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VINSIDE OUTV

♥MONTHS AGO**♥**

VINSERT 01♥

VASANDE**V**

Hlubi: this is not my child

Me : but ...

Hlubi: hey, you will get off my back. And find your brata father

Me: Hlubi ...it's your child, you're the only guy I've ever slept with. And you knowthis

He laughs

And I'm on the verge of tears , I didn't expect this

Maybe I loved him and he didn't love me But this is his baby

I didn't think he will react this way

And treat me like dirtl am hurt Hlubi: Asande, take a good lock at yourself He gestures to the whole ofme

Hlubi: I can never make a child with someone like you ,just leave me alone. And don't you dare spread rumours about me, otherwise we will have a bigproblem

Me: but, what am I going todo?

He clicks his tongue annoyed

Hlubi: you're asking me? If you don't know the father of your thing, then kill it

Me: what? I can't do that He sighs shaking his headannoyed

Hlubi: you're so naïve it's so annoying, but remember that you chose to be a youngmother all by yourself. It wasyour choice, leave me alone. And don't ever say I got you pregnant, ever again

Me: but ... I am telling you soyou can help me. My father will be very disappointed with me

Hlubi: that's your problem, just kill this thing of yours. And if you're so scared of your family, then you haveno other option

Me: but if you take responsibility, then he won't be so angry

He laughs and clicks histongue

Hlubi : don't annoy me Asande , l've already givenyou solutions

Me: I cannot kill our child

Hlubi: then leave me thefuck alone, it's your child

He turns and gets into hisbrothers polo

I am left eating his dust As he disappears What am I going to do?

I can't tell my sister

She will tell my mother

And she won't waste time telling my father I know, he will be very angry

This thing is killing me allalone

With no one to share it with Libo will just rejoice Seeing that I'm still at school and I fall pregnant

She will finally see me andher as one

Even better, she will hold herself way much higher and better than me

I don't know what am I going to do But I can't kill my child

But what will I do?

I have exams in just threemonths

I'm already two months as it is

Soon I'll be showing And then everyone will know

Ohthis is a mess

VLIBONGWEV

I smile with myself readinghis message

"I miss you more"

I respond back

And his call comes right assoon as he reads the text Ntando: muntu wami (mybaby)

I blush like a kid in a candystore

Me: sthandwa sam (my love)

Ntando: unjani? (How areyou) Me: ngiyaphila, unjani wena? (I am good, how are you) Ntando: couldn't better, now that I'm talking to you

Me: when will you be back from the city? I miss you so much, I just can't wait for you to get back seriously Ntando: I miss you too, but I'll be back soon. And I cannot wait to wife you, andhave our soccer team of boys

I smile, my smile evenreaches my eyes

Me: I will give you many kids , as many as you want He laughs

Ntando: and that's why, I am marrying you and payingso much money. You're a wife material, and I couldn't have asked for a better wife

Me: I am glad you feel thatway He heaves a sigh

Ntando: I have to cut this call short, but I'll call you again soon. Don't forget that I love you, and I'll seeyou soon

Me: and I love youHe drops the call

I take a deep breath Ntando is one of a kind There's rare guys in this village Who get the opportunity tomake it in the city Even though he is noteducated and all

But he runs his supermarketAnd he has lots of money That's why I love him

Because I know he will takecare of me

I will never have to suffer

And I won't need to work

Because he will be takingcare of me

I never made it far in schooll kept on failing grade 9

My father ended up, makingme quit school

He was very angry

But now, I know he's very proud of me

I am getting married To a guy with money

I won't even need that education

At least, I am not a deadbeat

And he will gain somethingout of me

I am excited for this marriage

Especially because it's with aguy that's rich

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VASANDEV

It's been a horrible day for me I am even scared to go homeBut I have no choice I know Hlubi

And when he says somethingHe really means it I should have just listened And stayed away from himIf only I knew better But it was just my stupidity

The guy changes girls, likehe changes his underwear His brothers car makes himcool

So girls just throwthemselves at him

I can't believe I fell for him

After he chased me for almost 6 months, since lastyear I finally gave in

And I gave him all of me Now, I am left with his seedThat he doesn't even want I should have done better For someone with hopes and a better future

Beyond this village

I sure made a stupid decision

VINSIDE OUTV

♥INSERT 02♥

VASANDEV

It's a joyous week here at home

Even I got to not stress aboutmy issues I am studying hard

And just trying to get bettermarks for my exams

I still intend on applying touniversities

Outside of this village With the hopes of maybe getting accepted in one of the big universities in the bigcities

I want better for myself Libo is about to get married Everyone is just happy She's the focus right now

The centre of attention

And obviously, my parentsare just ecstatic

Mom: pass me that I hand her the bowl

Mom: what are you doing?

Me: my maths

Mom: really? Why do you even bother yourself with that? You can just make sure, you're a well mannered girl. Get yourself a man and live happily

Me: I don't want to depend on a man She laughs

I know she thinks I'm stupid

Mom: you're stupid, that's what you are. You are not going anywhere beyond this village, get that in your thickhead

I don't want to be like every girl in this villagel want better I don't want to get married and depend on a man That's not a life I want for myself

I don't just want to be a wife

And have kids, mind thehouse

I want to work

I want to be educated

There's more beyond this village to be honest

And I want that for myselfI have dreams and hopes Me: no, I want to beindependent Mom: this whole education, and democracy thing has ruined you kids of today

Me: times have changed, it's not the same as your olden days

I know I am not her favouritedaughter She makes that one clear

And she will always approveof what Libo does

But I will not let her wordsbring me down

Mom: in our times, girl children were forbidden to have an education. All they had to do, was to be wife's and bare kids for their husbands

. Minding their homes

Me: well, that was your time. I will never settle for that

Mom: because you thinkyou are better

Me: no, because I wantbetter

She shakes her head
I can see she's getting angryAnd I don't think I should
continue with this talk
The good thing is, even ifthey disapprove with my decisions

They know where I stand

And I won't change for anyone

Not even for them

Even in my situation, I still hope that I can achieve whatI

desire

This pregnancy won't tie me down It will not be my downfallNot even before I begin

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VLIBONGWEV

As I wait for the results
I missed my periods lastmonth

And this month, I'm late

again with two weeks

And I am hoping that I ampregnant

Ntando wants kids Not just one or two

He wants more than that

And I know that's why he's marrying me

I just can't wait

I want to give him what hewants

And what's better than starting early?

This would be the bestsurprise for him

I know he will be happy

I pick up the pregnancy test Taking a deep breathAnd I look at it I let out a scream, on top ofmy lungs

Me: I am pregnant!

Oh my ...
I just cannot wait to tell himthis

I know he will be thehappiest man ever

My parents, I hope they willbe proud

They know we have sex I mean , we're getting married

It's not like we were just dating

So I was allowed, to givemyself to him

As soon as he made his intentions about me clear

I am not even ashamedabout this

VASANDE**V**

We're all sitting around the table having dinner Everyone seems to be lost intheir world

I am stressed and worriedabout my situation

I can forget, for a little while

But then, reality comes backand kicks in

Libo: I have newsWe all look at her

Dad: it better be goodShe smiles

Libo: it is

Mom: well, don't keep us

waiting

Libo: I am expectingWhat?

Libo: I know it's not what you expected, but Ntandowill be

happy. And he will

see he made the right decision by marrying me

My mother gets up ululating

While my father seems to belost

Libo: dad ...

Mom: we're going to be

grandparents Now he gets it

And the smile on his face

It shows how happy and proud he is

It's evident

Dad: yes my girl, this is whata woman does. Now your in laws, will see they didn't make a mistake with you. This is great news indeed

Libo: thank you dadWow!.

How I wish, I could tell themas well

But they won't have the same reaction

They will be disappointed and angry

I don't know what they would do to me

If they found out

And well, I am not to be married to a rich man likeLibo is

And I am still at schoolSo I cannot tell them. I just can't

Worse, Hlubi wants nothingto do with this baby

It'll be just a shame and nothing else

I will keep quite

I don't know for how long Because one can never hidea pregnancy

The tummy will grow big asmonths go by

And everyone will know

I can't hide it forever I don't know what will become of me then . VINSIDE OUTV

VINSERT 03♥

VLIBONGWEV

It's like I have made my parents, to be double proudof me

And it makes me happy somuch

Finally, I'm all they talk about I've done something that makes them proud

Not only am I about to getmarried

But I'm also pregnant

Ntando knows he's about tomarry a real woman And I pray , I give him a sonl am excited I might not be educated likeAsande

But this is an achievement forme as well

And a big one

She always thinks she's better than me

Just because she got tomatric at 17 years

And by that age, I was stilldoing grade 9

And failing dismally

But at least I got a man

Mom: I know you're excited about this I smile Me: I am

She heaves a sigh

Me: I know I am not marriedyet, but I'm about to be. Soit's not really a shame

She smiles

Mom: of course it's not, but I want you to be careful. Not everyone will be happy for you, you're getting married young and to a good man. Many girls and mother's willbe jealous of you, so you have to keep this a secret. Don't tell anyone that you'repregnant as of yet, because people with jealousy are verydangerous. They might do something to you, or your unborn baby

Well , I didn't think about that

But she's right

Me : okay , I won't tell anyone

Mom: and wait for Ntandoto get back, before you tellhim

I don't know why But I'll listen to herAnd not tell him He should be back in a fewdays

Then I'll share the news

VASANDE**V**

I am so tired

But I had to help around

Doing this and that

Things I just think are sounecessary

This is the weekend of thenegotiations

And it's just a bit too much

Because my mother wantseverything perfect

All because she wants Ntando's family, to hold ushigh

For whatever reason

Of which I don't think it's even necessary
Those people know us

And they know the kind oflife we live

They know we're not rich as them

So our standards are belowtheirs

But my mother is not havingthat

And she wants everythingperfect

For her precious daughter

I hope after the negotiations Things can just die down

And we can go back to ourlives

So I can really focus on theexams

Everything else happening

It has nothing to do with me

It's not even about me

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VSPHELELEV

Londiwe: I feel like ... She takes a deep breathMe: what? Londiwe: baby, do you really have to go study so far

?

