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Another Man's Child Is My Child by Sbusiso Mtshali

Chapter 1

Another Man's Child Is My Child

I was at the doctors, in the waiting room. There i was so freezing as we were waiting for the test and checkup results. She was right next to me, i mean Nompilo, my girlfriend. Nobody was talking to each other as we were seated closer, it's seemed like we were both wondering and our hearts were burning fear. We were at the doctors to do the checkup and find out who really has got the problem between us since we've been trying to make a baby for two years now but we failing.

I couldn't bare the silence between us, i grabbed her hand and looked at her. She turned and looked back at me.

Linda. "baby, are you alright?" i asked.

Nompilo. "yeah, I'm alright babe," she replied back.

The moment when I was trying to say something to her, a doctor came. I froze, looking at him and wanted to hear what he's got.

Dr Jaco. "Mr. Linda Mbatha and Miss. Nompilo Ntuli, I've got bad news and good new for you. I'll start with the good news because the bad news are much personal

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unless you permit me to tell them to both of you. "

Those were doctors words to us. I looked at her, she looked back at me. She gave me a look that reminded me that we've

signed a deal that we won't have secrets. I then turned to the doctor.

Linda. "start with the bad news Dr. Jaco, whatever it is just tell it to us, " i declared to Dr. Jaco.

Dr Jaco. "oh well, the permission is from you. The bad news are that Mr. Linda, you won't have any kids in your life. Your sperm organ is weak that it lacks your manhood, resulting in you being not capable of making kids anytime soon. My sincere apologies about that. And Miss. Ntuli, you've got no problem. Your results are quite clear, you can conceive. And the good news are, you both are HIV negative. That's all."

Those were Dr. Jaco's words telling us all the results of the tests and checkups. I felt my head spinning, i became dizzy. She held me, and laid me on the couch. But after some minutes i was a bit fine. We then left the doctor's room and went back home.

All along, things seemed to be fine though we were still trying to cope with the situation. We tried our best for help traditionally and spiritually but nothing came up, but our hope and faith was still until i realised that she has lost patience.

It was june 13 2015, this was her birthday. On this day i prepared something as a present for her. I drove to Ballito after hours to fetch her from work. I fetched her and we drove back home. I prepared dinner for the two of us and made her feel special, but that was less than what i prepared for her. Then after all, i put my hand in my pocket and came out with a small black box, inside was a wedding ring. I kneeled down on the floor, opened the box in front of her and then i asked her a question.

Linda. "baby, will you marry me?". She looked at me and started sobbing in tears. I thought those were tears of joy, but i thought wrong.

Nompilo. "Linda I'm sorry," she busted in tears and i didn't understand what really was it. "Linda i can't accept your request

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I'm very sorry." she said.

Linda. "what might be the reason for declining my proposal? " i asked with my heart full of disappointment."

Nompilo. "it's hard to explain. I know that you really love me and I'm sorry for hurting your feelings Linda. You know you can't give me kids and you know that kids are one of the other happiness i need to have in life." these are her words that torn my heart apart.

Linda. "baby i know all that. But let's keep hoping, perhaps something good will happen if we hope." i sad to her with my eyes full of tears.

Nompilo. "i gave so much of hope and faith on this and now I've just lost it all Linda. I can't go on with this relationship."

she said that and stood up, took her jacket and left the house. She left me wondering and so disappointed. I took my time thinking, and i stood up and went to look for her outside, but she was no where to be seen. I then went back in the house and picked up my phone and tried calling her, but her phone rang on the couch behind me, she left it.

At 2:17am, i received a text message from an unknown number, and it was written as following:

"Linda I'm sorry. I can not be able to carry on with our relationship. I know you love me and you really do, but all I'm afraid of is disappointing you. You know I'm that woman whose wish is to raise her kids, but with you my wish won't come true. I know this hurts you deeply, but you'll find someone to love you. I'm sorry."

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I was flat asleep when i heard a knock on my bedroom window, it was like I'm dreaming someone calling my name from a far range. Then i woke up and opened the curtain, i saw her.

Nompilo. "please open the door Linda," she said.

I then went to open the door for her. It was still early in the morning as it was around 5am. She entered, "good morning Linda." she greeted while passing me to the bedroom, i followed her. I stood on the bedroom door and looked at her.

Linda. "Nompilo," i called her.

Nompilo. "please Linda, let's not talk about this. I've explained it all in a message i sent you earlier. I'm sorry, i have to take a bath before i get late to work."

She said these words and left the room to the bathroom. I felt like the whole world has changed against me. The doctor told me bad news, my girlfriend is breaking up with me, my relationship is ending and on the other side, my mother is really concerned about having grandchildren. I never told her anything about this situation I'm in. I really didn't know what to do besides facing it. I felt a heavy burden on my shoulder.

While she was still in the bathroom, i stood up on bed and went to the kitchen to prepare a lunch box for her. I finished, then i went back to the bedroom and took out her Wimpy uniform and put it on bed. She's still not out from the bathroom, i went to check.

Linda. "Baby

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are you alright?" i asked standing in front of the bathroom door.

Nompilo. "don't worry I'm okay," she replied back.

Linda. "but won't you be late to work?" i asked that question. She kept silent a little and then she replied back,

Nompilo. "I'm not going to work anymore, I've changed my mind." these word got me thinking, i didn't understand which mind she had changed. But i left that to her.

Linda. "ok then, can i use the bathroom too? You took so long in there."

she didn't reply, she just came out and looked at me for a moment and started sobbing. She then went in the bedroom and i entered in the bathroom and took a shower too. When i got finished and went in the bedroom, i found her all dressed up her full work uniform.

Linda. "you dressed up now, you've changed your mind again?"
i asked while heading to the wardrobe to look for something to dress. You know if i had to compare women, i would compare them to a chameleon, they change now and then.

Nompilo. "yes, I've changed my mind again. I'm going. The moment i saw my clothes on bed and the lunch box you made for me, i felt like I'll be disappointing you on your effort." she said, and with those words i thought to myself that my world might be awaking and the sun might be rising to bring light again, but i wasn't sure.

We left the house and i drove her to work. There was silence all the way, we weren't talking to each other. I didn't really understand what was happening or where we were. But still deep down my heart i was feeling heart cracks, like the love quake had hit me in the heart. I dropped her and drove back to work too.

The time went by during the day. I wasn't myself as usual, although i tried to be strong and hid that with a smile while I was deeply hurting inside. When I drove back home i found that she was back home already. She was sitting on our bed in the bedroom, and behind her was her big pink packing bag.

Linda. "hi babe," i greeted her.

Nompilo. "hi Linda, I've been waiting for you. I'm leaving now." she said.

Linda. "you're leaving? Where to?" i asked sorrowfully.

Nompilo. "i just can't live this life. I'm going home, and consider this as the end of our relationship." these are her words that widen the cracks in my heart.

Linda. "but Nompilo, can't we at least sit down and talk about this?" i asked while holding my tears. This was a very hard time for me

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and could feel that if i could hold those tears for long my eyes would bust.

Nompilo. "no Linda there's nothing to talk about." she started sobbing, stood up and held her bag. I stood up too and waited in front of her as to avoid her not to leave.

Linda. "why can't we do an adoption? " i asked her, with tears starting to roll down my cheeks.

Nompilo. "Linda i can't raise a child that's not even one of our blood. And except that, i want to have my our child that I'll be proud of raising. I just really can't Linda, forgive me."

She said that looking at me straight into my eyes. I remained silent as i was running out of words to say. She carried on.

Nompilo. "Linda I'm very sorry, but you'll find someone to love you. All I'm doing for you is a favour. I just don't wanna play with your feelings and disappoint you by getting another man in your presence, and that's because i love you. Goodbye Linda. I'll be back in few days for some staff i left here. "

She kissed me on my forehead after saying all these words. I let her leave. I looked at her leaving while i was standing at the entrance door until i couldn't see her.

Then i went back in the house and got myself sitting on the couch. I held my head with my two own hands as if it was heavy, but yes it was. I then got myself picking up a TV remote and threw it on the wall as if it was the cause of all this drama.

I couldn't bare the pain of my heart breaking, i cried. It came into my mind that it really must have been love but it's over now, all i had to do was accepting. I hardly believed it was all happening that way. I stood up and what i realised was her phone still on the couch...

Another Man's Child Is My Child

A week and days passed by since Nompilo left me, she never show up. I kept hoping that perhaps she might change her mind and come back to me. We were in a relationship for almost eleven years with Nompilo since high school, and we've had so much ups and downs, but we fought and went through always. We had joy, we had fun and had seasons under the sun and moon.

My life wasn't the same without her. One of the days i decided to drive to her home to check on her. I took her phone with me, the one that she left on my couch a week ago when she left the house. When I arrived at her home, i found her mother (maNtuli) outside sitting under a tree shadow with her grandkids.

Linda. "good afternoon mah," i greeted her while crouching showing some respect.

MaNtuli. "good afternoon my son in-law" she greeted back.
"hey go get your uncle a chair," she said to one of her grandkids
and the boy ran quickly and came with a chair, he gave it to me
and I took a seat. She carried on.

MaNtuli. "so how you doing my son?" she asked that question.

Linda. "not bad mama, I'm doing good," i gave a smile to hide
my sadness, sorrow and heartbreak.

MaNtuli. "that's good to hear my son" she said.

Linda. "yeah it's good mah. Mama i came to check on Nompilo,
is she here at home?" i asked.

MaNtuli. "no she's not here right now

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she went to town with Zanele." she replied.

Linda. "oh ok," i said.

MaNtuli. "but they'll be here soon, you can wait." her mama said.

Linda. "no mah, i can't wait for them. I've got some business to attend, i just came to check on her and give her this phone. But since she's not around, I'll leave it with you to give it to her when she's back." i said to her mama.

I gave the phone to her mama and stood up as to leave.

MaNtuli. "son" she called me.

I turned to listen because i knew she wanna say something.

MaNtuli. "thank you for giving my daughter some time to come back home and bond with us. It's like you knew how much we missed her. You're a very good man Linda." these were her mama's words.

Linda. "thanks mama, but i have to leave now."

i said and walked straight to my car with my thoughts mixed out of what she had just said. I failed to understand what was really happening in my life. But nobody would give me a better understanding except Nompilo herself.

Later on during the day, i phoned Nompilo. The phone rang and luckily she picked up, that meant they gave her the phone.

Nompilo. "hi" she said over the phone.

Linda. "hi, how are you?" i asked.

Nompilo. "I'm good Linda." she replied.

Linda. "i hope your mother told you that I was there to check on you." i said to her.

Nompilo. "yes she did, and thanks for the phone. But Linda you don't have to waste your time checking on me, there's nothing

more i can do. Whatever I've told you a week ago stays the same. Please forgive me Linda." she said these words. I kept quiet a little.

Linda. "but have you told your mother that you broke up with me to let her know?" i asked her.

Nompilo. "no, but i will tell her just not now." she replied.

Linda. "ok Nompilo i get you. But i just want you to know that the reason why I check on you is that i love you Nompilo." i felt my broken heart pieces breaking again.

