowing what's going around me. Mam Zodwa runs in the kitchen.

Zodwa: Hayi

hayi, what did my dishes do to you?

I wasn't aware I was angry until now.

Me: I should have killed him when I had the chance.

I click my tongue and continue with my task at hand.

Zodwa: Whatever you do don't kill my dishes because they are innocent.

I pour the remaining meat on a counter and close it.

Me: I'm going out after doing the dishes.

I muttered in frustration, scrubbing the grease from the pot.

Zodwa: Don’t you want an extra piece?

Me: I’ve lost my appetite.

Zodwa: Yhoo ulaka.

She exclaims clapping her hands.

_

_

_

I tie my shoe laces and stumble to the lounge.

Me: I’m leaving.

Tata: Mmmm…

He muttered not sparing me a glimpse.

Zodwa: Before you walk out of that yard remember you’re someone’s wife. Tell him you’re leaving not us.

She shifts her gaze back to the screen.

Me: I don’t owe him anything. He had a wife for seven years and nobody questioned him. Is it because I’m a woman?

Zodwa: Your feminism speech don’t enter anywhere here. Remember respect others so that they can do the same to you.

My feet stomp on the laminated floor as I storm to the room outside. The real reason I built this room was avoiding to walk in and out in the house like I don't respect them. I knock once and push the door. I find him drinking water.

Me: Seeing that you're their favourite person in this world they think I should report to you that I'm leaving.

He kicks off his shoes and lies on his back then place his hand on top of his eyes shielding them from the light.

Me: Did you hear me?

Sandile: Loud and clear. Tell him to enjoy you while it lasts.

Me: Excuse me?

Sandile: Please leave with the plate and close the door on your way out.

I turn on my heels and walk out. My parents and I got along before he came along. I close the gate and run down the road as the droplets of rain start falling. It's just those drizzling that makes you were despite of how they are.

Me: Babe.

I yell as he locks the gate.

Mholi: You should have told me you're coming. I would have met you half with an umbrella.

Me: I’m here now.

He locks the gate after I walk in and usher me inside.

Me: Where are the kids?

Mholi: My mother took them earlier Take those off before you catch a cold.

I stumble to his bedroom and strip off the clothes and throw on his shirt. He walks in with a steaming cup.

Mholi: Med lemon with disprin.

I smile pecking his lips and take a sip.

Me: Thank you baby but you want to know what could warm me up?

I seductively muttered placing the cup on the beside and close the gap between us.

Mhloli: (smiling) Seductress you are Miss Ndlovu.

Me: My aim is to please sir.

I slide my hand on his sweats and take hold of his shaft. His breath hitches on his throat. I could feel him growing on my hand. Pulling down the sweats, I run my hand on the head then start stroking him. He shuts his eyes biting his lip.

Mhloli: Baby?

Me: Yes.

Mholi: Bamba amasende. {Hold the balls}.

I open my mouth and take him in fiddling with his balls. He squirms holding my head. I gag breathing through my nose. This is the only dick my eyes should see not my enemies.

_

_

The annoying device I call a phone rings waking me up from my slumber.

Mholi: Your phone.

I groan rolling on my side.

Me: Who is it?

Mhloli: You dad.

My eyes fly open. I drag my body, sitting up and take my phone from him.

Me: (alarmed) Tata?

Tata: Come home.

Me: What?

I remove the phone go look at the time and it reads 5:05am.

Tata: Come home now and use the small gate at the back.

Me: Why?

The line goes dead.

Mholi: What's going on?

Me: I don't know but he said I must come home and use the gate at the back.

Mholi: Whatever it is baby it must be important. You're father wouldn't wake you up for nothing.

I jump out of the bed and rush to the kitchen. I fill in the water and plug the kettle. I wait for it to be at least to be lukewarm and pour it on the basin and rush back to the room to wipe important parts. Different scenarios are already playing out in my mind and I don't want to feed in my negative thoughts on them. I discard the water after brushing my teeth and slide my phone in my pocket.

Mholi: Whatever it is just know I'm here.

I nod disappearing on his embrace.

Mhloli: Just breathe and call me if it gets too much for you.

Again I nod holding him tighter while my heart continues to beat on an abnormal pace on my ribcage.

Mhloli: I will leave you half way.

Me: Thank you.

He picks up his keys and we walk out. With each step I take feels like I'm walking on a snail pace. My house seems like it's disappearing further and further away.

Mhloli: Call me.

I kiss his lips and watch him turn back then start running home. As I get near I can hear people screaming or is it singing?

Me: What the hell is going on?

That fuels my pace and I run faster. Opening the gate, I find my both my parents standing outside. I bend down catching my breath.

Me: (panting) I came as fast as I could what's going on?

Tata: Listen.

I swallow sitting on the stoep.

Voice: Sikhulekile ekhaya KwaNdlovu. Indodana yethu ibone imbali enhle layikhaya. SingoDlamini besicela isiholobo esihle. {Greetings to the Ndlovu family. Our son saw a beautiful flower in your garden. We the Dlamini's would like to form a relationship with you}.

My eyes pop out of their sockets while my jaw hangs open.

Me: The fuck?

67

JENNIFER

I slept like a baby last night after receiving multiple orgasms from my man. I had intentions of waking up in his arms this morning not this nonsense happening right now. I swear to God that man I testing my patience and I have had enough of him. I jump to my feet and storm to the room he sleeps in.

Tata: Don’t bother his not in.

He yells after me and despite that I ignore him and barge in. It’s unlocked and empty like no one was staying here. If my father didn’t yell that I would probably think I’m delusional because the room looks like the first time I came home from Joburg, empty and enemy free. I take out my phone as it rings. It’s an unsaved number.

Me: Hello?

Sandile: My people are waiting outside.

Motherfucker!

Me: What is the meaning of this?

Sandile: You know what it means.

Me: Tell you people to leave before I burn them with hot oil.

I seethe out.

Sandile: You're already my wife and these are just formalities.

Me: Formalities my left foot. Tell your people to move from my father's gate. Who do you think you're ?

Sandile: I'm your husband. You're angry which I understand because I didn't tell you and you have every right to be. But let's face it you took something from me and the score is settled. An eye for an eye.

Me: Umnqundu wakho Sandile uyeva? Umnqundu wakho. {Swear words}.

I click my tongue and furiously disconnect the line. I throw the phone on top of the bed before I could throw it on the floor or wall.

Tata: Aza.

He yells from outside. I close my eyes and count to ten to calm myself down then walk out.

Me: Ta?

Tata: It's your call my baby. Tell me what do you want. Should I open or not?. I don't to open for them only to find out you don't want that. At the same time I don't want to open for them only to find out you also don't want that. It's your call.

Mam Zodwa walks out of the house holding her phone before I could reply.

Zodwa: I’ve called your uncle and his own his way.

My blood boils while my heart thuddes in my ribcage.

Me: (shouting) Tata ndibambe ndingekamonzakalisi lomama. Ndibambe tata. {Father hold me before I hurt this woman. Hold me father}.

I attempt to jump on her but my father holds me down while she screams.

Tata: Calm down.

I yank myself off from his grip.

Me: Suzozenza qhafu qhafu ngam apha Mam Zodwa. Ngubani okunike imvume? {Don’t make yourself shine on my expense Mam Zodwa. Who gave you the permission}.

Tata: Ngubani obekucelile? {Who asked you?}.

Zodwa: I thought I was helping.

I chuckle in disbelief. Somebody better hold me down before I chop her boobs back to Mhlab' uyalingana. Who does she think she is?

Tata: You’re not helping at all in fact you’re making the situation worse. Do you see how she is right now? I’m so disappointed in you Zodwa.

Zodwa: Baba I was just trying to help.

Tata: (scolding) Angikhumbuli ngikukhokhele neyodwa inkomo ungaze ugxambukele ezindabeni zakwaNdlovu. {I don't remember paying a single cow for you so don't interfere}.

She swallows hard and shift her gaze to the side.

Me: I don't know where did you people get the right to take a decision on my behalf. What am I? A toddler perhaps?

Tata: Don't count me in those "people" because I just asked you what should I do?

Me: Let the stand there until Jesus descend from the sky.

Tata: And that's what you will get.

Zodwa: It's rude to let abakhongi wait there without any acknowledgement.

Me: Mam Zodwa.

I caution glaring at her.

Me: I respect you. You and I have a very beautiful relationship so please don't turn yourself into my enemy.

She drops her eyes to the floor. Footsteps approach our before my uncle comes in view.

Bangizwe: I came as fast as I could.

Tata: Who called you here?

Bangizwe: Zodwa did. Mshana I heard that you're getting married.

He smiles opening his arms for me. I duck them and stand on the side.

Bangizwe: (frowning) Did I miss something?

Me: Sorry to burst your bubble malume kodwa I'm not getting married.

The frown deepens.

Bangizwe: I don't understand. Ain't those people your people?

Me: I've never seen them in my life.

Which is the honest truth. I don't know them and I've never seen them. People really like provoking me. When I start reacting they say I'm crazy.

Tata: I'm going to bed.

Me: Same here.

Bangizwe: Zodwa didn't you say niece is getting married? I had to cut myself in half because of excitement.

Zodwa: I thought she was.

Bangizwe: Next time don't publish false news because they will get you in trouble someday.

Me: Tell her wena malume.

She glares at me but guess what her stare doesn't bother me. Clearly she doesn't know me. Stares don't even move me because I came from being the Nyan Nyan girl.

Tata: Awuthule nkosi yam.

Bangizwe chuckles.

Bangizwe: Bhuti iyobanana.

My dad nods while he smacks my shoulder.

Bangizwe: Mshana.

Me: Malume.

Bangizwe: Yini inkinga yakho? Usaba umendo? {What is your problem? Are you scared of marriage?}.

I laugh.

Me: Umendo woyika mna. {Marriage is scared of me}.

He laughs walking away.

Bangizwe: uZodwa ungibiza ngombhedo ekuseni. Angazi kungani umuntu engamemezi uma edinga usizo ukuze simsize. {Zodwa calls me for nonsense in the morning. I don't know why doesn't a person shouts when she needs help so we can help her}.

He mumbled under his breath walking to the back. I giggle.

Me: And elingakhaliyo lufela embelekweni.

He laughs while she storms inside. My father shakes his head following behind her. Taking off my shoes, I close the door and walk to my room bypassing their room but immediately stop when I hear my name being called.

Zodwa: I don’t understand how can you let your brother and Azasakhe disrespect me like that.

Tata: Nobody was being disrespecting to you. They were just telling you the truth.

Yes wena tatam tell her.

Zodwa: I was only trying to help.

Tata: Nobody asked for your help.

Zodwa: So you don’t see anything wrong with what they did?

Tata: Zodwa I have a lot on my plate. Dlamini disrespected me to the core this time around. I thought I was helping him but he took advantage of that.

My ear have heard enough. I padded to my room and take off the socks. I jump in bed ready to sleep again but remembered I left my phone on the backroom. I drag my feet outside in

annoyance. Why did I leave the phone again? I promised Mholi I will update him.

Voice: Sikhulekile ekhaya KwaNdlovu. Indodana yethu ibone imbali enhle layikhaya. SingoDlamini besicela isiholobo esihle.

They are still here? Don't these people get tired? I continue with my journey and take my phone the close the door behind me.

Voice: Sikhulekile ekhaya KwaNdlovu. Indodana yethu ibone imbali enhle layikhaya. SingoDlamini besicela isiholobo esihle.

They shake the gate this time. My phone beeps in my hand. It's the unsaved number again.

"Those people are not leaving without you"

I text him back.

"Ukhe phantsi isitya sigcwele. Kanti uyaxoka" {You're lying}.

Voice: Sikhulekile ekhaya KwaNdlovu. Indodana yethu ibone imbali enhle layikhaya. SingoDlamini besicela isiholobo esihle.

They violently push the gate. My father steps outside.

Tata: Bangijwayela kabi laba.

He clicks his tongue marching to the gate.

Tata: Nibanga umsindo. {You're making noise}.

Voice: Siyaxolisa. Besithunywe yindoda yethu.{We are sorry. Our son sent us}.

I crane my neck looking to spot who the voice belongs too but my father is blocking my view.

Tata: My daughter doesn't want to get married to your son.

Voice: We got strict instructions that we must not leave without pay what's due to you.

Tata: Madoda angithi nginitshelile akafuni ukushada. Manje nifuna ngenze njani? Ngimphoqe? {I told you she doesn't want to get married. So what do you want me to do? Should I force her?}.

Silence.

Tata: Hambani niyobanga umsindo kwenye indawo hhayi phambi kwegceke lami. {Go and make noise somewhere else not in front of my yard}.

I smile as he turns on his heels and stockings towards me. My Superman in an inyanga's body. Just as he reaches me they start again.

Voice: Sikhulekile ekhaya KwaNdlovu. Indodana yethu ibone imbali enhle layikhaya. SingoDlamini besicela isiholobo esihle.

Tata: Bayeyisa laba.

Me: I’m coming.

I storm inside and go through the laundry basket on the spare room. I find my father’s old jacket and cap and throw them on. I take the gate keys and walk outside. A frown emerges on my father’s face.

Tata: Where are you going?

Me: To help them out.

I unlock the gate and the yelling stop. I close it and stand with them. What are my clan names again? Oh, yes.

Me: (screaming) Sikhulekile Kwa

Gatsheni

Boya benyathi, obusonga busombuluka Mpongo Kazing’elwayo,

Nina bakwaNdlovuzidl’ekhaya, ngokweswel’abelusi

Advertisement

Zaze zeluswa intombi uDemazane,

Nina bakwakhumbul’amagwela,

Nina bakwaDemazane Ntombazana,

Nina bakwaS’hlangu Sihle Mthiyane,

Ngokuthiy’amododa emazibukweni,

Nina bakwaMdusi, Ndlovu!!!

I clear my throat. Zulu is not far from Xhosa and I bet they can understand a word I said.

Me: (shouting) Ibokhwe yabo ifuna ukungena kwigadi yakho. Yivumele wena tatam ingene gqiba uyiqhele ubize abantu belali batye inyama le ongazaziyo ifunani kwakho. {Their goat wants to enter your garden. Allow it to enter then slaughter it and call the whole village to feast on the meat that you don't know what it wants in your house}.

Silence. I could feel his uncle's penetrating gaze on me. Didn't my father hear me? Why are they quiet when I'm helping them? Oh yes I'm off the script. Let me try again.

Me: (mainly voice) Bakhulekile kwaNdlovu. Bazengesicela esisuka kwibhokhwe yabo. Ifuna ukungena kwigadi yakho. Ifuna ukutshabalalisa igadi yakho entle. Vala loheke wena tatam bame kude kubuye uyesu. {Greetings to the Ndlovu family. They have a request from their goat. It wants to enter your garden. It wants to kill your whole beautiful garden. Close that gate father so that they can stand until Jesus comes back}.

My father looks at the sky and sighs in defeat and walk back inside.

Tata: Nayi ingane yenu boNdlovu. {Here is your child boNdlovu}.

Kanti ancestors are not the underground gang? So what are they doing in the sky? My whole life has been a lie. I look at the Dlamini's and shrugged my shoulders.

Me: I also tried. Maybe if you were not quiet he would have mercy on you.

JENNIFER

If you can't obviously beat them why not join them? I've heard enough of Sandile's disrespect. Not only did he disrespect me but also my father. This is the same man who took time and helped him back in shape despite of what he did and this is the thanks he gets? Talk about the way people are. He's such ungrateful.

Me: You might as well leave because there's n relationship that will be formed here. Your son burnt too many bridges that cannot be mended.

Uncle 1: We've got strict instructions to not leave without paying for Azasakhe's bridal price.

Haike they must sit there until kingdom comes. Me as Jen I tried helping them but it seems like they came here with a mission and they are not leaving without fulfilling it.

Me: Didn't she die?

I just had to ask because what the hell? How can you stand at someone's gate and yell for hours even though the owner told you countless times that you're not allowed?

Uncle 2: We are here to pay for a ghost?

Me: My sister died a very tragic death. Oh god bless her soul and I pray she rests in peace wherever she is.

I pitiful muttered dropping my head to ground and shake my head.

Uncle 1: We didn't know that's the case. Our intentions were not to open up old wounds but to build a relationship between the two families.

I nod still looking at the ground.

Uncle 1: Don't cry sis we didn't mean any harm. I was starting to think you're a family of lunatics but now I understand where you come from.

Excuse me? A family of what?

Uncle 2: We will take our leave. Again we apologise for our behaviour.

Uncle 1: Sandile really deceived us.

They walk to the car on the side of the road and speed off after jumping in. I stand on the road watching the car until it disappears from my view. My phone chimes snapping me out of my daze.

Me: Babe?

Mholi: What is going on? I heard people saying they saw people outside your house and they look like abakhongi.

Where are those people again? Ain't they suppose to be sleeping? It's 7am for crying out loud.