Me: not this again, I'm just going to study

Londiwe: but what if you don't come back?

Me: there's nothing for me here, I don't have a family. You know I stayed because Ididn't have a choice, but now ...things are different

Londiwe: what about me?

Me: we will continue ...

Londi: no, if you leave thenwe are done

I chuckle

Because I know she's serious

It's like I knew something like this was going to happenA gut feeling never lies I prepared my heart for anything

Even beforehand

She changed somehow after got accepted and I shared the news with her

I could see then

That this might be a problemeven break us up

But it's her choice and her decision

I will just walk away withdignity

And respect her decision

Without making her feelsomehow

Me: is that so?

Londiwe: you will cheat on me, and I'll be left a fool hung up on you. So it's best we break up, it's either me or you leaving for Cape Town

Me: okay, if that's what youwant it's fine

I get up

Londiwe: you won't even try

to convince me otherwise ?Me : no , why should I ?

Londiwe: then you clearly

don't love me enough

Me: I will not beg you, and nor will I convince you otherwise about anything. If you can choose to end us, just because I am moving away. Then I can respect that, it's your choice and decision

Londiwe: it's like you were just waiting for me to dumpyou, maybe this is what you've been wanting all along. And I just gave youan easy way out

Me: I didn't ask you, I didn'teven hint it. You have your whole family here, your brother and sisters. Your parents, I have no one. Youknow my situation with Spha, he doesn't want me anymore because his wife is complaining. I stayed and endured her abuse because Ihad no one, but now I have an opportunity to study andmake something of myself. Excuse me for being selfish and choosing myself over you, because at the end of the day you will also choosea better man with a job andmoney over me. We both know that's the reality of today

I open the door and walk out

It's easy for her to say

But she fails to understandwhere I come from

Spha is not even my family

He's just a guy who took pity on me When a fire burnt my home

Along with my parents and sister

But it's been hard all theseyears staying with them

But the past three years havebeen worse It hasn't been easy

He has a wife and child

And his wife, made sure lunderstood my place

She made me understand Iwas nothing of theirs

I can't stay here anymore

I need to build my own life

And if it means loosing agirlfriend so be it

Clearly, she didn't think about life outside of villageAnd I have I am going to Cape Town

I didn't get accepted last year

I applied again this year earlyJanuary

Just holding on hope and praying hard

First semester passed me

But now, I have been accepted

I won't let the opportunity pass me by

Sometimes in life , you haveto lose something In order to get somethingelse much better

Or just a lesson And this is it for me I love Londi , but love sometimes it's not enough

She lives comfortable

And I don't

Her life is much better thanmine

I'll rather leave, make something of myselfOr fail having tried Than to cry and have regrets

Over what might have beenor could have been

VINSIDE OUTV

VINSERT 04♥

VLIBONGWEV

The day is finally here

I can't even contain myself
I am going crazy out of mymind

Wondering what's happening in thereI barely even slept Ntando's family arrived herevery early And they didn't even keepthem waiting long by the gate

I know my parents are excited just I am

And they just can't wait for this whole thing to endl am hopeful They won't even give them a hard time

Just as long as the money isright

Everything will just goperfect

Without any drama
I keep looking at the timel am dressed

And I can't wait to be called out

So I can meet my in-laws

It's a happy day for me Ntando will be arriving thismorning

He promised

And said he will comestraight here

I can't wait to see him
Its been a tough few weeksNot being able to see him
I am never at peace when
he's not around

I trust him

I know he loves me And he knows I love him

But I cannot trust city girls

♥ASANDE**♥**

The ululations is a clear signthat all is well

Libo is happy This is her day From hereon she'ssomeone's wife Clearly my mother is excited

And well, my father is veryproud to say the very least

I am just glad all this will beover

Libo will go to her new home , with her in-laws

And well, I'll still be pregnant
With a fatherless childNot having a plan
Or knowing what I'm going
to do

I just hope, this doesn't turn to be a bother to me My parents will be on my case about getting marriedand whatnot

Because at this moment, that's so not my aim

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VSPHELELEV

I guess with Londiwe it's really done

She hasn't communicated anything

She's just quite

And neither have I

Me: there's something I need to tell you, I hope youdon't take it bad

He looks at me

That look that says I hopeyou're not bringing me trouble I can tell, he's also tired of me

Maybe it's because of his wife

The constant nagging and all

But he's also feeling the weight now

Me: I am grateful for everything you have done forme, and I will never forget you. One day, I will greatly thank you

Spha: what's going on?

Me: I am leavingSpha: what?

Me: today, but I want to tellyou that all your efforts and kindness with me did not goto waste. And I will ...

Spha: where are you going?

Even after everything, he stillcares Me: don't worry, I will be fine. It's time now, I go out into the world and find what's meant for me

Spha: I am sorry

Me: you have done more than anyone has ever done for me Spha: I wish things turned out differently

I let out a fade smilel just have to make it For the mere fact that I haveno one

I just have to

Failure is not an option

♥LIBONGWE♥ It's been a day

And now I'm about to leave

for my in-laws

I am scared and happy at thesame time

I am scared of the unknown

Because I don't know what awaits me there

But with my husband by myside

I know I will be okayNtando loves me And he will make sure I amwell taken care of

Mom : you have made usproud I smile

Dad: continue making us more proud, you're a wife now. You have a new family, but never forget where you come from

Me: I won't, I promise

I look at Asande

She has no emotionwhatsoever

I am not bothered

I know we're not the best of friends

And it's not like she cares much

Maybe she's even happy that I am leaving

Thinking she will be left theonly child

But I know our parents

They want nothing for her ,than to get married as well

- **♥INSIDE OUT♥**
- **♥**THREE MONTHS LATER♥
- VINSERT 05♥
- **♥**LIBONGWE**♥**

Maybe I am expected to besaying life has been a bliss

But well, it is what is it

And a bliss it hasn't been any It's been two weeks now And I haven't seen nor heard anything from my husbandNor is he missing He's just left

I can never question himOr ask him anything To be honest, if only I knewbetter

I wouldn't be here Nothing is working out forme

Ntando is no longer the man! thought he was

He throws everything aboutmy life, that he can

Right at my face

The fact that I am noteducated

That I come from a poorfamily

He doesn't leave anything behind

In his eyes , I am not a wife To him , I'm just a stupid village girl

No easy way out in life everworks

And I am learning that thehard way

I am even ashamed to goback home

I haven't even told my parents anything

The first month of ourmarriage was great

Everything was just perfect

I loved the fact that we live inour own house

Even though it's still in thesame yard as his family house

But I was happy, that we

wouldn't be staying with his family in their house

But as soon as that monthended

Everything changed

I was demanded to care forboth homes

To cook, clean and dolaundry for everyone

Even his sister's And I can't even complain to him about it

The first time I complained ,that earned me a slap

I couldn't believe it

It felt like a dream
Only that was the beginning of my now life

Not only am I slave here

I only see him twice a monthfor two days

And he's gone

He will come back again nextmonth for two days and leave again

I can't say anything about that again

Because I become apunching bag Him putting his hands on me , didn't just end with a slap

Next it was punches andkicks

All that, in a space of twoweeks

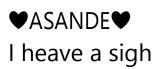
His mother doesn't even care When I cry to her, sheignores me

This pregnancy, is hard

I'm all alone

And I feel like I made the biggest mistake of my lifeever I don't know what to do

Or how to get out



I move away from the mirrorand grab the jacket on the bed

This is the only way I canhide this baby bump

The door opens, and mymother stomps in

Mom: I knew it

She closes the door andwalks over to me

Tears stream down my facel am scared What will she do to me?
I've been trying to hide this pregnancy

Mom: who's child is this?

I say nothing

Mom: you're such a shame, you better be ready to tell your father ...

Her phone rings

Mom: whoever is responsible of this, if theydon't marry you. You're going to leave my house

She takes out her phone andanswers

Mom : my beautiful daughterWow ! She walks out with the biggest smile ever , plasteredon her face

I sit down on the bed As tears blurry my eyes

Now what am I going to do?

There's no way Hlubi will change his mind

And telling my parents he'sthe father won't help

It's not like he's rich
I have disappointed them somuch

I'm sure by now, she's already telling Libongweabout me

And she will tell my father nodoubt about that

VSPHELELEV

Leroy: I don't think you'll beable to juggle work and school at the same time

I chuckle
If there was a way to getaway from his negativity

I would do it

But I just have to endure abit

Me: I'll be fine

Leroy: you're going to

grumble

Me: Nah, I'll be cool

I say grabbing my laptop bagand walking out

I don't have lectures today So I'm attending a job interview

I know my skills will speak forme

I want to get a job while Istudy

I can't maintain myself with student allowance

And I want to stay offcampus

Leroy is a lot, and he's degrading too much

♥INSIDE OUT

VINSERT 06♥

VSPHELELEV

Maybe I should be nervous

Seeing that this man is wellknown

And he's a famous soccer star

But I know I did well I trust myself enough

Muzi: I am going to give your chance

Yes!

