



THE PROTECTOR

(CONTINUATION OF HIS HOME)

Prison was not on the list of the things Jane thought would happen to her. Now she's stuck in a crowded area not knowing how to survive with dangerous women hovering above her.

#1

JANE BANDA

Goosebumps appeared on my bare arms and the cold hard chains rattled around my feet as i walked slowly behind the guard down the long corridor. I've heard of prison before but what i

was seeing was not what i had imagined before. Instead of fancy walls i saw in movies and telenovelas i saw dirty walls full of drawings that made no sense. The place. Instead of bars that you could peek out from, i saw hard steel doors with no spaces to see the outside.

My heart was not only filled with the shame and hurt from being seen that way, having to hear people testify against me...it was also filled with the apprehension of what was to come. I swallowed almost stepping over the chains as loud chatters from the women echoed through the prison walls. I couldn't see any of them but they sounded so sinister.

"You only eat once a day and that is before lights out." The warden glanced at me then shrugged "You have to work for pads." She

looked forward

What?

"We eat once a day? How's that fai—" I tried to talk but she turned sharply and pointed her finger at me.

"Save your voice for later!. You chose to be a criminal right? This is the punishment."

I inhaled shakily and followed her. Her back was broad and it was really hard to see where we were going. The smell of sweaty vinegar invaded my nostrils and my stomach churn in disgust.

The warden stopped at the last door and reached inside her pocket then pulled out bunch of keys attached to a round key holder. She turned around and bent down to my legs. She yanked the chains and i winced...she slapped in between my feet and i spread them a little. She unlocked the keys and i internally let out a sigh. Having the chains away from my legs was refreshing. She got up and yanked my hands forward then unlocked the cuffs from my hands then stared at me. Her eyes lacking emotion.

"I feel sorry for you." She simply said and my heart pounded. She placed a card on the door and it opened then she stepped away pointing forward with her head. "Get in"

Something blocked my throat as my heart beat quickly. I stepped in and the door shut loudly

drawing a squeak and a jump from me. There were five women in the cell and their eyes were all focused on me. I stepped back and my back hit the metal door. Two women were sprawled on the floor, other one the bed sleeping and the forth leaned against the wall with her muscular arms crossed. The fifth woman was at the corner next to a toilet reading a newspaper. There were three beds which was confusing to me.

I breathed out and raised my trembling hand. "My name is Jane Banda" i waved.

The muscular woman approached me and my hand gripped the bumpy thing on the door and my head tilted upward as her face inched closer to mine.

"You're a pretty thing aren't you love?" She gripped my chin and roughly pulled my face down. My jaw ached and my eyes watered as her sharp nails dug into my skin.

"Open your mouth." She commanded and i slowly widened my jaw. She leaned in and shoved her tongue into my mouth. Her hot breath mixed with whatever she ate invaded my nostrils and i gagged. She pushed her hand onto my neck pinning me to the door. My saliva dripped down my chin mixed with hers as she sucked on my tongue and tears poured out of my eyes. It hurt...being violated. It brought back horrible memories i thought i was past them.

Crying wasn't an option. No one would pity me in prison and i knew that i had to put meekness aside if i wanted to survive in here. When the

woman pulled away i coughed loudly wiping my mouth and watched her retreating back unbothered. She sat on the bed and crossed her arms with a serious look like she didn't just violate me with her disgusting mouth.

"A little kiss is what's making you cry?" She mocked and the other women laughed quietly.

This was going to be my worst nightmare.

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Later on A loud buzz echoed and the door opened and the ladies stood up. I stared in confusion as they lined out of the door. Following behind, i got out and noticed that the other doors were opened and more inmates

walked out. Everyone in here looked rough. At least no one was fighting as we lined up to the door leading into a room. Loud chatter and laughter filled the cold hallway as the queue moved slowly into the other room.

"Where are we going?" I whispered to my cell mate who stood in front of me. She turned to glance at me then crossed her arms.

"This is where we get food. Keep quiet before you get slapped." She whispered back then moved forward.

The last thing i wanted was to get hit by other women so i kept my lips sealed. We kept shuffling closer and closer until it was my turn to pick a dish. I moved closer to the men who were dishing. They dished into my plate and I

looked into it as I followed my cell mate. It was pap and some sort of soup...honestly they looked really disgusting. The soup looked so thick and the onions were too big like they were sliced by swords.

"Let's go back before lights out." cell mate said and i quietly followed her back into our cell. We both sat on the floor and she immediately attacked her food.

"Aren't you going to eat? This is the only time we eat. No breakfast no lunch, just dinner." She glanced at me and then accompanied her soup filled pap into her mouth chewing loudly

I appreciated her talking to me. She looked normal...like a normal woman. At least she wasn't violent. She looked like she wanted

nothing but to do her time and get out of here.

"What are you here for?" She asked

"Murder." I replied

"You?" She laughed softly "Yet you let Mo kiss you without fighting back. What are you really here for?"

"What are you here for?" I asked raising my eyebrows. "Bunch of things" she replied

I nodded and she raised her hand folding the jumpsuit from the wrists as she gathered the pap into the soup.

"Are there gangs in here?" I asked curiously

She stood up and grabbed her empty plate.

"Listen life in here is not like university where there are cafeterias and libraries. Life in here is hard Jane...you have to fight for showers. We eat once a day and we have intersexual women who can just f*ck you in the showers and no one would say anything. We are all depending on Ryan for protection in this cell and we get f*cked for it. Too bad she's in isolation. Ska dadazela, don't be stupid and think this is something fancy with mafia and whatever you are saying. It's hell in here. We only get out when we got to the showers and there are not hot water in there."

My eyes widened. She wasn't being serious right?

"How long have you been in here?" I wrapped my arms around myself

"I've been here for two years. The lady that kissed you four and the one that was sleeping came in recently and she's" she rotated her finger at the side of her head. "The other one two years ago. Ryan has been here for six years. She's respected around here. Acknowledge her when she comes back from isolation. Give her your food...that's a sign for submission in here. She doesn't talk much so don't ask a lot."

The others came in and they minded their business eating

"I'm KG by the way. The muscular is Mo." She

pointed at the women sitting close to each other whispering "That's Lee and beauty. They are close and lastly Vuyo."

"Doing introductions i see" Mo mocked staring at me. I averted my eyes taking my plate.

"I can't wait for Ryan to get here. She's gonna rip her apart" They all laughed and my heart skipped. "Want this?" I offered her my plate and she gladly took it.

My appetite was gone at that point. I missed my one year daughter. She would grow up without me and forget me...my husband will move on. What have i done? I should've just kept my job and accepted the little i got...that was more than enough. I kept hustling for a man and now I'm stuck here and he's outside.

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THE PROTECTOR

#2

JANE BANDA

It was really difficult for me to fall asleep after lights out. The paranoia got me by the neck. I was so afraid of someone just shoving their hands up my private parts or the lady...Mo coming and violating me in my sleep. I slept on the floor since the beds were only three and they were sharing. It was cold and very

uncomfortable. No pillows, nothing. My stomach grumbled and i sighed rubbing it. Maybe i should've eaten the disgusting food.

The whole room was pitch black. It was hard to see who was who. I wondered what kind of person Ryan was...what did they mean when they say she was going to rip me apart?

"Hey KG—"

"Voetsek wena! shut up we are sleeping!" Mo and the other ladies yelled

"I wanted to ask a question." I said

There were shuffling "Listen you better learn to

keep your questions to yourself. You think we are your friends? We are here to serve our time not to make friends. Shut up!" Mo's voice echoed in the dark cell.

I sighed and held on the thin blanket on the floor. She was right. This was not like home...i didn't know why i was hard for me to accept it.

"Do they allow phone calls in here?" I asked quietly not wanting to risk getting attacked.

"Yes 10 minutes." KG answered.

I hummed and closed my eyes. My mind flashed back to those horrible things I did. Poor Lawrence...the man really loved me. He sacrificed a lot for me and i didn't even have to

do anything. I threw his love back at his face and he didn't do anything to me to deserve it. My ears burned and i rolled over to my side and covered my mouth. A weird feeling settled on my chest and tears streamed down even faster. He looked at me with so much hate when he was testifying against me.

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The next day i was woken up by a loud buzz and doors opening. I stood up and rushed to the toilet to relieve myself. It wasn't clean but at least they didn't leave pee stains on it. I pulled down my jumpsuit and sat on the seat then sighed in relief as i let out all the liquid. After i was done i rushed out following other inmates down the hallway. Everyone was rushing...they were probably going to the showers.

I took a turn as everyone and behold...there were few shower cubicles and a long bench just in front. I looked around for my cell mates then shuffled closer to Mo. She glanced at me then pushed me forward. My face collided with someone's back and she turned and slapped me on the face. She pointed a finger at me and snapped in Afrikaans. Rubbing my cheek i stepped back and stood stiffly watching her as she took off her suit and stepped into the shower.