Me: They were in the wrong house.

I lie through my teeth opening the gate.

Mholi: Don't lie to me Jen.

Me: Baby I'm not lying.

Mholi: Then come and tell that lie to my face.

Me: (frowning) Where are you?

I turn on my heels and find him approaching. I close the gate and meet him halfway.

Me: Already going to work?

Mholi: I've been waiting for your call. Do you know how worried I've been?

Me: I'm sorry. Let me accompany you so I can tell you what happened.

I hold his hand and we walk down the road. My mind is already trying to come up with a lie but nothing comes to mind at this point.

Mholi: I’m listening.

Me: I’m married.

I blurted out unexpectedly. He ceases on his steps and turns to look at me.

Mholi: (shocked) What?

Me: I didn’t tell you because that chapter of my life was closed and buried.

Mholi: For how long?

Me: Baby it’s not imp...

H interjects.

Mholi: For how long?

Me: Years.

He chuckles walking a distance then turn back.

Mholi: So you lied to me?

I can’t believe I was able to sit with this for years. Lies make me sick and I hate them for a reason but I managed to do the one thing I hate in my life.

Mholi: (sternly) Answer me.

Me: Yes.

Mholi: Why?

Me: I left that life after it nearly took my life away. It was not worth fighting for. They all thought I'm dead.

Mholi: So in other words you faked your own death?

I nod.

Mholi: Unbelievable!

He retorts throwing his hands in the dramatically.

Mholi: So lying to people is who you are.

Me: I had no choice okay.

Mholi: Fuck that. We always have a choice.

Me: Not me. It was either that or I wouldn't be standing with you right now.

Mholi: So you let people think you're dead and let the grieve you while you're here enjoying your best life?

Me: Mholi, I had no choice.

Mholi: You're sick.

I gaps shocked.

Me: Excuse me?

Mholi: You're sick in the head.

My nostrils flare.

Me: Unless you walked a day in my shoes you have no right to judge me. You don't know what I've been through to get here.

Mholi: Excuses after excuses that's what hearing from you.

He spits out.

Mholi: Of course someone like you will always defend herself?

I arch my brow.

Me: Someone like me? Who is someone like me?

Mholi: A liar and a manipulator.

Me: Wow!

I clap once.

Me: So that's what you see in me? You don't even know half the story of my life and already you're judging me.

Mholi: I don't need to know it to know the kind of person you're. I should have seen right through you before you sneaked in my heart.

I swallow hard as a lump forms in my throat.

Me: I'm sorry.

Mholi: Sorry will never be enough. You looked me in the eyes everyday and tell me how much you love me only to find out you belong to someone else.

I wipe the infuriating tears that escape my eyes. The last time I cried was when I woke up in a coma only to find out that my brother is no more.

Me: That's because I've been telling you nothing but the truth. I love you.

I take a step forward but he takes two back.

Mholi: No, you don't. I'm not going to be your backup plan you can always fall into when you want to fix things with your husband and they don't go your way.

Me: Sandile and I are done.

He throws his back and erupt in laughter catching me off guard.

Mholi: Sandile? The same guy who was here as your father's patient?

I shift my gaze away.

Mholi: Wow! So in other words I've been a fool all along. How long have you been sleeping with him?

Me: Excuse me?

Mholi: You heard me. For how long?

I furiously wipe my face.

Me: A liar yes I admit I am one but a whore it's not in my vocabulary. The only man I've been shagging is you.

I half scream.

Mholi: And you expect me to believe that?

He turns on his heels and start walking away before he turns back again.

Mholi: Is your name even Jennifer?

Me: Jennifer is my second name.

Mholi: What's your name?

Me: Azasakhe.

He blinks chuckling.

Mholi: I've been hearing your parents calling you with that name and I thought maybe just maybe it's a name they saw it suits you. At some point I thought it was nick name not knowing it's your real name.

Me: I never lied about my name. It's just that name brings up so many bad memories I want to bury and brings out the worst in me.

Mholi: You know women lie all the time but I didn't expect you to be in that statistics. You disgust me.

He continues walking away while tears stream down my cheeks. I bite my lip to suppress the sob threatening to escape. I turn on my heels and walk back home consoling myself. Maybe I deserve all of that.

BUSISIWE

My stomach growls for the umpteenth time forcing me out of the bed. I yawn sitting and pick up my purse to look at the time.

Me: 7:25?

I jump out of the bed nearly tripping on my own two feet.

Me: No

no,no.

How come didn’t Junior wake me up? I quickly make the bed and open the curtains. I rush out of the room shouting his name.

Me: Junior?

Silence

Me: Junior?

I jump two stairs at a time. Kidnapping is a real thing in South Africa and my mind is a already giving me out the worst. Tears fill my eyes.

Me: Junior?

Silence. I finally make it downstairs and look around the house. Where the hell is my son and where am I?

Me: Junior?

I open and shut the doors of the rooms downstairs.

Me: Baby it's me. Just shout.

My voice breaks at the end of my speech. I look around one last time before walking to the stairs and sit down. I burry my face on in between my thighs and burst in tears. A car drives in and few minutes the kitchen door opens. I raise my head and find Kagiso stumbling my way with a takeaway. The smile drops as he locks eyes with me.

Kagiso: Hey are you okay?

I shake my head leaping up. He places the takeaway beside me on the stairs and cups my face.

Kagiso: What's wrong?

Fresh set of tears roll down my cheeks.

Kagiso: Hey.

He opens his arms and places my head oh his firm chest. The cologne his wearing fills up my nostrils while his heart pounds on an abnormal pace.

Me: I…Junior…

He cuts me off.

Kagiso: I just dropped him at school. We didn’t want to wake you up.

Me: (sobbing) I panicked when I didn’t see him.

Kagiso: I’m sorry.

Me: (sobbing) I can’t lose him, Kagiso.

Kagiso: You won’t.

Me: His my source of joy. The only thing that makes me happy.

Kagiso: Hey B look at me.

I raise my head and stare at him. He uses the pad of his thumb to wipe my tears and soften his eyes.

Kagiso: You will never lose him, okay?

I nod.

Kagiso: Say it.

Me: I will never lose him.

Kagiso: As long as I’m alive nothing will happen to you or him.

I don’t know why but I believe him.

Kagiso: Now stop crying. You look ugly when you cry.

I playfully push his shoulder giggling.

Me: I was just being silly. It's just that I'm used to seeing him everyday before I start my day and his the last person I see before going to bed.

Kagiso: No need to apologise. I get where you're coming from.

I drop my eyes to his chest and look at the stain.

Me: Sorry for the stain.

Kagiso: I'll change to another one don't worry about it.

Silence fills the room. His arms are still securely around my waist. I bite my lip raising my head and find him intensely looking at me.

Kagiso: Fuck don't do that.

Me: Do what?

Kagiso: Release your lip.

Me: Huh?

His long fingers find my lip and release it from my teeth but I involuntary tuck my lip back in between my teeth. It's a habit and I can't help it especially when someone is staring at me.

Kagiso: 'M'e Kagiso ha a etse joalo. {Kagiso's mother don't do that}.

He softly whispered shutting his eyes.

Kagiso: (husky voice) You’re killing me do you know that?

I frown.

Me: Where?

He flips his eyes open and they tell a tale.

Kagiso: Fuck boundaries.

He slams his lips on mine shocking me. Those eyes were telling a tale of lust. Of course that slow brain of mine. Yazi I blame my teachers for this.

69

NARRATOR

Morning breath is one thing that disgust people and that was the only thing running through Busi's mind as the man slide his tongue on her mouth invading her. She pulled back wanting to tell him that she didn't brush her teeth. Kagiso pulled her to him and deepen the kiss. She sighed closing her eyes and wrapped her around around his neck kissing him back. Kagiso hosted her on his waist and walked to the wall near the stairs. Busi squealed holding on him tighter. His mouth was back on hers again and her mind couldn't even think something logic. He placed her back on her feet taking off her dress. Soon clothes fly around the room and Busi shudders as her back was against the wall.

Her pussy clenched in need and Busi couldn't understand what was going with her. It's been years since she had a man touch her like that. Years that she felt excited and scared at the same time. Kagiso wanted her, he picked Busi up and slammed her on the wall. He look at her with so much lust that made her breath hitch on her throat. Busi gasped when he held her tight and placed her legs around his waist. Kagiso smirked and in one swift motion he attempted to enter her but he couldn't.

Busi: Oh god.

She screamed clenching her eyes, fists, curling her toes and even her butt. Her muscles have become loose over the years they were not in use. Her self conscious came back again. She pushed a whole human being with that thing and she didn't even know whether it would be the same as before and now her morning routine was still pending. Kagiso looked at her and breathed out. He was rock hard and this woman was just on her own world. A world of self doubt.

Kagiso: B?

Busi: Mm…

Her voice came almost a whisper.

Kagiso: Look at me.

Busi shook her head.

Kagiso: Baby open your eyes.

Cracking one eye, Busi looked at him. Was that disappointment on his face or what?

Kagiso: I need you to relax. You're squeezing every part of your body and I can't enter. Relax.

Busi: I need to go work Kagiso.

Kagiso: Okay.

Kagiso slid his hand down and rubbed her clit.

Kagiso: You're not going anywhere without me fucking you. I want to explore each part of your body so don't tell me about work. What is work?

Busi: Umhh…

She moaned digging her nails on his hand. Her eyes widen as the intrusion of his fingers entered her. She shifted uncomfortably.

Busi: (breathing heavily) Kagiso.

Kagiso: Relax.

She breathed out welling herself to calm down but every senses in her body where not allowing her do. That little voice in her head reminded her who this man was to her. He was not her friend, her boyfriend nor sex partner. He was just Junior's father and it should remain like that so why was she willing to go against everything he did to her just because of sex? Again she felt like that desperate woman she was years back. That woman who ran after him after being kicked out by her parents. That woman who easily slept with the first stranger she came across with because he was her crush. Tears down her cheeks causing Kagiso to cease his movements.

Kagiso: B?

She pulled his hand off between her thighs and dropped her feet to the ground. As much as that was nice this man caused her so much pain. How can she forget that?

Kagiso: Did I hurt you?

Worry latched onto his tone. He panicked running after her even though the task was a difficult one because of his third leg. He pulled his pants up and tucked his junk gently walking to her.

Kagiso: B?

She picked her clothes that were scattered on the floor and turned to him. Kagiso reached her and cupped her face.

Kagiso: Talk to me what's wrong.

Busi: What's wrong? Are you really asking me that?

She furiously wiped her tears fixing her dress. She ascended the stairs and Kagiso was slowly on her heels. She walked to the room she slept in and slide her feet in her heels and took her purse.

Kagiso: (frowning) That's what I'm asking.

Busi: What do you want from me?

Kagiso: Huh?

Busi: I'm asking you because I’m still the same annoying fly you used be all over your face. That same fly you want to squash every time you see.

Kagiso: B…

Busi: Let me finish. I’m not in your league and I will never be. I’m not one of those woman fill their heads with that nonsense because every guy is my type. Whether you’re rich

poor, handsome, ugly, disable or diabetic. I don’t choose because who am I to judge a person? Only God has a right to judge so in your own words I’m not your type and I will never be. Sex is a regular thing happening on a regular basis between strangers and there’s nothing wrong with that but I refuse…

He interrupted her.

Kagiso: Busi.

Busi: Let me finish.

She screamed at him crying.

Busi: I refuse to let you make look stupid again. You did it once and I would be a fool to allow you to do it again. Yes, I came to you the first time but this time around I’m more wiser that I was before. Whatever you think was going to happen forget. You think I’m still that old loose Busi you used to know?

Kagiso: I never said you were.

Busi: You didn’t need to say it because you already said it before. Remember how your facial expression changed every time you saw me? You looked at me like I was a smelling shit on your personal space. All I wanted was two minutes of your time. Just two.

She waved two fingers in the air. She will not crush and burn this time around. She did it once and it didn’t end well for her. Now it’s just her and her son against the world just like I has always been.

Kagiso: I know and I regret that. I regret it everyday of my life. I wish I could turn back the hands of time so I can do better.

Busi: There’s nothing you can do now. It’s done. I’m some cheap whore you can used and discard when you feel like.

She walked back downstairs much to Kagiso’s annoyance. Why couldn’t the damn woman stand in one place? All this running around is unnecessary.

Busi: We cry over spilt milk. Don’t pick up I will do it myself.

She spat marching to the door.

Kagiso: I love you.

He blurt out as she opens the door. Busi sharply turns on her heels.

Busi: (shocked) What?

SANDILE

Mamello's parents have been on my case about their daughter's whereabouts. I told them what that witch did to me and now that convinced them that I might have something to do with her disappearance. I had to live everything behind at the Ndlovu's because they were threatening of taking my daughter from her nanny. She's been my trusted helper for years and that's why it was easy for me to leave Sibahle with her. The helper stands next to the couch I'm sitting in.

Helper: Sir you have visitors.

Me: Who?

I turn to find my uncle's walking.

Me: My day is dull make it brighter bomalume.

They shake their heads and sit down.

Uncle 1: We took the first flight back.

Me: Okay tell me the good news.

Uncle 2: What good news mshana? Yini uhlulwa ukuqoma intombi eziphilayo? {What are you afraid of asking out living woman?}.

Me: Angikuzwa malume. {I don't understand}.

Uncle 1: Sigibela amabhaloyi amaningi kanti simemezela emagcekeni womakoti ungasekho emhlabeni? {We took many flights to get here and only to find out we were shouting outside a dead bride's home}.

I frown.

Me: Malume ubani ongasekhoyo manje? {Who is dead now?}.

Uncle 2: Umakoti. Waze wabukisa ngathi mshana. {The bride. You really embarrassed us}.

He shakes his head looking down.

Uncle 1: We didn't g there to open up old wounds to that family and our presence did just that.

Me: Bolamume I wouldn't send you in someone's house knowing the bride is already dead. The bride is much alive.

They share a look before turning to me.

Uncle 1: How?

Uncle 2: But the sister told us that her sister was dead.

Me: A sister? Azasakhe doesn't a sister.

Uncle 1: If that's the case who was yelling that you're a goat next to us?

Me: A goat? Please describe the sister.

I already know how that might be. He goes on and his description fits perfectly with what I have in mind.

Me: Bomalume that's not the sister but the bride.

Uncle 1: Ini? {What?}.

Uncle 2: Uqonde ukungitshela ukuthi uhlanya lomfazi umakoti? {You mean to tell me that crazy woman is the bride?}.

I amusedly nod. I'm surprised that she easily fooled them. This is Azasakhe we are talking about.

Uncle 1: Lowo omemeza ethi uyimbuzi? {That one who screams that you're a goat?}.

I chuckle picking up my phone and log on the app. She's online.

"Well played, Mrs D"

I press send and she responds immediately.

"🖕"

Her last seen disappears meaning she blocked me.

Uncle 2: The only thing missing was for her to shout (goat sounds) Meeee meeee tata. Meeee meeee sizocela isiholobo esihle.

I throw my head back bursting in laughter. I'm a very patient man and this time I'm ready to acknowledge my wrongs.

70

KAGISO

Fear is not something I'm used too. I can still remember how was I when I took on my first case and from that day forward I told myself I will never let fear be part of my emotions but here am I scared of her rejection. I blurted out that unexpectedly and it also shocked me.

Busi: What?

I sigh.

Me: It's not something it come out now just to stop you.

Busi: Let me get this straight, you say you love me?

Me: Very much. You live rent free in my mind. Everyday when I wake up you're the second thing that comes to mind after my son.

Busi: Was this before or after I become Junior's mother?

I drop my eyes to the floor causing her to chuckle bitterly.

Busi: What do you think I am? A yoyo you can play with everytime you feel like?

Me: Those are not my intention.

Busi: I don't care what your intentions are but I'm not going to be something you can fall on every time you're bored. Seriously

what do you think I am? A baby mama who will jump to everything you say just because we share a child?

Me: That's not what I'm trying to do.

Busi: That's exactly what you're doing. Don't confuse love with lust.

Me: I know what I'm feeling.

Busi: Men always say anything to get under our pants.

Me: Don't compare me to the rest of the world because that's not who I am.

Busi: That's exactly who you're. A self centred, arrogant

jerk who things the world revolves around you. You breathe the same air as I breathe. If you were breathing fire I would have regarded you as someone special but there's nothing there.

Me: Ouch! Maybe I deserve that.

Busi: And so much more. I don't want to burn bridges because of my son. If it wasn't for him our paths would have never crossed. I needed you years back but now I've grown a thick skin and I don't need you. Whether you're in Junior's life or not it doesn't make any difference to me. But one thing I'm not going to allow you to do is play with my son's feelings just like you do with everyone else.

Me: That’s my son too.

Busi: And I’m his mother and I will do anything for him even it means protecting him from his own father.

She spits out.

Me: I’m not walking away from him now on.

I clap back.

Busi: You’re a vulture who targets vulnerable preys like me.