I want to scream and jumpfor job

But I just hold my composure

Muzi: I know, you don't

have any experience. You'refresh from high school, and now you're freshman. But, Iknow what it's like to be a young man just trying to make it out there. Only for that reason, because I can see you're passionate and driven. You have skills, I believe you have what it

takes . Don't disappoint me ,because we will do over very best to accommodate you . Considering the fact that you're still studying

Me: I won't disappoint you ,you will not regret giving me this chance

He nods

Muzi: HR will have your contract ready by the end of the day, so tomorrow beforeyou start your work report to HR and get your contract.

After you have read and understood everything, signit as return it back. You're still a young man, trying to make it. Can you drive?

Me: yes, I can drive. I alsohave a learners, the plan isto get my license soon

Muzi: that soon, better be. We will hand you a company car, to make things easy for you in terms of transportation. No excuses of being late, because you were stuck at the rank or youcouldn't find a taxi
Wow! I am beyond wordsright now

I am so happy

I don't even know what to do with myself

I am just containing myself And not being all emotional

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I am scared to go back home I just wished school wouldn't come out

I don't want to face my parents

I don't know what's waiting for me home

What if she has already toldmy father?

I am scared

I don't think I can go home

I am not that bravel know my father And he's a man with a temper He won't hesitate to beat him

He won't even carel just can't I sit down my the stonebesides the road I am hungry

But going home is not anoption for me right now

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♥LIBONGWE**♥**

Ntando arrived yesterdayWe barely spoke He hardly touched melt's like he's not homel don't feel loved

I don't feel like a womanwho's married

He hasn't even asked howl'm doing

Or how the baby is doing

I've just been crying

I can't take this anymore

The door opens and he walksin

He's holding his phone in hand

I hope my mother didn't call his number back
Ntando: you don't want peace ever do you? I look at him Ntando: I am talking to you LibongweMe: but I
I shake my head

Me: I don't know whatyou're talking about, I haven't bothered you since you came back

Ntando: oh really, you don'tknow...

He stands in front of me Ntando: what's this? My whole body freezesHow did he ... I am not stupid

I knew he will not be happyabout this

I deleted the call history aftermaking the call

Me: I don't ...

I shake my head, but quicklyhe slaps me

I fall down on the bed , onmy back Me : Ntando please

Ntando: this is your mother's number, tell meyou're not the one who called her

I say nothing

Ntando: uyangijwayela wena (you're getting used to me)

He grabs me off the bed ,throwing me down

I cry in pain, the floor is cold

But he doesn't care, as he starts beating me up

I'm crying and begging him to stop
But he doesn't

As he walks out

I open my swollen eyes I can feel even my lips areswollen

Every muscle in me hurts

He left me on the floor as lam
What kind of a monster did Imarry?
I regret what I got myselfinto
Not a day goes by , and I
don't regret this
I drag myself off the floor ,balancing myself with the bed
I scream in pain , as I feel asharp pain on my lower
abdomen
Something watery runsbetween my thighs
I look down and it's blood
So much blood
He will probably kill me forthis

But his family doesn't care They don't care about me They know he beats me But they don't do anything They don't even reprimand him

I need my mother right nowl grab his phone on the bed I dial her number

♥INSIDE OUT

♥INSERT 07♥

♥LIBONGWE**♥**

I had to tell my mother, touse the back way So they don't see her walk in

She was shocked, andterrified

Finding me in the state I was

But she helped me, andcleaned me up

The baby is gone

And I had to tell her the truth

About everything that's beenhappening ever since I got married

I'm in bed now

I am in pain

But the physical pain

I feel nothing emotionally

Mom: I can't believe this

Me : you should go before he gets back , because he will know I called you again

She sighs

Mom: Ntando loved you

Me: yeah ...

It pains me to even admitthat

Mom: what went wrong? I shrug

Mom: what do you do? I look at her stunned

Mom: I mean ...what do you say to him to change like this

?

No ways!

This, I do not believeMe: what?

Mom: a man cannot be onething, and one day just change

and turn like this

Me: mom ...

Mom: no, you have to change. Whatever you'redoing, stop it

This has to be a joke

It can't be

She can see how battered lam I just lost my child

She didn't want me going to the clinic

I don't know why

And now , she's siding with Ntando

Me: you're my mother, andthis man is abusing me. His family is acting like they don't see, but you can't turn a blind eye like them

Mom: no ...no, you cannot leave your in-laws. You will endure this marriage and seeit through, don't embarrass us. Stop provoking him, be a wife. If he's cheating, then give him peace all men cheat chuckle bitterly. Me: wow!

Tears stream down my face

Mom: you can cry all you want, but you better not tell him you lost the baby oranyone here

Me: I am notI don't care about that baby, it's a good thing I lost that baby. Now I'll have nothing tying me tohim

Mom: I don't ever want tohear you talking like that, you're going to continue being pregnant

Me: the baby is gone ...

Mom: you'll pretend, theymust never find out you'renot pregnant. Otherwise they will kick you out, andwhere will you go? Your father will never welcomeyou back home

I shake my head tearing up

I don't think I've ever felt so much pain

My own mother turning herback on her Where am I supposed to runto?

Me: and then ...what will I doin four months when they expect a baby?

Mom: Asande is pregnant, you will take that baby andpass as your own
And now, I thought I haveheard it all

Me : you can't just give me her child !

Mom: mxm what child? She's a child herself, she's not married. And that thingis probably fatherless, and that's why she's been trying to hide it from us. I'll help her hide it from your father, and when she's due you'll have to be in labour. And I'll personally ask your in-laws, to let you come back home when you're due to give birth

I shake my head My heart is so heavy

I never thought I'll see this day

It feels like a dream

VSPHELELEV

I pull the chair sitting down

There's nothing I am not pleased about The pay is good The office is great and has anice view

I'm driving a whole X5
Even though it's a company
car

I'm still the one cruising in itl just have to make this work
This is my fresh start
By great beginning
It won't be busy, with varsity
as well
But I'll just have to make doSure, first payment I'm
getting a lisence

And moving out of campus
I have a good feeling aboutthis
I just have to keep my eye onthe goal
And what's ahead, where I
wanna be
Where I am headed
Because this is only the start

♥ASANDE**♥**

Me: what?

I feel like she's telling me a story

Or a joke of some sort

But then I know my mother

And I know, there's no wayshe's joking

She means it

Me: Libo is pregnant, whydo you want my child?

Mom: your choice, whetheryou give this baby up or I tell your father. And we both know what will happen, he will not hesitate to kick you out and for good. Libo is married, and she needs this baby

Me: no!

Mom: your choice

What kind of a mother is this?

She wants to give ...hell no!

Voice: is there anyone in thishouse?

He shouts from the kitchenMom: get ready to be out She

walks towards the door

I take a deep breath, closingmy eyes

♥INSIDE OUT

VINSERT 08♥

♥ASANDE**♥**

Me: please ...

She holds the door handleand stops She turns looking at me

I shake my head, fighting mytears

Me: why are you doing thisto me?

Mom: it's simple, Libo

needs this baby

Me : she's pregnant Mom : she lost the babyMe : but I don't

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I take a deep breath

Me: I can't give her my baby

Mom: Ntando will pay for

your college, that's what youwant right? You want to get away from the village, and go study. Make something of yourself, be big. Well, they need a baby and you can give them one. And

they'll make your dreams come true, you know they'rerich

I sit down on the bed

Mom: just think about it, you will get out of here. What will you do with a baby? You're only 18, Libo is married. You can't achieve all these dreams of yours, with a baby. When you leavefor college, what will you dowith a baby? Will you take itwith you?

Shes speaking so much sense

But I know my mother

It's not like she's doing allthis for me

It's for her precious daughter Her intentions are not pureabout me

I nod slowly

Tears are at the brink offalling

But I won't give her the satisfaction

Mom: imagine what your father will say when he findsout about this

Of course, he'll be reason

I mean , we both know he won't be happy about this

And she was right, he willkick me out

Without even thinking twiceMore than anything My father only cares abouthis reputation, not us

Well, maybe them But me, not so much

Mom: just think about it, and no one will ever have to know anything. You look likeyou're just the same months as Libo was, so when it's time you give birth. She will come home, and it'll be like the baby is hers. Ntando willgive you money, and you'll go on with your life. Kids arehard, I am telling you. So imagine how hard it is, forsomeone your age. You

can't have a normal youth ,you can't do things your peers will be doing . And youwill lack , while you have to do everything for the baby .

But Libo and Ntando , they have money . And they'll beable to take care of your

baby , you won't have to stress . Kids are expensive , and you're not even working

. I know I sound awful, but it's the truth. And as a mother, I should be honestwith you. I may seem like I don't believe you, but I want you to do what you put yourmind on

Wow!