I really just wanted to cry. I kept my head held high and swallowed multiple lumps. The women went in after the other and i just stood there until i was sure everyone was gone. I took off my jumpsuit suit and placed it nicely on the bench then stepped into the shower. I turned on the tab and shivered as cold water poured

down on me. I grabbed the soap then faced the wall and let the tears free. Who was i kidding? I wasn't going to survive...i didn't even know how to fight. After five minutes i stepped out.

My jumpsuit was gone!

"Hello?" I called out. "Come on this is not funny...bring my clothes back."

The warder stepped in and glared at me. "Back to the cell inmate!" She yelled

"My...my clothes." I stuttered out pleading with my eyes.

"I don't care and i will never care. Back to the

cell inmate!" She repeated

She walked past me and peaked into the showers pulling out three more women. I looked around and then took deep breaths before walking back to the cell Naked. Humiliated, violated...what's next?.

When i got in Mo raised my clothes with a smirk. She chuckled staring down my private area

"Your nipples are long as hell." She commented. "This is a lesson to never leave your things on the bench."

I swallowed. At least it still existed. "Thank you. Can i have it?" I asked softly

"Come and take it." She said

"Mo just let her be man...what's wrong with you?" KG said

Mo shook her head "Come and take it."

I moved closer to her and she reached her hand and grabbed my left breast. I let out a whimper and closed my eyes feeling the wetness down my cheeks.

"Mo please just let her go." KG's voice filled my ears as Mo groped me. She suddenly pushed me and tsked

"This one will die in here with how she's

behaving. Why are you crying?" She threw the jumpsuit and it hit me on the face.

"What do you expect? She just got here." KG argued

"And?"

I quickly put on the jumpsuit and glanced at the ladies who looked at me emotionlessly. I bit my lip and wiped my tears. Where was the confident girl who stood her ground? I didn't recognize this Jane...this Jane was weak.

"Are you okay?" KG asked and i nodded

"How old are you?" The other woman asked

"I'm 30."

She nodded and turned to the others. I walked to the corner and sat down. KG stood up from the bed and approached me. She sat on next to me and glanced up.

"You need to learn to stand up to Mo. You can't let her harrass you like that. I know it's prison but these cells should be better than the outsides. You can't just take it...she's afraid of Ryan and now that she's not here she's trying to practice dominance on you." She whispered

I nodded. I didn't trust my voice to respond her...i was just exhausted and it was day two.

She patted my back. "Be smart. Don't baby and you will be sorted ." She stood up and went back to the bed.

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THE PROTECTOR

#3

JANE BANDA

Later on i joined KG and Vuyo as they braided each other's hair. Being in here drove me crazy. Having to rely on each other to avoid boredom annoyed me. I sat beside them and watched as Vuyo grabbed on KG's long curly hair and parted it with her long pinky finger nail.

"What are you here for?" Vuyo asked not looking at me.

"Armed robbery and attempted murder." I replied then looked down. Thinking about it made me feel ashamed.

To think Jamie stayed at home looking after a house while i tried to hustle.

"You told me it was murder" KG chuckled

I shrugged

"Why?" They both asked

"I was hustling for my family and i guess i wasn't smart to try to rob other people." I simply said. Talking about it didn't make me feel relieved, it made me feel stupid. Really foolish

"At least you won't be here for a long time." KG said

"What's going to happen when i have my periods? I heard that i have to work for sanitary pads" i asked curiously. The last thing i wanted was to use a newspaper as a pad

"They have tampons and they are not enough. You only get five." Vuyo replied and my eyes widened

"That means it has to be inside for the whole day?"

"Exactly" they nodded

We stayed like that the whole day and i got to know that Vuyo was sentence for murdering her abusive stepfather and she was married with two kids. KG on the other hand remained secretive but she was a good conversation starter. We got along and even laughed about stuff. At least i had two people who were not judgmental and liked the idea of not being

insane.

I was kind of curious about the Ryan woman. Why was she in isolation...was she worse than Mo?. Something about her name made me paranoid.

"When will Ryan come back?" I asked

"We don't know. She's dangerous so I'm not looking forward to having her here." Vuyo responded "She choked a woman nearly to death in the showers. She once slapped Mo and she broke down in tears."

"Ehh. What is she going to do to me?" I asked

"Behave and hopefully nothing. She doesn't talk to anyone...don't provoke her."

That didn't make me feel better. This cell was crowded and Mo and her crew didn't like me. What if they tell Ryan to attack me?

When the doors opened, we were let out the cell. i walked by KG's side to the small sitting area and most inmates sat in groups. I looked around and everyone was talking and laughing. I tapped KG on the shoulder after reaching a long queue for phone calls. I was relieved that we were allowed to call home. I was longing to hear my daughter's voice even when what she said made no sense and my husband too. He was probably worried about me.

KG stepped inside the cubicle and dialed the

numbers. I watched her as her lips stretched into a smile and she laughed little blushing at whatever the person was saying then the warder beside the cubicle hit the thing with a stick. KG put the phone back and stepped out. I took deep breaths before walking in. I grabbed the phone then pressed my husband's number on the hard buttons. The phone rang twice and i was praying he answers

"Hello?" A female voice answered. I furrowed my eyebrows

"Hello who are you?" I asked

"Lady you called this phone. You can't ask that question."

I cleared my throat "I called Jamie Banda."

"And who are you?" She asked rather rudely.

What the hell?

"I'm his wife. Who are you lady? Where's my husband?" I demanded

"Ma'am don't ever call this phone again. Learn to move on." She snapped before the phone cut off. I stepped out in disbelief and i glanced at the phone and then all of a sudden i collided into someone and accidentally bit my tongue.

"Watch where you're going!" The woman shoved me back and i stumbled covering my mouth as

the taste of metal filled my mouth. I continued walking to where KG was as i wiped off the blood from my mouth.

"There's Ryan. The one sitting alone behind the chubby woman." She said as soon after i sat down. I turned my head and stared at the woman sitting alone with her legs crossed twisting the Rubik's cube in pure concentration.

She was not how i imagined her to be. I imagined her to have a muscular physique and body full of tattoos. She was anything but that. Her hair was in cornrows and she looked harmless.

"Are you sure? The one playing with a Rubik's cube?" I asked

"Yes."

"She looks harmless." I said and KG chuckled shaking her head.

"She's mentally unstable that one. Do you know bipolar...I'm warning you Jane. Stay in your lane...she's definitely coming back to the cell and hell will break lose."

I nodded. My mind went back to the lady on the phone. What the heck was Jamie playing at? Was she my replacement?

"You look bothered. As long as you don't bother her—"

"Mmh-mh i won't bother her." I dismissed.

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Later we went back to the cells. My mind was all over the place. The thought of Jamie cheating on me haunted me and i kept wondering how i was going to cope with it. Not after all the sacrifices. All the thoughts paused when Ryan walked in after all of them got in. Her aura was not calming...she looked harmless but her aura. I turned to Mo and she looked tense.

She walked to the bed silently and sat in the middle taking all the space. She crossed her arms and looked around. Her gaze landed on

me and lingered there for a while. I was uncomfortable and honestly...really terrified. Why was she staring at me like that?

"Oh a newbie?" She said and her voice came out deep and her accent surprised me.

"My name is Jane." I introduced myself nervously

"I didn't ask now did i?" She hopped off the bed and the sound of her twisting the rubik filled the room as the atmosphere turned tense. "I'm sure they filled you in. I'm the boss of you and everyone in here...that means you follow my moves, obey my rules and do whatever i want. You hear me babe?"

I nodded and swallowed hard. "Good. I don't tolerate nonsense in here and this is the only time I'm saying this because i hate yap yap. Be a good girl for me and you and i will be like this." She raised her hand and separated her index and middle finger into a peace sign then walked back to the bed.

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THE PROTECTOR

#4

JAMIE BANDA

I stepped into the house with a sigh. Job

hunting was exhausting and i was glad that things were looking good with Linda's help. She and i met in a taxi years ago and she became important part of my life. She was the only person i trusted with my daughter now that Jane was in jail.

"Hey. We missed you." Linda announced as soon as i walked into the living room. I leaned down and kissed my daughter who was playing on the floor

"I hope she wasn't a bother." I said

"No. She's an amazing company." She smiled and stood up.

"You forgot your phone home and i think Jane

called." She said and i raised my eyebrows

"What did she say?" I asked sitting down and Linda shrugged and handed me the phone. She walked closer and wrapped her arms around my neck then leaned in. I leaned back and cleared my throat. She removed her arms and stepped back.

"What are you doing?" I asked her

She frowned. "Jamie i thought we were getting somewhere."

"I'm married Linda."

Honestly Linda was breathtaking and she was

everything any man wanted in a woman. Well-mannered, beautiful, beautiful body and independent but i was still married to Jane.