Nompilo. "i know Linda and i love you too, just know that. But you'll find someone to love you more and accept you as you are. Mina i just can't... " she said and hung up.

Everyone knows that it can be difficult to leave a long term life situation behind, even when your inner wisdom tells you that things aren't right and it's time to let go. At this point, you can choose to let go and endure the sudden pain of leaving behind the familiar to make way for a new chapter in your life, or you can stay and suffer a constant, aching pain that gradually eats away at your heart and mind, like a cancer, until you wake up one day and find yourself buried so deep in the dysfunction of the situation that you barely remember who you are and what you desire. I had not to do this myself.

Things will happen that are unexpected, undesirable, and uncontrollable. But you can always choose to take the next tiniest step. Be brave and take it.

Be willing to make mistakes, learn from them, let go of them, and move along.

Truth be told, it's always necessary to accept when some part of your life has reached its inevitable end. Closing the door, completing the chapter, turning the page, or what so ever. It doesn't matter what your title is, what matters is that you find the strength to leave in the past those parts of your life that are over.

It's all about embracing the truth, what has happened is uncontrollable, what you do now changes everything!

So getting back to the story.

I had to forget about Nompilo in my life and move on. I believed that in order to make a great move, you have to first forget about your past so it won't trouble you on your next steps. I thought I'll take so much time being single because i wanted to be sure that I'm ready to be in love again, but I failed to do so. You know how beautiful women are outside there and some women can really give birth to some angels.

8 months later, i was driving from work to Spar to shop some items i needed. I was driving heading to the robot, from the left hand side on the pedestrian walkway i saw a woman walking with a little boy and the baby attached on her back going the same direction where i was driving to. I passed them, and after passing a distance i stopped and reversed back to them. I reached them

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opened the window on the passenger's side front door.

Linda. "hello mam." i greeted her.

Woman. "hi" she greeted back without even looking at me.

Linda. "where are you going at this time of the night?" i asked her.

Woman. "we're going home" she replied.

Linda. "oh ok, but you won't find any taxis at this time, can i take you there?" i asked her while driving slowly as she kept walking.

Woman. "no thanks." she replied denying my help.

Yes she had all rights to do so, I was completely a stranger to her. And that now the level of crime and women killing is too high, women are always in fear.

Linda. "hey, this place isn't safe, especially for a woman like you with kids." i said to her, trying to show that i care.

Woman. "i said no." she said with a harsh voice as if she's demanding me to get that.

I then left them and drove passed the robot down to Spar. I packed my car and went in store, bought everything i need and then i went back to the car. I drove off from Spar heading the same direction i came from. I stopped at the robot. Far across the road i saw her again standing next to the robot. I guess she was waiting for a taxi.

I drove straight across and i took a u-turn to drive on the side where she was. I stopped next to her. Again i opened the window.

Linda. "mam where's your home?" i asked her.

Woman. "it's in Groutville." she replied back.

Linda. "ok, get in the car I'll take you there. You don't have to stand here, you won't get any taxis." i said to her and she seemed to hesitate.

Woman. "ok it's fine." she said while taking her bags. I unlocked the back door so she could let her son in with the bags and she got in too. "thanks." she said.

Linda. "you're welcome mam." i said, then i drove off. "hey, my name is Linda Mbatha, and you are?" i introduced myself to her.

Woman. "I'm Zipho Dube." she replied telling me her name.

Linda. "I'm happy to know you Zipho" i said smiling.

Zipho. "I'm happy to know you too."

She said without even looking at me, she was looking outside through the window. I drove to the petrol station, Bonjour to fuel up. The young man cried of hunger to her. She took some biscuits and gave him.

While the fuel was being filled up, i got out of the car and went to steers. I bought a mini burger for kids and a juice for the young man. I went back to the car and gave it to him. We then drove off from the petrol station taking the way home. She seemed not good from her looks.

Linda. "hey, are you ok?" i asked looking at her.

Zipho. "yes I'm ok" she replied, but still not looking at me.

Linda. "but you seem like there's something bothering you." i said to her. She turned looked at me. Her eyes were red as if she was crying.

Zipho. "yes I'm not ok, but I'll be ok anytime soon when i reach home. I just need to be home." she said. I drove to get her home as she was giving me directions. "it's ok now, you can leave us here. Thank you Linda." she said looking at me. Linda. "you're welcome once again Zipho." i said.

She then took her bags and children and jumped off the car. I drove off a short distance and stopped, i reversed back to her.

Linda. "Zipho," i called her. She stopped and looked at me. "I'd love to see you again in one of the days, so do you mind if I ask for your number?" i asked politely.

Zipho. "it's ok" she said, and started naming them...

I woke early in the morning the next day. The only thing that was in my mind was Zipho. I then took my phone and scrolled on my phonebook for her number, i got it and got myself starring at it for some minutes. I wanted to call her but it was still early that perhaps she might be still asleep. I could assume that she had a long bad day yesterday. I then decided to wait for the right time.

While taking that decision, i threw my phone on the side pedestal of my bedroom suite and went for a shower. I got myself prepared to go to work. I drove off to work. At 9:00am, i had to take my tea time at work and that was the time i found perfect to make a call. I then took my phone and dialed the number. "you have insufficient airtime to make a call, please load airtime." damn, this MTN woman is irritating sometimes.

Linda. "you went wrong woman, i have sufficient airtime to make a call. You should have told me to switch off my data connection so i can make a call."

I silently spoke to myself while switching off data connection. I dialled the number again, it rang but nobody answered. I dialled again and still nobody picked up. I wondered what could be the reason she doesn't pick up my call. But then i thought to myself that probably she's busy.

I went back to work as the tea time was over. I worked all day until my working hours for the day were over. I was hoping that she'll call back or send a please call. This kind of thing is really disappointing sometimes you know. I then drove home after work. All i had to do was to take a shower and do the gaming after. Gaming is my hobby that i mostly do. I took a shower and prepared myself some food and then i got myself on the couch. I knew that FIFA 14 would hide my disappointment and misery.

While i was still gaming, my phone rang. I paused the game and checked my phone

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the caller was Zipho.

Linda. "hey MaMbuyazi." i answered.

Zipho. "hi how are you?" she asked.

Linda. "I'm good and yourself?" i replied and asked back.

Zipho. "I'm good too. I got missed calls from this number, who am i speaking to?" she asked.

Linda. "it's Linda, from yesterday. Still remember?" i replied.

Zipho. "oh hey Linda" she said, and i bet she was smiling, it's just that I couldn't see.

Linda. "i tried calling you earlier and you didn't pick up."

Zipho. "sorry about that, i was so busy at work. It's when I'm out now." she explained.

Linda. "ok i understand." i said.

Zipho. "thanks for that. So is this your number right?"

Linda. "yeah that's my number. so where are you?" i asked her.

Zipho. "I'm on my way to the taxi rank. Why you asking?"

Linda. " i was just asking. Can I offer some help once again? " i asked gently, and she laughed.

Zipho. "what help Linda."she asked.

Linda. "i want to come fetch you there in town, I'm sure that the taxi rank is full and busy as it's Friday." i said to her.

Zipho. "are you sure, ain't you busy there?"

Linda. "no I'm just bored alone here and driving to fetch you will do some company." she laughed.

Zipho. "ok then, it's your choice." she said.

Linda. "ok I'm on my way." i said and hung up the phone. I then took my car and drove off to town...

Another Man's Child Is My Child

She told me that she'll be waiting at shoprite and i must phone her when I'm there. I took the N2 route because it was the fastest and traffic free route i could use rather than Route 102. When i arrived at shoprite i phoned to tell her I'm around already. I told her where i parked.

In 3 minutes later after call, i saw a lady from a distance coming to the side where I parked. Please, allow me to describe her. She was in her sky blue jean, wearing a blue like t-shirt i could tell that was a Hesto t-shirt for sure while she was coming. She was dark skinned yet so beautiful and had hips and figure. In fact she had all that a guy could go crazy about from a woman. She came closer and closer. I thought to myself that it must be Zipho. I wasn't sure, you'll remember that i just met her at night a day before. She stopped walking, i saw her putting the phone on her ear as to make a call. Suddenly, my phone rang. I answered.

Linda. "hi Zipho."

Zipho. "hey Linda, where you parked i can't see you?" she asked.

I thought right, the lady was Zipho. I smiled on my own in the car.

Linda. "come closer, i see you where you are." i said to her.

Zipho. "ok I'm coming." she said and hung up. I then got out of the car and went approaching her, we met.

Linda. "hi." i greeted her along with a hug. She laughed a little.

Zipho. "and what's up with a hug Linda, you're making me shy now." she said.

Linda. "I'm sorry about that. It's just that I'm not used to getting hugs, so i thought i could use this opportunity." i said to her and smiled.

Zipho. "that's lies right?" she said looking at me.

Linda. "nop, it's a fact." i replied.

Zipho. "but i don't believe you." she said.

Linda. "Well, you better do believe me. Hey let me take you to my car." i said to her.

We then walked to the car, we reached it. I opened the passenger front seat door for her and i let her in and closed it. I then turned to the drivers side and let myself in too. All i was doing i was doing it so gently because i wanted her to feel special.

Linda. "so you right maMbuyazi?" i asked.

Zipho"yeah, I'm alright." she said.

Linda"that's good. So tell me, where to from here." i asked her.

Zipho. "no where besides going home." she replied.

Li da. "ok

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let me take you there safely. Put on your seat belt please." i said to her. I started the car engine and drove off.

Zipho. "so you decided to be a transporter?" she asked, i laughed a little.

Linda. "why you asking that?"

Zipho. "you transported me home yesterday, and you asked to do the same today." she said. I looked at her.

Linda. "and i could do that everyday for you."

Zipho. "ok, i see." she said.

Linda. "hey how was your last night?" i asked.

Zipho. "it was so hectic, i couldn't sleep. Thanks for your help last night. " she said.

Linda. it's ok, that was nothing." i said to her.

Zipho. "to you right? You don't know how it meant something to me. Although i acted strange to you at first, i was driven by anger and I'm sorry about that." she said. I looked at her a little.

Linda. "ay no, it's ok i understand Zipho." i touched her shoulder to comfort her. I didn't ask her for a permission to do that. "but where were you coming from at that time with kids?" i asked her.

Zipho. "i was from Mandini. There's something happened there where i live then i chose to go home with my kids. But let's treat it as something personal, I'm sorry to say that." she said.

Linda. "don't worry, it's ok. So you working at Hesto?" i asked looking at her.

Zipho. "yeah I'm working there. And what about you?" she replied and asked back.

Linda. "just guess"

Zipho. "yoh! That's not really an easy thing to do." she said, i laughed a little.

Linda. "I'm working at Sappi paper mill." i said. Our conversation had to cut as we were already where she jumps off.

Zipho. "you can stop now and let me jump off here." she said.

Linda. "this journey was too short, but i guess I'll see you anytime soon again." i said looking at her and she looked back at me.

Zipho. "ja, i guess so too. Goodbye, drive safely."