I would really be so touched

If really she means what she's saying

But I know she's not

Me: it's fine, I'll give themthe baby. Given that, theyreally pay for my college
The smile on her face

It's like that of an achievement of some sort forher

She really must be proud ofherself

For securing the bag for herdearest daughter

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♥LIBONGWE**♥**

I so wanted to tell him whathappened In actual fact, I wanted himto see the bump gone withhis own eyes

But unfortunately, it seems like he's gone

He didn't come back last night

And still , there's been no sign of him today

I can bet, he's gone to wherever he's always at

I don't even know how I'm feeling

I just don't see reason of this marriage

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♥ASANDE**♥**

I don't know what this makes me

Is it even a wise decision?
I kept this baby

Even after Hlubi denied thebaby

I chose to not abortl hid this very well Even if it meant wearing a puff jacket

Even when the sun wasscrotching hot

And now, so far in

I'm willing to just give it up

Will I be able to live withmyself? Knowing what I've done

Will studying, having afuture

Being the independentwoman I want to be

Erase what I've done ? Will it make me feel betterabout myself ?

I doubt!

How will I feel seeing thischild

Playing happy families with Libo and Ntando? Knowing he is she is mine

A tear drops down my cheekl wipe it off I'm so battling with my emotions and thoughts rightnow

♥INSIDE OUT**♥**

VINSERT 09♥

♥LIBONGWE♥
what are you doing here?

I close the door locking it

Me: you want to get me intotrouble

Mom: stop acting, I knowNtando is not here I heave a sigh

Me: don't rub it in my face

Mom: listen, I hope you haven't told him anything

I shrug

Me: I wanted to, but as you can see he's not here

Mom: good, it'll give you time to come into terms with

what happened

I am not even sad

Maybe I'm a bad human being

I just lost my baby

But I am not mourning I feel no pain I am not sad

It even sounds somehow tosay this

But I feel happy now

With this baby gone, I havenothing tying me to him

Mom: well, you're not goingto do that. Because Asande has agreed to give you her baby

Me: what?

Mom: yes, so in just a few

months you'll be a motherThis is ...

I shake my head

Not believing what I'm hearing

Me: how did you get her toagree?

I doubt it was mutual

Maybe she forced orthreatened her

Mom: it doesn't matter, what matters is that she agreed

Me: what did you say to her?

Mom: why are you worryingyourself about that?

Me: because I know Asande

Mom: you should be worried about your tummy being visible, do you knowwhat you're going to fake itwith?

I look at her stunnedI am shocked And lost for wordsMom : do you ?

I shake my head slowlyMom : well you better She turns and reaches for thedoor

Mom: don't you dare disappoint me, or our family

. You're someone's wife now , and your home is here

Me: this will turn out verybadly

Mom: no, it won't if only you won't open your mouth

Me: are you even considering how Asande will feel, with me raising herchild as mine?

Mom: Libo, don't be stupid. Asande is a child herself, what will she do with a child

? Can she afford to feed and clothe that baby? She can't, but you and Ntando can

Me: what kind of a home isthis going to be, where weraise a child in the midst of violence and abuse

Mom: stop, I am doing thisto save your marriage

I shake my head

Mom : get your priorities right , because right now youseem to be concerned abouteveryone except yourself andyour marriage . Asande

doesn't even need this child ,if anything you'll be helping her . She has her head filled with the stupid career thing , being a mother at 18 is not for her But she kept her babyThat says a lot v Mom: I won't come back here again for this

She unlocks the door andwalks out I take a deep breath

I swear, if only I knew better

I mean, what's this?

And what am I getting myselfinto?

How will Asande feel seeingme raising her child?

I know mom doesn't care

But no one can just giveaway their child

♥ASANDE**♥**

So many scenarios are goingthrough my head

Maybe I should run awayBut where will I go?
I don't know anyone outside
of home
My father doesn't even get
along with his relatives

We don't know anyone frommy mother's family

She never even talks abouther family

I don't know if I'll be able to live with myself

A life of guilt and regret

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VSPHELELEV

Leroy: I see you're doing

good

Me: mhm

Leroy: I didn't see you today

, I thought you had lecturesMe: yeah, I did

Leroy: so you ditched themfor work?

Me: no, I attended

He chuckles Leroy: but how?
I lift my head looking at him

Me: dude, I did. And now I have work to catch up on, so please

Leroy: fine

I focus back on my laptopJust a little while longer I'll be out of here
When I get my own space,
I'll have no one nagging me
It's not even his business
what I do

I don't even like him

Like , we're roommates And that's where it stands I'm not here to make friends I have goals to achieve

♥INSIDE OUT

♥MONTHS LATER**♥**

♥LIBONGWE**♥**

Ntando: this is not necessaryl look at him He's been moody all morning

Me: you agreed to mymother

Ntando: I don't understandwhy you have to go there, you can give birth here

I say nothing

I don't want to argue with him
Because it doesn't end well

So I'll rather keep my mouth shut

Besides , it's been tough months

Having to pretend I am stillpregnant And it always turned into afight When I couldn't sleep with him

Besides, faking pregnancy

I just couldn't bring myself to let him have me

I am without doubt that he's cheating

So he can go and get hisneeds taken there He's always gone to Joburgl wouldn't be surprised if he has another family there

And his parents know aboutit

Especially his mother

Right now, I just want thisover and done with

I'm going home today

Ntando: my mother is here, she can help

I zip up my bag

Ntando: as soon as the baby is born, you're coming back

As if he wants me here

Ntando: are you hearing meLibo?

Me: yes

He clicks his tongue walkingout

I take a deep breath
I don't know how much
longer I can keep doing this

If only I was half smart likeAsande

Chose better for myself

Than just to settle formarriage Look at me now ?I cry everynight I don't remember how happiness feels like anymore

VSPHELELE**V**

My phone rings, I reach forit

Me: hello?

There's silence

But I can hear the other person breathing, on theother side

I remove the phone from myear

I look at the caller, and it's Spha I chuckle placing the phoneback on my ear

Me: bafo (brother? Spha: how are you? His tone is down

He sounds somehow

Me: I can't complain, and

yourself?

Spha: where are you Sphe?

Me: I am okay, actually I'mbetter than okay. But you don't sound good at all, is something wrong?

Spha: I hope you have notturned into crime there

I frowm

Me: what ...no!

He sighs

I close my laptop and get upfrom the chair

Me: why would you think lam into crime?

Spha: I got a lot of moneytoday

I let out a smile

Me: that's money for you and your family, and for you to finish renovating the roomfor the kids

Spha: this is a lot of moneySphe

I chuckle

Me: I know I can never repayyou enough, but it's for everything you have done for me. I'll always and forever be grateful to you

Spha: you don't have to thank me for anything, I wasjust doing humanity

Me: you never asked for it, so please accept it. It's fromme with a pure heart

Spha: but where do you getthis money?

Me: okay, if you must know. I am studying at UCT, and lam working for very big

company owned by a soccerstar Spha: that is great really, but shouldn't you be saving your money?

Me: I am saving , don't worry

Spha: I don't know how tothank you, this money is alot and it'll come in handy
Me: I know it will, you don't

have to thank me

A slight knock comes at thedoor

Me: come in

The door opens and Muziwalks in
Me: Uhm, my boss just
walked in. We'll talk some
other time, take careSpha: all the best Me: thanks
I drop the call
Muzi: I am sorry, I didn't
know you were on call

Me: it's alright, what can I help you with?

Muzi: nothing much, but I

am here to say I'm pleased to say the least . And I think you're ready for a permanentposition , that's if it won't be interfering with your work ofcourse

No kidding!

Muzi: your work speaks foritself, it would be foolish ofus to lose you

Me: you mean this?

Muzi: more than anything, but do sleep on it

He smiles and walks out I am left in shock Like, a permanent position means everything right now Especially because I got myown apartment now

I am able to balance workand versity

I didn't even think I'll do that well last semesterBut I did And things are going greatfor me at work as well

This promotion, could begreat for me

♥INSIDE OUT

VINSERT 11♥

♥ASANDE♥
Seeing Libo here at home

I don't know how to feel I mean , I'm soon to give birth

My mother has been sneaking me off to the clinic

She's played a big role in this

Making sure that no onefinds out I guess I should be glad I'm a bit chubby

So my tummy is really notthat much visible

And I've gained weight

Literally my father doesn't make much of it He thinks I've just gained weight

He doesn't suspect that it's

because I am pregnant

Mom: we all know what wemust do

We're both just looking at her

Libo just looks like a formershadow of herself

She doesn't look happy forsomeone that's married

And was so eager to be someone's wife

And worse, even her body
She looks like she's an
unhealthy personl may be wrong
But something is definitely
wrong with her

Mom: you won't go to the

hospital

Me: do we have a midwife?

Mom: midwife for what? I am here, and I'll deliver thebaby

What?

Me: have you delivered ababy before?

Mom: I am not going to goback and for with you about his

No ways!

I cannot put my health at riskAnd my life into her hands I mean , she doesn't care about me

What will she care, wether llive or die

I look at Libo

Hoping that she'll say something
But it's like her mind is noteven here

She's zoned out on us

Is this really the person I am going to trust with my child's life?

She herself doesn't even looklike she's living It's been a dreadful day

And now, I am not feelingwell

I tried to sleep but I can't

I don't know, but this feelingis not something I've felt before

But the slight pains, they're familiar

Like the time when I thoughtI was giving birth Only it was the false labourpains

If I am giving birth tonight

I should let my mother know

I get up and walk to thekitchen The light is on , and there's voices

I stand by the door listening

Libo: I can't, why did you lie to her?