Me: You…

She cuts me off.

Busi: You can hurt me all you like but I swear to God Kagiso if you hurt Junior I will slice that big cock of yours and feed it to you.

A smile curve on my lips as she threatens.

Busi: You’re just Junior’s father so stay in your lane. The next time you see me it better be about Junior not that nonsense you just spewed with your mouth.

She clicks his tongue marching to the door while I stand rooted on my spot, shocked.

Busi: Who does he think I am?

She mumbles under her breath.

Busi: Busiswe the forever loose panty dropper who is always ready to sleep with any man. Bloody nonsense. Ethwele intloko kanti lantloko igcwele ububhanxa. Yazi uyandiqhela lo.

She slams the door behind her.

Me: Wow! That was mouthful.

I exclaim snapping out if my daze and heavily sighed. My phone chimes. I fish out.

Me: What?

Ade: Woah! What's got your panties twisted? Are you in your periods? Should I bring you painkillers? Food or drink?

He fires all the questions and I hear someone laughing on the background.

Ade: Name anything Kg my man I'm at your service.

Me: What the fuck do you want Adesola?

Ade: Woah! You're really not in the mood. Whoever pissed you didn't think of us.

I hold my bridge nose and exhale loudly.

Me: Again what do you want?

Ade: 7pm.

Me: Where?

Ade: Don’t be late.

He hangs up after that.

NARRATOR

Ade: You’re late.

He mutters as Sandile walks in the VIP section. He places his keys on the table and picks up a glass to pour himself a drink. He gulps it down in one go and leans back on the couch closing his eyes. Tyson and Ade watch him closely. Kagiso’s footsteps are loud as he approaches them.

Ade: You’re also late.

Kagiso: Don’t fuck with me. I’m not in the mood.

He mirrors Sandile’s actions after taking a swing of his glass.

Ty: Wanna talk about it?

Kagiso: She called me a vulture. Imagine a whole Kagiso fucken Mofokeng a vulture.

Tyson amusedly hide behind his glass.

Kagiso: I seriously don’t understand women.

Sandile: You can say that again.

He mutters flipping his eyes open.

Sandile: I thought she wanted me that’s why she came back.

Kagiso: She left me with blue balls.

Ade and Tyson bursted in laughter.

Kagiso: I couldn't even chase after her.

Sandile: She told my uncle's that she's dead.

Laughter.

Ty: Dlamini I assume you're talking about your wife and I'm not sure who are you talking about Kg.

Kagiso: (irritated) I'm talking about the mother of my fucken son.

Ade: You've been talking about this son of yours and I'm starting to think that his not there. You're just making things up.

Kagiso unlocked his phone and went to his gallery and tossed his phone to him pouring another shot. Ade observed the picture and smiled.

Ade: Lucky bastard.

He handed the phone to the next person which was Tyson.

Ty: I swear I'm looking at you when growing up.

He handed the phone to Sandile.

Sandile: The boy couldn't just escape your genes.

Kagiso smiled taking his phone back.

Kagiso: That gentleman is Kagiso Junior Mofokeng.

Sandile: When are we meeting him?

Kagiso: I'm currently not in good terms with the mother right now but hopefully this weekend.

Ade: What did you do? Kagiso: Long story.

Ty: Cut it short. We all have time.

Kagiso shook his head and narrated everything and by the time he was done they were rolling on the floor in laughter.

Ty: Wait, let me get this straight. You told her you love her after you nearly hit it?

Kagiso: (annoyed) That's what I just said.

Ty: Can you repeat the whole story again?

They laughed while Kagiso clicked his tongue.

Kagiso: I'm not repeating shit.

Ade: You're funny. Didn't you say falling in love was a weak thing? Kagiso: That was before now.

Ade: I never thought I will see the day.

Sandile: Same here.

Kagiso: I also didn't think I would be in this position some day.

Ade: Do you want my advice?

Kagiso: Even if I say no you will say it anyway.

Ade: Great! There are lines that are blurred along the way and obviously you're the course of that. If you really into her show her that you're making moves on her because you guys share a child. Show her that you're genuine and you love her and your son is just a bonus to that. And you Dlamini I might not know the real issue but your story is much similar to mine. I took my late wife for granted and after death that's where I started to appreciate her more. When I look at how old my kids are I know they would have had a big brother or sister but that didn't happen because she died with that child. Sometimes you don't know the value of what you have until it's gone.

Sandile: What are you saying?

Ade: All I'm saying is that both these women are hurt. They are bleeding and you're making matters worse by putting your weight on them. You both have the power to give and take and that power you're misusing it the wrong way.

Ty: To add on that apology is the first step. Apologies like you mean it and don't force them to accept it. It's up them whether they forgive you or not. Apologies and leave. Don't be cocky about or rub it on her face. Leave immediately after you said you piece. An genuine apology is shown by how you pour out

your heart and mean each word you say. An apology comes straight from the heart and it cannot be copied.

Ade: Regret is the like a broken record that keeps playing in your mind every time you're alone. The what ifs questions become endless when you're in that state. What if I did this? What if I did that? What if I turn back the hands of time? What if I did one and two? Trust me it's not a nice feeling to be in. The first years after Happiness dead I was in that state. It's like she took away my happiness just like her name. Don't be like me guys. Appreciate what you have.

Kagiso: Are we going to preach the whole night or just drink?

Ty: I hope you heard him and will take what to he said to heart and mind. Love is not an easy journey and when you're about to embark on it you must be wise and matured. You can't just say you love somebody's child while you scheme and do all the other shit I don't want to mention. Remember the minute you utter those words I love you to her do you know how many men are lined up behind you to have that one chance. That one shot they won't mess it up because they know what they want unlike you who doesn't. Don't waste someone's child by promise her heaven on earth knowing you can't fulfil that. Love needs maturity so the question is are you guys matured enough for these women?

71

A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER

BUSISIWE

It’s Hope’s birthday and I’m preparing to go to the Collins. Initially the invitation was for Junior but the would rather hang out with his father and his friends playing FIFA the whole day and not attend the party. I put my hoop earrings on and apply lip balm on my lips. A knock comes on the door and he picks up his bag and rushes to it.

Junior: Bye mama.

Me: Haibo just like that? You don’t even know if it’s him.

Junior: He said at 12 and now it’s 12 right?

He mutters opening the door and indeed it’s his father.

Kagiso: Hi.

Me: Hello.

Junior: Mama we are out.

I pace wrapping the gift and look at him.

Me: Not even a goodbye kiss?

He groans.

Junior: We’ve been through this before mama.

I giggle.

Me: I’m waiting.

He drags his feet towards me and I bend down in order for him to place a kiss on my cheek.

Me: Have fun baby. I love you.

Junior: I love you too.

Me: Remember it’s church on Sunday. I’ll pick you up Saturday late.

It’s the school holidays and his spending them with his father. I took a leave at work so I can spend time with him but he will rather be somewhere else than be here.

Junior: I don’t like church.

Me: You never like anything.

I yell after him as he walks out leaving the two of us.

Me: Can I help you?

Kagiso: Can we talk?

Me: We are doing that right now.

Kagiso: I mean like seriously talk.

Me: I don’t have time for your advances. If it’s not about Junior then forget it.

Kagiso: It’s actually about him. I would like to pay damages for him.

Me: Oh.

Kagiso: Yes and if it’s not too much I would also like him to take my surname.

Me: I will have a word with my parents and get back to.

I place the scissor down after taping the edges of the wrapping paper. My gift is a Barbie doll that goes with her own tea cup set. I know how we girls are with our dolls and tea sets. I raise my head and find him still standing on the same spot.

Me: Was there something else?

He blows out a sigh.

Kagiso: It might not sound genuine to you but know I mean every word I say.

Me: What about you talking about?

Kagiso: I’m sorry.

Is that all?

Kagiso: I know I’m the best person you like having in your space for obvious reasons and I take the blame for that. I’m sorry I was stupid not to listen to you years back. I’m sorry for always shutting you out everytime you tried to talk to me. I’ve seen

people getting played by women and I was just trying to protect myself from that. I may have threw money on your face thinking that's what you want but trust me if I knew better we wouldn't be here right now. I could go on the whole day mentioning my shortcomings but want you to know is that I'm sorry for everything. I may not seem as man enough back then but now I know I wronged you in so many ways. Please find it in your heart to forgive me because I mean it. I'm not pushing any agenda behind it even though I still stand on what I said. I really love you but that's just another agenda for another day. Have a blessed day.

He turns on his heels and walk out. I blink rapidly to stop the tears from falling.

Me: You're not going to cry.

I murmur padding to the cupboard and take a glass. I walk to the tap outside and fill it up then take a sip.

Arriving at Sihle's, I place the gift where others are and look for her. I find her in the kitchen.

Me: Need help?

Sihle: Please mntase. The cater dropped me at the last minute and now I'm trying to make hotdogs for this kids.

Me: What should I do?

Sihle: Slice the bread while I fry this wors.

I wash my hands and throw on the apron she just handed me.

Sihle: I paid them weeks back and they are only telling me now that they can't cater for a small number, imagine.

Me: That's a bummer. Where is Benjamin?

Sihle: I sent him out on a grocery shopping because he was freaking out.

I giggle.

Me: Men.

She rolled her eyes.

Sihle: Tell me about it. I don't see my walking money. Where is he?

I laugh.

Me: Probably eating junk with his father.

Sihle: That boy is my walking money. Just his brain nje.

I laugh. Sihle and money she will never change.

Me: You and money.

Sihle: Money is life just like food. There’s this snobbish woman at Hope’s school who thinks she breathes the sun.

I giggle.

Sihle: She’s been nagging us on the WhatsApp group chat we have as parents that her kids don’t need extra classes because whites will always be clever than us blacks. Bendifuna undiboleke uJunior noba lusuku olunye nje khe ndiye naye xa izezi spelling nto ntoni zabo asibone ukuba asimuncwanga singabantu abamnyama qha asithandi ukuqhayisa ngobukrele krele bethu. { I want you to borrow me Junior for one day so I can go with him when they held this spelling what not of theirs so that she can see we are black people are not stupid but don’t like showing off}.

I burst in laughter.

Me: You need Jesus shame.

Sihle: That women just rubs me off the wrong way.

I giggle.

Sihle: I don’k know if I’m reading too much but you’re not your usual self. It’s like something is weighing you down.

I place the knife down and turn to her.

Me: Kagiso finally apologised.

Sihle: Which one? The small Kagiso or the big one?

Me: Sihle.

Sihle: (giggling) Okay, I'm serious right now. How do you feel?

Me: It's been something I've waiting for, for years and now it finally happened I don't know how to feel. I'm numb and conflicted.

Sihle: Nobody knows the pain you went through than you. Take your time to evaluate everything. If you want to forgive him it's up to you if you don't that's still up to you.

I nod shoving a piece of bread in my mouth.

Me: I'll think about it.

Sihle: No pressure. Anyway Aza's anniversary is coming so what do you think we should do this year?

Me: The same routine of going to the cemetery but this time after we come back we can throw a smaller nyana after tears.

Sihle: Great idea. You're starting to show that you birthed a genius.

I laugh.

Sihle: I can't believe we will be marking a full 7 years without her.

She absentmindedly murmur.

Me: Time really flies.

JENNIFER

My relationship ended and I'm the one to blame for that. Mholi has been nothing but the best boyfriend I've ever had in my history of dating. I'm really sad on how things ended between us but I know it's for the best as long I'm still tied to that man. I know Sandile won't easily grant my wish of giving me a divorce. I can easily go through it the court way and let the magistrate force him to grant me one but I know he can buy his way out so that I don't get what I want. I'm tired of always fighting. I want that happiness after the storm not the calm before the storm. I thank God he hasn't bothered me this week and I will like for it to remain like that but I know that's just impossible with Sandile.

Receptionist: Miss Ndlovu.

Me: That's me.

Receptionist: The doctor is ready for you.

I jump to my feet and take my slim bag and follow behind her. She widely opens the door for me and closes behind me leaving me with Doctor Noor.

Doc: (smiling) Miss Ndlovu how can I be at your service today?

Me: My periods are late.

I’ve bn convincing myself that it’s probably stress the main factor of that but that little voice in the back of my mind says otherwise.

Doc: How late?

Me: I’m not quite sure because I’ve been having irregular periods.

Doc: Irregular how?

She narrows her eyes on me after opening my file.

Me: Sometimes they come twice a month. Like one the first days of the month and in the middle of the month.

Doc: Okay

Advertisement

when was the last time you had a normal period?

Me: I would be lying if I say I know.

Doc: I think we already know what’s the meaning of that right?

She smiles jointing down.

Me: Yes.

Doc: I like giving my patients choices because sometimes pregnancy test are not accurate. Would you like to do a scan?

Me: Yes please.

She nods vigorously and continues to write down. She goes on preparing me about the transvaginal ultrasound and the discomfort of it.

Doc: If you just follow me to the bed.

I do as instructed and lie on the bed with my feet widely open. I shift uncomfortable as she pushes the wand inside me.

Doc: You see that black dot over there.

I nod looking at the screen.

Doc: That's your baby.

My emotions come crushing down on me and I feel tears on the verge of my eyes.

Me: How far am I?

Doc: I would say 5 weeks if my calculations are correct but let me print the scan for you.

I bend my index finger and wipe my tears.

Doc: You can put your clothes back on while print.

I jump out of the bed and walk behind the curtain to throw my clothes on and walk back to her.

Doc: As I've predicted you're 5 weeks pregnant.

She hands me the scan and squint my eyes to see the dot again but nothing.

Me: There's nothing here.

She giggles. She better give me my baby or else I will be a thorn in her life.

Doc: You might not see it now but as he/she grow you will see him or her.

I nod biting my lip. The thought of being a mother never crossed my mind but he'll I enjoyed being an aunt to my brother's kids and Mholi's kids and now I'm having my own.

Doc: Your irregular periods were caused by stress, certain health conditions or pregnancy which in your case is pregnancy. How may days do you periods last?

Me: 3.

Doc: That's why they came twice a month. They are shorter than normal periods.

My heart skips a beat.

Me: Are you saying they shouldn't be short?

Where have my blood been going all along? Her laughter snaps me out of my daze.

Doc: No, I’m not saying that. It’s normal to have that at your age because menopause starts early to some people.

I breathe in relief.

Doc: The first trimester is the most crucial to your baby's development. During this period, your baby's body structure and organ systems develop.

Me: How long does it last?

Doc: 13 weeks.

Me: That’s a lot to take in.

Roc: You will learn as we go by. One thing about pregnancy is that you must enjoy it.

Me: Oh, I plan to doc.

She laughs as I jump to my feet.

Doc: See you on our next check up.

I wave at her smiling from ear to ear and walk out. My day started from applying for a job post to now this. I stand on the line with my prescription requesting. I jump in the cab and greet the driver after taking my medication and smile looking at of the window. Life is slowly mending it’s self. The smooth ride force me to give my eyes I break. I close them leaning back on the armrest and before I know it the driver is waking me up.

Driver: Ma’am we are here.

I yawn taking out his fee and jump out of the cab.

Me: Thank you.

I cross the road and make my way home. I bump into my father outside.

Tata: Your fake death anniversary is coming and we need to do a ceremony.

Me: (smiling) Okay.

He frowns.

Tata: You’re okay?

Me: I’m perfect.

Tata: You’re surely in a good mood.

Each year we do a cleansing ceremony for me in order the ancestors can not be confused. I’m still living and breathing and still much need their protection.

Me: I know you know Tata.

Tata: Know what?

Is this old man going to play this Tom and Jerry game with me now? I’m too old to be playing hide and seek these days. I’m someone’s mother for crying out loud! Where is his respect?

JENNIFER

Two days later my father still pretends like he doesn't know. I'm sure his waiting for me to tell him but I'm not going to ruin the surprise. I want him to ask me instead. I've been on my happiest since I find out about the pregnancy. My mother favoured my brother more than me while my father left while we were still kids. My first ever boyfriend broke my heart and turned me to a public laughing stock. My brother sold me to a man I hardly know for survival in jail and the man married me without my knowledge. Even if I refused to marry him Akhona took that right away from me when he signed an agreement with him that he can take me as his wife. The so called husband walks out of prison and warms his way into my heart for only to break it again. He came with his own baggage that I needed to deal with.

I understood because everyone has his or her own baggage but for his girlfriend to attempt to kill me was the last straw. I didn't know being in love with him meant I had to fight for my own life at that time. Moving away and starting my life afresh was the hardest part but I knew I had to do it. 7 years down the line he finds that I'm alive and again he just wants to waltz into my life again. He doesn't care about how I feel as long in his eyes it's

okay fuck everybody's feelings. I'm not going to start by mentioned my baby daddy.