She said as she opened the door and jumped off. I drove off. Far a short distance my phone beeped a WhatsApp message tone. I went through it, it was her. I read the message. "hey, i forgot to say thank you. Your help is being noticed and is highly appreciated by Zipho. Drive safely :)." this was her message that left me smiling and tuned to the good music...

From there we used to chat on WhatsApp during our free hours, especially evening hours. We spent days chatting until we decided to meet up again after a week. She already knew some about me through our social network conversation, and i knew some about her. She was a good, cool and respectful woman and she's still that.

Another Man's Child Is My Child

I woke up early morning to a sunrise of astonishing beauty, so I walked out the front door to experience it. And as I stood in the yard gazing up at the pink, orange and blue sky, my heart sung and ached at the same time.

Instinctively, I wished to share this breathtaking moment with Zipho, but she was not around or any closer still, and that troubled me. I felt a bit down and incomplete, without being able to share this special moment with her. The most beautiful sunrise I'd ever seen was slipping through my fingers.

I considered running into the house to grab a camera so I could at least show Zipho a photo of the moment that she missed, but I caught myself and took a deep breath.

I then acknowledged that there was something else I needed to do instead, I needed to let this moment be enough, without anything more ,without needing the moment to be shared or photographed or uploaded online on social medias.

So I gazed back up at the sky, and told myself out loud, “This moment is enough. This moment is enough just as it is.”

Truly, there was no good reason for me to feel otherwise. And I’m glad I came to my senses.

Of course, I know I’m not alone in this feeling, that the beautiful moments of our lives need to be shared, or photographed, or uploaded online to social medias to be complete. It’s half the reason social media is so prevalent in our lives today.

Too often we feel like the good moments of our lives aren't good enough unless we somehow capture, share, and solidify them as a semi-permanent fixture in our lives.

Or we feel like the moments of our lives just aren't good enough at all. So we choose to distract ourselves with gadgets and TV shows 24/7 just to stimulate ourselves. It's like second nature to us. We're so used to feeling like the present moment isn't worthy of our full presence!

That morning was of the day we planned to meet locally. But the way the sun was so hot that day, i decided to take her and her son to the beach for some fresh breeze. Her son was was 5 years old of age. I bought him a kite to play with while her mother and I seated on the wooden stairs watching him play.

Zipho. "I've never seen my son this happier ever since I had him." she said these words.

I didn't know what to say

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but i asked a simply question rather than to keep silent.

Linda. "why is that?"

Zipho. "because no one have ever thought of family good times and valuable moments." she said.

Linda. "oh ok, i get you. Where's his father?" i asked.

Zipho. "i don't know." she replied. She was sitting on a down stair and i was on the upper one both facing the ocean. "we had a fight few weeks back and i couldn't settle for an abuse anymore, then I decided to go back home with my kids. That was the day you first met me on that night in town." she said.

Linda. "what was the reason for your fighting." i asked.

Zipho. "there's too much i couldn't bare from him Linda. But the main thing, i caught him in bed with another woman i knew she was my best friend." she explained so.

Linda. "sorry about that Zipho." i said.

Zipho. "it's ok and it's all over between us now." she said.

Linda. "and the kids? You'll raise them on your own?"

Zipho. "i can't fail the strength to raise my kids Linda. They're my own now, God gave them to me for some reasons." she said.

Linda. "ok i get you maMbuyazi" i said to her.

Zipho. "hey, enough about me now. What about you?" she asked.

Linda. "well, there's not much about me." i said to her.

Zipho. "you've grown too old to have so little." she said and i laughed a little.

Linda. "yeah that's true."

Zipho. "how many kids you've got?" she asked.

Linda. "i have none." i answered. She turned her head and looked at me.

Zipho. "you joking right?" she asked still looking at me.

Linda. "no I'm not joking. What I'm telling you is true." i said to her.

Zipho. "oh ok, i get you, hardly though." she said.

Linda. "I'm serious Zipho."

Zipho. "how old are you?" she insisted to know. And i replied to that.

Linda. "I'm 29 years."

Zipho. "a 29 years old man with not even one kid. Ay, it's amazing shame." she said.

Linda. "yes, it is right. " i said.

Zipho. "you're very lucky. I'm a 27 years old woman with two kids. My son is 5 years and my daughter is 1 year old. And that's enough, i don't need anymore kids I'm right here." she said. I remained silent a while. I didn't know whether should I tell her story or not. Where's your wife?" she asked.

Linda. "i don't have a wife, see my hand, there's no ring on my finger, I'm not married." i said. She laughed on that.

Zipho. "ok your girlfriend then." she said.

Linda. "i used to have a girlfriend but at the moment i don't have a girlfriend Zipho." i said and looked far deeper the ocean. With my eyes playing blurry of the tears, but i held myself.

Zipho. "aw, Linda. What is exactly that you have. Don't you think that's strange of you?" she asked looking at me.

Linda. "i have a car, a house and my shameful life story." i said and I could feel my throat was now inching.

Zipho. "a shameful life story?" she asked.

Linda. "yes." i replied.

Zipho. "can you share it with me if you don't mind?"

Linda. "no not yet Zipho, maybe at some other time when I'm ready and prepared." i said to her.

Zipho. "oh ok, i understand Linda. Take your time." she said.

I really didn't know where to start about telling my story. I felt it so embarrassing to tell. But the thing is, she said she don't need kids anymore. That got me thinking deeply. We then left the beach and drove back to drop them. Before she dropped out, she held my hand and said : "be strong".

Another Man's Child Is My Child

Later on that day, during the evening hours. She gave me a call, i watched my phone ringing and then i answered it.

Linda. "hello maMbuyazi" i said answering the phone. She laughed a little and i guess i called her nicely.

Zipho. "it's amazing how you know my fore-surnames, i don't even know any of yours." she said, and I laughed.

Linda. "Donda is one of them, and i like it the most."

Zipho. "oh ok, I'll keep that in mind so I'll use it next time." she said.

Linda. "I'll be glad."

Zipho. "cool. So how you doing this evening?"

Linda. "I'm very good, and yourself?" i replied and asked back.

Zipho. "well, I'm doing very good too. Hey I'm phoning to say thank you for all you've done for me throughout the day, especially for my son." she said.

Linda. "it's ok maMbuyazi, you're more than welcome." i said.

Zipho. "thank you Linda. God bless you."

Linda. "thanks for the blessings. Hey, where's your son?" i asked her.

Zipho. "he's asleep, i guess he's tired. He had lot good times today." she said.

Linda. "ok i get it

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he should be very tired."

Zipho. "hey, i got to go now. Good night, sleep well." she wished me a good night.

Linda. "thank you and good night to you too. I guess I'll see you again anytime soon." i said.

Zipho. "no problem." she said and hang up.

After that call, i started to feel that love spike burning me inside my heart. I felt a needle stitching my broken heart on the inside. It was time i had to act following my heart. I started to strongly love her. There's only one thing that was always killing me with a biggest smile. And that was her appreciation.

This lady gave me much interest on her with only appreciating everything i do for her. She was kind and different. Not so many woman do appreciate everything you do for them, they're so very few of them that does and it was my lucky to meet one. In fact i mean i was blessed.

My feelings for her got stronger and stronger that i couldn't bare keeping them inside my heart unspoken. I had to figure out ways to let them out and be heard, probably i might be

lucky. I thought so deeply. I found myself picking up my phone and made a call to Zipho. It rang once and she picked up.

Zipho. "Donda." that's the way she answered. I liked it, and it got me smiling.

Linda. "wow! I'm glad you used that." i said.

Zipho. "i told you I'll save it for the next time." she said, and we both laughed a little.

Linda. "yeah you did. Hey, do you have any plans for tomorrow?" i asked her.

Zipho. "no big plans besides going to church."

Linda. "ok I'll go church too. I just wanted to invite you for lunch." i said.

Zipho. "wow! That would be nice i guess. But I'm sorry i can't make it, I'll still be in church until three." she said.

Linda. "ok how about dinner? You, your kids and I. Just the four of us." i asked.

Zipho. "but Linda..." she laughed.

Linda. "please" i begged her.

Zipho. "ok ok, it's fine, your invite accepted." she said still laughing a little.

Linda. "thank you Zipho. I'll come fetch you at 6:30pm tomorrow, is that the right time?" i asked.

Zipho. "no problem" she said.

Linda. "ok see you tomorrow then. Good night once again." i said and hang up.

She woke me up with a phone call the next day, Sunday morning. We chatted over the phone until she hang up. I then woke up from the bed to the bathroom and took a shower. I finished, and then i started preparing myself to church. In an hour and few minutes i was done. Then i drove off to church.

The day went by, although to me it was like an hour happens after 3 hours that day whereas it happened in 60 minutes as usual. It was a really long day i can tell, but i knew that no matter how long could it be it will come to an end. I stayed patient until the time i was waiting for arrived. At 6:06pm, i made a phone call to her. The phone rang.

Zipho. "Shandu kandaba" she said, answering her phone.

Linda. "wow! Is that a surprise?" i asked in amazement. She laughed softly,

Zipho. "i guess so, what do you think?"

Linda. "well, I'm surprised."

Zipho. "ok i see. So how are you?"

Linda. "I'm very good, and yourself?" i replied and asked back.

Zipho. "I'm good too."

Linda. "that's very nice. So, are you ready, can i come over to fetch you?"

Zipho. "yeah, you can come."

Linda. "OK, I'm on my way." i said and hang up.

I got out from the bedroom and took the car keys, i entered in the car and drove off. I left everything sorted and prepared on the table.

We had some fun while on the table having our dinner. When we finished

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i took some dishes to the kitchen and left some on the table, she took that some i left and followed me to the kitchen. I never expected that, but that was the time i found the best to kick the spark out of my heart and let those words be spoken.

Linda. "hey." i called her the time she seemed to leave the kitchen. She stopped and looked at me.

"i think I'm ready to share my story with you." i said to her while putting dishes in the sink to wash them.

Zipho. "oh ok, so you wanna share it now or..."?...

Linda. "ja sure" i cut her on her question.

Zipho. "ok. Can i help with that?" she asked pointing at the dishes asking to wash them.

Linda. "yeah if you willing to, thank you."

She then took over. I sat on the cupboard next to my hob and started narrating my story.

Linda. "you know i had a girlfriend, but we broke up months ago, in fact it's almost a year now since we broke up." i said.

Zipho. "sorry about that, but what was the reason for your break up?" she asked looking at me.

Linda. "I'm not sure whether you'll believe me or not, but let me try. Her name was Nompilo Ntuli. We were in love for almost eleven years since high school. Years back, we wanted to have a baby but we couldn't get one and we didn't know what could be the reason for us failing. But we then went to a doctor last year for some check ups and the results were too bad and shameful." she stopped washing dishes to listen carefully. And i carried on.

Linda. "The doctor told us that I'm the one who has a problem, a failure to impregnate and i will never impregnate any woman in future. So with that, he meant I'm not going to have any kid

of my own. And that's what lead to us breaking up. She couldn't settle for a man who doesn't impregnate." that was me sharing my story.