This sounds like a heatedargument Mom: stop being stupid, lam doing this for you

Libo: no it's for you, because you don't want to be embarassed. I never said! wanted this baby, I lost mine and I've accepted that .I'm better off without a childwith Ntando, he doesn't deserve that from me . I am living in hell , and now you want to bring Asa's child into this mess . I am not doing this , and you better tell her that you lied . Ntando doesn't know anything about this , and he did not offer to pay for any college or whatever . Because he will never agree to something like this , I should have neverlistened to you and I wouldn't be here now Mom : oh shut up , everything I did ...I did for you . But you're so stupid ,you can't even see that

Tears blurry my eyes

This can't be

So everything was just a lie? Ntando doesn't know about this

He's not even a part of it

Wow!

I really shouldn't be shocked

This is my mother after all I turn back slowly , and usethe dinning room door walking out

I rush out, in the cold anddarkness

I just want to get away fromthis place
I don't know where I'll goBut I can't be there
There's no way that I'm
giving my child to Libongwe

I can't believe I was even willing Worse , they tricked and liedto me

Libo knew about this from the beginning

What point is to grow a consciousness right now?

But all these months she's been lying to her husband And pretending to bepregnant

Hell no!

I am not doing this

Let's see what they will dowhen they can't find me I don't know how long I'll make it

Because I can feel thesepains intensifying

But I just have to keep ongoing

♥LIBONGWE**♥**

Right now I just wanna dragmy bag

And get out of here

But then , it's all the same It's not like I'll get peace when I leave here

I open the bedroom door

And it's empty

I hear my mother shouting

I turn back and follow hervoice to the dinning room I walk in and she's standing by the wide open door

Me: what ...

Mom: she's gone

I am so lost and confused

Me: who ...

Mom: that stupid child ranaway, she ran away!

She turns around and clicksher tongue

Pacing up and down

Me: it's late, where would she run off to? And why would she run away? Thatdoesn't make sense, I am sure she just went out for some fresh air. She will beback

Mom: she's pregnant, and due to give birth anytime

Oh well ...
I don't know what to say anymore

Or wether I should be happythat she ran away

- **♥INSIDE OUT**
- ♥INSERT 12♥
- **♥**ASANDE**♥**

I walked until I couldn't anymore

Until I found this shed

I don't know who's it is

I've never seen it before

I don't even know how far I am from home

It's so cold

But I can feel this baby iscoming now I scream my lungs out

As I feel myself opening up

Every muscle on my bodypainful

Tears streaming down mycheeks

I take a deep breath, just trying to calm myself down

I cannot afford to lose mybreath

I can't give up

If I let the pain get to mel will lose him He won't make it

And I will never be able tolive with myself

Knowing I'm the reason he's no more

I am tearing apart downthere
I just have to endure a littlelonger

I push with every little strength I have left in me

I throw my head downAs I hear a loud cry I lift my head

My eyes land on himl let out a fade smileMy eyes failing me But I can't ... I just can't

I turn to my side and grabthe bottle

I break it down on thecement floor

Startling his tiny self

I grab the bottle piece, andcut the amblical cord

I look at him and grab thesmall torn towel

I just found it in this shedl cover him with it As I tie the amblical cord

It takes me forever to get up

Even his cries are dying down! take out the bloody dress And pick him up Poor thing, he's sucking on his thumb

I grab my boob

And try to feed him

But it's a struggle

I don't know if I'm doing it wrong

Or he just doesn't know how to do that

I take a deep breath calmingmyself down

I have to be patient

Maybe he will finally get thehang of it

But he doesn't, the more I try
The more it seems like he's not getting it Me: please eat I wipe my tears with onehand

Trying to cover him

But it's no use He's getting cold , he's even shaking

He's so tiny

Will he be able to handle thecold?

Me: please ...
He lets out a loud cry
I'm sure it's been hours by
now

He's still crying

He hasn't eaten anything

I am scared now

Even I am crying with himWhat will I do? How will I even see the wayback home?

Even if I wanted to go back

Right now , I don't know what to do

His cries are even dyingdown

His tiny body is ice cold

Maybe I didn't think this clear Here I am , all alone

And it doesn't seem like I know what I am doing

I take a deep breath closingmy eyes

The small block by the dooropens up I move back in fear

Voice : ungathuki ..(don't be scared)

Says the voice of an oldwoman

I am scared, I don't even want to pretend She walks in

And I don't know her What if she's a ghost ?I mean, this is a village

And we have heard stories ofold women She walks towards usl look at my baby And I realise, he has stoppedcrying

His body is now cold, waythan it was Woman: oh dear child...

There's sadness in her voice
I felt my head and look at herWoman: come with me, you can't be here with ...

It's like she bites her tongue
Woman: come with me child
, where is your family? I shake my head
I feel a sharp pain piercingmy heart

As a wave of sadness justoverwhelms me Me: I can't go back home ,they want to take my child and give him to my sister. Ican't ...I have to get away with him ... I try to get you, but shehelps me you slowly

Woman: lets go
I try to lift him to my chest

But I realise he's quite down , his eyes slight open

He's not breathing

The realisation hits me

Poor thing couldn't have made it

The coldness and the hunger

The woman quickly takes himfrom me

As tears stream down myface

I go down letting out apiercing cry.

- **VINSIDE OUTV**
- ♥INSERT 13♥
- **♥**ASANDE**♥**

This feels like just anightmare

I held my baby in my hands And he died in my arms

Like ...how does he take his last breath

And I am not even aware Yet, he was in my handsI couldn't sleep a wink
I kept seeing his face

My eyes would burn, everytime I tried to closethem

It's morning now

And we've already buried him Just me and the old woman

Around 5am, we went out

Not far from her hut, weburied him there

His tiny body was justwrapped in a blanket That's just how we buried him

This will haunt me forever And now, I know for definite I can't go back home

Kgari: I don't know what happened between you andyour family, but you're still young. And you have your whole life ahead of you ..andyou need them ...

Me: no, I need to leave. I need to get away from here. I applied for school, but I still haven't gotten a reply. But I can't stay here, they will never welcome me backhome Kgari: they will ...

Me: no, they won't understand. My family isvery traditional

She nods slowly

Kgari: where will you go? I shrug

Kgari: last night, I wanted to just pass the shed. But I couldn't help hearing the little cry ... I wish I had gotten there earlier

I nod with tears streamingdown my face

I get up

Me: thank you for everything, but I have to go

Kgari: you don't know whereyou are going, you'll end up on the streets

Me: I can't go back home, Iwanted more. A future, a career. Inspire others, and be a role model to young village girls. Being married off, is not an achievement. Iwanted to be proof of that...

I wipe my tearsMe : thank you I walk heading to the door Kgari : wait ...

I turn and look at her

Kgari: I shouldn't be doing this, you're someone's child. And your parents are probably worried bout you, but I believe you still have a chance to make it in life. I couldn't do that for myself, but I can help youl frown Kgari: I have a sister who lives in Joburg, she can takeyou

Me: Joburg?

in

Kgari: yes, you'll just have tocatch the bus. I'll call her, and she'll come pick you up

at the station

Me: I ... I can hitchhike

Kgari: that is not safe

Me: I don't have money for

the bus

Kgari: I will give you money

...let me call her now

I walk back to the chair, while she takes her phoneand calls her sister

I'm smiling inside

This could change my life

♥LIBONGWE**♥**

It's almost afternoon now

And still no sign of Asande

I wouldn't be surprised if she ran away

Maybe this was always goingto be her plan

To run away at the lastminute

I mean, she's done with matric

They finished writing a weekago

Even though schools are notclosed

She's not compelled to attend the last few remainingdays Maybe she just wantedshelter

So she can study and bedone

It could be , that the plan wasn't go give away her baby

And I am happy
My mother is here fuming

I don't know where my father is

I haven't seen him since coming here yesterdayMaybe he went away Because he was told I'm coming to give birth Me: I should get going She gives me an ugly look

Me: Asande is gone ...Mom: that one, she betternever come back to my house I mean, we're both not blindShe's not missing she ran away

Obviously, the plan is tonever come back
Me: you got me into this mess, right now I don't evenknow
what I'll tell Ntando.
Because he's expecting me
back home with a baby

Mom: now you're blaming me?

Me: you told me to lie, andkeep on pretending.

Because you thought youhad a plan, and now the plan has failed and...

I get up

Me: I am going home, but just know if they kick me out It's all on you, I'm coming back. And you'll explain todad why I'm back...

Mom: don't you dare

Me: and knowing that evilfamily, they will want their bride price back. I don't know what you're going todo, because surely by nowyou've spent it all I walk to the bedroom tograb my bag

I'll get there , and tell Ntando the truth as it is I sneaked in

Making sure no one sees mefrom his family house

I open the door to our roomAnd get inside And he's sitting on the bed Holding the small fakepregnancy bump

I had two

Since I had to pretend thatthe tummy is growing

One is small, and the otherone is big That's the one I left at home

I have nothing on me rightnow

I close the door

Me: I will tell you the truth, and leave nothing out

He looks at me

I pull the chair near thewardrobe

I sit down

And take a deep breath

I look at him, his eyes gazinginto mine I narrate everything to him

From that day my mother came here, when I lost thebaby

All this time, he's just quite

Just looking at me

Me: now Asande is gone, she ran away. That's why I came back with no baby, because there is no baby. Ilong lost our baby

Ntando: and you wonder why I treat you the way I do

He gets up Right now I am expectinganything

To be kicked out or beaten ,maybe to be embarassed to the whole village

Ntando: think of a lie you're

going to tell my family

Me: I'll tell them the truth, they deserve to know the truth

Ntando: good then, you'll stay here with them and tellthem. I am leaving for Joburg right now

He turns behind the bed And grand his back

He walks past me and walksout My jaw drops Just like that?