"When will Jane be back? Deep down you know that you won't be able to wait for her. She was selfish when she decided to commit a crime knowing that she has 13 months daughter. What kind of a woman does that?" She asked. "That woman doesn't even deserve you...she slept around and you stayed because you believed that she was hustling. Why couldn't she get a normal job like a normal person?" She raised her arms and slapped them on her thighs in exasperation

I kept quiet.

"You don't love her like you claim to. No man

would allow his wife be bent over by other men for money." She said.

"I hasn't been a year since she got arrested." I said

"Okay. I won't be here forever." She bent down and picked up Rain. "Time for bath baby."

JANE BANDA

After our meal the lights went out and nerves kicked in. I sat by the wall listening to every shuffle as the occupants of the beds got on.

"Who the hell are you sharing with? Get the f*ck off the bed." I heard Mo's voice snap

"Whose bed? Don't get started with me...fight someone your own size." Vuyo's voice echoed

I laid down and covered my body with the blanket. My heart was heavy and it was to ignore it. My marriage with Jamie was open because we had to hustle. I was fine with that because it was a mutual agreement but being in here was going to give him enough time to find someone else and fall in love. I took deep breaths trying to calm myself down. Maybe i was being paranoid...i should've introduced myself, maybe it was the nanny.

The loudness of the Rubik's cube filled the entire room. It was twisting furiously and i wondered what was wrong with Ryan. Someone laid beside me

"KG?" I called out

"Yeah i don't have a bed tonight. I guess I'll be your floor mate." She chuckled

The next morning after the showers i queued to the telephone. The wait wasn't long like it was the previous day. I grabbed the phone and dialed Lawrence's number. The possibility of dying in prison was very high and i wanted to at least speak to Lawrence once. His phone rang few times and the women behind me complained loudly.

"Hello?" He answered

"Please don't hang up it's Jane." I quickly said

"What do you want?" He snapped

"Please come see me. I want to talk to you...i only get five minutes on the phone—"

He interrupted. "Why would i do that? Do you know how much i hate you right now Jane? Don't ever call me again"

"Wait please. Please forgive me Lawrence...i was stupid, i should've cherished you—"

He interrupted again "You lied to me. I fell so hard for you...you made me believe that i was going to be a father, made me believe that you were my soulmate. I loved you so much and i hurt Charlotte for you. I humiliated the poor

woman and became a fool because of love while you were busy planning to take everything from me."

Tears burned my eyes and i swallowed speechlessly. I saw the warder walking closer with the corner of my eye then put the phone back. The tears dropped as i made a way to the cells.

LAWRENCE

Putting the phone away, i cursed loudly. Just when i was about to heal nicely. I leaned against the chair and placed my arms on top of my head then sighed.

"What's on your mind?" My mother asked

walking into my office. She headed to the couch and took her seats.

"Jane called me from jail." I replied

"Oh?"

"You don't look happy" she said and i shook my head

"Of course I'm not happy ma. I hate that woman and her calling me will only drag me back to the pain and regret. She should just die in there." I gritted out

"I don't like Jane because she was so disrespectful to me and Charlotte but you are

the one who brought her into your life and our lives Lawrence. I don't know why you are mad because her stealing from your was your karma...you should be glad it's over or do you still love her?" She asked

I gritted my teeth "Of course not."

"Okay then don't pay attention to her." She said.
"I came her to ask for a favor...i need a house keeper and i was hoping you would help me out with information." She smiled

"I'll ask around." I dismissed

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THE PROTECTOR

#5

JAMIE

My daughter was really fond of Linda. She would literally jump up and down after hearing her voice. Linda was really good with children and i got to enjoy having her over these past weeks. Sometimes wished that i had met her before meeting Jane.

Jane was not someone a wife material. I hated that i let out hustling get to that point. Linda was right, Jane was selfish...she was selfish for going against my will and committing armed

robberies.

I walked into the nursery and checked on Rain. She was still sleeping thankfully. My phone rang in my bedroom and i hurried out and got in the room. I grabbed it on the bed and glanced at the screen.

It was Jane's aunt.

"Hello?" I answered

"Hello Jamie. Have you heard anything from Jane? I'm worried sick." She asked

"No ma i haven't." I answered

"How? Weren't you supposed to go see her?"
She asked "Jane is behind bars because you allowed her. How can you watch your wife rob banks and people? A woman who had just given birth at that?"

"What was i supposed to do? I never asked Jane to rob people and banks." I said

"Real men get jobs Jamie. They don't live off of their wives with no worries about the whereabouts of the money." She continued shouting

"Don't insult me. You failed to raise your niece right...if you want to see Jane you can go see her. I will never visit her in jail and bring my daughter bad luck." I said and quickly hung up.

I was getting fed up with Jane's family insulting me. Getting a job was difficult, what was i supposed to do? Force people to hire me? I clicked my tongue and put her on mute. A knock sounded on the door and i put on my sleepers and headed to the kitchen. I unlocked then pulled the door open. Linda stepped on the stoop with a smile holding a plastic from fast food restaurant.

"I was around and decided to pass by." She said.

I smiled and stepped aside letting her get in. She got in and put the plastic on the table then sat down. I closed the door then walked over to the cabinets. I took out plates and sat down.

"What's in there?" I asked

"Burgers and wings. Is the queen asleep? I got her nuggets...i made them myself." She smiled

"Thank you Linda." I said and she reached across the table and grabbed my hand. I squeezed it and my eyes staring into hers.

She cleared her throat and pulled her arm back then took out the takeaways from the plate.

JANE BANDA

For weeks my routine was the same. I behaved and that kept Ryan away from me. I was getting impatient as i hoped that Jamie would come to

visit me. Or even my deadbeat father, just anyone from my family. I was not coping and i barely slept at night thinking of the worst things that could happen to my daughter.

It was currently dinner time and my hunger was getting worse. Food here was still disgusting and not well cooked but it sated my hunger. Things were getting better or at least i thought so.

I shifted closer as the queue moved bit by bit. My stomach grumbled loudly and i sighed moving my hand to rub it. Grabbing the plate i moved closer and the cook dished Somp and i walked over to the other one and she added the soup. I followed the other inmates as they headed to their cells. Eating in the open space was better than in the cells but who was i to say

anything?

I got to the cell and took a sat on the floor with the others as they ate. I put my plate down and folded my sleeves. I then stretched my legs, grabbed the plate and placed it on my lap then started eating.

"Do you have kids Jane?" Vuyo asked.

I nodded and stared eating "She's going to be two in September. I miss her so much."

"You should ask them to come visit you. Being in here is depressing so seeing people from outside can make you feel better. My man visits me every month." She said

That was nice

"I doubt they allow kids in here." I said.

"You can just talk to her on the phone. Maybe you are just enjoying the depression." KG said

Footsteps echoing silenced our conversation as we turned and came face to face with Ryan's sour face. She walked towards me and bent down taking my plate. I frown and stood up quickly

"What are you doing?" I asked

"I'm eating. I thought i already established my role in here." She said and moved to the bed. I

followed her and stood by the foot of the bed.

"I'm hungry and i can't watch you eat my food." I said.

Talking to Ryan was a risky thing to do but i was really hungry and wasn't about to keep quiet and wait until the next day to eat when i hadn't had anything all day.

"What are you going to do about it? I told you very well that I'm the boss of you." She said

"But that's my food and you had an option to go get yours. Who do you think you are trying to dominate us when we are all here for the same reason? Fact is that we are all criminals, you are not the queen of this place." I said

She stood up and walked over to the toilet then dumped my food into it then flushed it. A lump formed on my throat and my eyes burned as my stomach cried out in hunger.

"I haven't done anything to you! Why would you do that?" I screamed marching to her. I grabbed her shoulder blade roughly and she turned back and shoved me back.

"You disgust me!" I screamed "I wish you die in here mpša tena (you dog)."

"You think your little threats scare me. I warned you Jane but you continued like this is your mother's place. You have no respect for me while i make sure that everyone around here

doesn't bother inmates from this cell. You will know what prison feels like starting from today. Go sit the f*ck down before i show you how evil i can be." She said and clicked her tongue

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THE PROTECTOR

#6

JANE

My hostility towards Ryan worsened as the night went on. I was hungry and really angry and hearing her twisting and turning the Rubik's

cube irritated me even more. Worst part about it was that I couldn't even share food with other ladies because we were all fighting for ourselves, every man for himself and the food weren't even enough for us.

The following morning I approached her in the showers. The last thing I wanted was to make enemies in jail when I had no one to protect me. I waited until we were both done and quickly followed her back to the cells. She took a seat on the bed and i fiddled with my fingers glancing at the door to ensure that we were alone.

"I don't want to get on anyone's bad side Ryan. I just want to serve my time without bothering anyone." I started and she glanced at me.

"You followed me all the way from the showers to tell me that?"

i took a deep breath "You took my food and dumped them into a toilet when i did nothing to you." I said louder than i intended.

"My bad" she shrugged

I sighed in disbelief "You had no reason to bully me but you did. I would've shared with you if you had asked me."