I love Mholi with all of my heart and I understand where he comes from because that's the same thing Sandile did to me. His anger is justified and he has every right to break up with me but one thing I'm not going to do is chase after him. I've been doing that my whole life and this time around I'm looking for change. Change in how I do things in order for me to be a better mom to my child. This baby is the one thing I can call it my own without fighting for his or her love. I know she/he will love me until my last days.

I walk outside to the gate and look down the street. It's my father's birthday and the old man is turning 51. I wake up in the morning and went to town to buy a few things just make this day special for him and by the time they come back from the council meeting everything will be set up for the party. I did spring cleaning after coming back just to beat up time. The house windows are sparkling outside and the laundry is hanging outside. The only thing I didn't do is taking down the curtains and washing them. I clamp my hands in excitement looking at my set up. I pick up my phone to go through the list again.

1. Balloons ✅

I look at the balloons on the wall and the big one written 51 and tick it off.

2. Rice ✅

He will make uphuthu the day he throw himself a party not this one is that is thrown by me. I can't invite people over and feed them pap. My father doesn't mind eating it the whole day and do is my uncle and I know my guests which consists myself, Mam Zodwa, umalumekazi and two of little cousins do mind. I'm not counting Bangizwe because I know he will agree to everything his brother says. It's just a mini party for relatives only, minus my cousin Thulisile because she's at work. The day I get a job and it pays well is the day I will throw him the mother of all parties.

3. Meat ✅

My mouth waters as I peel the lid and look at the various meat on the table. Wors, chicken, pork and red meat. The birthday man doesn't eat pork so he will be having the red meat while we have pork.

4. Drinks ✅

I've got 2 soft drinks

Advertisement

Coke and Sprite and a 2 litre of Tropika. Again he only drinks juice instead of soft drinks. I don't know why does he fusses like this. I can't imagine my life without a soft drink.

5. Cake ✅

I resist the urge to dig my finger the Happy birthday tatam words written in cream. I ordered the cake and I picked it up this morning. It cost me R600 because it was short notice. If he does appreciate me for this I wouldn't know what he wants from me.

6. Snacks ✅

I pick on sweet and chips and throw them in my mouth ticking them off.

7. Entertainment and gift ✅

My WiFi depleted last night when I was searching for the perfect gift and entertainment for him. See I went all out?

8. Music ✅

I managed to download four songs at KFC this morning. Two are for him and two are for me.

9. Disco lights and disco ball ✅

I know his got two left feet and the disco lights will help think his dancing all the kind of face moves in the world only to find out his standing on one spot but just looking at the lights. I'm such a good daughter and I need people's praises because I've

already praised myself. I close my notes after going through everything and sit down.

They said the meeting will only take a few hours maximum 2 but it's more than that. I pick the knife and cut a small slice of cake for myself. I'm sure he won't not because he doesn't have a sweet tooth. I moan as the delicious flavours hit my taste buds. I wipe my mouth and march to the kitchen to wash the side plate and walk back with it after rinsing it. The cake is staring at me, tempting me to cut another slice.

Me: You're not going to do that. Control yourself.

I scold myself picking up the cake and march to the fridge. I carefully make sure the lids are all closed the shove it the fridge. I swear to God if there's people are not here on time I might celebrate his birthday on my own. I take another trip to the fridge to place the drinks and walk back. I lie on the couch and fix the cushion then close my eyes. It's better resting my eyes than looking at what's in front of me.

--

The gate outside jolts me up from my slumber. I Juno out of the couch and run to the window to peek. It's all of my guests including the birthday man. I close the curtain and rush to the kitchen to take out the cake and place the open space of which is the slice I eat on the back. The cake looks upside down now

but I bet he won’t notice. The door opens as I walk back with the drinks. I smile waiting for them to approach the living room. My father is the first one to walk in.

Me: (singing) Happy birthday to you x2

Happy birthday dear tatam.

Happy birthday to you.

He smiles walking in further.

Me: How old are you now? X2

Tata: I’m still 50 mntanam. Thank you though for an early birthday party. If I knew my birthday is the same day as my daughter’s then I would be celebrating it everyday.

Me: (shocked) What?

Tata: It’s not my birthday.

Say what? Kanti whose birthday is it today?

Tata: Here.

I skeptically take his phone and look at the screen. It’s the calendar app and marked as an important day is Aza’s birthday. Say what? Before I could reply my uncle’s son Sbonga barges in the room startling us.

Sbonga: Baba there are people outside the gate.

Us: What?

Tata: Who are they?

Sbonga: I don’t.

Bangizwe: Go and ask them who are they and what do they want.

He nods and walks out. I padded to the window to peek but my aunt close the curtain.

Malumekazi: Don’t do that.

Sbonga comes back.

Sbonga: They say they are the Dlamini’s and they want to speak to an elder.

Me: You got to be kidding me.

Bangizwe: Let me handle this.

My father nods as he walks outside.

Malumekazi: Aza go and wrap your head.

Legally I’m his wife but traditionally I’m nobody’s wife so I ignore her.

Me: It’s my birthday.

Tata: So?

Me: Ain’t you guys going to sing for me?

Silence… well God gave me my own voice so let me sing for myself.

Me: Happy birthday to you x2

Happy birthday dear Jen.

Happy birthday to you.

My uncle walks in and behind him are the Dlamini’s but that doesn’t stop me from singing.

Me: Mimi I will give you a big slice of cake.

She shift her gaze back to her parents then me. Bribery always works with kids.

Mimi: How old are you now? x4

I smile responding.

Me: I am 30 years old today x4

Mimi: Hippy hippy.

Me: Hooray.

I jump to my feet and connect the connect my phone. M’nike by Tyler ICU blast on the speaker and I start dancing looking at the disco ball. I know I’m not moving an inch from my spot but the

balls and lights are making me the most talented dancer in the room.

Bangizwe: Bhuti you have visitors.

Me: (singing) Hayke hayke hayke hayke

I roll my eyes biting lip doing Kilimanjaro.

Bangizwe: Mshana the elders will like you to evacuate the room.

He yells over the music.

Me: Tell them to come back tomorrow not today malume.

I yell back continue with my task at hand. If it was my father's birthday I would have given the the room for that but it turns out it's mine and as always the Dlamini's are ready to ruin the day but not today.

Bangizwe: Mshana…

I cut him off.

Me: The queen is celebrating malume.

My youth days are soon coming into an end because bandigilile…they knocked me up and months from now on I won't be able to do a mere vosho. The song comes into an end and I pause waiting for the next one.

Tata: As you can see you came at a wrong time. It's my daughter's birthday.

Sandile: I apologise for that but I pushed for this meeting to be today so that she can see I'm serious.

Just outside near the gate there's a guava tree and it has a huge shade that can accommodate all of them because I'm not barging from here. I didn't unknowingly planned a surprise party for myself only to let people ruin it. I dug in my pockets and went all out thinking it's my father's day. If I knew it was mine I would have woken up and went to town to buy myself streetwise two and slice of cake to celebrate not all of this. The next song comes through.

🎵Ke Na le bolwedhe ba go idibala

Banhlala ka idibala

Ke na le bolwedhe ba go idibala

Banhlala ka idibala 🎵

I throw myself on the couch doing the idibala dance. My uncle lowers the music and I jump to my feet. My head is spinning from looking at the disco ball.

Tata: You just like setting her off and you know how she responds to ambushes.

Sandile: Again I'm sorry but for her to forgive me on her special day it will mean the world to me. We brought two goats to wash the yard for what I did. Please just hear us out.

Both his uncle's nod. I wipe the sweat off my face.

Tata: Leave Dlamini.

Sandile: Please just give us two minutes.

He shifts his gaze to me and his eyes soften.

Sandile: Please.

Me: Fine.

I turn off the music while the march to the couches.

Zodwa: We will be in the kitchen dishing up.

She attempts picking up the dishes in front of us but I stop her in time. I didn't spent so much money to feed the Dlamini's. These people are rich and I'm an upcoming single mother. Like a professional in boardroom presenting a presentation I do so with my food.

Me: R5 slice of cake.

My father burst in laughter while my aunt and Mam Zodwa gasp shocked.

Me: R10 glass of coke or sprite.

I turn to my father.

Me: R25 glass of Tropika.

He covers his eyes laughing and shakes his head. He's the only one drinking juice so he understands why it is expensive.

Me: R5 amakhozo amabini erice. {R5 two grains of rice}.

Zodwa: Ini? Isn't that not my rice?

It's hers but who cooked it? I look around trying to spot what am I forgetting. Oh, yes the meat.

Me: R20 drumstick or any piece of chicken. R30 red meat piece and R45 piece of pork.

Bangizwe: Ini? Usangena. {What? You're crazy}.

Me: Take it or leave it malume. It's my party and I bought all this by myself.

Malumekazi: But you invited us over.

She protests joining forces with her husband.

Me: Yes that was before I knew it my birthday not my father's.

Do these people think I'm Mother Teresa? I love them but not like that.

Me: Are you guys taking the food or should I go and sell it somewhere else?

Sandile amusedly clears his throat.

Sandile: We'll take everything on the table. How much is the balance?

Keeping a straight face, I mutter.

Me: R5k.

Gasps echoed in the room while my dad and Sandile laugh their lungs out.

Zodwa: (shocked) Azasakhe?

Me: What? I didn't sing and dance for mahala, Mam Zodwa. My services are expensive.

I only spent R1200 on this party but they don't know that. Do they know how expensive pork meat is? And besides why are they shocked? Nothing is for mahala in this world especially not on my birthday. I've got transport, uniform, school fees and diapers I need to save for.

NARRATOR

Sandile's uncle cleared his throat after they were all done eating.

Uncle 1: I'm sure you're all asking yourselves why we are here. Our nephew brought us here to ask for forgiveness for what he did. His actions lead to taking a life of one of your own.

Uncle 2 nodded.

Uncle 1: We are humbling ourselves before you asking forgiveness. I know it's not something it can be done over night but I know someday we can reach that point you no longer seem him as an enemy.

Uncle 2: No parent wants to bury their own child and again we apologise for ruining such a special occasion.

He chirped in.

Bangizwe: We've got no problem with you because you didn't do anything to us. The only person we have a problem with is your son. He keeps taking advantage of my brother's silence.

Ndlovu: Maybe his mistaken my help to forgiveness. I didn't help you because I wanted to help you. Your people begged me to help you and if it wasn't up to me I wouldn't have. I didn't owe you anything neither does anyone in this room.

Uncle 1: We understand.

Ndlovu shook his head.

Ndlovu: I don't think you do. Is it the first time you came here and told to leave but disregarded what I said?

Silence.

Ndlovu: It's not the first time and the first time was much worse than this. How do you send your people to ask for a hand in marriage knowing that you've been disrespecting that home? Which parent or in this case which bride would have said yes to that?

Uncle 1: We are here to rectify that mistake.

Again Ndlovu shook his head.

Ndlovu: I don't have a problem with you or any elder from the Dlamini household. The only person I have a problem with is your son and I don't expect you to answer for his crimes while his here. We parents can't always be crucified for our children's actions. Mdala lomuntu and he knows between what is right or wrong and if you keep shielding him he will always do this. Burn bridges and send his elders to answer for him forgetting they were not on the scene on the day of the crime.

Sandile clears his throat.

Sandile: May I speak?

Bangizwe nods.

Sandile: I'm ashamed of my own actions. At times I do things without thinking of how the consequences will be at the later stage. I know I may seem like I'm always taking advantage of your kindness but I've trying to prove myself that I'm worthy of your daughter. I saw how much she loves her current boyfriend so I panicked. In my own head I was thinking maybe just maybe if I send my people here first than him you may forgive me and see how serious I am about her. Sometimes I forget that not everyone can be bought. I learnt the hard way that love and happiness cannot be bought. I have money and lots of it and it only brought me misery instead of happiness. Burning bridges is a way of trying to mend things and it all goes back to power and money. There are places where you need to use power and there were you don't same as money. Power and money get over people's head and that's exactly what happened to me. I let power control forgetting what I was taught back home by my parents. My mother would be disappointed in my actions because that's not the man she raised. Both my parents are still much alive and I didn't want to involve them in this. Being a prisoner for a while makes you sometimes forget who your real self is. I lost my path and humanity along the way and burnt more bridges. The very same power is the one that made me cut ties with my parents. Pastor Dlamini and his wife brought to this world a destroyer of people's life.

I looks at Jen waiting for any reaction from her from his revelation but he gets none.

Sandile: I'm not going to blame anyone for what I did because I am to blame. And I'm not saying all of this to manipulate you into forgiving me. I'm only saying it because it comes from the bottom of my heart and I see where my wrongs are.

He shifts his gaze to Jen.

Sandile: MaDlamini I know that I have been forcing you into relationship from day one but not anymore. I'm sorry it had to come to losing a life in order for me to see power was what I was using all along instead of my logical mind. I'm sorry for what Mamello put you through and I'm sorry you had to live on the run because of me. Our relationship started off on a wrong foot and I'm willing to accept any decision you take moving forward.

Jen drops her eyes to her lap where her vibrating phone was. She declined the call making a mental note to call Mholi back after the meeting.

Sandile: If it's counselling I will take and if it's divorce I will grant you one as long you're happy. The past two weeks I was here I saw how happier you were and I'm not going to stand in your way. Whatever you decide just know that I will support you even though it will be hard to do so. You only found love once

as a person and mine was short-lived because we always didn't see eye to eye. I'm not going to blame witchcraft and everything because it may seem like I'm manipulating you but I'm not. I'm deeply sorry.

Saying the divorce word shuttered his heart. He was hoping she wouldn't choose the latter.

Bangizwe: We heard you and we appreciate your efforts for coming here to man up to your mistakes. Not many would have done so and it shows that you really know the difference between what's right and what's wrong.

The phone vibrates forcing Jen to shift her gaze to it.

Ndlovu: Aza do you want to say something?

Jen: For now no. You will hear from my lawyer.

She jumped to her feet and quietly walked to the kitchen go pick up her ringing phone. Clearly whatever Mholi had to say was important.

Jen: Hello?

Caller: Hello ma'am.

A frown emerges on Jen's face.

Caller: Ma’am I’ve been trying to got hold of the relatives of the owner of the phone for hours now. Do you somehow know the owner of this phone?

Jen’s heart pounded.

Jen: Yes, his my boyfriend.

Caller: I’m sorry but there’s an incoming call from the mother.

Jen: What happened to him?

Silence.

Jen: Hello?

She removes the phone to look at it and the line was dead. She tried to call him but it kept saying line busy.

Zodwa: And then?

Jen: Someone called me from Mholi’s phone asking if I’m a relative or what.

Zodwa: That’s it?

Jen: The line went dead after that.

Zodwa: What are you waiting for? Call back again.

She nodded dialling his number again.

Caller: Hello?

Jen: You called earlier asking about my relationship with the owner's phone then cut the call before I could reply.

Caller: Oh yes I remember now. Sisi we managed to get hold of the mother. There was an accident, a taxi collided with another taxi.

A gasp slipped out of Jen's mouth.

Jen: Is Mholi okay.

Paramedic: It doesn't look good sisi. Just get here.

Jen: Which hospital?

The paramedic called out the name and dropped the call.

Zodwa: Yini?

Jen: Mholi was in a car accident.

Zodwa gasped placing her hands on top of her head.

Zodwa: Is he okay?

Jen: I didn't ask.

She trailed off walking out of the kitchen.

Ndlovu: Everything alright?

He muttered seeing the distress on her face.

Jen: I'm not sure.

She placed her phone on top of the table marching to the door.

Ndlovu: Manje uyaphi?

Jen: Mholi was in a car accident and I need to get to the hospital.

Sandile jumped to his feet.

Sandile: I'll drive you off. We were already on our way.

Jen: Thank you.

She ran back to the table to pick her phone and walked to the door.

Jen: I'll keep you updated.

She yelled closing the door and rushed to the car. Jumping in, she closed the door and lean back on the chair.

Sandile: Can I drop off abomalume first then take you straight there.

Jen: Okay.

Sandile stepped on the gas speeding off. He kept stealing glances of her on the view mirror. The universe was really working on his favour. Would it be cruel for him to want Mholi dead? This man was taking his wife away from him and maybe just maybe wanting him dead is not that so bad. People die all the time and he will be not the first one. If his dead then that

means that they still got a chance to fight for their relationship. Mholi being in the picture wouldn't give them that chance. He parked the car outside the BNB and both of his uncle's stepped out.

Sandile: We'll talk.

He honked and drove off.

Sandile: Which hospital?

Silence.

Sandile: Aza.

She shifted her gaze from the window and looked at him.

Sandile: Which hospital?

She called it out and cast her gaze back on the window. There was a lot in her mind as she kept pushing back any negative thought that keeps creeping on her. She broke out of her thoughts when Sandile slams the door after stepping out. She looked outside and they were at the hospital parking lot. The door opened.

Sandile: Come.

She stepped out of the car and he closed the door for her. They walked inside and immediately her eyes caught Mholi's mother crying hysterically. She stiffen ceasing her movements.