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- **♥**INSIDE OUT**♥**
- ♥SEVEN MONTHS LATER♥
- ♥INSERT 14♥
- **♥**ASANDE**♥**

Another day at the postoffice

And still nothing for me But I am not loosing hope

I am keeping my head uphigh

And doing what I need to do

I'll get there

It might not be today ortomorrow

Or someday soon

But I'll get there

Susan: you look down

I put down the fruit basketAnd sit down Me: it's been a long day She smiles

Me: let me wash the cups, and I'll make you a cup of tea

Susan: stop working so hard, Khethiwe was here. We hadsome tea, and I was going to wash those. But you know how she is Me: she has the wholegossip of Soweto

We laugh

I get up and pour cold waterin the dish, and start washing the cups

Susan: business was good

Me: I always sell best when I roam thr streets, at the ranks

there's too many of us

Susan: it's not safe though

I smile

Me: I will be safe, I makesure I don't go to dodgy places

Susan: Kgari would be soproud, if she can see younow God bless that woman's soullt's just sad that after a week I left the village

She passed away

Susan held the funeral here

And it was a beautiful sendoff

Even then , she didn't kick me out

She still accepted me

And welcomed me into herhome

Said she made a promise toher sister

And she will keep it, until Ifind my feel

She has been just a blessing
It's just the two of us hereShe doesn't have any kidsKgari
has a daughter
And now the daughter hasmoved to the village

She's taking care of hermother's house And she says she's takingcare of the grave my littleboy is at

This family has been everything and more to me

I didn't get accepted at Varsity Where I had applied And now, I've applied at UJYet I'm still waiting for my final results

I requested that the principalhas them sent to me

I know I passed well

I did check with a phone

I just need my documentswith me

While waiting for that

I had to do something withmy life So , I started a small businessto sell

I sell fruits around JoburgCBD

And I am doing well

Because I am able to helpSusan around the house And I take care of myself

Susan: I have something for you, maybe it'll cheer you up

She gets you and grabs a white envelope by the topshelf

Susan: this is for you

Me: what is it?

Susan: open it and seeNow I am intrigued I take the dry cloth and wipe my hands

I open the envelop And tears blurry my eyesJust reading the first lineMe : oh my God ! She smiles Me: I ... I got in I tear up , as emotions justengulf me

She hugs me

I just fall into her embraceCrying my eyes out I am accepted at UJ to do LLB Law

Yes!

Finally, now I am headingsomewhere

VSPHELELEV

Mhm, a year a few monthsin

Varsity is still manageableAnd so is work And my life , couldn't be better

I have my own house now

That I just bought twomonths back

And now, the goal is to getmy own car

I am still driving thecompany car

And I am not complaining

I just need one that's mine

Once in a while, I still docheck in on Spha

Life is going well for him andhis family

And I can see, me leavingdid them well

But it also did me well

Cape Town is now home forme

Muzi: I need you to go to Joburg

Me: for what?

Muzi: the new company

we're looking to open that side, the plan is to buy a oneand not build from scratch.

And we already have a bid ,but I need to know everything from the inside before we can buy

Me: that can take a weekmax

Muzi: you think you can? Me: yeah sure

He gets up

Muzi: my good man, come see me before the end of the

day so we can finalise the details . Also your stay and means of transport while you're that side

Me : alright He walks out
I lean back on my chairAnd look up
I wonder if my parents are watching over me and seeingthis

I hope they're proud

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♥INSIDE OUT♥

♥INSERT 15♥

♥ASANDE**♥**

Susan: what is wrong?

She asks I walk in , with a sigh placing the basket down

I sit down

Susan: did somethinghappen?

Me: I saw something

Susan: what? I hope notmurder

I laugh She's always thinking about dangerous things

Me: no, I saw this guy fromthe village

Susan: oh, I hope he didn't

harrass you

Me: no he didn't

Susan: so now are you scared, he will tell yourparents

where you are?

I shake my head slowly

Me: this guy is married tomy sister

Susan: your brother in-law?!

Me: yes, but I saw him with another woman. Holding two

kids, one could just be about 3 years. The other one

, maybe just over a yearSusan : hah !.

Me: I was just as shocked

Susan: you think ...he's not

faithful?

Me: that woman and those kids could have been just anyone, but he had his handaround her waist. Like they're lovers, he saw me ...and he was very affectionate with her. As ifhe's trying to prove a point

Susan: now what are yougoing to do?

Me: nothing

Susan: you won't tell yoursister?

Me: I haven't spoken to her in five months, maybe things have changed. Or she knows what her husband gets up to , I mean he didn't start coming to Joburg frequentlyjust now

Susan: I see

Me: I don't want to get myself involved, maybe theywere coming back from the village or going. Because they had luggage with them

I get up and walk in the kitchen

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♥LIBONGWE

It's the ululations outside that gets to me

I get up from the bed

Maybe one of the sisters isgetting married I wouldn't know

Because no one tells meanything around here

After the village shame I gotl just live here like a foreigner I don't know why Ntandodoesn't just let me go

Because living here is torturel peek through the window I try to look through thecrowds

It's hard

But I catch a glimpse of Ntando

He's holding a small baby in his arms

And another one with hishands

Me: what the ...

And there's a woman next to him

The more I watch, the more I just see what's happeningThat's his family Probably his Joburg family He's had a family all along

I move back, as tears burnmy eyes

Why does it hurt?

He long showed me that he doesn't care anymore

This was bound to happen

But with kids that age

It's been happening

I sit down on the bedholding my chest

I close my eyes as tearsstream down my face

VSPHELELEV

It's been a long day

I just want to get to the hoteland sleep

Arriving this morning

I just went to the company

I know Muzi, he's a man of results more than anything

I have to make this weekproductive
But now I have to restI stop by the robots
I see a finger behind

I look closely, and it's a ladyshe's holding a basket

I pull over to the side And she gets closer, I rolldown the window

Me: hi

She turns and looks at meSuch beauty Lady: can I help you?
I chuckle

Me: what do you have there?

Lady: fruits, the last of theday

Me: well, can you give me afew?

Lady: there's only 4 left,

how many do you want ?Me: give me that 4

She crouched down, andgrabs a plastic

She puts inside the pears, and gets up handing them to me

Me: thank you

I reach over taking them

I take out R200 note andhand it to her

Lady: let me look for change She moves back a bitreaching for her bag

I wind up the window, andget on route driving away

I catch a glimpse of her, as ifshe's shouting as I take a turn to the N1

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- **♥**INSIDE OUT**♥**
- ♥INSERT 16♥
- **♥LIBONGWE**

I couldn't even go outside It's the shame

And the embarrassment I've finally gathered myselfHis mother was so loud
I am sure half the villageheard her
Some of the neighbourswere peeking

I will go back to being talkedabout

As if my shame had alreadybeen done

Now, it'll just get worse
The door opensAnd he walks in look at him
I can't help but be
Overwhelmed by emotions
I don't even remember howit felt being loved by this man

I don't even miss him

I don't remember how he used to me

How we used to be And I thought he was it forme

What changed?

So quick and so fast How did we get here ?What did I do? How did he lose his feelingsand love for me

It doesn't make sense

We were happy

Well, I thought we werehappy

But now

I don't even remember how that felt like

Me: whats going on? Ntando: with what?

Me: outside ...the noise?

He shrugs
I don't even know what am I
supposed to make of that

Me: that woman and thosekids?

He looks at me

Me : is she your other woman ? And are they yours ?

Ntando: she's my fiance, and not the other womanPain strikes my heart I swallow a hard lump of pain Me: Iwhy?

Ntando: why what?

Me: when did I start notbeing enough for you?

Ntando: you lied to me

Me: and you changed, wayeven before that

He says nothing

Me: I could have given youkids, if that's what you wanted

He chuckles

And it's just a mock to me Ntando: I need a heir, as aman I want a family

Me: you killed our baby, in case you have forgotten that. You beat me without care, knowing very well I am pregnant

Ntando: and you lied

Me: what ... it doesn't matter

does it? Because you havewhat you need, and I'm clearly

not that

Ntando: so you're going to

blame me?

Me: why don't you just let

me go?

Ntando: will you bring backmy bride price

This is nonsense

Me: we're Africans, where

have you ever heard of such?

Ntando: incase you haven'tnoticed, I live by my standards

Oh well

His fucked up standards

Me: now what? She's goingto be your wife, you'll play happy families. What aboutme

Ntando: you're a bride in

this family

Me: I am your wife, funnyhow you need an heir but you

don't even touch me

Ntando: how would you feelsleeping with a liar?

Me: get over it, I got overwhat you did to me

Ntando: you provoke me, like you're doing right now. And you want to play victim, I am not doing this. I'm here to take my clothes, I ammoving to the other hut

I shouldn't be feeling this hurt

He long left me

I don't know why he doesn't just let me go Why I still love him ?