She stood up and walked slowly to me. My heart pounded but i kept a straight face and stood my ground. Ryan stood in front of me with her arms crossed. Her large eyes stared deep into mine.

"Yeah right!" She asked and my eyes widened taken aback.

"Really."

"I didn't know. I was hungry" She shrugged and went back to sit down. I sat on the floor cross-legged and placed my arms at both sides of my body to balance myself and looked at her.

"What are you here for?" I asked her.

"Don't ask me stupid things." She snapped at me all of a sudden and then grabbed her cube and twisted it furiously.

"Okay. I was just trying to make a conversation because i hate silence." I said and stood up. I headed to the corner and her voice stopped me on my tracks.

"You shouldn't trust people easily." She said
"You are a fool for trying to make friends in jail. No one here came because they stole candy. There are some f*cked up people in here. I see you everyday revealing your gums at everyone thinking you are a good person. You will die if you keep that up...don't ever let your guard down." She said

I turned around and she was staring at me.
"Thanks for your advice but my guard is not down."

"Good." She nodded "They usually ignore me in

here so—"

Our conversation got interrupted by the others getting in and the doors shutting close afterwards. Ryan turned away and kept quiet. I furrowed my eyebrows then faced the gang.

JAMIE

After breakfast i walked Linda to her car with Rain on my hip. Linda smiled and kissed Rain's cheek then her eyes glanced up at me.

"I'll see you guys later." She said "I'll be crossing fingers for you. I really hope they call you so you can work."

I smiled tightly "It's really hard for an old man like me to find a job so i don't really hope for anything. Don't let us get you late...we will see you later." I told her

She leaned closer and pecked me on the lips then pulled away slowly her lipgloss sticking on my lips. Her breath smelt great and the feeling of her lips on my made my blood rush south and i found myself grabbing her hand and pulling her to us. I pressed my lips onto hers and parted them gently with my tongue. She placed her hand on my chest parting her lips. Rain whined and we pulled away.

"I'll see you later." She blushed and let go of my hand then walked to her car.

I went back inside and my phone's screen was

lit up from the couch. I picked it up and there was a missed call from Jane's aunt. I dialed her number and called

"Hello Jamie." She answered

"I missed your call. I was outside." I said

"Oh i called to let you know that I will be there tomorrow to help you out with Rain. I know how difficult raising a child can be so i want to help out while you look for a job." She said and i closed my eyes and massaged my forehead

"It's fine aunty. I was thinking of taking Rain to my sister."

"No no I'm coming there. I want to be there for the sake of my niece." She responded. "Or do you have someone taking care of you and Rain?" She asked

"Of course not."

"Okay then i will take an early bus tomorrow. See you then Jamie. Kiss my granddaughter for me." She said then hung up. I sighed in annoyance and put the phone on the couch.

JANE

Later we sat around asking each other questions. It was just me, KG and Vuyo like always. Ryan sat alone and i badly wanted to call her over but she was just hot and cold i

didn't think i could handle her on and offs. When we were alone she looked really calm and i was even surprised by her answers. Maybe she was afraid of Mo? Or just anyone in the here.

"So what are you going to do when you get out?" Vuyo asked

"I'm going to give my daughter a big hug and relocate with my husband." I let out softly

The door opened and the warder threw an envelope in. "Letter for Kagiso!" She yelled before the doors closed.

KG stood up and headed to the door where she bent down and picked up the letter. She tore it open and unfolded the paper. We watched in

silence as her face changed and she cleared her throat and walked over to the toilet. She crumbled the letter then threw it inside then flushed it.

She turned and smiled at me. Her smile didn't even reach her eyes. It looked fake "The first thing i would do is start a business." She said sitting down

My conversation with Ryan came back and an unfamiliar feeling settled at the bottom of my stomach.

"Ex lover?" I asked curiously

"Yep."

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Please like and comment

THE PROTECTOR

#7

JANE

Days went in a blur and i was adjusting very well. I got along with my cell mates...well except for Mo. I didn't even know what her deal was. A natural bully maybe? She kept giving me death stares and glaring at me. Ryan on the other hand was just quiet and i got to learn that she was introverted. I wondered how she ended in jail. She and i talked sometimes and our conversations were always short and

meaningful.

Talking to her was refreshing and it was good to talk especially since we were all dealing with things and our mental health was suffering. I even got tempted to ask to share her bed. I was really tired of the floor. Not only was it cold and hard, it was not clean and the dirt on the floor made it hard to get comfortable.

Today was Saturday...I've been counting because Saturdays were visiting days. I was looking forward to seeing Jamie. A part of me was certain that he was not coming but i hoped he was because i missed him and our daughter so much. After the guard showed up and answered that i had a visitor, i made sure to prepare myself mentally. Anticipation filled my veins as the warder led me to the visiting room.

I looked around and a large smile stretched my lips as i spotted my aunt. We were not close but she was my only family from my mother's side.

It felt so good to be remembered. I walked over to her and pulled a chair then sat down. The warder took the cuffs and chained me to the desk.

My aunt stared at them and her eyes welled up in tears. "Aunty no don't cry I'm fine."

I glanced at the warder who stepped back ignoring what was happening. My aunt was dramatic and possibility of her wailing was very high. She was the type who jumped into the hole in her close friend's or family member's funerals.

"Does this make you happy?" She asked "I can't express how disappointed i am Jane. You disappointed me and it hurts that i failed to raise you better." She shook her head placing her hands on the table.

"I'm sorry." I let out softly with my head bowed down. She reached for my hands

"No touching!" The warder gritted out then hit the table two times. She then stepped back. My aunt cleared her throat and moved her hands away.

"Are you okay?" She asked. Her eyes glancing around the place "It doesn't look like it's safe in here."

"It's prison aunty. Of course it's not safe." I retorted "I'm fine."

"What else did you do Jane? How many people have you destroyed?" She asked and her face fell with a disappointed look.

I opened my mouth but nothing came out. I had no answer because there were many. Shame...that was what closed my mouth quickly.

"Hhm?" She pushed

"I was trying to make a living aunty and i chose the wrong path...i don't have a good excuse for doing that." I replied shamefully

"Make a living for you and Jamie. That man you were busy hustling for doesn't even want to come here to see you." She said her frown deepening.

I mirrored her frown as her words settled in my brain "He doesn't want to come see me?" I asked "Did he say that?"

"Yes. I hate seeing you in here but Jamie was supposed to be here with you...akere you were hustling for him? But no he says he doesn't want bad luck." She crossed her arms cocking her head back.

"Oh."

I didn't know how to feel about the revelation. Part of was hurt that my husband had no intentions to see me while the other grew angry at myself for being so stupid. I was stupid for giving my all for a man who did nothing for me. I loved Jamie but being in here made me realize that my love for him blinded my ability to think clearly.

Deep down i knew that bad luck wasn't what was stopping him from seeing me. He just didn't want to see me and that made me feel even worse. I glanced up at my aunt and tried to smile while nodding softly.

"I understand. I will just call him." I said and nodded again.

"I moved in with him to take care of Rain while

he goes to work. The little lady is growing smart." She smiled

"I miss her so much. When you come back can you come with her?" I asked

"Do they allow that in here? I will do a research." She said and i grinned gratefully at her.

After my aunt's visit i was all smiles, seeing her made me feel so much better. I guess that was what my cell mates were talking about. I was really grateful that she dropped everything just to visit me and ensure that i was doing fine. She was the only one i saw as my real family.

When i got back in the cell i walked straight to Ryan's bed. I took a seat beside the bed facing

her with my whole body. She stopped her movements and stared at me.

"What do you want?" She asked

"Why are you so guarded?" I asked "Aren't you lonely?" I teased.

I was really asking for a punch but Ryan looked like she was lonely. No one in the cell bothered to talk to her and the conversation we had made me see her in a new light.

"Of course I'm lonely. I'm in a fu*king prison."
She crossed her arms and tilted her face to the side.

I cupped my chin. "There are lot of fun things to do than twisting that thing all day...that's for smart people." I said

"Who said I'm not smart." She frowned

"You're in prison so you must be very dump." I teased "Smart people avoid places like these." I grinned at her

"Well even smart people can be dump sometimes." She played along.

I settled in my blanket on the floor after the lights were switched off. I stayed like that for a

while because i was restless. I laid on my back with the blanket over my neck. All of a sudden i felt a hand pressing down mouth and nose. My heart raised as i let out a whimper. The hand pressed harder and my lungs burnt as i tried to breathe.

"Mmh..." I kicked my legs and my heart beat quickly. My hands weakly reached for her head and pushed the face away as my legs kicked harder desperately trying to allow air in. My head felt so light and eyes rolled back and darkness covered my vision.

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UNEDITED.

KINDLY LEAVE A LIKE& COMMENT
THE PROTECTOR

#8

JANE BANDA

When I came to it was already morning. I looked around and my cell mates were behaving as usual. Was it a dream? I felt it and I knew it wasn't a dream. Someone had actually tried to kill me in this cell. My heart raced as I looked at each one of them.