Zipho. "that's very sad Linda. But she was just so stubborn and selfish, how could she?" she said.

Linda. "it's all in the past now. She told me that one day I'll find someone to love and who'll love me too the way i am, and I'm glad I've found someone i love already. It's just that I'm not sure if she loves me too or not" i said smiling.

Zipho. "wow! Really?" She asked the question and started washing dishes again.

Linda. "yeah! For real, and she's right next to me" i said looking at her, she stopped and looked at me like she was amazed.

Zipho. "Linda, I'm the only person who's right next to you right now. " she said looking me.

Linda. "yeah i know, and all I'm trying to say is that I'm falling in love with you Zipho." i said looking at her. She laughed a little.

Zipho. "stop kidding me Linda" she said and continued laughing. I stood up from the cupboard to the floor, got closer to her. I grabbed her both hands as wet as they were.

Linda. "hey, I'm not kidding. I'm serious, I'm in love with you Zipho."

I had to wear a serious face mask, looking at her. She looked at me too. The moment of silent began. I then took her hands and put them both around my neck, and i held her on her waist pulling her closer and closer until we made that full body

contact. Guess what happened at that moment? We kissed. We stopped kissing for seconds and looked at each other, unexpectedly, she kissed me again. After that she looked at me and i was looking at her too.

Linda. "Zipho, i love you" I told her that and she didn't say anything. Instead she looked on the other side and kept quiet for a while. I could see that she was kind of shy of what just happened it happened so quick i guess. "are you ok?" i asked her.

Zipho. "i don't know Linda" she replied.

Linda. "hey come here" i said pulling her closer, i let her lean on my chest. I brushed her on shoulders. "you'll be be ok baby" i said still brushing her. She woke up and stepped backwards leaned on the cupboard.

Zipho. "you know i don't know what to say Linda

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but I'm just too much for you."

Linda. "what you mean you're too much for me?" i asked. I really wanted to understand because i really didn't.

Zipho. "look at me Linda. I have two kids and you don't have any kid. And I once said i don't need any kid anymore. Look at you, you're a good man. You own so much and i don't own anything besides these two kids." i just smiled at her you know.

Linda. "Zipho. I let my heart grew feelings for you knowing exactly that you have two kids and i don't have even one. Don't you think that I've already made a decision that I'll treat them as my kids? Well, I'm willing to do that and help you raise them. I know they are another man's kids, but because I'm in love with their mother they can be my kids too. Zipho, I'm not looking to having kids with you if you don't want to, and besides

that, i have accepted my condition that i can't impregnate. You know i once thought of adopting a kid from an orphanage, but since i met you and developed love feelings for you i kicked that thought out of my mind to always think of you because you have kids that are your blood. Zipho, you're a very kind, beautiful and respectful woman I've found so hard to let her raise kids on her own. You said you don't own anything besides these two kids. So now I'm giving you a chance to own something above those kids, something to be a third. I want you to own my heart Zipho Dube, and if you do take this chance, I'll teach you how to own more in the long run. " i said to her and she just cried.

I let her lean on my chest and i softly brushed her on shoulders to comfort her. She then woke her head up away from my chest and gave a look at me.

Zipho. "But Linda, as I've said that I'm too much for you. What will people say about all whst I am, especially your friends and family? Won't they say I'm with you for all what you have?

Linda. "Look baby." I said and took a deep breath. "Most of the time in life, you have to let go of people's judgments and ignore them. Sometimes you can use them as a courage to going forward. Today, I challenge you to make this your lifelong, daily motto: *"I respectfully do not care."* Say it to anyone who passes judgment on something you strongly believe in or something that makes you who you are. People will inevitably judge you at some point anyway, and that's ok. if you affected their life, don't let them affect yours. That's how I live my life."

By that time i was looking her straight in her eyes, just to make sure she understands each and every word.

Zipho. "Linda, I get you. But for now I don't know what to say. This just became a twist in a tail. Can you please give me some time to think about all you've just said."

She politely requested some time to think. Her voice was down, soft and low, to me it felt like i was listening to some sweet melody.

Linda. "it's ok Zipho. Take your time, i won't rush you. Just take it one step at a time. And remember that the happiness of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts" i said to her.

Zipho. "Yoh! You talking Linda. Thanks anyway for understanding."

Linda. "you're more than welcome beautiful"

I said to her and smiled. My aim was to bring back her smile again

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and yes i managed to do that. She did smile back at me. Zipho was really beautiful and still she is. I then touched her face with my right hand and moved my one finger down over it until i got to her chin, i lifted it up and kissed her on the forehead.

Zipho. "hey, we have to go now it's getting too late." she said with that melody like voice.

Linda. "yeah! It's late already, i have to drive you home."

We then got out from the kitchen to the lounge and found her son so concentrated on the T.V watching the cartoons. You could see that he was so focused and want no one to disturb.

Zipho. "Mnqobi, stand up and let's go. Uncle Linda is driving us home to rest now." she said to her son.

Mnqobi. "but mama I'm still watching TV." Mnqobi replied, still concentrated on the TV.

Zipho. "let's go, you'll come back tomorrow afternoon. Remember it's Monday tomorrow you're going to school (grade R)." she said to him.

Mnqobi. "but mama."

He said while standing up. You could see that he was really unhappy with that, but he had no choice but to go. We then left the house to the car. I drove off taking them home. we really had a good time that night. It's only time that disappointed us by being so short. We reached the destination, where i had to drop them.

Linda. "you sure i have to drop you here?" i asked her.

Zipho. "yep" she replied.

Linda. "where's your home from here?" i asked her.

Zipho. "it is behind that big house." she replied pointing a big house that was a distance away.

Linda. "let me just drop you closer. Can i?" i asked her.

Zipho. "ja sure, you can."

I then drove a short distance and stopped to let them jump off, but instead, she looked at me. She came closer and closer right to my lips and kissed me.

Zipho. "i love you Linda"

She said looking at me. Oh yes, she crowned me with those words. She was now my queen and i was her king, and that's when i found myself so lucky.

Linda. "i love you too Zipho" i said it too and kissed her again.

Success is all about everything an individual dreams off and is rarely easy, but always worth it. Those who have achieved their dreams know better that life is about willpower and persistence. It's about hanging on to hope when your heart has had enough, and giving even more when your mind and body want to give up. Yes, each step may get harder, but the view from the top is priceless, and well worth enduring the journey to get there. So in love again I succeeded, it's all I was hoping for. And this time I'm sure I've reached the mountain top.

I woke in the morning the following day and prepared myself to work, it was Monday. But before doing anything, I phoned Zipho first. Her phone rang, she quickly picked up.

Zipho. "hello babe"

She answered. It's been a long time I last heard those words in my ears. I smiled and even wished she could see the biggest smile she had put on my face.

Linda. "morning my love, how are you this morning?" i asked over the phone.

Zipho. "I'm just feeling blessed, and yourself?" she replied and asked back.

Linda. "I'm doing very good my love. What makes you feel blessed so early in the morning?"

Zipho. "do you really wanna know babe?"

Linda. "of course baby" i insisted.

Linda. "ok, I'm feeling so blessed to have you as a person I'm completely sure that I'm in love with. A person who's kind, intelligent, smart and loving. And I thank God for a such blessing." she said. Those words really drove me crazy.

Linda. "wow! Thank you baby" i said. I ran out of words to say. And I think it was my first time I ran out of words to say.

Zipho. "it is now my chance to say you're more than welcome." she said. We both laughed a little.

Linda. "so baby what you up to this morning?"

Zipho. "I'm preparing to go to work."

Linda. "ok same here. But baby can i drive you

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I'll drop you first then I'll drive myself to work too." i pleaded.

Zipho. "now that's an application of being a transporter" she said and laughed softly, i laughed too.

Linda. "but baby you know that i can do that every day for you, i completely don't mind."

Zipho. "ok it's fine, you can do so."

Linda. "thanks babe. So let me do fast so i can drive to fetch you. I love you Zipho."

Zipho. "i love you more Linda."

Linda. "thanks maMbuyazi. " I said and hang up.

I did everything quickly, i finished and then drove to fetch her. She got in the car,and then we drove off. We chatted and we were enjoying our morning drive together.

Zipho. "babe" there she called me,and i responded.

Linda. "yes love."

Zipho. "where's your birth home?" she asked.

Linda. "my birth home is in Matubatuba, kwaMsane. My mother lives there with some of my siblings. Unfortunately my father died 7 years ago."

Zipho. "oh, sorry about that" she said.

Linda. "thanks babe. So what about you?" i asked her.

Zipho. "well, my birth home is right where i currently live, in Groutville mission. I was born and i grew up there up to this age."

Linda. "you're lucky to be born in a township area. I was born in a rural where things were hard, and they still are, that's why i came this side to seek a better living so i can support my family."

Zipho. "wow! You seem to be a wise man."

Linda. "ja you can say so baby. It takes a wise man to never give up." i said.

We stopped near the entrance gate where she had to jump out.

Zipho. "my love, i have to go now" she said.

Linda. "ok my love. Have a wonderful day and work safely. I love you." i said to her.

Zipho. "you too have a bright day and safe work. I love you too baby" she said, and then we kissed.

Few months gone by. We were still doing very good together, although we used to argue and fight sometimes. That's what happens mostly in relationships, we all know that. But we used to settle down and talk when something went wrong and forgive each other. What I've noticed very well between us, is that nobody was selfish or stubborn, we both wanted to build up our relationship and make it strong and healthy.

We really valued our relationship than making it a hobby, just like nowadays relationship. Hey, I'm not judging by saying this, so don't get me wrong, it's what i see mostly happening that relationships turns to hobbies nowadays. We did put much effort and time to invest in our relationship, because all we wished for was to see it growing much stronger.

Sometimes she used to sleep over in my house, especially on weekends. That was because i asked her to bring me her kids so that i can get to know them and teach them so that we can always connect. I wanted them to treat me as their father just as I'll treat them as my kids. In the long run, i saw that Mngqobi

and i are very clicking so close every time. He was enjoying every moment when we're together. I taught him much about gaming, we used to play together. He was a very sharp and a clever young man, and even now he's still.

I've been going home alone monthly without Zipho. But in one of the months i decided to go with her, just to show her my home and know my siblings, especially my mother. My mother knew about her but she just never saw her in reality except in pictures. I asked Zipho if she'd like to visit my home.

Linda. "baby

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I'm going home month end. So i was thinking of going with you to show you my home and let my mama know you. Would you love to go with me?"

Zipho. "but why would I deny that opportunity to meet my mother in law baby. I'm very much happy that this time you wanna go with me" she said.

Linda. "thank you baby, we'll go with the kids too. Mngqobi and Lungile." i said.

Lungile was her second born, a young baby girl. She was about to be two years that time, she was growing very fast. I then phoned my mother to inform her of our visit. The phone rang, she picked up.

Mama. "hello Linda my son" she gladly answered.

Linda. "hello mah, how you doing?"

Mama. "not too bad my son, and yourself?" she replied and asked back.