Sandile: Do you know her?

She slowly nodded watching her as she wails louder.

Jen: That's his mother.

She turned and walked outside while Sandile is hot on her heels. She sat on the pavement and brought her knees up and buried her face in them. Sandile crouch in front of her.

Sandile: Hey

Advertisement

don't y want to go and find out how he is?

Jen: He didn't survive.

She muttered absentmindedly.

Sandile: You don't know that. You know how you women like to exaggerate things. She might be crying because of the accident.

She raised her head and looked at him. If the man is dead he will definitely rejoicing but the pained look on her face stops him from doing so. She attempts to leap up to her feet but falls back on the pavement as her knees suddenly become weak on her. Alarmed, Sandile helped her to her feet and widen his eyes freezing.

Jen: What?

Sandile: Don't freak out but you're bleeding.

Jen: I’m not suppose to be bleeding.

Sandile: Women bleed all the time it’s normal.

She shook her head. The man was not understanding her.

Jen: Sandile, pregnant women don’t bleed.

Sandile: (shocked) Excuse me, what?

BUSISIWE

I’m sitting in between my mom’s legs as she helps me untie the braids in my head.

Me: Who do you think will be the top 8?

Mama: I didn’t like both Lungelo’s so I say the other one must go to.

I giggle blowing off the dandruff from my lips. We are watching the repeat of SA Idols.

Me: The first one didn’t move at all.

Mama: I don’t care which theme it is but I don’t like them.

I laugh.

Me: Haibo mama.

Mama: What? For me there are people who deserved to be there more than they do. They can sing but the are people who can sing more than they do. For example Mother was suppose to be on the top 16.

Me: It’s 12 mama.

Mama: Yona leyo. {That one}.

She waves her hand dismissively.

Mama: Your need to try using starch water and see if it won't work for you.

Me: Starch water?

Mama: Yes, people are recipe creators our there. Apparently when you wash your rice you don't discard that water but pour it in a container then leave it for days. I'm not sure if it's two or three to let is soak then wash your hair.

Me: That's creepy. Does it work?

Mama: Those who have tried it say it work wonders.

Me: Doesn't the water change colour and start smelling?

Mama: Haike ubuza umntu orongo ngoba nam andiyazi. Ndiva ngondiva nam. {You're asking the wrong person because I also don't know. I also hear rumours}.

Me: I will try it and see where it takes me. I better not lose my hair mama because it will be your fault.

I threatened causing her to laugh.

Mama: Nobody forced you to do so.

Me: I need to call Junior.

She stops cutting the fibre off and allows me to jump to my feet. I pick up my phone dialling Kagiso's number. He answers on the second ring.

Me: Hey, I hope I'm nt disturbing.

Kagiso: Not at all.

Me: Can you please pass the phone. I need to speak to him.

Kagiso: Sure.

I hear him yelling his name. His apology still lingers over my head. I thought it would be awkward after that but not once has he brought it up and I appreciate him for that.

Kagiso: Your mother needs to speak to you.

He groans on the background.

Junior: What now? Didn't she call hours ago?

I giggle as Kagiso chuckles.

Junior: Mama.

Me: I worry about you when you're not next to me. I wanted to say goodnight baby.

Junior: But you call all the time. Couldn't you say it earlier?

Me: It was noon then not night.

Junior: Good night mama.

Me: I…

Tu.tu.tu. I frown turning to my mother.

Me: He hanged up on me.

Mama: Good. You're also cramping his style. You can't keep calling every hour.

Me: I was worried.

I defend myself taking my spot back on the floor.

Mama: Which is a good thing but you're exaggerating it. I would have done the same thing. Junior is not lost where he is.

Me: I know that but I'm not used to sharing his attention with someone else.

Mama: You might want to start having an open mind because it's his second home and boys will always have that tight bond with their father's. Sometimes more than their mother's, sometimes less.

Me: I hear you.

Mama: Relax and stop stressing about him. My grandson is a big boy who can take care of himself and this thing of yours wanting to always be by his side needs to stop. Trust me I know no parent want to understand that their child is growing up but it is what it is.

Me: I'll try to be less clingy.

Mama: Allow him to be free and have a good time wherever he is. He doesn't need to always have to be thinking about you. Allow him to be a child once in a while. I know he has a smart mouth but at the end of the day his still a child and give him that time to be one.

I nod and she embraces me.

Mama: You're a great mother. More than what I have been and I'm proud of you.

I smile snuggling further more.

Dad: Are we having a cry session?

We laugh breaking the embrace.

Mama: We didn't hear the door.

Dad: That's because the TV is loud.

He looks around the room then back to us.

Dad: I don't see my favourite person in the world anywhere. Is he in the kitchen?

My mom dramatically gasp.

Mama: I thought I was your favourite person.

Dad: No my love my grandson is.

I laugh.

Mama: I cannot wait for that man to take his son.

She mumbles under her breath.

Dad: It still doesn't change that his my grandson or kanjani princess?

Mama: Don't forget that your hairs fate lied I my hands. I've got a scissor and I know how to use it.

Laughter.

Me: Haike tata andizingeni. {I'm not getting involved}.

Dad: Mxm coward.

I giggle sticking my tongue. Sometimes my parents can kids sometimes and I love witnessing this. Years in that marriage and they still got that spark that we youngsters need. My dating mojo went from 100-0 in days. I'm at that point that not everybody needs a man to make them happy.

NARRATOR

Flipping her eyes open

Jen looked at her surroundings and sighed. Everything came down crushing on her and the doctors words are still ringing in her ears like he just spoke them.

Doctor: Unfortunately you had a miscarriage.

That’s what the man said and it didn’t also help that Mholi was part of her past now. A very painful past she thought was her future. They had plans before everything happened and children were also part of them. She knew that in order for her to be free with him she had to be a divorcee and that was the hardest part at that time. Sandile would have dragged his feet and made her life miserable because she could be happy. The door opens taking her out of her thoughts.

Sandile: Hey you’re awake. Let me get the doctor for you.

He turned on his ready to walk out but her words stopped him.

Jen: No, I need my parents.

Sandile: They are outside. I’ll call them.

He walked out and a few minutes her parents walked in.

Zodwa: My baby

She rushes to her side.

Zodwa: Are you okay?

Jen: I don’t know. I feel my mind has stopped working.

She raised her head to her father.

Jen: Didn’t you see it?

Ndlovu: They blindsided me this time.

She nodded and leaned back on the pillow closing her eyes.

Jen: It’s like I’m losing it.

Zodwa: Don’t say that. It will get better.

She shook her head scrunching up her nose.

Jen: I don’t think so.

They shared a look.

Zodwa: Rest sisi. We will be outside.

Jen: Can I have my phone?

Ndlovu: We’ll ask for it.

They walked outside and Sandile leaped up to his feet.

Ndlovu: She’s asking for her phone. Where is it?

Sandile: It’s in the car. I’ll get it.

He stumbled outside.

Zodwa: Do you think she’s losing it?

Ndlovu: I don’t know but I hope not.

He heavily sighed and sink back in the bench. If he could he would take her pain away from her. The fact that his only hearing about her pregnancy now means that they knew from the start that the baby won’t make and that’s why they didn’t

show him. Like any parent he would have made means to try to protect her and her unborn child. Maybe there was something he was missing. Maybe there's an ancestor who is angry at them because it's the only explanation he has right now.

Inside the room, Jen heard the door closing and she opened her rimmed red eyes.

Sandile: I brought your phone. The doctor is coming.

She thanked him and waited for him to leave the room then clicked on the number making a call.

*

*

Sihle who just put her last born to bed went back to her bedroom.

Sihle: Finally.

Ben: I told you she sleeps better when you're the one tucking her in. If it's me she makes balloons with her saliva and blows them even when I sing her a lullaby.

She took of her robe to join her husband then switched off the side lamp.

Sihle: Your kids are a problem.

He faked a gasp drawing circles on her skin.

Ben: Ain’t they yours too?

Sihle: Hope is mine but the others no they are not.

They laughed.

Ben: Hope is quiet compared to the others.

Sihle: That’s little girl. I know I can always count on her.

She raised her head kissing his lips. Benjamin grunts pulling her to his lap. His hand went to her pyjama top and pinched her nipple. Sihle groaned on his mouth causing him to slide his tongue in. Her phone rang on the pedestal much to their annoys.

Ben: Don’t answer it.

He dropped kisses from her jaw to her neck. She nodded as he went to that particular spot. Neck kisses were her weakness especially that spot his assaulting right now. The phone rang again causing them to groan.

Sihle: People have no time.

She bent on the bed taking her phone on the her side. Ben smacked her butt.

Sihle: You’re so naughty.

Ben pulled the bottom to her ankles and licked his lips after seeing no restrictions. He opened her butt cheeks and buried

his face on her. Sihle moaned placing her elbows on the bed to balance herself. A giggle came out of her mouth as she picking up the call. When they say someone was a freak they were talking about Benjamin Collin.

Sihle: Hello.

Voice: I'm sorry to call you after so many years but I needed someone to talk to.

Sihle's eyes fly open at the voice. Her heart skipped a beat as she crawls out of the bed to the floor.

Sihle: Hello?

She pulled her pants up.

Jen: I know I'm suppose to be dead and not make contact with anyone because that is what you guys believe but for how long? I wanted to call but I didn't to disrupt your lives with my endless problems because I'm the one who always have problems.

Tears filled Sihle's eyes. She knew the voice like the back of her hand.

Sihle: (breaking voice) Who is this?

Jen: I'll tell you some other time but right now I need a shoulder to cry on. All I ever wanted as a little girl was a simple life. Just being happy with the people I love. It didn't matter whether I was in a relationship or not but what I have longed for is

happiness. Tell me Sihle, what is my purpose in this life if my happiness keeps getting snatched every single time when I try to grasp it. When will it ever be me who is happy?

Tears rolled down Sihle's face alarming Ben. He jumped out of the bed and took the phone from her and switch it to loudspeaker.

Jen: When will I finally breathe and laugh like everyone else? Everytime I let my guard down I get burnt. Everytime when it's my turn to be happy something bad happens. My happiness is always short-lived and I'm asking myself what is really my purpose? Is it to always get hurt and witnessing other people being happy? I'm starting to question God and my ancestors. Maybe they meet up somewhere and discuss ways to hurt me before they deliver their final verdict on me. They somehow enjoy seeing me miserable. Maybe as we speak they are rolling on the floor in laughter after what they did to me. I keep asking myself how do I keep surviving these attacks because no sane person can withstand what I've been through and what I'm still going to go through. I question my entire existence as human being. My heart is being roasted day in and day out. Pain is tattooed on me like a scar I found in a battle. All I know is pain and everytime it strikes I thought I grew a thick skin. I thought I was immune to it. I was coming to terms that I will have to raise my child on my own because the father dead this afternoon on

am accident. What kind of birthday that takes two important people in life? What am I suppose to celebrate every year? The fact that I lost my boyfriend or I miscarried?

On the end on the line, Jen grimace as her friend become hysterically.

Jen: Don't bother crying for me mntase because I also can't cry for myself. I did that my whole life and now my eyes are dry. I haven't dropped a single tear since they broke both news to me. It's not because I don't want to but because I don't have any tears left to cry. I always accept my situation and make the best of it but this one is too heavy for me. Life is rolling me over like a dice and whoever wants to get a piece of hurting someone is doing so. Attacks are coming from all sides and my walls have all collapsed. I can't shield my heart from them. I can't protect myself from. When will I be happy Sihle? Why do bad things always happen to me? Who did I wrong in my part life so that I can apologise to him or her? Is a curse mhlawumbi that I'm not aware of?

Pain laced in her tone. She swallowed the lump in her throat and continued.

Jen: I didn't call you to put you in my misery. That cord broke off years ago and it's not going be put together again. We are grown now and every women has her share of problems and I don't even you to carry them with me. I just needed to take this

out of my chest because I can feel it there's no going back. I'm brocken beyond repair. If I wake up tomorrow still sane I will know that I must prepare for another test because that's what my life is always about. I'm being tested each day and guess what? I lose all the tests.

She disconnect the line after that statement leaving Sihle bursting in tears.

NARRATOR

At 4am Sihle was already up and ready to start her day. She couldn't sleep a wink after last night. Her mind couldn't shut down and let her rest. She dragged her feet out of the bathroom after taking a shower and find Ben awake too.

Ben: Hey.

Sihle: Hi.

Ben: Did you get any sleep at all?

She shook her head and sat on the edge of the bed.

Sihle: I couldn't.

Ben: I know. I was sleeping right next to you. How do you feel?

Her lips quivered.

Sihle: I'm between a rock and a hard place. I'm angry at her for not trusting me enough.

Her glossy eyes find his.

Sihle: She was my best friend, Benjamin.

Ben: I know baby.

Sihle: She's like a sister from another mother.

Ben kicked off the blankets and crawled to her. Wrapping his around her, he picked her up and placed her on his lap. Sihle buried her face on his chest crying.

Sihle: I don't know how she is now compared to what she was back then. I want to be so mad at her but that call left me torn.

Ben: She must had a reason to do what she did. Nobody just fakes their death for the fun of it.

Sihle: How do I start comforting her? Where will I start even looking for her?

Ben: She was married right?

Sihle nodded.

Ben: Start by confronting the husband. I'm sure he knows something if he also doesn't know means that she's running away from someone or something that's life threatening.

She raised her head and packed his lips with her moist lip.

Sihle: Thank you. I don't know what will do without you.

Ben smiled and kissed her lips. She broke the kiss getting off his lap.

Sihle: I think I will had over there now.

Ben: (shocked) Now? It's not even 6 o'clock my love. You need to rest.

Sihle: I will rest when I get back.

Ben shook his head opening the covers.

Ben: No, you're going to rest now. I'll promise to drive you wherever you want to go when you wake up.

She sighed dropping the towel and slid under the covers. Ben got behind her and spooned her.

Sihle: I love you.

Ben: I love you too. Now sleep.

She faintly smiled closing her eyes. Hopefully she will get some sleep this time around because those words are still ringing in her head like a fresh whisper someone keeps whispering on her.

KAGISO

The intercom jolts me up from my slumber. I throw on some shorts after getting off the bed and padded downstairs barefooted. Normally I'm up and ready for the day by this time but I slept late because Junior and Sibahle. Since her father is still back in KZN I'm babysitting her for the time being, reliving the nanny from her duties.

Me: Who is it?

Voice: It's Sihle.

I pause frown. I haven't heard from this woman in years so you can how confused I am. I pick the remote and open the gate and march to the door to unlock it then march back on the stairs and sit on the last staircase. A knock comes through.

Me: Come in.

The door opens and she walks in accompanied by her husband. She looks around before finding my eyes. I don't know her that much but I can definitely say she had a rough night. I usher them to the living room exchanging greetings. They also greet the kids.

Me: Oh, you guys are up.

Junior: We've been up for hours.

He muttered tossing a popcorn on his mouth. Isn't it too early for that?

Me: Can I prepare breakfast for them first?

Sibahle: We already ate uncle.

Me: Oookay. What else didn't you guys not do?

Junior: We didn't slee whole day.

I chuckle.

Me: It's a Sunday and I have a valid reason for that. Can I have the room, I need to talk to my guests?

With my son I've learned that I must treat him the same way I want people to treat me because the boy is just something else. I can handle a debate in court because that's my profession but not on my son. That little fucker isn't scared of anyone except for his mother. Yes

Advertisement

he respects me but his not to call me out when I'm wrong and that's what I love about him.

Junior: We'll be in the playroom.

Me: Thank you.

I watch them walk away until they disappear then turn to my guests.

Me: How can I help you?

They look at each before the husband nods and squeezes her hand.

Sihle: I got a call last night.

Me: Okay.

Sihle: I…

She trailed off swallowing hard.

Ben: My wife got a call last from a friend she thought she buried.

I sigh leaning back on the couch.

Me: What do you want to know?

Sihle: Tell me that she’s dead and someone was playing a prank on me.

Before I could reply a knock comes on the door. I leap up and march to the door then open it.

Me: Hey.

Busi: Hi. I hope they are ready.

Me: For lazing around they are definitely ready but for church they are not ready.

Busi: But I asked you nicely to prepare them.

Me: I overslept I’m sorry.

I widely open the door for her.

Me: Come in. There’s a meeting I’m about to hold and I also think you need to be part of it.

Busi: I hope you’re not planning of killing me or else I won’t let you live a peaceful life.

She threatens marching inside causing me to chuckle.

Busi: Which way?

Me: Living room.

She disappears on the corridors and a few minutes later I hear them talking. I sigh bracing myself. There's a reason why I am a Mofokeng and why they are the Dlamini's but as always I'm dragged on their saga. I close the door and follow behind her.

Busi: What's this meeting about?

Sihle: We need answers and since I can't find his friend his the best person to answer these questions for me.

Busi: (confused) What questions?

Sihle: I got a call last night and guess from who?

Busi: Who?