I got up and headed to the toilet where I pulled down my jumpsuit, sat down and relieved myself. After I was done, I got up and pulled up my jumpsuit then walked over to KG.

“I need to tell you something.” I whispered to her holding my hands together and occasionally fiddling with my fingers as my eyes looked around urgently.

“Is it something private?” she turned to me and pushed my shoulder a little gesturing to the corner.

The doors opened and the others walked out and I remained behind with KG. We were usually early to the showers but I couldn’t wait around and wait for another attack.

KG knew how everyone behaved in this cell and she was pretty observant. She was the only one I considered a friend in this cell. I wasn’t that

helpless but I didn't want a repeat of what had happened. It was a scary experience and I didn't want it to experience it again.

"Someone tried to kill me last night?" I said and wrapped my arms around my torso as the memory sent shivers down my spine.

She frowned and cocked her head back in surprise. "Someone tried to kill you?" she asked drawing her eyebrows together "How?"

"The person blocked my mouth and nose. I couldn't see the face since it was dark in here. I feel unsafe right now." I admitted softly

"I didn't hear the door opening so whoever attacked you lives in here with us." She said and

pulled me to the door. “The only bullies in here are Mo and Ryan. I didn’t hear anything.”

“I couldn’t even scream.” I sighed

“Something like that never happened in here. Maybe it was a dream.” She concluded

I shook my head “It felt really. I passed out from it...I know difference between dreams and reality.”

We walked quietly to the bathroom. Ryan couldn’t have done it because she had no reason to and Mo was a bully who violated me the first day but why would she want to kill me. I was no longer safe and that thought scared me.

“Don’t worry about it. Maybe it was just Mo messing with you.” She said and we headed to the showers. We sat on the benches and I watched as everyone step in and out of the shower stalls.

I spotted Ryan talking to Mo. Mo’s arms were crossed and she was nodded as Ryan said something using her hands to talk. That was weird...I found myself pushing against other inmates and standing closer. I couldn’t hear what they were saying and that made my paranoia worse.

JAMIE

I walked into the kitchen fixing my uniform and

pulled a chair and sat down watching as Jane's aunt stirred soft sorghum porridge in a big pot. I greeted her and took out my phone and texted Linda good morning.

Working felt great. I was worked as a clerk at the local high school and it made me feel so much better about myself. Jane's aunt being here was also helping because raising a child alone wasn't easy.

"Jane misses you. You should at least see her once." She said and switched the stove off then removed the pot.

I sighed "I'm not ready auntie. Rain is still young too...I need to prepare myself mentally for it." I simply said.

“She is still your wife don’t forget that. I’m sure being in jail is hard...she needs your support. You should go with Rain, she misses her so much.” She said

I massaged my head “Auntie Rain is still young. What if she cries out for her? I don’t want to break my child’s heart.”

She sighed in defeat. “it’s fine. Should I add sugar in your porridge?” She asked and I nodded.

My phone vibrated and I picked it up staring at the screen with a smile. It was Linda.

‘Good morning. Today you have to make time to

see me.'

After replying I took the bowl from auntie and grabbed a spoon.

JANE BANDA

Later the paranoia got worse. I was terrified of what was to come. I really hoped it was just Mo messing around. I kept stealing glances at Ryan.

I sat down besides KG and closed my eyes peaking into her newspaper.

"Hey where did you get this?" I asked curiously

"I found it in the kitchen." She said then chuckled "I know these articles by heart now. I miss going outside."

"me too." I sighed

A buzzing sound startled me and I whipped my head to the door as it opened. The guard peaked in with a straight face. "Jane Banda...you have a visitor." She yelled.

I stood up and walked over to the door. My aunt was probably back with my daughter. My heart pounded in anticipation as I walked behind the guard.

We got to the visiting room and the guard stopped at the table where a woman sat. I sat

down and she cuffed me then stepped back. I stared at the lady waiting...she had a mask on and shades. Her hands reached for the shades and removed them first. She smelt good, flowery scent mixed with something I couldn't figure out.

She bent down putting the shades in her back. I followed her moves with my eyes as she moved the mask. My eyes widened and my heart dropped in disbelief.

"Hi Jane." She greeted with a straight face

"Charlotte?"

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yesterday's insert. Unedited

Please like and comment

THE PROTECTOR

#9

Narrated

Jane stared at Charlotte in disbelief. She pulled the chair closer staring at her. Why did Char come to visit her?

"I heard that you were in jail and I had to come see for myself. All mighty Jane has fallen." She said and crossed her arms with a sigh.

Jane swallowed and took a deep breath. "I'm really sorry I was horrible to you. You didn't deserve my ill treatment especially since I didn't even love Lawrence."

"I figured." Char said "You and I used to be so close when you were still Lawrence's personal assistant. I actually thought of you as a friend but..." She shrugged

"I'm really sorry. I wish Lawrence was here so I could apologize to him too. I was such a horrible human being for absolutely no reason and now I'm paying for it."

Char's face softened. "How is it here? You look skinny." She asked

“Horrible. I’m grateful that I eat everyday even if it’s once a day and a very small portion of food.” She replied

“I was actually here to gloat and make you horrible but honestly Lawrence was who ruined our relationship. I will never blame the other woman for a man’s mistakes. You wronged Lawrence and he wronged me. You are paying for your crimes...that’s what matters.” She said

Jane swallowed a lump. “How’s Lawrence?”

“I think he’s fine. We don’t talk much...he’s just a regular at my restaurant.” She smiled.

She returned the smile. She looked good, gained a healthy amount of weight and she was

glowing. Jane envied her so much...she envied the happiness she had all over her face.

"You're glowing." She stated

Char smiled. "it's the baby glow. Thank you."

"You have a child? Wow...a girl or boy?" she asked

"Boy." She chuckled dreamily and took out her phone as Jane watched. She went to her gallery and clicked on a picture then flipped the phone to Jane.

"He's so cute. He's younger than mine mos?" She asked "My daughter is one year and two

months now. I can't believe I won't watch my daughter grow." She sighed

"Be on your best behavior and you might get out on parole and be able to see her." Char comforted

"Life really humbled me Charlotte. I'm even ashamed of being here with you. I got humbled so fast and I didn't even see it coming. Yoh life is like a wheel shame."

"At least you're not crazy. Some people prefer to deal with thieves the traditional way." Char said

Jane nodded and Charlotte covered her mouth chuckling. Jane joined in and then the chuckles

turned into full blown laughs. Lord knew how long it had been since she laughed.

**

Jamie walked into Linda's house and headed to the living room following her. She waited for him to sit down then she settled onto his lap straddling him. He pulled her head down and kissed her. She parted her lips and rocked her hips against him.

He grunted "Wait...babe wait." He pulled away from the kiss and grabbing her hips to stop her.

"Mmh?" Linda asked with her eyebrows furrowed

“I want us to get tested before we take things further. I don’t know what kind of people Jane slept with and I’ve been afraid to go get tested. I don’t want to infect you with anything.” He explained

Linda smiled and slowly got off of him. Jamie placed a cushion on his lap hiding his manhood then turned to her.

“It’s not like I don’t want to sleep with you or anything.” He continued

Linda smiled “Jamie you don’t have to explain yourself. I understand and I’m grateful for your thoughtfulness. It shows how much you care and it’s really sweet.” She said

“Oh.” He chuckled “I was really nervous.”

Linda stood up “Should I dish for you?” she asked and Jamie nodded.

“How’s Jane’s aunt?” she asked as she walked to the kitchen.

“She’s a great guest and she knows how to take care of Rain without struggle.” He replied

He moved to the edge to see her moving around in the kitchen. “I’m glad. You should visit Jane and tell her what’s going on. She has to know that you are with another woman because I don’t want issues in the future.” Linda said

“I’ll see her next week.”

**

After Charlotte’s visit, Jane went back to the cell and spotted KG sitting at the end corner pressing on what looked like a phone. She approached her and KG put it away.

“What?” she asked

“I thought they didn’t allow phones in here.”
Jane said

“Well I’m a hustler.” She said and Jane shrugged and turned around. Her eyes met Ryan’s who was staring shamelessly.

She sighed and walked over to her. She sat beside her on the bed.

“Why did you try to kill me that night?” she asked

“What makes you think I’m the one who tried to kill you? Do I look like I want to stay here for more years?” She asked

“Then what were you saying to Mo?” She asked

“Mo is leaving this week and I was making a conversation. Why are you interrogating me?”

“Because you clearly hate my guts—”

“Get over yourself girl and open your eyes. You clearly have enemies outside and you should know that it’s easier to use just anyone in here to kill a fellow inmate.” She said

**

The next day Jamie walked in the law firm and waited in the reception. A woman who was there stood up and walked over to the reception table then said few things and left. He stood up and approached the table.