Linda. "I'm very good mah, it's just that i miss you now."

Mama. "haibo! Kahle wena. why so fast my son, you were here three weeks back."

Linda. "to me that doesn't matter mah. I don't have to count time, weeks and months to miss you mah, i always do miss you when I'm away from you."

Mama. "i was just saying Linda, i miss you too my son."

Linda. "ok mah, look I'm coming home month end as usual, but this time I'm coming with visitors." i said.

Mama. "who are those visitors?"

Linda. "just take it as a surprise mah. I have to go now, i love you mah."

Mama. "i love you too my son" she said, and then i hang up.

The month came to and end. We all took a ride together and drove home for Zipho, Mngobi and Lungile to meet my family. We had a safe journey all along the way until we reached home. Every body was so excited to see me driving in the home gate, including my mother as she was outside chilling with her grandkids. I parked the car, and then we all jumped off.

Linda. "hello mah." i greeted while taking a hug at the same time. She also gave Zipho a special one and greeted the young ones excitedly. "mah can we all get in the house please." i pleaded.

Mama."ok my son let's get in."

She said. We then got in the house and took seats. We chatted for some minutes before doing the intro.

Linda. "hey mah, by the way this is Zipho Dube. The one i always tell you about and show you her pictures on my phone. Now you got to know the real her. And Zipho, this is my mother. The woman who gave birth to me and raised me with all support." i introduced.

Zipho. "I'm very happy to meet you mah."

Mama. "I'm also happy to meet you too my child. It's been months i wished to know the real you but Linda kept on saying that i mustn't rush."

Linda. "i haven't finished mah. This one..." pointing at Mnqobi who was next to me seated on the couch. "is Mnqobi. He's our clever boy. And that one you handled is our little tinker bell, Lungile."

I said, doing my last intro. She welcomed them in warm hands. We sat and had some chat and fun until i decided to give Zipho and the kids some time to rest, hence, we hand a long journey.

Linda. "hey mah, I'll be back. I just wanna take Zipho and the kids to my room so they can get some rest."

Mama allowed me. We then got out of the house back to the car to take our packed bags, and then i led them to my room. I had an outside two rooms house at home, besides the one i have here at Thembeni which is much bigger.

Linda. "baby

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this used to be my house here at home. But now it's ours. We'll always sleep here if we visited. So you can be free now." i said to her.

Zipho. "ok baby. But..." she said and didn't complete what she wanted to say.

Linda. "but what baby" i asked.

Zipho. "baby I'm just not feeling comfortable, my heart fails me even if I'm trying to be." she said, and yes i saw that on her face.

Linda. "probably that's because you've never been in this place. But just relax baby, everything is gonna be ok." i said while pulling her closer with my hands on her waist and kissed her on the forehead.

Zipho. "I'm just having a strange feeling, but it will pass."

The little tinker bell was already asleep on sofa, i took her to the bedroom and put her in bed. Mngobi was outside playing football with other kids.

Linda. "babe, excuse me for a couple of minutes. "i said.

Zipho. "you going somewhere?"

Linda. "yeah! I'm going outside to my dad's grave to greet him. That's what i always do when i came home."

Zipho. "oh ok, you can go i'll get myself some rest" she said.

Linda. "thanks baby"

I kissed her and then i left the house to my dad's grave. There i kneeled and greeted my father in the grave.

Linda. "hey dad, I'm home today. You know i miss your presence and will always do. Just know that wherever you are i love you, we all do love you as much as you died knowing that..."

In the middle of my conversation with dad i heard something disturbing behind me. I turned to check, it was my mother. She came and kneeled next to me too. I continued talking until i got fished. At that moment i heard my mama saying...

Mama. "Linda, we need to talk" she said, stood up and walked away.

She left me wondering, thinking what it might be that she want us to talk about. And the other thing, I've never seen my mother on that serious face for a while. I then stood up and walked to my house first to check on Zipho and i found her asleep on the bed. I didn't disturb her, i left the house to my mother's.

Linda. "hey Nosipho, where's mama?"

Nosipho is my younger sister, the last born. She doesn't know her father, i mean our father because he died before she was born and left mama pregnant.

Nosipho. "i think she's in her bedroom." Nosipho replied. At that moment, another voice appeared...

Mama. "I'm right here."

That was my mama's voice from the bedroom. I then went in there to hear what she wanted us to talk about.

Mama. "sit over there." she said, pointing at a single seater sofa that was in her room while she seated on the bed.

Linda."what is it ma? " i asked her.

Mama. "Linda, you've never told me that you have a grown up child to that age. Is that how you keep secrets there in Stanger? Who these kids are? " she asked.

Linda. "no mah, i don't have any secrets for you beside... " eish i nearly busted it out to her but i held my words.

Mama. "besides what Linda? "she seriously wanted to know what i wanted to say.

Linda. "Ok mah let me make it clear. I don't have any kids with Zipho. These two kids are hers." i said.

Mama. "Linda you kidding me. You trying to tell me that even the young one is not your child?" she asked,giving that not understanding look.

Linda. "yes mah

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she's not my biological baby."

Mama. "but my son, have you lost your mind?" she asked, her face was full of frown.

Linda. "no mama i will never loose my mind. But mah, is there anything wrong with all that?" I asked seriously.

Mama. "can't you see that everything is wrong Linda? You know how much I'm willing to raise my grandkids, and now you took someone who has another man's kids to make her your wife. No Linda you've lost your mind." she said, and she was furious. I then forwarded the sofa i seated on to be so close to her.

Linda. "look mah, those another man's kids you talking about are my kids too. I've made a choice to raise them. And your willingness to raise my biological kids as your grandkids is impossible." i said while taking out my wallet from my pocket.

I took out that result paper i got from the doctor, i always kept it in my wallet.

Linda. "mama you see this, i got it from the doctor last year when i went for my manhood check up. The doctor told me that i will never impregnate by any chance due to my manhood weakness. And this is what led to us breaking up with Nompilo because she couldn't bare it. This is all the secret i had hidden for you. But now that I've told you, is no longer a secret and you have to accept and start treating these kids as your grandkids. Although they're another man's kids, but that doesn't matter to me, they're my kids too. And Zipho is gonna be my wife, i want to marry her. I hope you won't find it so difficult mah." i said to her.

Mama. "But. Linda my son, out of all women in the world you chose to love a woman with two kids while you don't even have one? No Linda i can't take this. This is way too much for you. You made a wrong decision."

Linda. "oh, so now you judging my decision mah? Have you forgotten your promises, the promises you made when my dad passed away? Have you forgotten that you promised to support me on everything and step i take that leads to my happiness mah? " i asked her all these, furiously.

Mama. "i still remember all that Linda, but i can't support you on this one. I really can't."

Linda. "what's wrong with you mah? What's wrong? " i asked her and i was so angry that time and could feel tears on the way.

Mama. "you wanna know what's wrong? What's so wrong is seeing you raising another man's kids." she said.

Linda. "oh, is that so. But mah, can i remind you of something you seem to have forgotten? Have you forgotten that when my dad first met you, you already had one child, and that child is S'manga. The one i respect as my brother from another father but from the same mother. All he did, he accepted him as his child. He raised him, taught him, fought for him and supported him in everything until where he is right now. After him you both had me and my two twin sisters and Nosipho together. Wasn't that great mah? " i asked her

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lowered my voice respectfully.

She didn't reply at all these questions i asked, she sobbed in tears instead and my heart became sore. I remembered the book of Deuteronomy 5vs16 and so I had to humble myself.

Linda. "look mah, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to fight or hurt you. No matter how much we argue I'll never fight you or be strong at you. But all i want from you is your support by accepting my decision cause no matter what, nobody can change me from that, even if my dad was still alive he'd never influence me to change. You know that yo'll both, you and dad used to tell me that I'm a brave man, and now this is how i become brave to stand for my decision and for my own dreams. I'm in love with Zipho mah. She is a caring and a loving woman I've ever met in my life. And these two kids, I'll help her raise them and please do accept that mah. Mah I'll give you some time to think about this."

Those were all my words to her. I really loved my mother so much, but i wouldn't allow her to make me change my decisions by any chance. Because i knew that my decisions are my happiness, if not so, they are my lessons in life.

I then stood up on sofa and walked heading to the door. When i was about to get out by the door i heard her calling me.

Mama. "Linda" she called me with her voice sounding still teary. I turned and looked at her.

Linda. "yes mah."

Mama. "my son I'm sorry. I'm sorry for everything. I think i was just becoming selfish and stubborn, I'm sorry my son. I do accept your decision..."

I didn't let her finish what she was saying, i went to her and gave her a hug.

Everything seemed to be good until the next day, which was Saturday. I thought all this arguing with mom was over, but i realised that it wasn't over when my uncle visited home. I caught them in the middle of their conversation, my uncle and my mother when i entered the house to look for mom. They were in the bedroom talking, and I just leaned on the door with my ear to listen.

Mama. "my son has gone crazy. He fell in love with a lady with two kids. I don't know what's really got in his mind. Please convince him to change his mind uncle, this isn't right." I heard my mother saying that to my uncle.

Uncle. "he's crazy sister. Out of all women in this world he just chose a woman with two kids, another man's kids? how could he give us such an embarrassment?" my uncle said.

Mama. "he told me that the doctors told him that he can't impregnate any woman his whole life when he went for a check up last year." my mother said.

Uncle. "the doctors? And he believed them?" my uncle asked.

Mama. "yes uncle it seems like he believed them."

Linda. "how come? What do doctors know besides their English medicine? They always think it works for us too, i believe in traditional help sister. Don't worry, I'll make him change his mind about all this and after that I'll take him to Baba Unkangala, he'll sort him out. i swear he'll impregnate every woman he meet and some will give birth to twins, i tell you sister."

Mama. "please help brother, but don't tell him i told you this."

At that moment i opened the door and stood in the middle and gave them a furious look.

Uncle. "hey nephew, i was just about to check you after.."....

Linda. "oh is that so? Please uncle, don't dare lie to me. I'm not a baby, i heard all your conversation with mah, i was just standing right by the door listening. Mah, what type of a person are you? We spoke about this and you said you accept. Were you fooling me? Now you're telling uncle to convince me change my mind. That will never happen. " i said

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and was so angry at them.

Uncle. "calm down my nephew and let's talk man to man." my uncle said.

Linda. "which man you talking about? You mean yourself?
Uncle, you ain't a man. You also failing to let me do my own decisions. Hey listen, if your parents were the ones who chose for you who to love, that's your weakness. Do not apply it on me, I've chosen the person to love on my own. No matter what condition she is, i love her. Nobody will ever change me from that unless she stops loving me. Mah, i thought you are my loving and supporting mother, but you've just changed to being a selfish castle queen. You know what, I'm now leaving here." I said to them and shat the door on my way out.

Uncle. "hey Linda! Linda!" that was my uncle calling me on my way out of the house. If you get out by that gate of this yard, don't ever come back here. Do you hear me?" he kept on shouting. I stopped and turned back to him.