Sihle: A very distraught and devastated woman.

Busi: I'm not following.

Sihle: She poured out her heart to me and I felt her words because I knew her like the back of my hand. I grew up with her. Went to the same school with her, got all sort of naughty with her and even spent three days in a jail cell with her.

Busi's eyes widen before she jumps to her feet.

Busi: No. Someone must have been pranking you. We buried her.

I heavily sigh.

Me: She's alive. In fact she's been alive for years now.

Sihle &Busi: How?

They mutter in unison.

Me: It’s a long story but to cut it short her life was in danger and she needed to lay low.

Busi: You’re not making sense.

Me: It was a life and death situation and she had to fake her own death.

Sihle: So who did we bury?

Me: Since people were not allowed to view the body a doll took her place.

Sihle: Wow.

Me: You have to understand that she’s not the one who made that call. Someone had to make that decision for her and since her only sibling was in jail and her husband being a jerk someone had to take over and protect her so I did just that.

Busi: Did you just say I?

Me: Yes, I did. I hunted her father down and called him. He came and took her while I cover my own tracks. Not everyone knew that including Sandile. It was just me and her father, the police and the doctor.

Sihle: I don’t know what to say.

Ben: Why protect her?

Me: In my circle we protect each other. When you introduce someone as your potential wife and later marry her we protect that person with our live even it means protecting her from you and that's what I did. There's Ade's wife Zobuhle and her kids. I would do the same for her including Tyson's wife Nomaswazi.

Ben: I understand.

Me: That goes for everyone. I'm sure if Tyson or Ade knew that they would have done the same. It doesn't matter who protects her but also long as her life is in danger we do the job.

Sihle: Why couldn't Senzeni do the job?

I chuckle.

Me: It's actually Sandile not Senzeni.

She giggles.

Sihle: You know where that name came about so I thought that was his name.

I laugh.

Me: Let's just say he took things lightly and underestimated his ex.

Sihle: I should have known that woman would do something like this.

Me: Nobody thought she would take extreme measures to keep him. In fact we all underestimated her.

Tiny footsteps approach where we are. I turn back and find Sibahle stumbling to me with my phone.

Sibahle: When are you coming back? I miss you.

Sandile: Soon my love. And I promise after that I will take you anywhere you want to go. Now can you please hand over the phone to your uncle. I love you okay.

Sibahle: I love you too daddy.

She hands me the phone and runs back upstairs. It's a video call.

Me: Rough night?

Sandile: More than that.

Me: They didn't your apology?

Sandile: Even if they didn't accept it, I would have left knowing at least I did apologise. It's more than that.

Me: What?

Sandile: She lost her boyfriend yesterday.

I squint my eyes narrowing them.

Sandile: I didn't do it if that's what you're thinking.

Me: That’s so hard to believe. You show up at her door step and her boyfriend mysteriously dies?

Sandile: I had all the chances in the world when I was still living with them so why now? I shoot people not cause car accidents.

Me: True that’s not your style.

I feel a hot gaze burning my eyes. I turn to find all eyes on me. Almost forgot I have guests. I clear my throat.

Sandile: It doesn’t end there.

Me: What could be more worse than that?

Sandile: She lost the baby.

Me: Another exciting news for you. I’m sure you’re thrilled.

Sandile: Actually not really. I’ve never seen her so broken like that.

Me: She made a call last night and reached out to an old friend and now they are here wanting answers.

Sandile: I knew someday it will get to that. But right now she’s not in the state to answer any questions. The doctor had to sedate her because she was staring the wall for hours. She doesn’t speak nor talk. Her last voice to us was when she asked for her phone.

Me: Damn that’s deep.

Sandile: I think this her breaking point. She's having a meltdown but it's a self diagnosis because the doctor hasn't said anything. I'm seeing a depressed Aza on this one.

Me: Are you far from her?

Sandile: She's sleeping.

He shifts the phone to the bed.

Me: Can you bring at closer to her face.

Sandile: Why?

Me: Just do it.

He does as instructed mumbling I'm weird under his breath. I hand the phone to Sihle and tears fill her eyes as she gasp.

Sihle: That's her. Busi she's alive.

She hands the phone to her and bury her face on her husband chest. As if Aza can feel their presence she opens her eyes and looks at the screen.

Busi: (breaking voice) Aza?

Jen: (weakly) Maka Junior.

Busi: Oh my goodness.

She burst in tears as Sandile removes the phone from her. I take my mine back.

Sandile: We'll talk.

Me: Sure. Don't worry about princess I'll take care of her.

Sandile: I know you would.

He hangs up.

Ben: I think we should leave. Thank you for your time.

He helps his wife up and they walk away. I hoist her to my lap and envelope her.

Me: Talk to me.

Busi: I'm overwhelmed.

Me: It will take time to get used it.

Busi: You don't understand. I mourned for her and made peace with that I will never see her again. Our relationship was to rocky and I blamed myself for it. I wanted to apologise to her for what I did and I knew I will never get the chance to do so.

Me: Now it's your chance to do so. You're given the opportunity to do so and don't let it pass you by.

She wraps her arms around my neck, sniffing.

Me: One thing I know is that she hates pity. Don't go there and feel sorry for her because that will drive her crazy.

She giggles drawing back her mucus.

Busi: Thank you for always listening.

Me: No problem.

She raises her head and lock eyes with me.

Me: My parents should be coming to your family during the week of there's someone to welcome them.

Busi: On which day?

Me: Any day your parents are available.

Busi: I'll ask my mom and get back to you.

I nod staring at her. She stares back locking me into a staring contest.

Me: We both can't deny the chemistry between us but if you're not ready I'll …

My words died down as her lips collide with mine.

Me: B?

Busi: Shhh.

She cups my face biting my lip. I groan opening my mouth for her. A giggle forces us to break apart before we could do more. I turn and find Sibahle and Junior sitting on the stairs. Sibahle hides her eyes with her hands and giggles running up the stairs. I look at my son expecting him to do the same but he doesn't.

Instead his eyes are on mine. Sometimes it creeps me up how much we look alike.

Me: What?

He scrunches his nose up in disgust.

Junior: Is your tongue heavy on you, Kagiso?

Me: (confused) What?

Junior: What is your tongue doing in her mouth?

He turns to his mother.

Junior: Can you even breathe, Busi?

Busi drops her face to my chest embarrassed while I chuckle. That arrogance people talk about on me I see it now. His arrogance is out to play and the name calling is the indication of that.

BUSISIWE

Everyday I take one step forward and the next take ten backwards. I really don't know what I want and it's starting to mess up with my mind. Maybe it's because the last time I was wanted by a man was back in my high school days. My relationship lasted for two years before we called it quits. We both wanted something different from each and that's how the relationship ended. I so badly want to hate Kagiso for what he put me through but the heart is the most deceiving organ a human being can have.

Junior: Mama?

Me: Huh?

Junior: Can you please dish up for us.

Me: Oh.

I leap up to my feet and pick up their plates. Kagiso shoves his my way and I side eye him. I ended up not going to church like I intended. I've never been that embarrassed in my life. Junior just had to call me out like a parent who just got his child being naughty.

Kagiso: Please.

I wonder who was dishing up for them when I was not here. He could have dished up for everyone when made the food like normal people but not Kagiso. I hand them their plates back and take my sit.

Kagiso: Are you not having anything?

Me: I already ate thank you.

He nods then dives back in the plate in front of him. I wait for that prayer normal people have before eating but it doesn't come. As much as we didn't attend church that often I know I taught Junior how to day grace.

Sibahle: Can I please have another sausage.

Kagiso gets off the chair and makes his way to the kitchen. I hear a sound of buttons being pressed before I hear the microwave spinning. He comes back a few minutes later with 4 sausages and put one on both Junior and Sibahle's plate then take the remaining two. I cringe as he slice the pieces and combine them with the eggs before shoving them in his mouth. He already had two more before this and the kids had their one and half.

Me: Jesus!

I exclaim jumping to my feet. All eyes turn to me.

Kagiso: Something wrong?

Me: No.

I quickly rush out of the room to the bathroom. I close the door and lean on it. Laughter reverberates on the other side causing me to shake my head. Realisation dawns me and I realise I'm the only normal person in this house. Those people out there are not normal from the son to the father and the best friends daughter. I walk out after composing myself and find the kids racing upstairs while the guardian is doing the dishes.

Kagiso: You're okay?

Me: Do I look like I'm not okay?

I snap irritated. What does this man insinuating? He furrow his eyebrows.

Kagiso: Forgive me for annoying you. I was just asking.

Me: Don't ask.

I click my tongue and storm to the lounge and his hot on my heels.

Kagiso: What's your problem?

Me: Right now you're my problem. You're all over man Kagiso.

Kagiso: (frowning) I'm all over? What the fuck do you mean?

Me: I mean everywhere. You're MTN everywhere I go. All I see is you nje.

Kagiso: I don’t think I’m following but whatever it is I know I’m not the cause of it.

I scoff.

Me: Oh you’re?

Did I say his MTN? I must have been out of my mind.

Kagiso: Let me go before we exchange words that might hurt each other.

I pick up the cushion and throw it at him.

Me: Vele hamba that’s what you’re good at.

He sharply turns on his heels and bend down to pick up the cushion then toss it on the couch. He marches back to the kitchen and that sets me off. I get off the couch and follow him.

Me: Oh so now you’re ignoring me?

He heavily sighs and mumbled inaudible words in his home language and since I’m close to him I heard him.

Kagiso: What does this crazy woman want from me?

Me: I want one thing but you can’t give me that.

Kagiso: B I’m not going to do this with you. I’m not a psychic nor am I a prophet. I don’t know what you’re talking about and what has set you off. We were just fine earlier on so what happened from then to now?

Me: A lot has happened.

Kagiso: Then whatever it is happening in that pretty head of yours don't count me in on it.

He pushes me to the side and pack the dishes back on their places. Is this man blind of should I spell everything out for him?

Kagiso: I'm taking the kids out to the park. Are you tagging along?

Me: If I was not here when you have asked me?

Kagiso: Jesus woman the answer is no or yes.

Me: Where you going to call me over or there was someone else you were going to take with?

I spit out leaning on the counter. His frown deepens.

Kagiso: What?

Me: What?

He stares at me for a while before breaking into a brief chuckle.

Kagiso: B?

Me: Mmmh.

Kagiso: Are you jealous?

My eyes widen.

Me: Ubani? Mna? Asoze!

I retort placing my hands on my hips. What does he take me for?

Kagiso: Okay so you won't mind if I introduce you to someone else?

I swallow hard.

Kagiso: You won't mind right?

He arches his brow waiting in anticipation.

Me: No I won't.

Kagiso: Liar. Your mouth says one thing but your face says the other.

Me: You're not about to cross question me. I'm not one of your clients.

Kagiso: (chuckling) I never said you were. Why are you so jumpy?

Me: I'm not jumpy.

Kagiso: Then how do you feel?

Me: (shouting) I don't have feelings for you.

He looks at me before throwing his head back and break into laughter.

Kagiso: Now I see where the problem lies.

He closes the gap between us and his finger find my chin and raise it to so the eyes can be level.

Kagiso: I'm going to ask you a question and I expect an honest answer.

I nod.

Kagiso: Do you have feelings for me?

Me: What? Who told you that? I demand that person to come here and tell me that straight to my face.

Kagiso: (beaming) Nobody told me that but you did. You have feelings for me but you're in denial.

Me: Ufunde gqithi wena ngoku lemfundo yakho ikuza entloko. Ubona izinto ezingekhoyo.{You studied too much and now this education of yours is getting in your head. You're seeing things that are not there}.

He chuckles.

Kagiso: Do you know the first step of denial is?

Me: I'm sure you're going to tell me advocate.

I sarcastically muttered rolling my eyes.

Kagiso: It's trying to justify something that you know is there just to make yourself feel better.

Me: I’m not in denial.

Kagiso: Is it?

Me: Yes.

Kagiso: (amused) I see.

I squeal as he picks me up and places me on the counter then push my legs apart and settle on them.

Kagiso: Denial is a bit a bad thing as long you’re trying to convince yourself that something is not true whereas it’s true.

Me: I’m not in denial.

Kagiso: So how do you feel?

Me: How many times must I tell you that I don’t have feelings for you?

Kagiso: (smirking) There’s a difference between how do you feel and what you just said. I didn’t say you have feelings for me but you said that.

Me: Excuse you? I did not.

I protest like a child throwing a tantrum. He smiles nodding.

Kagiso: Okay.

Me: Good. Let me down before you start saying I want you.

Kagiso: Don’t you?

Me: No.

Kagiso: Don’t tell me that thought never crossed your mind before.

Me: It hasn’t.

Kagiso: Considering the fact that you partly confessed your feelings for me I find it hard to believe.

Me: I didn’t confess to anything.

I push him aside and jump off the counter. Junior and Sibahle makes their way down already dressed up.

Sibahle: We are ready.

Kagiso: Take any car keys and wait in the car. I’m coming.

Junior: Mama are you joining us?

Kagiso: (amused) Yes mama are you joining us?

Me: No baby. Have fun though.

He nods and they both walk out.

Me: I have to go.

Kagiso: You’re not walking out of that door without telling me the truth.

Me: What truth?

Kagiso: That you love me just as much as I love you.

My heart skips a beat. How does he know? I've been trying to convince myself that my mind is just playing tricks on me.

Kagiso: Is it?

Me: No.

He nods.

Kagiso: Okay.

Is that all he is going to say? Just okay? What is wrong with this man? Where has he seen a woman confess her own feelings to a man? Probably in the movies not in real life. And I'm not confessing to anything.

Kagiso: Come I'll drop you off.

I cross my arms over my chest and stand rooted on my spot as he walks upstairs. He comes back a few minutes later with his wallet and phone.

Kagiso: Let's go.

Me: I'm not leaving here without you wanting me.

Kagiso: Didn't you say you don't want me?

Me: You're twisting my words.

Kagiso: Is it? I'm sorry then.

Is he mocking me?

Kagiso: Tell me what do you really want?

Do I have to spell everything out for him? Why are men are so slow when it comes to thinking? If I had to pull up my skirt and show him my butt his mind will work faster than before. He will know what to do.

Kagiso: B w…

I cut him off irritated.

Me: Ubane usithi B. B yantoni? Andiyonyosi mna. Igama lam ndingu Busiswe hayi B. {You keep saying B. B for what? I'm not a bee. My name is Busiswe not B}.

That B nonsense is the one making him not see clearly. I can already hear that "Bzzzz" sounds of a bee. He's a man and I expect him to take the lead on this one but no his still stuck on abo "Bzzzz". Bloody fool! This man will never take me and my feelings serious. He drops a bomb shell on me than when I expect him to repeat his words he choose to play dumb.

Kagiso: Seriously woman what do you want?

Me: (screaming) I want you to take the lead and be in charge. You cannot tell me you love me and pretend like you didn't say it. Say it again.

Kagiso: You don’t reciprocate those feelings so why should I bother?

Me: How do you know?

Kagiso: You said it yourself and I respect it. You’re confused and I understand.

Me: I’m not confused. I know what I want.

Kagiso: What do you want then?

Me: You. I want you.

Kagiso: Oh.

He flatly replied.

Me: Yes I want you. Infact I don’t want you but I love you. I love you with all my heart.

Kagiso: Do you know how long I’ve been waiting to hear say that?

I smile shaking my head.

Kagiso: It’s been long. Come here.

I stumble towards him and wrap my arms around his waist and place my head on his chest. He’s firm chest cages me.

Kagiso: Thank you.

He raises my head and kiss my lips. I stand on my tiptoes kissing him back.

Voice: B?

The voice sounds so familiar but so far.

Voice: B.

I feel a hand shaking my shoulder. I open my eyes and look at my surroundings. I'm sleeping on couch and hovering above me is none other than my son, Sibahle and the dream manipulator.

Me: Where am I?

Kagiso: My place.You dozed off earlier.

I kick off the throw leaping up.

Junior: Mama did you have a nightmare?

Me: (frowning) No why?

Kagiso: You were moaning. Very loud.

My eyes widen.

Me: Whaaaaat?

Where are my shoes? I need to get out of this place because what do you call that? I don't have feelings for the man and the only logical explanation to that dream is that he stole my normal beautiful dream and inserted that blurred one.

Me: Must have been a nightmare. I have to go.

I just hope I didn't moan someone's name because that will be the end of me.

Kagiso: We are going out. Are you joining us?

Hell to the no! That dream proved that his dangerous so why should I throw myself on the lion's den?

Me: (yelling) No

Advertisement

I'm not going.

Kagiso: There's no need for you to yell.

Me: That's the only way you understand things. I told you that I don't have feelings for you.

Kagiso: (frowning) What?

Is he going to play dumb? He can deceive everyone out there including his opponents in court but not this woman.

Junior: Mama are you okay?

Kagiso: What feelings?