“Hello.” He greeted “I’m here to see a divorce lawyer. It’s my first time here so I don’t know where I’m going.”

“Oh that’s Mr Brown. Do you have an

appointment with Mr Brown?" She asked and Jamie shook his head.

"don't worry. Go sit there and I'll call you...your name?"

"Jamie Banda."

She nodded and Jamie moved back to the seats and sat down.

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THE PROTECTOR

#10

A MONTH LATER

Jane sat beside Ryan as they ate. Today they were dining at the dining area and it was nice to actually enjoy food without the stench of the toilet. Jane has been getting herself closer to Ryan. She felt paranoid when she was alone even though the attacks didn't go on. She couldn't let her guard down in prison...anything could happen.

Besides the paranoia, guilt was also making it difficult for her to sleep at night. Charlotte was nice to her and it made her feel horrible when

she thought about it. How many families had she destroyed in the name of hustling?

She sighed and licked the soup off her fingers. She then leaned back on the chair glancing at Ryan.

“I can’t believe this is starting to be my favorite meal.” She said

Ryan glanced at her “It’s because you have no choice. It’s not like you can request pizza.”

“I don’t know how you’re always bitter about everything.” She shook her head

“I’m not being bitter. I’m being real.” She said.

She shrugged. "Do you get visited?" She asked

Ryan shook her head and sighed "Nobody cares about me." She said

"I'm sure that's not true." Jane shook her head.
"I'm sure they are just mad for whatever you did."

"my whole community hates me Jane. I ran over a four year old and ran away." She swallowed
"My family don't want anything to do with me. Nobody even bothers to come here...when I call they quickly hang up." She said

Jane kept quiet and looked down suddenly feeling sorry for her. She glanced at her then

reached for her hand. "I don't know what to say so..." she cleared her throat.

"It was a mistake right?" she asked and Ryan nodded and removed her hands and covered her face.

"I had just found out that my ex cheated then I just drove off in pure rage. May her precious soul rest in peace." She said

"Yoh. I never expected to hear something like this. I'm sure you don't sleep at night." She said

"Yeah."

**

Char grabbed the tray and followed Tony out of the kitchen to serve her customers. She really needed to hire more stuff now that business was growing rapidly. Or she could ask Noel to help out whenever he has no classes.

“The exhaustion!” Tony exclaimed as soon after placing the food on the tables and walking back to the kitchen.

“Stop being dramatic.”

“You need to start paying me extra for being a waiter and a manager at the same time.” He said

“You are my son’s godfather...that’s more than

enough.” She said and Tony clicked his tongue

“I don’t know how Noel keeps up with your selfish ass.” He said and Char laughed.

Once in the kitchen Char leaned against the wall and sighed. The other waiter walked in and glanced at her.

“The restaurant is full and everyone is eating.”
One said

“Thank God!” Tony exclaimed earning laughs from the other staff. He walked out and Char followed him outside. They got in his car and Char sighed loudly.

“I’ve paid Jane a visit a month ago.” She said

“Jane the thief?”

“The one and only.” Char replied “Poor thing. She was all bones...you could see that she was starving.”

Tony shook his head in disbelief “I can’t get used to your big heart you know. You shouldn’t feel sorry for her at all.”

“What good will it bring me to hate her? I have a man who loves me and gave me a son. I have a huge business that brings me so much money to afford myself...hating her is honestly pointless.” She shrugged

Tony nodded still in shock. With a heart like that, he was just thankful that her best friend was no pushover.

**

Later on Jane followed the warder to the visiting area. A smile permanent on her face as she thought of seeing whoever was visiting. She felt lucky that she was at least getting visits unlike Ryan.

When they got in the visiting room Jane's heart skipped. She looked closer and her smile got wider and she rushed in anticipation. Sitting down, she stretched her arms then the warder easily cuffed her as she smiled widely at Jamie.

“Hi.” He greeted

“Hi. I can’t believe it took you a month to see your dear old wife.” She said

“Well I was busy with work and Rain.” He replied then looked around

“How are you?” she asked with a sigh

“I’m doing good Jane.”

Jane frowned. “Is everything okay?” she asked

“Yes everything is okay. What makes you think everything is not okay?”

“Your tone is what confuses me Jamie. You didn’t even care to ask about my well-being.” She said “If something is wrong just say it so we can move past it.”

“I actually bought you something. Can you move your hands a little?” he asked

“What for?”

He grabbed his bag on the floor and placed it on the table then took out an envelope. Jane watched as he opened it slowly. He pulled it out then pulled out a pen and removed the bag from the table.

“What is this?” she asked

“My lawyer drafted papers for divorce and all you have to do is sign.” He said and Jane’s heart dropped

“what?”

Jamie sighed “I want divorce. I can’t wait for you Jane and Rain needs a stable family and we can’t do this while you are in here. Please don’t cause drama. Be a bigger person and please sign...should I ask the guard to unchain you so you can sign properly?”

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#11

Jane stared at Jamie in disbelief as her heart beat faster in rage.

“You have such a nerve you know, the audacity!”
She snapped earning few glances

“I said not to cause drama.”

Her nose flared. “I shouldn’t cause drama?
You’re crazy if you think I will sign these papers.
I fed you Jamie. I clothed and sheltered you

while you lazed around not doing anything” she cocked her head at him “The house you are staying in is all me. I sacrificed my freedom, I’m stuck in this hell hole because I tried to provide for you and you have the nerve to come here talking about divorce? Wa nyela (you’re crazy).”

“So you expect me to wait for you? Yes you provided for me but I didn’t ask you to. You did it out of love and I appreciate it but you can’t expect me to stay in a marriage with someone I can’t touch or even see everyday.” He said

“Yes you are right, I did it out of love because I thought you loved me too.” She snapped

“I love you Jane but I can’t...”

“That’s just a half-assed excuse. I can’t believe you are cheating on me and blaming the fact that I’m here for it. Seven years of being together, seven years of struggling together Jamie and you want to throw it just like that?”

“Jane I’m not your prisoner. Don’t waste my time and sign the papers...I don’t have time to argue over this.”

“Jamie wee I’m not going to stay here and listen to nonsense. Warder! Please take me back to my cell.” She yelled

The warder walked closer and unchained her from the table. Jane stood up and pointed a finger at him. “You’re not getting any signature from me. I’m your wife and it’s going to be like that forever. You are taking me for a fool and

I'm not going to stand for it. Sies!"

She followed the warder to the cell swallowing multiple lumps on the way. Why was Jamie doing this to her? After everything she sacrificed?

She stood beside the warder as she unlocked the door then she stepped inside. She headed to the corner and faced the wall as tears blurred her vision. She took deep breaths trying be secretive about it.

"You okay?" KG asked

Jane wiped her tears and turned around. "my husband visited me. I'm still emotional about it...I'm fine." She sniffled

“Are you sure?” she asked

“Yes I’m sure.”

That night Jamie got out of the bathroom and sighed sitting on the bed. He removed his towel and walked to the wardrobe and took out his underwear. His phone rang and he quickly answered.

“Babe?”

“Hey. How did the meeting with Jane go?”
Linda’s voice echoed

“She’s being difficult.” He said “She caused so much drama. I can’t believe she expects me to wait for her.”

“Give her time. You didn’t plan this properly Jamie. You should’ve went there just to see her and get her comfortable not just drop divorce on the first visit.” Linda said

He sighed “You wanted me to pretend? Our marriage was over the minute I allowed her to sleep with other men. I don’t owe Jane anything and she should stop her childish games.” He said “Enough about Jane, let’s talk about us.”

“yeah?”

“I’m thinking of taking Rain to crèche. I don’t feel comfortable with Jane’s aunt in my house. I feel like she’s there to guard me.” He said

“No Jamie. Next thing they would be blaming me for breaking you and Jane apart.”

“Okay we will take this slow then.”

“Thank you. I also think we should put this on hold until you sort out your mess with Jane. I’m a God-fearing woman and I would really hate to be labeled a home wrecker.” She said and Jamie hummed.

“I understand and I promise to sort this out as soon as possible.”

The door of the bedroom opened abruptly and Jamie pulled the phone from his ear and covered his lower body with his hands.

“Auntie!”

“Oh you are not dressed? Get dressed and come to the kitchen. I want you to explain why you’re making my niece a fool.”

She walked out and left the door wide open. Jamie grabbed his pants and put them on then checked his phone seeing that Linda cut the line.

The next morning Jane stepped into the last

shower stall and closed her eyes facing the wall. She grabbed the soap washing her hidden areas. The bathroom was half empty so it was easy to shower without fighting for it or a guard rushing you, also it was safer that way. The thing with her husband was eating her alive. She knew that she got herself into prison and that he never asked her to do whatever she did but she thought they were together in that. He enjoyed luxury life without complaining.