Linda. "uncle, who told you that I'm lost where I'm going to? For your information, I'm not lost, I'm going home." i said, turned and walked away.

You know, I felt mentally strong I didn't want to sit around feeling sorry about my circumstances or how they have treated me. Instead, i took responsibility for my role in life and understood that life isn't always easy or fair. Not only your fake friends can act against you, even your loved ones and relatives can act against you.

I entered in my room and i found Zipho playing with little tinker bell, Lungile. I leaned on the bedroom open door frame and looked at them and smiled, even though i was truly deeply hurting inside. And with that smile i was hiding all that. I then went in and sat on the bed next to them.

Linda. "baby, get ready. You and the kids, we're leaving in an hour time." I said to her while picking up Lungile and played with her.

Zipho. "we're leaving today? Ain't we suppose to leave tomorrow on Sunday?" she asked.

Linda. "yeah we suppose. But things have changed baby, i got some special business to do tomorrow and that's why we have to leave today."

I said to her, although i was lying on her. It was a very hard situation that I can tell her, and i guess that every man would do this just for his relationship defence. I knew that telling her what really the reason was, would break her and make her feel so not comfortable and not acceptable to my family. I really valued my relationship and didn't want a thing to break it.

Zipho. "ok, let us get ready then. Where's Mngqobi?" she asked.

Linda. "i think he's outside playing with other kids."

I replied. I then stood up and went outside to look for Mngqobi, i called him.

Zipho and the kids got ready to go. We took our packing bags to the car.

Zipho. "baby, I'll be back, i just wanna say goodbye to mah." she said.

Linda. "no

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you ain't going there let's go." She stopped and looked at me for some seconds.

Zipho. "love, is everything alright?" she asked me.

Linda. "yeah it's alright."

At that moment, there came Nosipho. She seemed to be so worried as her face was telling.

Nosipho. "brother you're leaving?" Nosipho asked.

Linda. "ja we're leaving Nosipho, I'll see you again next month."

Nosipho. "but why so early brother? You just came here yesterday and today you're leaving, why can't you leave tomorrow? I haven't even had a word with you."

Linda. "i wish we could stay sister, but i got some business to do and that's why we have to leave today."

Nosipho. "ok i understand brother. But i also want to go with you, I'm pleading you for that. It's so boring here and my life is just stack, probably i can do something better there, like finding a job." she pleaded.

Linda. "do you think that's a good idea for you, and have you told mah?"

Nosipho. "yes brother it is and i spoke to mah before you even came home and she agreed with that. Look brother, i won't take so long, I'll just pack my clothes in the bag and I'll go like this because you all are ready." she said looking at me.

I couldn't say no to her, i let her go pack her clothes. Nosipho and i were very linking in a way that i always wanted her to have all the goods in her life. She came back unexpectedly.

Nosipho. "see, i told you i won't take long brother."

Linda. "did you tell mah that you're leaving with me?"

Nosipho. "well i did tell her repeatedly but she seemed to be busy with uncle." she replied. We then entered in the car and drove away.

I got myself tired of driving on our way back home, and that was the result of over thinking. I had so many thoughts in my mind and i was feeling deeply hurt inside. I took an of ramp to Empangeni Engine petrol station to fill up the fuel and after filling the fuel i gave the car to Zipho to drive. Oh i never told that she was a competent driver. She then drove off.

All the way i was thinking of all the drama that mah and uncle had caused in a day. My mama had changed for me. I never knew that she could do such a thing to me after her promises she made years back then. But then i told myself that all that doesn't matter to me because I love Zipho, and the kids to support was my choice and nobody would change me on that. I know that many people will judge me wrong for doing that, but the thing they won't have a clue about is that it was all about what i want and the happiness i saw to have in life with Zipho.

Nosipho and the kids were starting to connect nicely, having fun at the back seat. She wasn't knowing that these kids ain't my kids biologically. We then reached home and there we had our

lunch. After lunch i asked Zipho for an excuse to talk with Nosipho. We then went outside to the veranda. I leaned on the veranda steel bars and she did so next to me. I took some deep breath.

Nosipho. "hey brother, are you ok?" she asked me.

Linda. "yeah I'm ok."

Nosipho. "but you seem not to be." she said. Nosipho knew me too well as her brother.

Linda. "look Nosipho, Zipho is my girlfriend and I truly love her. Mnqobi and Lungile both are her kids from another man, with her i don't have any kids. But i made a choice that I'll love her, raise and support her kids as mine too. But before you say anything, read this."

I said handing her the result papers i got from the doctors. She then read it and after reading she stared at me with her eyes showing a cloud of tears.

Nosipho. "brother

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I'm very sorry about this. It is very saddening." she said starting to cry.

Linda. "to me it was before I met Zipho, and that is all what made me take a decision to love a woman with another man's kids that mama failed to understand."

Nosipho. "mama failed to understand this?"

Linda. "yeah, and she's the reason why i came back here today as we were supposed to come back tomorrow on Sunday."

Nosipho. "but how could she do that? Have she forgotten about the promises she made to us?" she asked seemed to be frustrated.

Linda. "i don't know Nosipho."

Nosipho. "probably it's still early for her to understand and accept, give her some time. Well, on my side i do understand brother and i'll never go against your decisions if they mean happiness to you, unless you decide to do drugs then.

She said and laughed a little, and i guess she was trying to cheer me up. I looked at her and laughed too.

Nosipho. "hey, she looks so cute and beautiful isn't it?"

Linda. "definitely."

Nosipho. "i could see it in your eyes that you're in love brother. Well, she's so beautiful and perfect for you. And Linda, i just want you to know that you'll always have my support as my brother." she said, i looked at her and then i gave her a hug...

You know sometimes in life things happen the other way round just to test your strength and how strong you are to overcome them. It was a week later when i got a call from my uncle, and it wasn't expected. I watched my phone ringing as i sat on the couch with Zipho next to me. I then answered,

Linda. "hello."

Uncle. "hello Linda my nephew how are you?"

Linda. "I'm doing very good."

Uncle. "that's good to hear, I'm also doing good except your mother who's still worried and i am worried too." he said.

Linda. "you're worried about what?" i asked notoriously.

Uncle. "about you, the decision you've made to fall in love with a woman who has two kids with another man. Nephew, you still haven't changed your mind about that? You're a good man to make such decisions."

I found myself failing to talk next to Zipho as this was about her, i then asked for an excuse to the bedroom.

Linda. "no uncle, i still haven't changed my mind and i will never ever change. Why can't you people let me do what's best for me? Something that is my choice. The woman i fell in love with is the woman that i love and wanna be with for the rest of my life, and that won't change." i furiously said to him.

Uncle. "but nephew..."

Linda. "but what uncle? Huh! The only thing you failing to do is accepting the person I'm in love with because she has two kids and i don't have any with her? Is that so? Who said that a woman with kids doesn't deserve to be loved by a man with no kids? " i cut his words because i was so angry.

Uncle. "Linda, don't dare raise your voice when talking to me

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you hear me?" he said and i could hear that he was starting to be angry too.

Linda. "whatever it is uncle. What you gonna do? You just accept it because i will never change, and tell mah to do so too."

I said to him and then hang up the phone. He called again as soon as i hang up on him. But that time i didn't answer, i

rejected instead. I then dialled my mama's number and the phone rang.

Mama. "hello" she said as she picked up the phone.

Linda. "mah you still failing to accept that I'm in love with Zipho, a woman with two kids?" i asked her. She kept quiet a little.

Mama. "Linda, is that what you phoning me for?"

Mama. "mah I'm phoning to tell you that i will never change my mind about Zipho because i love her, she's the woman i wanna be with in my life. So it is up to you that whether you accept that or not. But to whatever you'll choose i just want you to know that i love you and i always will. I never disrespect you and changed for you, but the thing is that you're against my decisions. Mah I'm old enough to make my own decisions the way i want to. All you have to do is to accept, support and wish me good luck as a parent. You see now, you've just displayed a bigger picture in front of me, a picture showing that you're never been proud of me as your son and you'll never be. But all i know for sure is that, only if my dad was still alive he would support me." i said and hang up leaving her no chance to say a thing.

A day after that, my brother S'manga payed me a visit late evening with his wife and two kids. We had a very good bond all together. We had dinner during late time hours. S'manga was his first time to pay a visit since I'm with Zipho in my life. Unexpectedly, i heard him say...

Smanga. "ladies, can you excuse us we're going outside to talk man to man with Linda".

We then stood up and walked outside the house to the veranda.

Smanga. "hey brother, i heard mom telling me that you've fallen in love with a woman who has two kids with another man. Is that true?"

I looked at him first before i answered him, i was wondering if he'll judge me too.

Linda. "yeah brother it's true. I'm in love with Zipho, a woman with another man's kids while i don't have any kids." I answered him looking away.

Smanga. "so she's the one in the house with those two kids i saw right?" he asked.

Linda. "yeah, as i introduced them to you." i answered.

Smanga. "ohja, she's a beautiful black woman. I hope she deserves your love and you deserve hers too" he said. I looked at him, i didn't know what was the point exactly.

Linda. "ja she's beautiful and I'm glad you see that too. According to me she deserves my love, but the thing is that the other part of my family is against our relationship, against my decision of happiness. And that to me it means no one values my happiness besides Nosipho."

Smanga. "hey Linda, look. I'm not here to judge you or be against you brother. I'm just here to support you in whatever you may need my support on. I told mah not to go against your decisions because you're old to stand on your own now and you've got reasons to some decisions. Although we seem to be arguing with her about that but it's nothing if it comes to your happiness

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I'll convince her to understand. But Linda, you have to be sure that she's really the person you wanna be with."

Linda. "S'manga, my heart has fallen so deep in love with Zipho. She's the woman i really wanna be with in life, no matter what. This is about my life and my happiness, not about people's happiness. Brother I'm in love with Zipho not just because she

has kids and kids are my advantage to her, I've fallen in love with her real being and the kids are just an additional to my love for her to the point that i can't impregnate. And i have decided to raise them as my kids too."

Smanga. "well. Then if so, you got my support on that young brother. You know your father was not my biological father, but the way he raised me as his child still amazes me. Nowadays stepfathers abuse women's kids. They're taking an advantage that they're not their kids, of which is a wrong thing to do. All I'm trying to say to you Linda is that i was so greatful and blessed to have your father as my stepfather, and so as these kids are so lucky and blessed to have you as their stepfather. Look brother, just take your time and do your own thing that brings you happiness in life. Just don't worry about mah, I'll make a plan to make her understand."

He said, and these were words i never expected from him. They just left me a courage in life.

We then got back in the house, S'manga and i. There we bonded for some few minutes until they decided to say goodbyes.

"hey guys, we're thinking of going home now before it's gets more late than it is" that was S'manga's words.

Noaipho. "it's still nice being together, but the time has beaten us. I hope we'll see you again soon."

Zoli. "ja we still need more time to be together so we can get to know each other more better."