There's no point in enduring this

Ntando: I don't even know ifl should take them, you and your mother are very evil people. Look at how your sister ran away from home because of you two, even to this day you have to idea where she is. Yet life goeson for you

He turns and walks outl sit down on the bed As tears stream down mycheeks

♥ASANDE**♥**

I'm lost in my thoughts

Wondering about that manfrom last night

He just left

After giving me so muchmoney

My money was only R23 He left his change of R177That's a lot of money

One can never even say, that's a keep the change kind of a situation

I don't know why I'm wondering about him

I'm certain I'll never even seen him again

But it's scary

This is Joburg

And things are said

Men target women, and joincults through them

Rich men specifically
These young ones , who havethings their age mates only
dream of

Like that man of last night

He wasn't even that old

But he was driving an expensive car And his cologne, suresmelled expensive

But maybe I am worrying fornothing

I mean, they give thousandsof money

Not the small change I got I say small change, because I am sure to him that's all it is

A slight knock comes at thedoor

Me: come in Khethi walks in

Khethi: I hope I didn't

disturb

I shake my head with a smile

Khethi: I have this for you, Ipassed by the post office

I am on my feet in secondsMy heart is beating so fast

Me: this is what I think it is ?She nods with a smile I tear up smiling, opening the envelope

Me : oh my God ! My results , and mycertificate

Me: now I can apply for funding, and I can finish my registration

Khethi : I am so happy foryou I touch my chest , taking adeep breath

Me: I will get that degree ...

Khethi: Advocate Mavuso

We look at each other andlaugh

Khethi: you did it

Oh my goodness, I sure did

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♥INSIDE OUT

♥INSERT 17♥

♥ASANDE**♥**

Me: I registered for funding, they wanted a lot of things. I don't know if I'll get it

Khethi: have faith

Me: it's ...I lied on the

affidavit I madeKhethi: about?

Me: my parents, I mean they wanted their details there. And questions about whether they're still alive andworking

Khethi: what did you say? lam sure it's not that big of alie

I take a deep breath

Me: I said they're old, and stay in the village. They survive on my father's live stock, and my mother's garden. And per month, they only make R1 500

She laughs

Me: it's not funny ...

Khethi: it's not that bad of alie, besides at this point you basically live like someone who's an orphan. It's not likeyou said they're dead

She's not helping me right now What if they find out that Ilied?

My mother doesn't work yes

But my father works at thefarm

And he earns way more thanthat R1 500
Crossing fingers
Just praying and hoping Khethi: just relax, be happy.
You've finally registered, and
you'll get this funding. It wasmade for kids coming from underprivileged homes
The system is so corruptthese days

We don't know what is what

MIID/

♥LIBONGWE**♥**

Me: I don't even know what to call that situation

Mom: that girl will bestaying there?

Me: she stays there already, as it is. They've moved in

Mom: what are you going todo about this? Because

when I try to help, I'm the one who gets blamed

Me: the situation with Asa'sbaby wasn't helping, look where it got us

Mom: if I had actually raised kids, we wouldn't be here. Because you would be happy with your husband and child Even after this king, she doesn't feel bad

Me: it's fine, I won't do anything. Ntando is an adult, he knows what he's doing. It's not like I can leave, because we don't have his bride price anymore

Mom: where have you everheard of such? Even if we had it still

Me: bye

I drop the call

She's really not helping mewith anything I don't know why I even bother myself, trying to talkto her

This is my reality now I guess

Being stuck in this polygamyof some sort

That's if it's even one Because clearly, the girl hasthe man and kids

The family loves herAnd I am nothing I still haven't seen her

Or even been introduced toeach other
The way it's so quite
She hasn't even come in hereShe clearly knows why she's here

And it's for the man, nothingelse If I knew what I was gettingmyself into

I wouldn't have been that excited

Because this right here is hellon earth.



Most tikes Khethi has a wayto make me feel better

And this is just one of thosetimes This is just my inside out

I mean, I've been holding on

to so much

Running away home

Never feeling the love of aparent Always feeling like I don't matter

Seeing my sister beingfavoured over me

Falling pregnant for thewrong guy

And loosing my child, in themanner I lost him

Some days I have nightmaresabout it

The struggle has been realand felt

Inside I might be all sortsand kinds of sadness emotions But outside, I'm ought to flourish

And I intend to

I wasn't planning on coming to sell anything today

But , here I am doing what Imust do Lady : can you please comeinside , I need some fruits but I left my purse inside

Me: alright

She walks ahead I followbehind her

Lady: I'm on the front desk, so you won't go further ..! don't want you to miss clients waiting for long inside

I let out a smile as we walkinside the tall building

At least, we're just going to reception

Lady: please give me threepears, and two bananas

Me: alright

I crouch down to the basketVoice : and we meet again Lady : Mr Mdluli
I lift my eyes
Recognising the voice

And he's looking right at me

I get up

Him: how are you? I frown

And turn handing the ladyher fruits

She hands me a R20 note

I reach in my bag and giveher, her change

Me: thank you

She awkwardly smiles

Him: don't just ignore me

Me: I am not, I'm attendinga customer. In her work place

He chuckles

Him: yeah, last I checked Iwas a customer too

Me: and you drove off before I can give you yourchange ..

Him: don't

He looks behind me

I turn , the lady is still here She shamelessly walksaround her desk

He shakes his head and takesmy hand

That awkward feeling

Not knowing how to react Whether to remove my hand

Ot just be rude to him

We walk outside of thebuilding

I finally retrieve my handbackMe: I don't have your change, I didn't think I'll see you ever again

Him: is that what you usually do to your customers?

Me: what? ...you're the one

who left

Him: don't get all worked up

, I won't leave ever again . And don't worry about the change , I'll get it back muchmore in return

Now I am lost

He reaches in my basket andtakes out an apple Me: you'll ruin my business, you can't keep your change on me just so you can take fruits for free from me

Him: it'll never be for free, I'll remind you of this day 5years from now on. And you're Mrs Sphelele Mdluli, carrying our first born princess

He takes a bite of the appleand walks back inside

I'm left standing stunned

. ... iere stallallig stalling

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♥INSERT 18♥



I reach over to the side

It's cold

Like damn cold

I slowly open my eyes

And the bouquet of roses ,brings a smile to my face

I let out a chuckle

I bring my side down Putting on my sleepers I pick up the roses , andcheck the card

"We'll be out there, cheeringloud for you mommy"

I let out a slight laughgetting up

I grab my silky gown and putit on

I make the bed

And head over to thebathroom

I take a pee, and brush myteeth

I walk downstairs And the aroma in the kitchenfills my nostrils

Me: mhm ..

She turns and looks at mewith a smile

Khethi: finally the graduateis up

I laugh sitting down

I grab a piece of bacon andmunch on it

With my eyes closed

And I can feel her eyespiercing at me As soon as the tasty taste isgone, there it comes

I frown opening my eyes

Khethi: why are you doingthat to yourself?

Me : don't judge me She laughs handing me aginger biscuit

My mood just dropsMe: I hate this I take a bite, and it feels somuch better

Me: why the feast?

Khethi: do you want to fainton stage?

I laugh

Me : don't be dramatic , eating this much I might just

Khethi: don't be selfish

Me: I don't like the fact thatyou're so wise

Khethi: it comes with theage

We laugh This woman! I can never get anywhere

Me: let me go bath, I still have tons to do. Make yo, shoes the dress

Khethi: I still don't understand why you have topick everything on the last day

Me: just for the thrill of it

Khethi: it doesn't make

sense

I get up

Me: finish up, I am comingto eat

I walk back upstairs

VSPHELELEV

I can't even hear what this woman is saying My mind is not here

I keep checking my watchAnd time is moving fast But there's nothing from her

No text, no missed call am getting worried Muzi: Uhm Mdluli ...are you still with us?

I lift my head and look atthem

Muzi: is something wrong?

Me: UhmI am ..

I get up

Me: I am really sorry, but can I please be excused. My wife is graduating today, topof her class too on Law. I just want to ...

He laughs

Muzi: what are you stilldoing here? The others laugh as well

I take a deep breath with achuckle

Muzi: congratulations to her, and hey ... before they start to head hunt her, connect me to her. I might have something for her, especially

if she's anything as good as you were in your youthWe laugh Me: what are you saying?

Muzi: come on , you're still as young as they come . And better than good , when I met you 6 years ago

I shake my head grabbingmy laptop

I walk out of the boardroom

I take out my phone callingher as I walk to my office

♥LIBONGWE**♥**

Sonti : you know it's such a shame

I look at her

Life has been anything butgood

I'm more like a slave in this place

I have endured so much! am worn out
That I don't even have
energy for anything
As if it was not enough, thatshe came here with two kids

She had another one twoyears ago

And she's pregnant again as we speak

As for me, I'm still me I don't even believe I'm a wife anymore

Ntando hasn't touched me in all these years

I don't know a man

I don't even remember how it feels to be penetrated and pleasured

But surely Sonti gets it all

She can't even hide her gloat

As she keeps on producing evidence

Sonti: I don't know what your deal is being here ..
Me: why don't you ask your so called husbandShe laughs
She annoys me so much

We're not fighting for Ntando per se Because it's clear and evident that the man is hers

But she rubs in on my faceevery second she gets

I hate that we live in thesame yard

And we're bound to just bump into each other

The same Ntando who onlystayed here for two days a week

Now he's always here everyday

He sleeps home every nightClearly the idiot was me

And still is

Now, I'm just a formershadow of myself

I've lost who I am

Sonti: husband darling, I'm the legal wife remember? She flashes her ring in frontof my face Just three months after shemoved here

They had one massive whitewedding

Sonti: why don't you just leave? Because if you do, I promise you he won't come running after you

Me : are you so sure ?
Because he doesn't want me
to leave

Sonti: keep lying to yourself, clearly you enjoy this kindof treatment. I don't knowwhat I expected, you're a village girl. And you think marriage is an achievement, had you done something with your life. You wouldn't be here

She picks you the bucket ,and carries to the main house

While tests blurry my eyes
I hate her, but unfortunately
she's right

I shot myself in the foot

By thinking getting married ,is making it in life

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- **♥INSIDE OUT♥**
- VINSERT 19♥
- **♥**ASANDE**♥**

Where do I even begin ?This was just a dream And there were times I didn't think I will make itBut here I am Coming from where I was To now where I am

I can't believe the grace of God that has been upon mylife thus far

This is my dayl have made it And I'll certainly rejoice and be proud

I look over to my side Khethi looks proud as everl know I've done well Even to this day, she's still by my side

I appreciate her so much

That's why when things changed in my life

I wanted her here with me

I just couldn't leave her alone in Soweto
I took her with me

And now, she mostly certainly feels like the only family I have from my aside

Apart from my own littlefamily

The driver parks the car He gets off and opens thedoor for Khethi

My door opens, I lift myeyes and look at him

My lips curve into a smile

He holds his hand out, andhelps me out His hands trail to my bumpl smile

Sphe: you're so beautifulMe: mhm ...