My eyes widen. Jizas! Did I just say that out loud? Can the ground open up and swallow me already.

Me: Fire, fire. My broda thunder that mouth. Mumu wetin dey say? {Fool what are you saying?}.

My Nollywood ears come to play. I've been watching Nollywood movies everyday and now I can pat myself in the back for being a fast learner.

Them: Huh?

Confusion swirled in thieir eyes.

Me: I have to go.

I pick up my bag avoiding eye contact and rush to the door.

Kagiso: Busiswe.

I ignore him and close the door behind me. I need to find the strongest church so they can pray for me. A demonic spirit is using me. Spirit of Jezebel has entered my body.

Me: I shouldn't have skipped church today.

I mumbled picking up my pace as they keep yelling my name. I know what I feel and it's not feelings for him.

77

BUSISIWE

Since I couldn’t go to church, I resorted to watching these church programmes. I need to be one with God after what happened this morning. I don’t even know how to explain what happened. Someone must have manipulated my dream because I’m not desperate for a man. My phone chimes as I scroll down looking for a verse.

Me: Mntase.

Sihle: Hey

Advertisement

unjani?

Me: Apart from being confused I think I am okay.

Sihle: We are sailing on the same boat. I don’t think my mind can get used to the fact that she’s alive.

Good lord! How can I forget the most important thing ever. See why I say I don’t want that man near me? His whole being nje just messes up with my mind.

Sihle: Busi are you there?

I snap out of my daze.

Me: Ewe mntase.

Sihle: I was thinking maybe you can ask Kagiso to give us her home address then we can fly down to see her.

There’s that name again. Dear lord hear my prayers and burn his name of people’s lips.

Me: Ask who?

Sihle: Kagiso.

I can hear confusion laced in her tone on the end of the line.

Me: That demon? I’m not going to do that.

Sihle: Haibo! What happened?

Me: Just know that his an incubus.

She giggles.

Sihle: You’re not making sense at all mntase.

Me: Ucinga andimboni. {He thinks I don’t see him}.

Sihle: Are you going to tell me what are you talking about?

Me: Uthi mna ndiyamfuna. Khawufane ucinge. {He says I want him. Just imagine}.

Sihle: Khame ndikubuze lento. Wena uyamfuna na? {Let me ask you this. Do you want him}.

Me: Intoni? Unotshe impundu zelawu. {What? Hell no}.

She laughs.

Sihle: I wouldn’t know mntase because I’m not you.

Me: I’m telling you that I don’t want him.

Sihle: You’re the only one who knows what you feel so I’m the going to argue with you.

Me: Thank you.

Sihle: So that address?

I heavily sigh.

Me: I’ll get back to you.

Sihle: Word of advice mntase if he makes your intestines to move then don’t want until someone else takes him away from you. Life is too short to deprive yourself izinto ezimnandi…nice thing.

Me: I hear you.

Sihle: Just think about it. What if he dies now while you’re still scared to tell him how you feel?

Me: I don’t feel anything for him.

I raise my voice yelling. What is wrong with these people?

Sihle: Khawume ndidrope phambi kokuba undihlafune. {Let me drop before you chew me}.

She hangs up. I breathe out and go to my call log. I tap on his number and wait for it to ring but instead the annoying man from my network provider tells me I'm out of airtime. I send a please call me instead and like his been waiting for it my phone rings immediately.

Kagiso: B?

My heart skips a beat while words get stuck on the roof of my tongue.

Kagiso: Busiswe?

Me: Iauaia.

Kagiso: Huh?

Me: Yhoo network.

I remove the phone from my air and wave it around.

Kagiso: Busi can you hear me?

Me: Auahgah.

I wave the phone.

Kagiso: Busi?

Me: Yhuu le network inezothe man. {Yhoo this network is annoying}.

I disconnect the call and switch it to flight mode and toss the phone on top of the bed then take the remote. I increase the volume.

Pastor: Pray for your heart desires.

I close my eyes and kneel in front of the TV.

Pastor: Talk to God. Let him be your friend. Be free to him like you're free to your friends.

Me: Thixo somandla wena wadala izulu nomhlaba. Naba abantwana bakho befuna ukundihenda. Ndibabheka kwelicala kukho lo umnye unomoya kasathane. Ndibangathi kukho andibambileyo. Ndithelele somandla undihlangule kulomlo ndikuwo. Umntana wam mncinci gqithi for ukuba ndiye esihogweni mna.{God that created heaven and earth. Here are your children wanting to tempt me. I go this side and there's another one who has an evil spirit of Satan. I go to the other side and someone is holding me down. Speak on my behalf and rescue me on this fight I'm in. My child is still young for me to go to hell.

Pastor: Allow him to be that one friend that you confide in without getting any reply or judgement. Pour out your heart. What are you scared of?

Like his message is speaking to me. I increase my voice.

Me: (shouting) Isihogo sika sathane kulapho ndingasoze ndiye khona. Ndiyala ngam. Ndihlambulule. Ungandingenisi ekuhedweni ndimncici gqith. (shouting) Satan's hell is where I'm not going. Don't lead me to temptation while I'm still this young}.

Pastor: Amen!

Me: Amen!

I open my eyes and leap up to my feet.

Pastor: Praise God. Give yourself a round of applause for that marvellous prayer.

I clap my hands.

Pastor: He will not leave you not forsake.

Me: Amen!

I knew he will not leave me especially now the accusations are hanging over me.

JENNIFER

I throw the soil on the grave and walk back to my family. It's official Mholi is really dead and I will never see him again. I somehow hoped that he was injured somewhere and the doctors made a mistake but grave across from where I'm standing confirms everything. The choir starts singing those

soppy songs that brings tears to everyone's eyes at the casket goes down. And still my eyes are too dry for me to cry. God knows my heart like the back of his hand by now and he knows I've been crying my whole life. Saying goodbye is the most difficult thing to do but it has to be done in order to get closer. I close my eyes and silently speak to him.

Me: Protect our child from the other side.

Opening my eyes, I watch some local men filling up the grave. We drive back to his house after everything to wash our hands. His siblings make their way towards me.

Mholi's brother: Come this side.

I shake my head.

Tata: Unfortunately we are not staying.

Mholi's sister: At least eat something.

Tata: We have somewhere to be.

They have been my voice since mine disappear from me.

Mholi's brother: We understand. Thank you for coming.

I nod faking a smile and turn on my heels following my parents to the car.

Voice: Jen?

I turn to locate the voice and it's none other that his sister.

Mholi’s sister: I’m sorry to bring this up now but I can’t help it. That guy you’re wiyh is he your brother or cousin?

If it was any day I would have laughed my lungs out and tease Sandile about it but unfortunately my sense of humour also vanished with everything.

Mholi’s sister: If his your extended family please hook me up with him. J think I just found my future husband.

For the first time in a week I crack a smile.

Mholi’s sister: I hope you don’t mind right?

I amusedly shake my head. I don’t care eve if he marries him. Men are the last thing on my mind right now.

Mholi’s sister: Joy.

She squeals embracing me then ran back inside. I walk to the car and jump in. Sandile speeds off and since his house is not far from mine it doesn’t take us long to reach home. I make my way to my room outside to change and padded the main house.

Tata: Come.

I follow him to his ancestral hut and sit on the reed mat. Two candles are wrapped with a wool on both side and burning.

Tata: People take soul ties lightly but sometimes they are the one that becomes your bad luck. Sleeping with someone

automatically makes your soul connected to that person. We are breaking yours from Mholi and whoever side the wool breaks from means you or he is the one who let go first. The left candle represent him and the right is you.

I nod and wait in anticipation. 20 minutes later the wool is still tied to the candles. I huff annoyed the sage will choke me to death.

Tata: Patience.

He cooed softly. I sigh and place my hand on my cheek and balance it with my knee. The wool finally breaks just as I doze off. I sit up straight and loon at him.

Tata: It broke from his side.

Meaning his the one who let go first.

Tata: Stay put I'm coming.

He walks out and minutes later he comes back with a plastic. He opens it and takes out more candles different in color's and places baby clothes and a bottle on the floor. My heart sinks. He lights the candles and brings the incense closer to me. I cough chocking.

Tata: Inhale it.

I drag in my breath inhaling it. He places it down and I zone him out as he starts talking. I knew this had to happen and I know I

would have delayed it because I was not ready to say goodbye. How do you say goodbye to someone you've hardly know? Yes she or he was inside me for 5 weeks but I only knew that a week ago.

Me: Ivakele.

I blurt out causing him to pause speaking.

Tata: What?

Me: His or her name is Ivakele.

The name just crossed my mind right now. My prayers were really heard hence Ivakele.

Tata: Don't cry in the near future and say we didn't give you any name. Ivakele is your name and let your soul rest in peace. Don't bother your mother but protect her. Mholi I'm handing you your child and as a father I expect you to be with him or her.

Tears blur my vision but they don't fall down.

Tata: Azasakhe respected you until your last days so I'm expecting you to return the same courtesy. I have high hopes for you boy don't disappoint me.

He turns to me.

Tata: We'll go to the river in the evening so you can bathe.

I nod looking at the tiny clothes.

Tata: I'll give you a minute.

I wait for him to step out of the room and pick the clothes and cradle them on my chest.

Me: Always know that mommy loves you.

I place them back and get off the floor then stumbled to the main house. I find my parents including the Sandile. I clear my throat to gain their attention.

Me: (softly) I've seen how you've been looking at me. Pity is written all over your faces and I don't want that.

They immediately look away.

Me: I don't want you to pity me. Tragedy strikes to anyone and it's unfortunate that I'm that person who gets to feel that. Life moves on and we can't dwell in the past. I just have one request from all of you.

My father nods for me to go on.

Me: Allow me to grieve my own way. Allow me to feel the pain no matter how are it is. Treating me like an egg that will break any time won't heal me instead it will set me back. I want to feel the pain and how deep it is. I want to rapture every part of me. I want to bleed on my own without any helping hand. I want to wear my pain as a scare. I want it to be visible to

people. I want it to turn me insane if it gets to that. I want to feel the pain so that when I move on I don’t look back. Allow my pain to break me in order for me to move on. Break me any how it wants. If I survive I would know that someone helped me through it and I don’t want that. I want to survive on my own. Let pain be one with me.

3 YEARS LATER

JENNIFER

Nurse: Jen, phone call.

I pull the blankets down.

Me: (sleepy voice) Who is it?

Nurse: The usual one.

I fully open my eyes and roll them.

Me: Tell him I'm sick or something.

Sandile: Get your ass up.

His voice booms loudly on the speaker causing the nurse to giggle. I yawn sitting up and take the phone from the nurse and switch off the loudspeaker.

Me: This friendship is starting to annoy me. What do you want?

Sandile: Nothing just to wake you up.

Me: You do know that I can do that by myself right?

Sandile: You take your sleep more seriously as if you're paid for it.

Me: That’s because it’s important. Don’t you have a girlfriend or something? You need to get laid so that you can get off my back.

He laughs.

Sandile: Unfortunately for you I don’t. My wife just happened to friend zone me, imagine.

Me: She did good. You can be too much at times.

He chuckles.

Sandile: Poor me. I made a bad choice when I married her.

I laugh.

Me: I definitely say she’s the one who made a bad choice. Imagine having a husband like you who is not even romantic. When was the last time you got laid?

He cracks up so hard.

Sandile: Tsek Aza.

I giggle.

Sandile: On a serious note how are you?

Me: Still kicking and screaming and you?

Sandile: I’m okay just taking one day at a time. I miss you though.

Me: You were here just last week.

Sandile: Don’t care.

Me: Well I don’t because you call everyday so it makes it hard for me to miss you. I hate to see you go but I love to watch you leave.

Sandile: Is it? Then this is the last time I’m calling you.

I laugh tucking my feet under my thighs.

Me: I didn’t say stop calling.

Sandile: Mmm.

He muttered in a deep voice then that silence we usually fall into follows. I can hear him breathing on the end of the like and I do the same.

Sandile: When are you getting out?

Me: When I’m ready.

Sandile: You were ready just last week. What changed your mind?

Me: I realised that I was not ready to face the world again. It got too much for me so I booked myself in again.

Sandile: People were waiting for you. Your family

Advertisement

friends and me.

I heavily sigh.

Me: I know. I chickened out at the last minute. I got used to this safe space I'm in and out there just feels like I will fall back into depression.

Sandile: You've got people who will be with you every step of the way.

Me: I don't expect people to baby me all the time. They've got their own lives to live. My parents can do that because it's in their nature to baby kids until the last days but my friends? No, we are grow ups now and each have her own life and her fair share of problems.

Sandile: Sometimes your responses just amaze me. You're not the same crazy woman I met years ago.

I laugh.

Me: I grew up plus pain changed me. And not to forget you. You drove me crazy.

He laughs.

Sandile: I fumbled a lot.

Me: See. Your whole demeanour was the one driving me crazy. Everytime I saw you or your family something in me would just

be crazy. It’s like a switch will be turned on when I saw you guys.

Laughter.

Me: Don’t laugh.

Sandile: I’m sorry just that many encounters come to mind right now.

I giggle. The door opens and the nurse peeks in and mouths.

Nurse: Dr Makhanya is here.

I give her and thumbs up.

Me: My therapist is waiting for me. I have to go.

Sandile: Babe?

Me: Mhm.

Sandile: I love you.

I smile.

Me: Bye friend.

Sandile: I can be your friend and your lover.

Me: (playfully) Boy please.

He laughs as I disconnect the call. I get off the bed and fix then walk out of my room after shoving a piece of paper in my pocket. I hand nurse Andrei her phone back.

Me: Thank you but next time just say I'm not here.

She laughs.

Andrei: He buys me airtime to speak to you so I can't do that.

I roll my eyes and padded to the therapists office. I knock and wait for him to invite him in. He opens the door and frowns upon seeing me.

Dr: Are you lost?

I smile walking in.

Me: Maybe.

He closes the door and walks to the couch.

Dr : I thought they were speaking about a different Jen when they said Jen was waiting for me. What happened?

Me: I don't know.

Dr : I remember how excited you were on our last session that you were getting out.

Me: I was until I remember that the world was cruel on me. What if it happens again?

Dr: What if it doesn't happen again? How will you know if you don't give it a chance?

I shrugged and lean back on the couch.

Dr: You once said you're a risk taker so what's stopping you from doing so?

Me: I guess I'm being cautious about it. I don't want what happened before happen again.

Dr: Fear is always part of our lives. It's not something that start now because of you. You have to face your fears in order to overcome them.

Me: I know.

Dr: If you did you wouldn't be here.

I drag out another sigh and take out the paper from my pocket and hand it to him. He unfolds it and goes through it before narrowing his eyes at me.

Dr: I'm seeing Mondli and Zodwa here which I assume are you parents. Tell me about them.

Me: Well my mother and I didn't have that close relationship. She preferred my brother more than me so I grew up fending for myself. I could say I matured while I was still young because of circumstances. But regardless of that I loved her. She was my mother.

Dr: Go on.

Me: Then I met my father. We clashed at first but as time went on I realised we are just the same but his strict when it comes to tradition. I guess it has to do with him being a sangoma.

Dr: Why didn't your father just throw his bones and give you herbs to heal you?

He teases making me laugh.

Me: There's a saying that says a doctor can't cure himself or herself.

Dr: True.

Me: He specialises on being a dentist because he practiced both tradition and western medicine. If I had cavity he would be the one I would have gone too but what I was going through was beyond him and his herbs.

Dr: Tell him more about him.

Me: He played a role that I've been longing for since I was a child. That attention my mother didn't give me he gave me. Then there's Mam Zodwa. We clash almost everyday but I love her. She's my mother that one. Reflecting on my time with them I've realised that I've been a brat to her since day one. I spoke to her any how I wanted and regardless of how my relationship was with my late mother she didn't raise me that way. Respect

goes a long way and that's what I owe Mam Zodwa. She's been with my father for years and obviously that makes her my mother whether I like it or not.

Dr: I like that you're seeing your mistakes and not trying to justify them.

Me: The first in healing is to acknowledge your wrongs right?

He smiles.

Dr: Right.

He looks at the paper then back at me.

Dr: Kids. What do they signify?

Me: I lost one and may his or her soul rest in peace.

Dr: Amen!

I giggle.

Me: I realise that I've been depriving myself a chance to be a parent to my brother's kids. Like it or not I'm the only parent they have. I lost so many years of their lives because of fear of the unknown.

Dr: How many are they?

Me: 3. Twins and a girl.

Dr: See you don't need to birth a child for it to be your own.

I smile nodding.

Me: Then there's Sibahle. Damn I'm a mother man.

He laughs.

Dr: Can we move or you still want to share more?

Me: We can move.

Dr: Friendship. Sihle, Busi and etc.

I smile.

Me: I reconnect with my old friend and I must say it's quite refreshing. Everytime when they visit it reminds me back in the days when were still growing up. Sihle is a mother of two but she still behaves the same. She was the trouble instigator back in the days and still is now. Can you believe she once said I must do escape here like prison break and escape plan.