Zoli was my brother's wife whom he got married to few years back, her full name was Zoliswa, Mbuli was her surname. She was a Xhosa woman, a woman of his choice whom he chose her on his own and no one ever went against him for choosing a

Xhosa woman just like they're against me for loving a woman with two kids. That made life so unfair to me, but i treated that as a challenge in life. Although it was much hard because it was a challenge involving my family. They then said goodbyes and left the house to their car, they got in and drove away.

Nosipho. "hey, I'm thinking of going to bed for a sleep now. So good night sleep well." Nosipho said as she was giving me a hug and kissed Zipho on a chick." you stay strong together, i love you." she added and then went to the bedroom.

Zipho. "hey baby, your sister is one of a kind I've never met before." Zipho said, and i think that was out of amazement.

Linda. "yeah

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she's a cool, good and loving young girl. Just as her brothers." i said and winked at her. She laughed a little.

Zipho. "yeah, that's true. I saw that on S'manga too."

Linda. "that's how our dad taught us when he grew us. He taught us how to appreciate, to love and how to value our relationships with people we love and those helpful close to us, and also those we meet who bring the goods in us. He also taught us how to tolerate those who does bad to us. Our father was a life teacher, not only to us. But also to those who found the good in him."

Zipho. "mmmmh! Linda, I'm finishooo like the nigerians usually say." She said and we both laughed. "your father was really a good man i can sense that from all what you said. And i can see that from you, you've just inherited his goodness."

Linda. "yeah babe, people usually say so. Hey babe, i was thinking about Nosipho that how about i send her to a driving school to study for a learners license as she's currently doing

nothing. And then after that she'll do the driving practices once she gets her learners license."

Zipho. "yeah sure, let her go for it. And once she gets her learners you'll also help her do practices with your car. It's a good idea babe." She said, agreeing with my idea to help my sister.

Linda. "well, with my car I'll leave that to you. You'll teach her."

Zipho. "well, you know I'm your no problem lady"

She said as she winked at me. I stood up and picked her up in my hands and headed to our bedroom.

A month later. Zipho and i were in town doing the late shopping after work that made us drove home late. Surprisingly, when we got home, there i found my mama sitting on the couch next to Nosipho playing with Lungile. I became shocked seeing her in the house and i was so amazed seeing her playing with Lungile.

Linda. "hello everybody in the house."

I greeted them heading to the kitchen to put some stuff we've bought into the fridge. I guess Zipho wondered why i didn't greet mah and didn't even hugged her, hence, i usually tell her how much i love my mother.

Zipho. "good evening guys and hello to you mah" that was Zipho greeting.

Mama. "hello my daughter how are you?"

Mama. "I'm very good mah i can't complain, and yourself?"
Zipho replied and asked back.

Mama. "I'm also doing good."

Zipho. "I'm happy to see you here mah" Zipho said smiling.

Mama. "yeah my dear, i just decided to pay you a visit though it won't be long."

Zipho. "we appreciate that so much mah."

I came out from the kitchen and passed to the bedroom and didn't say a word. As soon as i closed the door i heard it opening. It was Zipho.

Zipho. "baby, did you notice your mom is here?"

Linda. "yeah i saw her

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she's right there on the couch."

Zipho. "but you didn't say a word to her why?" she aske and I kept quiet. "my love, is everything good between the two of you?" she asked again.

Linda. "nothing is good between us and i don't know why she's here." i said sadly.

Zipho. "what's wrong baby? Talk to me if it's not personal."
Zipho said and after that followed a knock on the door.

Linda. "who's that?"

Nosipho. "it's me Nosipho brother. Mah is calling you."

Linda. "ok I'm coming just now."

I said as i stood up on bed and walked to the sitting room, i took
a seat on the couch.

Mama. "Linda my son how are you?"

Linda. "I'm good mah."

Mama. "Linda i want to talk to you privately."

Linda. "ok let's go talk outside." I said to her. We then both stood up and went outside.

Mama. "Linda, i can see that you're still mad at me about being against your choices and decisions. Yes you have to be mad i can't blame you. But my son i came here to admit that i was really making a big mistake about that and to apologise to you and to Zipho if she knows about it. Linda my son, as from now on i let you live your choices and do your decisions. With all this i'm not neglecting you, don't get me wrong. I'm still your mother Linda and it's about time i keep my promises, i will support you my son and i always will. I spoke to your uncle to set you free before i came here and he apologises too. So now my son please forgive us for that. But before you accept or deny my apologies, call Zipho upfront here so i can apologise to both of you if she knows about this."

Those were my mama's words to me. I just cried and wondered what really was happening and what changed her mind.

Linda. "what changed your mind now mah? "i asked.

Mama. "do you really wanna know my son?" she asked me if do i really wanna know what changed her mind.

Linda. "yes mah."

Mama. "what changed my mind is knowing a good man that your father was. A loving and a humble man he was. A man who used to love his family in a no matter what situation." she said and started sobbing in tears.

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my apologies, call Zipho upfront here so i can apologise to both of you if she knows about this."

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Linda. "ok mah, i get you. But Zipho doesn't know anything about this. And so i accept your apologies." i said and hugged her.

Things in life got back to normal after my mother apologised to me. She accepted Zipho and the kids to be part of my life as i chose them to be and also to be part of her life too as her in laws. Visits at home were more usual monthly. I can say that's where my complete happiness was brought back in life.

Nosipho was still pushing on her side with the help from Zipho as she passed her learners license. One of the weekends we drove to the soccer field for Zipho to teach Nosipho to drive. Mngqobi, Lungile and i sat down and watched them while we were also having fun. She was taking it slowly and she had fun of learning something new in her life. The main aim of teaching her was for her to get keen with driving so that it would be easier when she gets to the driving school. They finished and came to us where we were seated.

Zipho. "hey guys, ain't you hungry now?"

Linda. "we already have made a plan about that baby. We decided that as soon as you both finish you'll drive us to Nandos in town."

Zipho. "oh ok, we don't mind, right Nosie?" She said looking at Nosipho as she wanted her to agree with her.

Nosipho. "yeah! Sure" Nosipho replied.

Linda. "ok good then. So how is she handling your driving techniques?" i asked Zipho.

Zipho. "she's doing very good and she's so quick at catching. I mean, she's a quick learner."

Linda. "that's very good. So ladies, between the two of you who will drive us to town?"

Nosipho. "she will. Zipho will drive us all to town" Nosipho replied pointing at Zipho.

Linda. "ok then, take us there we can't settle for hunger anymore. You both take the front seats and I'll be at the back seat with the kids."

We then stood up and got in the car and drove away to town.

There we parked the car

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jumped off and went to Nandos. Guess what? On the door way at the shop entrance i bumped to Nompilo, my ex girlfriend. That time i had Lungile with me, i stopped and looked at her and she stared at me. She was pregnant, i think she was around six or seven months.

Linda. "hi Nompilo" i greeted her.

Nompilo. "hi Linda" she greeted back and kept staring at me.

Linda. "hey are you ok?" i asked her.

Nompilo. "yeah, yeah! Sure, I'm ok." She replied.

In my mind came a thought that maybe she's amazed that i have a child, but i ignored it.

Linda. "ok then. I'm glad to see you again after a long time i last saw you. Anyway have a great day, somebody's waiting for me inside." i said and left her still standing.

I entered inside the shop and went to the table where Zipho and Nosipho were seated and i took a seat too.

Linda. "so ladies, have you decided what to choose on the menu?" i asked them.

Nosipho/Zipho. "yeah!" they both replied at the same time.

Zipho. "but we decided to go buy it ourselves for you guys, we just took you out remember."

Linda. "oh ok, we've got no problem with that. We appreciate it."

They then stood up and went to the counter to order. After few minutes they came back with the order, and then we helped ourselves, we ate.

Later on that day in the evening after dinner at home, i asked Zipho to the bedroom for something. We went in together, and there i opened the safe box and took a small black box i kept in there for so long. Do you still remember it? It was the one i bought for a woman i had before Zipho, who she declined my request.

I then kept it in the safe box with a big hope that probably one day I'll find a woman who deserves it. But that day it was more than before as i started with handing her the keys of my VW Golf 5 GTI. I kneeled down in front of her and grabbed her hand. I then put my hand in my pocket, took out the keys folded them so that she can not see what really it is.

Linda. "hey baby, i hope you know how much i love you. And so today i decided to give you more of my love to you and make you see more of it. Baby, I've decided to hand over to you my current car as i want to buy a new one. So here are the keys

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and i declare the car as yours from now."

I said as i hand her the keys, and that time she was sobbing in tears.

Linda. "don't cry my love i haven't finished my mission yet, there's still more for you. Please close your eyes." she closed her eyes and i put my hand in my pocket again and took out that black box and opened it. "you can now open your eyes." she opened. "Zipho my love, this is a sign of how much i want to be with you in my life. I want you to be forever mine. So, will you marry me?"

I popped up that special question that every woman would like to hear from her guy. She covered her eyes with both hands and cried, looked up as if she was praying at the same time. She then looked at me and said nothing.

Linda." come on baby, say something. MaMbuyazi, will you marry me?" I begged her to say something but she kept silent. "baby, if it's that i reacted so fast, please forgive me. It's just that in you I've found a potential wife that I'd never like to loose r be taken away from me. You're just all i need Zipho. All i ever needed, and I'm glad that I've finally found you. So please say something baby."

Zipho. "i just don't know what to say Linda, this is way too much and hard for me."

That's what she said, and then she cried again.

Zipho. "I'm afraid Linda, I'm afraid of myself. I'm too much on my own for you to ask me to marry you. Look, i have two kids and you don't have any kids. I'm afraid of what people will say about all this. You know how people are, some will say I've done something to make you dumb, to make you be my slave and make you give everything as easy as that. And to me that won't make any good living." she said.

Linda. "hey baby look. This isn't about people, it's about us. The day i told you that i love you i wasn't doing it for the public, but i was doing it for myself, i fell in love with you and I chose to love you and this is how i prove it. I chose to love you knowing that you have two kids and i don't have any. You know why? It's because i really fell in love with you and i didn't care about what people will say because I was looking for my own happiness. People will always nag, point fingers and talk bad because they don't want to see happy couples, but that's non of our business. All we need to do is to be strong and prepare to accept the challenges together, you and i. I love you Zipho, and again I'm asking this question. Zipho Dube

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will you marry me?"

Zipho. "Ok Linda i understand you. But please get me, I'm not denying your proposal I'm really looking to approve it, but i have one thing that we need to do before we get married. If it succeeds I'll marry you and if it fails I'll still marry you with the fact that we tried but we failed." she said.

Linda. "tell me what is it baby? I'm willing to try." i asked her wanting to know what is it that she want us to try.

Zipho. "remember the time i told you that i don't want anymore kids? I wasn't so sure about it. Linda, at least having your baby can set me free from all this fear i have. So i want us to try and I'm really willing to give you at least one baby." she said.

Linda. "But baby you know that's impossible." i said wondering.

Zipho. "just believe that it can be possible my love. You may never know when is the time but the better is to keep trying. So let's give it a try baby. If it fails, then we'll go on. My mama knows someone who can help you traditionally."

Linda. "well, let's give it a try. But for how long baby?"