Sphe: you don't look

beautiful, you are beautiful

Me: I love you

I lean over pecking his lipsSphe: I was worried

Me: I know, but I'm here

now

I look into this man's eyes And I see the genuine lovehe has for me

My life changed for thebetter

Meeting him , I didn't think four years later we would be here

Been together for these pastfour years

And we've been married fortwo years

We've been living together in Rosebank for three years

So much has happened inthe four years

And now, we're just a week away from delivering a brand new person

It turned out to be four yearsand not five

And the first born princess iscoming Just as he wanted

I have everything I need andwant Life turned out for the betterFrom today onwards, I'll be addressed as Advocate MdIuli I didn't hesitate taking his surname

Getting rid of my ownattachment

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VSPHELELEV

I look at Khethi , she's one proud woman

I remember my owngraduation

We've just gotten engaged

She was there

And she cheered the loudestl am happy I met this woman And now , we can experiencethese life moments together

And be there for each other

I am a proud husbandShe deserves this Because sometimes we hadsleepless nights

But they have paid off

Now we're here

Seeing her on that stageMaking her speech And receiving her degree

It's a moment I would have never missed for anything



Trust Khethi and Sphe totreat me

It's been a great day

Now I am tired, I just wantto soak myself and rest

After the graduation ceremony we had lunch

It's was nothing but spoils

Our own little celebration

Sphe: want me to rub yourfeet?

Me: come bath with meHe smiles

Me: innocently Sphe: okay yes finel laugh
He takes my hand and wewalk upstairs to our bedroom
Sphe: you know, now that we're here. And seems like this
is where we'll raise our family, I think we should do

something about that housein Cape town

Me: what were you thinking

?

Sphe: definitely not to sell, it's property babe. We can generate income from it, create a business of some sort

I nod

Me: alright, we'll think of

something

Sphe: I love you so much llet out a smile

Me: and I love you

Sphe: let me go run you abath

He pecks my lips
And walks to the bathroom! lay back down on the bedAs!
feel little kicks
I close my eyes

The feeling bringing tears tomy eyes

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VINSIDE OUTV
VINSERT 20♥

♥ASANDE**♥**

I open my eyes slowly As I feel the moist inbetween my thighs

I let out a slight moan And he thrust in deeperI flinch a bit, moving upSphe: I am sorry ...
He caresses my nipples

I close my eyes, letting out amoan

He breathes hoarse on myear

I grab tight on his armHe increases his pace I roll my eyes back, as awave of pleasure runs through my whole body

He deep grunts, as I feel hisdick jerking inside of me

He slowly moves overl turn my head As his lips grace mine And we passionately kissJust as a kick startles us We pull out of the kisslaughing

Me: you woke the baby up Sphe: she lacks timing andall Me: we ...

I let out a scream of pain, asl feel a sharp cramp on my lower abdomen

Sphe: what's going on?

Me: it's ...

The warm liquid runningthrough my legs

Me: oh my Godcall Khethi

He quickly gets up and putson his pants and t-shirt He runs out of the room! slowly sit up straight Khethi walks in

Me: I think my water justbroke

Khethi: okay, we don't havetime. Because we don't know how fast you're dialitang, Mdluli will get thebag. Put on a dress, let's goto the car

Me: without bathing?

Khethi: there isn't time for that, or else you'll give birth in this house Me: I thought ...I still had a week Khethi: mhm ...lets go

This is awkward How do you give birthRight after having sex

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VSPHELELEV

It's been three hours
I am pacing up and down Yet she seems to be so calm!
don't understand why

Me: are you okay? She smiles

Asa: yes

Me: babe ...

Asa: for real, the doctor iscoming anytime now

I nod slowly

At least she's not anxious as I am And 30 minutes laterMy princess is born A spitting image of hermother I couldn't be more happier as a father

I have a whole human beingI created this person Asa: hey ... I look at her with a smile

Me: she looks so much likeyou

Asa: let me see her

I move closer to the bed And place the baby on herAsa:

she's so beautiful

Me: she's a baby, she's cute

She laughs

Asa: ouch ...

Me: take it easy, you've just

given birth

Asa: are you happy?

She looks into my eyes

I lean down placing a kiss onher forehead

Me: I am more than happyShe smiles

Me: I told you this was

gonna happen

She laughs Asa: just stop I couldn't be more content than this

♥LIBONGWE

I grab both my bags andwalk out

Ntando is outside with hiswife

Right by the tree, and theirkids I just can't do this anymore

I've reached my breaking point

I'm done being here

And for no reason

Also being treated like this I am walking out of here

I'll see if he will stop me or what

I walk out, and head to thegate watching them

And they're also just watching me Ntando doesn't even look like he cares He's not even paying me any attention

I guess, this man doesn't see me as anything

I walk out of the gate And they've turned their eyes away from me

I wipe the tear that dropsdown my cheek

I walk over heading to myhome

I don't know what will await me

Maybe my father will kick meout

That's possible

But right now, I have nochoice

I don't know why I'm still living in that house

I'm sure he wouldn't even care to go to my parents

And ask for his bride price

Because that has never beenheard of

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♥INSIDE OUT

- VINSERT 21♥
- **♥**THREE MONTHS LATER**♥**
- **♥**ASANDE**♥**

He holds my handl smile turning over Sphe : are you okay ?

I nod with a smile

He gets out of the car

And walks around to openthe door for me

I get out

He walks to the backseat ,and takes Ovayo from herseat Sphe : should we give yousome alone time

Me: please

Sphe: okay, we love youHe pecks my lips
I take the shawl and throw itover my shoulders

I walk over to the graveFive years ago I didn't think I'll ever come back here But here I am For the first time in five years , I'm here to see my little boy

I kneel down

It's very clean

And Kgari's daughter has done a great job keeping itwell

Even the tombstone Spheleleput

It's just beautifull wipe my tears As words fail me And I have so much to say tothis little guy

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♥LIBONGWE**♥**

I walk in the kitchen And find my parents in amayhem

Me: what's going on?

Mom: at this time, you'reonly waking up now. Andyou wonder why your marriage failed
Those are words I eateveryday

It doesn't even get to me at

all

I am fine just as I am Seeing that even Ntando didn't follow me Not cause any drama

It's just these villagers

I'm a return soldier to themSo it's fine, I don't care I cared what people wouldsay about me If I was going to end up notgetting married

I was happy for marriage

Without knowing whatmarriage is

And the hardships that comewith it As of now, I am fine as I am

Mom: we're going to the outskirts, it is said your sisteris here

Me: what?

I ask in shock as they walkout Leaving me stunned

But I am not missing this

Is she alive, after so long?

I run out, pulling the doorclosing it

This, I want to see.

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♥ASANDE**♥**

Me: I do feel I should have done better, known better. I thought I was protecting you, I didn't know what will happen. I was young and

clueless , I didn't want to giveyou away . Maybe if I did , you would still be alive today

. I am so sorry my baby , if I could reverse the wings of time I could . I am sorry , andI hope you find it in your heart to forgive me . I will always and forever love you ,I will never forget you .

Watch over us ...
I wipe my tears off

I feel a hand on my shoulder

I lift my head and look atthem

I raise my hands and takeOvayo Me: this is your little sisterOvayo

Sphe kneels next to me

I close my eyes in happiness

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♥LIBONGWE**♥**

We get to the house
And there's a beautiful black
car parked outside
I watch as my parents walk in
And I follow behind them
The door opens before theycan even knock
My jaw drops

This cannot be the sameAsande



Okay!

How do they even know I amhere?

I didn't expect to see my

parents here

And Libongwe

She looks so shocked

She doesn't even look like herself

She's even list weight

My dad looks like he's aged a thousand years

I look at them

And the pain, the hurt andrejection is not even here Mom: Asande! Me: sawubona ma Mom: where ...where have you been all these years? Her voice is shaky I take a deep breath Me: I don't have a lot to say, but seeing you here ... I didn't even know how I'll feel when I see you. But I feel nothing, inside out They just look at me

I close the door Sphe and Kgari's daughter are gawking at me

I feel lifted I

I laugh, leaning by the doorclosing my eyes

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THE END	

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