She sighed and it was cut short as a hand blocked her mouth and a strong body pushed her forward taking a hold of her arms. More hands grabbed her head facing it up to the shower head. The person removed the hand from her mouth letting the water get in her nose and mouth. The salty water traveled deep into her nostrils drawing more coughs as she cried out for help.

She whimpered and choked as they held her in place. Fingers dug into her ribs as the water did her no justice. Coughing with burning lungs she opened her mouth and let out a muffled scream.

“Help...pff” her heart pounded and she cried out as they grabbed her head with both hands and connected it with the wall. Her ears rang as they slammed it against the wall.

“Please I didn’t do anything—” They kept repeating until she fell onto the floor beats of blood mixing with the water and moving into the pipes.

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I'm late forgive me.

LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#12

Char rolled over to the other side and checked her son in the cot. He was still asleep so she rolled to the other side and faced Noel. She inched closer and laid her head on his chest listening to his soft snores.

“Babe?” She called out softly

“mmh?” He raised his eyebrows with his eyes still closed. Char leaned down and kissed his lips

“I’m going to leave soon. Wake up and tap my ass for thirty minutes at least.” She said

He laughed softly before opening his eyes and rolling onto his side. “You always know how to make my mornings you know?”

She chuckled and leaned down pressing her lips onto his while her hand traveled south. Noel groaned softly and parted his lips letting her kiss him. Their son’s cry startled them and they pulled away staring at him. Noel got off the bed and walked over to the cot and picked him up.

He immediately kept quiet

“why are you selfish?” he asked him and Char laughed sitting up.

“I swear every time your mother and I try something you cry...don’t you want siblings?” His little nose wrinkled and Noel chuckled then kissed his little nose.

“Let’s go get fresh air alright?” he glanced at Char “I don’t have a class today, I gave nanny a day off.”

“I would stay with you both but things are hectic at the restaurant.” She sighed

“I can’t wait to finish this degree so I could come help you out while I apply for a job.” He said and leaned in kissing Savior's cheeks.

“I can manage for now. As long as it’s bringing us money.”

“But you need to find balance okay and rest Char.”

“I hear you babe.” She got off the bed and stood behind Noel leaning over his shoulder “Hey you...did you miss mommy mmh?”

“Savior looks a lot like you.” Char said

Noel glanced at her then back at their child “He

has your nose though and skin tone.” He smiled.

When Jane opened her eyes later that morning, the first thing she noticed was a tube attached to her arm. With her other hand, she reached out to her head and gently touched the bandage on her forehead.

She noticed a doctor talking to a giant man in a uniform...a male warder? She opened her mouth letting out a whimper as the beeping of the machine worsened her headache. The doctor turned and walked over to her.

“oh you are awake. Are you in pain?” she asked

“Just a little headache. Where am i?” Jane asked

“in the infirmary inside the prison building. They found you unconscious in the shower bleeding.”

“Oh.”

Her heart stuttered as she thought back to the attack. She was certain that she was going to die when her head was smashed against the walls of the shower stalls. She didn't need another problem especially with her husband demanding divorce. Who would want to kill her? She had no enemies in prison.

How was she going to sleep at night after all of that. That was more than just teasing and

bullying, it was attempted murder and there was no relaxing after that. Whoever tried that was one of her cellmates because the attacks started inside the cell. It was definitely not Mo because she couldn't jeopardize her departure so who? Who would want to kill her for the fun of it?

"Someone is trying to kill me. Please don't let me go back to that cell" She begged as she stared at the warder.

The warder crossed his arms staring back at her. He was intimidating with his built and emotionless face. Very dark in complexion with wide shoulders and muscled arms.

"This wasn't the first attack?" his rough voice asked

“No. I’m going to end up dead if i go back in there.”

“You’ve got no choice.” He said nonchalantly and Jane closed her eyes as her eyes pounded faster. The machine beeped faster and the doc touched her shoulder.

“Calm down.”

A lump blocked her throat “I almost got killed and they might succeed because nobody is a real guard in here.” She covered her face letting out a choked sob “Please don’t take me back there.”

The guard marched to the bed and hovered over

her. "Listen, this is prison and there are lot of messed up enemies in here. You are going back there and you will toughen up...I wonder what got you in here if you are such a softie. Things like these happen all the time. She can go back today mos doc?" he asked

"No tomorrow." The doctor answered

"I'll be here so calm down there."

Meanwhile Jane's aunt wiped Rain's bottom then discarded the diaper into the bin. She dressed her then walked to the basin to wash her hands. She carried Rain and headed to the kitchen where Jamie was having breakfast.

“Rago Rain (Rain’s father).” She greeted with a hard tone.

Jamie annoyed her with how she was treating her niece. She hated people who didn’t value their vows.

“Auntie I wanted to talk about something with you. Can you please sit down?” he asked

She pulled the chair back, it’s feet scratching the tiled floor then sat down. “Yes?”

“I’m really grateful that you left your family to come take care of mine. I enjoy having you here to take care of me but I think you should go home and rest. I will get a nanny who will help

out with Rain.”

“What are you trying to tell me Jamie?” she asked

“I’m saying that Rain and I will manage without you.” He said “With all due respect.”

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LIKE & COMMENT FOR MORE

THE PROTECTOR

#13

“I’m saying that Rain and I will manage without you.” He said “With all due respect.”

“I don’t know what’s going on between you and Jane and your reasons for wanting to end your marriage but don’t think I will just leave my grandchild here so you could bring whoever you want to abuse her.” She snapped “I don’t understand you these days Jamie. You are disappointing me.”

“I’m not against you seeing Rain. I just don’t want you to guard me.” He said

“Oh? I’m not going to let a total stranger watch Rain while I’m still alive.”

She stood up and walked away. Jamie face-palmed with a sigh then texted his friend.

‘Can we meet man? I have a lot going on’

He then stood up and headed to his bedroom where he grabbed his things and then headed out.

Jane’s aunt listened to the door closing and shook her head in disbelief. What a useless man...she really needed to call his family so they could discuss his behavior.

Lawrence walked into Charlotte's restaurant and a waiter spotted him and let him to the empty table. If he was being honest, he did miss Charlotte. Seeing her glowing and happy made him realize that he's lost a diamond while picking up rocks like Jane. He could see her in the kitchen laughing with her stuff. Now he knew why her business was growing...Char was a great person and a good boss. He really loved the table where he could see her clearly.

Char removed her apron and walked out of the kitchen. Lawrence averted his eyes and cleared his throat. Her perfume hit his nostrils as she stood by the table.

"Ready to order?" She asked

He shook his head "Still checking."

Char hummed and moved to another table and after taking orders she walked back to the kitchen. As he was about to relax, Noel walked in pushing their baby in a stroller. His heart fell along with his mood. He stood up and straightened his jacket ready to leave.

"Lawrence...good to see you man." Noel greeted moving to his table "Why does it look like you are leaving without eating?" He asked

Lawrence sat back down "No." He said

Noel glanced at the kitchen then smiled at Lawrence pulling a chair to sit down. He got a

lot taller and really manly with a nicely trimmed beard.

“You don’t need to rub it on my face.” He said

Noel frowned “Rub what on your face?”

“The fact that you got Charlotte and even gave her a baby. You won.”

“I wasn’t aware this was a competition man.”

“Well it hurts.” He said quietly and Noel raised his eyebrows.

He wasn’t expecting that kind of confession. Lawrence was someone he once admired

before he turned into a confidence crushing monster and hurt Char and hearing something like that from him was shocking.

“Well that’s part of life. We make mistakes and we learn lessons.” He told him

Lawrence rubbed his face and chuckled humorlessly “Sorry for being hard on you before. You already had a lot going on and I just worsened it because I undermined you. You look good by the way.”

Noel smiled “Thanks. You too...I’m glad you bounced back after the whole scam saga.”

“Me too.”

Char walked out of the kitchen holding her bag. "Hey!" She greeted in surprise and Noel turned back then stood up "You got impatient?"

"I got bored." He replied and walked around her then grabbed the stroller. "Let's go home little man...mommy is done for today."

Jane opened her eyes that evening and sighed in relief when she saw the white walls and familiar beeping of machines. She looked around and that male warder was still in the room sitting on a chair beside the door with his big arms crossed.

"I need to have my own cell please." She

begged “I will give you whatever you want.”

“Lady are you trying to bribe me?” he asked

“No but I’m begging you. I’m sure you have sisters or a woman at home. Please imagine them in my situation. Have a heart.”

He took out his phone and scrolled down completely ignoring her and Jane sat up balancing her aching head with her palm.

“Please.” She begged

The man raised his head and glared at her “I don’t own this prison so I don’t know what you expect me to do.”

“If I die you will be responsible for it.”

He scoffed “Oh really? Do you think the law favors inmates? They couldn’t care less about any of you. You must be new if you think like that. You have no idea how many women died in here and nobody did anything about it.”