He cracks up so hard.

Me: (laughing) I've accepted that no matter how old we are she will always be Sihle. Her husband my former boss's son is loaded but she still charges Sandile money for visiting me.

He laughs.

Dr: Your friend is savage.

I giggle.

Me: She’s a special case that one. Then there’s Busi. She was the one who came from a front well off family from the three of us. I don’t have a lot to say about her because I don’t know her now. She’s holding back and it makes it difficult for me to connect to her again.

Dr: Junior.

I laugh.

Me: He’s my person that’s all I can say.

He chuckles.

Me: Him and his father just get me. Kagiso understands me before I can utter a word.

He nods dropping his eyes back to the paper then back to me.

Dr: Sandile.

Me: A friend.

Dr: But his name keeps popping everywhere. I skipped the name under family because his there and friendship his also there. Tell me about him.

Me: What makes you think it’s a him?

He amusedly raise his brow.

Me: Truth be told his my husband.

He widen his eyes.

Dr: You're married?

Me: Child I'm a 32 year old woman turning 33 this year what did you expect?

Dr: You didn't strike me as someone who is married. Women usually wear the rings to prove that and Reneilwe Makhanya is one of those woman. She never takes off her ring and my father once took it off while she was sleeping to polish it and she freaked out the entire day.

I laugh.

Me: I don't even know where mine is.

Dr: How many years have you been married?

I chuckle.

Me: Would you believe me when I say it's ten years this year.

Dr: The why are you here Jen. Our first session you mentioned ex's and now I'm surprised that all along you're married.

I giggle.

Me: Life got complicated along the way hence I'm here.

Dr: Tell me about him.

Me: He’s Shaka Zulu’s son whose been courting me for 2 years now.

I smile.

Me: We just vibing and laughing nje.

Dr: (smirking) Loving, fucking zonke nje.

I pick the cushion behind me and throw it at him. He ducks laughing.

Me: (smiling) I’m still your elder.

Dr: Ngiyaxolisa. I just love teasing you.

I giggle. Three years later I finally found my smile back. When I first walked in this facility I was in the brink of losing. My father didn’t know how deal with me anymore and I could see they were tired. They old and I don’t fault them anywhere. My life has been a roller coaster ride from the beginning and they don’t know peace since I came into their lives. It was either I choose to let pain consume of I choose to pick myself up and start afresh and that’s what I did. This place has been my peace. It gave me time to reflect on my past decision and see where I want to go in life. I had a lot to live for. I had to forgive myself first and let bygones be bygones because nothing comes out from holding a grudge. It only creates misery and hatred. I don’t want to be that vile person I was before.

Dr: You’re ready for the world but it’s not ready for you.

He breaks me out of my thoughts. I smile in appreciation. My therapist just had to be a child that has a lot of wisdom behind his ears.

SANDILE

Parking the car, I close the window and step out. I lock it and walk to the garage door and close then make my way inside. I frown as I find the door unlock.

Me: Aunty.

I yell flicking the lights on and march to look for her.

Me: Aunty.

Soft music starts playing in the living room. I make my way there and find the lights dimmed.

Me: Aunty.

A figure moves on the chair near the stairs catching my attention. I squint my eyes then march back to the wall and turn on the lights.

Jen: (smiling) Hey stranger.

She uncross her legs and leaps up to her feet.

Me: You're here.

She nods vigorously stumbling towards me.

Me: You're here.

Jen: I'm here.

I drop the keys and open my arms for her. She runs and jumps to my lap. I tightly hold her and spin around.

Me: Fuck you're here.

She giggles.

Jen: I'm here.

Me: How? When we spoke you said you were not ready.

Jen: Put me down first.

I chuckle walking to the chair and chair and lower myself on it and pull her to my lap.

Jen: Dr Makhanya discharged me again after our session. I'll be seeing him thrice a week.

Me: If I knew you come I would have made it special.

Jen: Lucky you have me who thinks for you. I made it special.

I grin.

Me: How?

Jen: You'll find out soon. The night is still young.

I embrace her again.

Me: I still can't believe you're here.

Jen: And I'm here to stay. I hope you're ready because I will annoy you for life.

I quickly pull out and look at her.

Me: Did just say I think you did?

She pecks my lips.

Jen: Nigga you better keep up because I'm not the same anymore.

I laugh crushing my lips on hers. She pulls out shaking her head.

Jen: Nah, you're not about to ruin the night.

I smile raising my hands in surrender.

Jen: From here onwards forward we go. What happened in the past stays in the past.

Me: Agreed.

Jen: If there was someone else in my absence please let me know now so history won't repeat itself.

Me: Would you believe me if I say I was waiting for you.

Jen: You don't have to lie to me. I will understand because of circumstances.

Me: I'm serious. I've been abstaining.

She laughs.

Jen: Askies but you didn’t strike as someone as who can do that.

Me: I was serious when I said I want us to fix what we had. The problem that made us clash all the time was that none of us wanted to listen to the other. You had your baggage and so did I.

Jen: Like I said it’s all in the past. But I apologise for breaking your leg.

She bite her lip to suppress the laughter bubbling down her throat. I playfully click my tongue.

Me: You’re full of shit yazi.

She burst in laughter.

Jen: Sorry but the image I have on my mind is hilarious. Back then I was scared when it happened but now it cracks me up everytime I think about it.

I snort.

Me: You left me wounded.

Jen: (giggling) I’m apologising nje.

Me: Like you mean it.

Jen: Okay

I’m sorry for breaking you leg.

Me: Who? Who are you apologising to?

Jen: (smiling) To my friend hawu.

Me: Do I look like I'm your friend?

Jen: (laughing) I'm joking. I apologise baby for breaking your leg.

A beam from ear to ear like a retard.

Me: Say it again.

Jen: I apo…

I interject.

Me: The word after that.

She rolls her eyes.

Jen: Your ego is boasted. Yes you heard correctly. I said baby. I think it's time to give us a shot again.

Christmas really come early for me because what do you call this? I could feel my stomach doing the flip-flops while my heart skips a beat.

Me: Are you serious?

Jen: I wouldn't have came straight here hours after my release if I wasn't serious. I would have been on a flight to KZN back to my parents.

I bite my lip containing my excitement. I can't afford to mess this up again not when she just gave me another chance. Her hand find my beard.

Jen: You need to shave to show people you're no longer single.

I laugh.

Me: My beard isn't that long.

I protest.

Jen: Yes but a clean shaven will do. People have to be amazed the next time they see you. Your were single then and now there has to be a difference. It has to show that there's someone in your life and she's taking of you.

Me: I think I'm going to love the new you.

Jen: As long we don't have secret and lie to each other. I think we were just fine if we rule those out.

Me: I've got none.

Jen: I came to you bare this time. I'm vulnerable and if you know you can't handle that please let me know now before I invest a lot in this relationship.

Me: I swear nothing will break us apart this time.

Jen: I really hope so.

Me: Can I kiss you?

She laughs.

Jen: When I said I'm vulnerable I didn't mean that fragile. You don't have to treat me like a glass that will break anytime. And yes you can kiss me. I've been waiting all day to wrap my hands on waist and kiss your face.

I chuckle capturing her lips. The kiss was so slowly and passionately. My hand went to the back to unzip her dress but she broke the kiss.

Jen: (panting) Not so fast Mr. I have a surprise for you and it will work out if you cooperate.

Me: You can give it to me tommorrow. Right now I want to bury myself in you.

Jen: No. Run upstairs and take the quickest shower you ever took and come back.

I thinned my eyes.

Me: You're not going leave right?

Jen: No, I won't. Aunty dropped Sibahle at Kagiso's and I have her a day off so it's just you and me here. We've got the night all to ourselves so are you willing to make use or not?

Me: I'm definitely using it.

She jumps to her feet and so do I. She smiles upon seeing the tent ibmy pants.

Jen: I'm pleased to know I still have an effect on you. You have 25 minutes. Make it quick.

I curse under my breath and slowly walk to my room. I strip naked and jump in the shower. I shudder as the cold water hit my skin. I don't know what she had instore for be me but whatever it's is I love it already. I step out and wrap a towel around my waist and walk downstairs. I find her as she places food on top of the table.

Jen: I'm pleased to see you naked. I forgot to tell you don't dress up because we will be eating naked.

She murmurs taking off all her clothes and shoes. I groan as she stands naked in front of me. Pulling out a chair she extends her hand.

Jen: Lose the towel and come sit.

I swallow dropping the towel and make myself comfortable on the chair. I release as shaky breath when her cold hand hold my cock.

Jen: It's been a while.

She mutters staring at me and position herself. She slides down all the way and we both moan. I hold her waist and start

thrusting underneath. She puts her hand on my chest stopping me.

Jen: Where are you rushing to? There's no need for you to rush anywhere. We've got time in our hands it's not like you're stealing it. Relax, take your time. It's yours.

Her walls squeeze me in making me hiss.

Me: I don't think I will last long baby. Allow me to have this round.

I clench my jaws holding her tight. My balls are ready to release load and load of cum. She runs her hand on my back and whisper.

Jen: Cum.

Like I've been waiting for that instruction, I release what I have been keeping for years growling. She holds me until I came down.

Me: I'm sorry.

Jen: There's nothing to be ashamed of. I've got to feed you.

She breaks the embrace and turn to pick the cutlery and slice the meat then turn to me. I open my mouth and she pecks my lips as I chew.

Jen: Eat to gain your stamina. The night is still young my love.

I curse as she plants wet kisses on my neck. Whoever this woman is in front of is not the same woman I met before. This one just happened to be a freak because who the hell eats food deep balls in someone’s cunt?

NARRATOR

Soft music played in the background while Jen keeps feeding her man. On how she could still eat and be not affected by what was inside her was still a mystery to Sandile. She looked so calm while he was sweating profusely. He took a shaky breath swallowing what was in his mouth. She scooped another portion and fed herself.

Jen: Full?

Sandile: Almost.

She nodded and continued with her task in hand. She brought the glass of water to his lips and waited for him to drink his portion and she followed after. Jumping to her feet, she picked the plate and went back to the kitchen while his cum leaked. He smile watching her butt juggling and just seeing his cum on her thighs turned him on. He dropped his eyes to his boner.

Sandile: Sadla Dlamini. {We are going to feast}.

He whistled grinning like a fool. The last time he was sexual active was with that witch. If he knew by that time what she was doing he would have killed her there and then. He couldn’t believe the lengths she went through just to keep him. And him? How did he not see through her? Everyone close to him didn’t like her and he thought they were jealous especially

Kagiso. The man slept with random women like it was a sport. Raising his head, he found her stumbling towards him.

Jen: Penny for your thoughts.

Sandile: I'm just reflecting on the past.

Jen: I told you forward we go from now on. The past is the past and everyone has a past. Let it stay where it is.

She straddle him sinking on his cock. Moans fly out of their mouths.

Sandile: (breathing heavily) I never got a chance to say sorry for my fair share of mistakes.

Jen: I'm listening.

She held his head bouncing on his lap.

Sandile: (grunting) Fuck baby I can't speak.

She brought her lips to his ear and bit his earlobe whispering.

Jen: What's stop you?

Sandile: Slow down.

Her sensitive breasts against his rock hard abs and she looked up at him. He moved his hand from the nape of her neck to her jaw, holding it tightly and maintaining eye contact. Her lips parted.

Sandile: Shit MaDlamini slow down.

He grunted shutting his eyes. Jen grazed his skin with her teeth. He captured her lips and she placed a hand on his shoulder and gripped it as the kiss intensified. His hand gently squeezed her sensitive boobs and she arched her back at the painful yet pleasurable sensation. Her legs grew weaker and her eyes rolled on the back of her head. Sandile watched the beautiful scene in front of him as she climax whispering his name. He jumped to his feet and padded to the middle of the room where no furniture was restricting them.

Sandile: Open your eyes.

She did as instructed.

Sandile: Look at us.

She looked down and uncomfortable breath come out of her while she cum again.

Sandile: Look at me as I fuck you.

She kept her eyes on him as he moved. Each watch the other emotion. Moans and grunts filled the room. Jen brushed her lips on his silencing the noise. Tears welled in her eyes and she held them back. Sandile went faster and she cried real tears as the wave of her orgasm hit her hard. He moaned her name as he came inside of her and she held him tightly as she cried, another climax hitting her.

Jen: (sniffing) Shhh.

Her voice filled his ears as he continued to pump on her.

Sandile: Fuck!

Jen: Don’t make a sound.

She sniffed closing her eyes. The orgasm began to wear off and she become more of their movements. Was she floating in the air? Her eye flew open and they widen. She was definitely floating and how come she didn’t see it before? The head of his cock rocked a delicious spot in her and she threw back her own thrusts more enthusiastically, wanting to take him all in her. The position they were stretched her and she felt it every time he buried himself fully. Jen: More.

She gasped, looking at their connection.

Sandile: You want more?

He muttered through gritted teeth.

Jen: Yes. Sandile: Then keep quiet like you requested.

He growled. Oh

he was so going to give her more than she can handle. He dropped her back to her feet and Jen hold him for balance as her legs were still shaking from her orgasm. He turned her around and bended her then kicked her legs further apart.

Sandile: Touch your toes.

Jen bent touching her toes, breathing heavily. Sandile rubbed her butt before smacking her. She yelped turning to him

Sandile: Who told you to stand straight? Fucken touch your toes Azasakhe. That deep voice of his commanded making her pool again. She was suppose to take control of this so why was the doing so and why was she liking it? Seeing that she was just looking at him, Sandile positioned her. She licked her lips touching her toes. A smack connect with her butt and she moaned. Sandile: You moan or make any sound I'll stop.

He threatened. That smack on her butt came unexpectedly. She took a sharp breath. Sandile spread her cheeks and slammed into her. Jen stood on her tiptoes, harshly biting her lip to stop herself from making a sound.

Sandile: I'll give you more. Just hope you'll be able to take it.

He growled taking handful of her hair and tugged lightly everytime he thrusts into her. With each thrust felt incredibly, delicious that the first one.

Jen: God Sandile. Sandile: Shut up!

He roared reminding the words she said earlier on.

Jen: I can't keep quiet.

Sandile: Learn to before I tape your mouth.

She sank her teeth in her lip curling her toes.

Sandile: My heart beats for you. Fuck I love you woman.

Jen: Ngamangqaku mntuwam. {Same score my love}.

The following morning, Jen laid half asleep on the floor as Sandile fingering and eating her pussy. She was beyond exhausted and her insides her burning. She shouldn't have went straight home after being discharged or maybe yet she should have not initiated this in the first place. It's like she woke a sleep bear from its cage. A crazy night and wild night they had. Her body was buttered but not in a bad way. While he on other hand had multiple imprinted hickeys on his neck to describe the previous night. He stroked his shaft latching on her clit. She moaned closing her eyes. Drowsiness was starting to kick in on her and keeping her eyes open was becoming a difficult task to do. Sandile lined himself up and thrust in. Her eyes rolled on the back of her head before she passed out succumbing to the exhaustion.

Climbing off the bed, Busi tiptoed around the room to pick up her clothes. She bent down looking for her bra but couldn't find it. She huffed frustrated fixing her breast over the top.

Busi: Where is it?

She whispered going around every corner of the room. She had to get out of this room before that man can wake up and before

that inquisitive child of hers can see her. Sprawling on the bed with no care at all, Kagiso watched her as she huffed and puffed looking for her bra. He wondered how long will this woman keep doing this because everytime she sneaks out like a thief at night. It's not like they were having an affair or anything but she acted like that was the case. 7 years ago they had a son and now his 10 this year and on top of that they have a 2 year old daughter and she still sneaks out. Busi turned her head to the bed and Kagiso quickly closed his eyes pretending to be asleep. She breathed out nodding. He was still asleep and she had to leave without her bra again. First it was her underwear and now her bra? Definitely not a coincident. She attempts to open the door and found it locked. Kagiso: Where are you going?

She stiffened widening her eyes.

Busi: I thought you were asleep.

Kagiso: I knew you would pull this shit again so I locked the door. Get back in bed and sleep.

Busi: The kids. Kagiso: What about them?

Busi: I don't want to confuse them especially Junior.

Kagiso: If I remember correctly Junior came from my sperm and I don't owe him shit.

Busi: You don't understand.

Kagiso: His my son and I don't answer to him.

That husky voice of his got louder as annoyance laced on his tone.

Kagiso: I'm getting tired of this childish behaviour of yours. Make up your fucken mind if you want to be a woman or a child. You're a mother of two for heaven sake start acting like it. If I wanted a child I would have gone for one but I can see clearly that you're still immature and need to grow the fuck up.

He pulled the sheet to cover his junk and closed his eyes leaving Busi frozen on her spot.

……. The End…….

For Daily Latest Books Free to Download on https://novelsguru.com/ and visit my Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/groups/3345453369055623