Zipho. "if it goes above four months without success, we'll consider it as unsuccessful. And then we can go on getting married. But if we succeed, I'll have to give birth first and raise the baby for some months while preparing and then we get married." she said to me.

Linda. "well, ok baby i get you and understand why you wanna do that."

Zipho. "thanks for understanding baby."

I grabbed her hand and looked at her.

Linda. "Zipho, I'm really in love with you."

Zipho. "i love you too Linda and I'll always do love you, no matter what." she said, and then we kissed.

We both agreed to try and see if it'll work or not. Zipho decided to stop preventing, and we then went for it trying naturally as much as we wanted it to happen. The time went by and we saw nothing happening.

In one of the days after two and a half months probably, i received a call from Zipho. My phone rang and i picked up.

Linda. "hey baby" i said answering the phone.

Zipho. "hey baby, how are you?"

Linda. "I'm very good sweetheart, and yourself?"

Zipho. "I'm more than good, I'm happy to the moon." She had that kind of excitement i could feel.

Linda. "wow! What took you to the moon baby?"

Zipho. "guess what."

Linda. "wait, you're pregnant?"

Zipho. "yes Linda i am. I'm pregnant your baby and you're a father to be soon." she said excitedly.

Linda. "really baby?" i asked her, and I wasn't believing it.

Zipho. "yes baby it's true. I bought a pregnancy test and the results came positive. I'll send you a picture after this call."

She said. I became silent for few seconds trying to believe it, and I then started sobbing.

Zipho. "hello baby, you still there?" That was Zipho asking over the phone.

Linda. "yes baby I'm still here. It's just that I don't know what to say."

Zipho. "ok i understand baby. I know it must be hard for you to believe it after all you went through. We'll talk later when we get home. I love you Linda."

Linda. "i love you too baby."

Later on that day

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we got home after work. I left them sitting in dinning room to the bedroom to take that black box again. I came out and went to kneel in front of Zipho who was sitting on the couch and opened the box.

Linda. "Zipho, will you marry me?" i asked her.

Nosipho. "wow! Amazing." said Nosipho, she couldn't hold herself out of the excitement.

Zipho. "yes Linda, i accept your proposal. I'll marry you."

She said sobbing in tears. I guess it was tears of joy within her heart. So all we had to do was to set the wedding date and send invites to family, friends, relatives and neighbours.

Nosipho. "hey, you guys are such an inspiration in my life. I've been with you not so long but I've learned so much from you. My brother, I'm so proud of you. I wish i could get a man like you in my life. And Zipho, you're very lucky and consider

yourself blessed multiple times for having such a man. Men like him are very scarce, i can tell." these were Nosipho's words.

Zipho. "thank you Nosipho. You know Linda and i are expecting to have a baby soon." She said that and a big smile followed.

Nosipho. "i beg your pardon."

Zipho. "I'm pregnant and your brother is the father." said Zipho.

Days, weeks and months went by and i could see by her tommy widening that someone is quickly growing inside. My family knew about the pregnancy and my mama was at last so excited for that she'll be a grandma for my biological son or daughter. We weren't so sure what gender our baby is gonna be as the doctors weren't sure too. Almost every day i used to kneel down in front of Zipho, kiss her tommy and talk to as if I'm talking to someone who could talk back to me. It was a very exciting and funny moment I've ever had in my life.

Preparations for our wedding were still on as the wedding date was set to be in 4 months after birth of our baby. Invitations were sent to families, friends, relatives and neighbours of our choices. I really couldn't wait for both to arrive in my life. I mean our baby and our wedding. Life seemed to be so great by that time, and Nosipho on the other hand had made her best to pass her drivers licence. She was then a fully competent driver, all with help from Zipho. Who knew that Nosipho would be so helpful and could return back the favour to Zipho? When Zipho couldn't drive, Nosipho was always there to help drive her where ever she wanna go during midday as she was on her maternity leave.

You'll remember that i handed my GTI 5 to Zipho as i was to buy a new car. As my family was expanding, i then decided to buy a Toyota fortuner of which was the car i had found suitable for a family. One of the days i was driving in town after work during early hours of Friday. I bumped myself to Nompilo at Spar in the long teller ques.

Linda. "hey Nompilo" i greeted her.

Nompilo. "hey Linda how are you?"

Linda. "I'm doing very good and yourself?" i replied and asked back.

Nompilo. "I'm also good. Long time no see."

Linda. "yeah! Long time no see."

Our conversation paused as she was heading to the teller to pay for her items. She was in front on the line as i was behind two people after her. She paid and went out. The line went on quickly until i reached the teller and paid for my items too. I walked out to the passage and i found Nompilo standing.

Linda. "hey, you still here, you waiting for someone?" i asked her.

Nompilo. "of course not."

Linda. "ok

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you can jump in my car if you may need a lift."

Nompilo. "ok thanks."

She then picked up her bags and followed me to the car. We put our plastics in and jumped in too.

Nompilo. "Linda, is this your car too?"

I smiled over that question and then replied,

Linda. "yeah it's my car, it's only one month new."

Nompilo. "what happened to the other one? You smashed it?"
She asked and i laughed softly.

Linda. "you don't have to smash a car to buy another one
Nompilo. I've just upgraded and i handed the one you know to
my wife."

Nompilo. "wait, did you just said wife?"

Linda. "yeah! You heard me right. In fact she's still my fiance but
i consider her my wife because she agreed to marry me. Our
wedding will take place next year June and that will be after
four months of our baby's birth. I mean her and i we're
expecting a baby."

Nompilo. "are you lying to me Linda?"

Linda. "nop, why would i? I'm telling you the truth. And your
invitation to the wedding is pending, you may receive it any
time soon."

Nompilo. "no thanks, I'm sorry to reject it."

She said and looked out through the window. I looked at her, Linda. "are you sure about that?" i asked.

Nompilo. "yes I'm sure Linda." she replied sounding angry.

Linda."oh well, I'll send it just in case you change your mind."

Nompilo. "can you please drop me there at second stop (Melville), and thank you for a lift."

I then slowed down as i was approaching a bus stop, i stopped and she jumped out and then i drove away.

The time was due. Zipho gave birth to a handsome little boy which I proudly call our son. All I had to do was to thank God himself for giving me such a blessing and especially it all happened naturally, of which it was the time God had planned for me, and perhaps with the right person. So due to all that I had to name our son Bonginkosi. I was so proud and much happy of my life, seeing what was said impossibles become possible. I thank Zipho for giving me the strength I was to give up on, if it wasn't for her I wouldn't have Bonginkosi.

Talking about happiness and joy, that's just a little. There was so much joy and happiness to come in our lives as our wedding preparations were in process and the wedding itself was too soon. Everybody in my family was so excited including my mother and uncle. You'll remember that at first these two gave me hard times failing to accept Zipho. But this time they treated her so good. It was only few weeks ahead to our wedding when I got a call from an unknown number. I watched my phone ringing, and then I answered thinking that probably it might be one of my wedding guests.

Linda. "it's Linda Mbatha on the line hello."

Woman. "Hi Linda, I hope you doing good. It's me, Nompilo."
she said over the phone

Linda. "Oh hey Nompilo, how you doing?"

Nompilo. "I'm good I guess."

Linda. "that's nice. So how can I help you?" I asked her.

Nompilo. "Well, I'm phoning to congratulate you and tell you
that I have accepted your invitation. I'll be at the wedding."

Linda. "Thank you very much. I knew you'll change your mind."

Nompilo. "Yeah! Well, it's all my pleasure. But Linda

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are you sure of your marriage?"

She asked, and I kept silent a little not understanding what really she was trying to say.

Linda. "what do you mean about that?" I asked her.

Nompilo. "well, nothing much my dear I was just asking a question. Linda you're marrying a woman who has another man's children, don't you see that she has done something to dumb you and she's after your everything?" She said and I laughed a little at her.

Linda. "You're still a very good joker ne? So that's the reason for your call, it's all about jealousy I see. Listen here Nompilo, the woman you talking about right now is a woman of my choice after your leaving. I loved her knowing that she has kids with another man and those kids I chose to raise them as my kids too. She's a woman that gave me her strength and patience that you failed to do and chose to leave me. We both have a baby now out of her patency. If only you did all that, this could be happening to us, but then you blew it and so accept that and make peace with it so you can live better. If it's that she's after all what I have, that's nothing, I'll learn something if it happens."

Those were all my words to her.

Nompilo. "Ok Linda, we shall see. I don't mean to be jealous, but good luck." she said and hang up...

A wedding day had arrived. It was about close to 05:00am when I woke up that day. What I've recognized or noticed was that I woke up to a sweet tweet and melody made by birds on the slate. I went straight to the window and opened the curtain looked outside through the window and sun beams shone inside on the glossy painted walls as I opened the curtain. I then opened the window and there I felt a fresh morning air breeze. At that very moment the birds were still tweeting on the slate, and that made me wonder if were they wishing me a good luck or what? I can tell that that day was a very bright day seemed to be profitable to almost everyone who had plans on it. It really seemed like a different day, more like the future.

At that very moment, my brother, S'manga came in the room and joined me as I was still standing on the window looking outside.

Smanga. "This is a day you've been longing for all along young brother." he said to me.

Linda. "Yeah! And it feels like I'm dreaming that it finally came to happen." I said still looking outside.

Smanga. "I know that feeling Linda ask me, you know I'm a victim. It once happened to me and as soon as the day ends, you will realize that it's a dream came true. So now, all I can say is that I'm very proud of you my brother. Although we ain't from the same father but we're from the same womb you know that. Good luck young bro."

He said to me and gave me a special men special handshake.

Smanga. "hey, you better get yourself preparing before the time points up the sky." he said.

I head my phone beeping and vibrating on the pedestal and went to attend it. It was a message from Nosipho and it was read like:

Nosipho/sms. "may this day be a day filled with a longer lasting life happiness and joy to the Mbatha family, especially to you Linda. I wish you all the best of success. We all love you, so as you do love us. Good luck my brother."

I just smiled over it and threw the phone on the bed.

I then started preparing all I needed and got finished. Then went to bond with my friends and brothers who were groom's men waiting for the time to arrive.

Well, the time had suddenly arrived. We all took transport to the community hall where the whole ceremony took place. There it all happened the way it usually happens in most weddings. We said the vowels just as the pastor had instructed us. I said mines to her, and she said hers to me too. And then it was all back to the pastor again.

Pastor. "to all of you who are here today. I call you all the witnesses of this marriage. But before i complete my work, before i bind this 2 angrls. Is there anyone who wish that this marriage doesn't proceed? If so, show yourself by raising a hand."

That was pastor's words to the public in hall. The hall kept quite and no one had raised hands to stop us proceeding. But suddenly, at the entrance door behind us shown up a woman in all blacks standing. No one recognized her until the pastor asked.

Pastor. "so is it you mam who wish that this marriage doesn't proceed?"...

I couldn't see who really she was as she hid her face with a black hat and her head facing down, but when she lifted up her head, I then recognized that it' was Nompilo.

.....**THE END**.....

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