Her heart pounded “And you’re fine with it?” she asked

“I’m not fine with it but what can I do? The only thing I get out of looking after notorious criminals is a paycheck.” He shrugged

“I can give you anything in exchange for protection. Someone is out to get me and is in

that cell...next time they won't leave me unconscious, they will leave me dead."

"I don't take bribes." He snapped "Didn't you hear me the first time?"

Jane swallowed a lump and sighed in defeat. What was she supposed to do? She couldn't rely on her own strength because they could just gang up on her.

She swallowed hard and with a humbled voice she said "I can give you my body if you promise to protect me in here."

He straightened his whole body staring at her in shock. She noticed his name tag

“I can give you sex if that’s going to earn me protection.” She swallowed “I wouldn’t beg if I was desperate. Please Nicolas have a heart.”

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THE PROTECTOR

#14

Nico stared at her long without blinking and when her stomach growled loudly, he looked away with a sigh. He was used to it, being offered sex on a silver platter. He knew how the inmates worked but the one he was currently

watching looked really weak.

“I don't sleep with inmates. You just have to learn to survive.” He said

Her face visibly fell and her frown deepened. Her whole head was bandaged and it was hard to imagine what she went through to lead her to unconsciousness.

“Why?” Jane asked almost loudly. His rejection mixed with hunger, anger and fear of death overwhelming her.

“Why what? I said i don't sleep with inmates. I don't want to sleep with you...you could be carrying a lot of diseases mixed with a lot of spiritual ties. I respect myself too much and you

are not my responsibility. Why am i even explaining myself to you?" He clicked his tongue

"Okay then help me escape if you don't want to offer me protection." She said

Nico rubbed his hand on his face. "This is going to be the longest night of my life." He mumbled

"I have a daughter who would suffer if i die in here. I just need to serve my time peacefully and get out of here." She said

"You didn't think this was going to happen when you committed a crime? You didn't think you were going to get caught?. Don't make my problems yours because I'm just here to guard

you. I don't have time to pity you." He said

The door opened and the doctor came in holding a plate. She handed it to her and Jane bowed her head and started eating. It felt like the last meal with how things were going. She swallowed the pap and almost wanting to face palm her embarrassment away. She wasn't used to being desperate and honestly speaking, it damaged her pride a little bit.

"Tomorrow I'm discharging you. You're fine."
The doc grabbed her bag and Jane stopped eating and furrowed her eyebrows.

"You're leaving me here?" She asked "Will another doctor come for night shift?" She asked

“There's no night shift here lala. I don't get paid for night shift.” She said “See you around Nick.”

She walked out the room and closed the door.

**

Meanwhile Ryan got on the bed after their dinner and sighed. She was getting worried about Jane. Even though she was annoying with her questions and really intrusive, she was refreshing to be around and she considered someone close to a friend. She was very positive when she first met her and that's something Ryan needed after a long time of silence.

“I heard Jane got attacked in the bathrooms.

Anyone seen her today?" She asked

"No." They replied in unison

"And she also got attacked in here...one of you must have done it, who's Jane's enemy in here?" She asked

"What would we gain from attacking her?" KG asked "Didn't she say she was a robber? Her enemies are probably sending people after her."

"What about the time she got choked in the middle of the night?" Ryan asked staring into her

"How am I supposed to know? I'm not Jane's mother. She's not a helpless child...this is prison and we are all trying to survive here. I got sexually assaulted two times in here and you got stabbed and nobody cared so why are you caring?" KG snapped at her

Ryan scoffed "And here I thought we supported each other in here. Aren't you her friend?" she asked

"I'm no one's friend Ryan."

"On a serious note guys, what if we are also in danger?" Vuyo asked

"Don't be crazy. This is Jane's problem not ours."

Ryan sighed and moved a bit on her bed. Prison was just hell.

**

Next day Jane followed Nico to her cell. With her heart on her throat, she bowed and forced her mind to focus on her beautiful daughter who looked so much like.

They stopped by the door and Nicolas turned to her “Behave and you might just survive.” He said and she nodded

He opened the door and Jane stepped in and glanced back watching as the door shut with a loud bang.

“You're back!” KG said

“You look rough.” Ryan said

She pulled a tight smile and sat down against the wall, the coldness of it seeping through her jumpsuit.

“Did you see whoever attacked you?” KG asked
“It's going to happen often you know, you have to prove that you are strong or get someone to protect you.”

“Neither of the two is possible. I'll just wait for death.”

“Maybe you should call your victims and start apologizing. People can hold grudges.” Her other cell mate she never even had a conversation advised.

She nodded and noticed that Mo was not around. “Mo already left?” She asked and Ryan nodded

“How i wish i was here.”

During shower time she stayed behind and remained in the cell alone. She thought of the people she bankrupted and most of them weren't capable of revenge especially by using someone in jail because they weren't that rich. Lawrence was the only one with money.

Her heart pounded. Lawrence wouldn't do that right? He was a good man who only flopped in the love game. She stood up and paced around the room.

She froze when she remembered the phone KG was holding. She rushed to the beds and lifted the first one. She moved to the second and lifted it. There was her newspaper and the phone was under it. She switched the screen on and pressed the buttons to unlock. Going through her messages, she sighed in disappointment then she dialed Jamie's numbers. Surely there was airtime inside

The phone rang few times

"Hello?" He answered

“Jamie it's me. Can i talk to Rain?” She asked in an audible whisper

“What for?”

“What do you mean what for? She's my child and i need to hear her voice. Can you put her through? I know you are home. I don't know aunty's number so please don't give me a hard time” she begged

“Jane stop calling me.” With that the line went dead.

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UNEDITED

LIKE& COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#15

"Jane stop calling me." With that the line went dead.

She stared at the phone in disbelief and quickly shoved it back under the mattress. A lump

formed on her throat and she choked as she tried to swallow it. Walking back to the corner, she covered her mouth letting out loud and scratchy sobs. All the things came back as she cried...the divorce, the attacks and now she was being denied her own daughter.

She sniffled staring up at the ceiling as she coughed out her cries. The first one to come back was Ryan and she didn't even care to be quiet when she heard her footsteps.

"Are you okay?" She asked

She nodded and glanced at her with tears streaming down her face. "I don't deserve pity or concern. I messed up." Her voice broke as she pulled her knees to her chest and laid her head on them.

Ryan sighed and sat down beside her. "We are in prison Jane. We are going to reach a breaking point now and then...what's wrong?"

"Everything." She gasped out in exasperation
"My marriage is falling apart and there might be a chance of losing my daughter to my so called husband. The husband i sacrificed a lot for, a husband i sacrificed my freedom is denying me my daughter and there's nothing i can do because I'm stuck in here." She wiped her tears and swallowed taking deep breaths

"Why is he doing that?" Ryan asked

Jane shrugged "Maybe he never even loved me. I should've just signed the divorce papers

without saying much. There's nothing to fight for here."

"You didn't because of your child right?. You know that if you two divorce, your husband might get full custody of your daughter because you are in here and will be out after a long time?" She asked

Jane nodded "I'm even thinking of escaping."

"Done that and i ended up in isolation for five days without eating. Don't try it." She said and stood up walking to her bed.

The others walked in chatting very loudly and Jane removed the evidence of her breakdown before walking to them and engaging in

whatever they were talking about.

During lunch Jamie sat with his friend in the small coffee shop. His friend sipped his coffee and sighed

"Sorry i couldn't see you yesterday. My wife was not fine so i had to nurse her." He said

"It's okay. I wanted to vent about Jane."

"Oh i forgot to ask about her. How is she doing? I've been to prison before and i know that it's hell in there." He said

Jamie shrugged. "I haven't seen her. We are divorcing so why bother asking."

"She's divorcing you?" His friend asked in shock

"It's the other way around actually. I tried to be patient man but—"

He interrupted "It hasn't been a year yet but you are already tired of waiting. No man you can't do that...divorcing her while she's in jail? Aren't you being a little inconsiderate?"

Jamie frowned "I didn't sent Jane to rob banks and con people. She knew what she was doing and these are the consequences."

"i won't justify Jane's actions but you were enjoying the money she got from her crimes right? You're still enjoying it. That's why most men are single, it's because of men like you...you ruin our reputation as men." He pointed a finger at him

"Calm down. Jane will be fine."

The man shook his head in disbelief "New pussy right?"

"Excuse me?"

"Yes another woman is capable of making a man spew bullshit. You're seeing someone right?" He asked

"I didn't come here so you could judge me."

"I'm not judging you man...I'm just shocked." He sighed "My cousin works as warder in women prison...i could ask him to watch over Jane. She's still the mother of your child."

"Which cousin?" He asked

"Nicholas. The one i told you was in the military."

"No man don't bother yourself with Jane. She's a grown woman. I actually don't want to talk about her right now."

His friend shook his head with a sigh "You will

tell me when you're ready right? There's more to this right?"

"There's more to nothing man. I just want peace...Linda is calm and peaceful. All Jane did in our marriage was bring me STIs."

Later that day the warder stood by the door and called out for KG. She followed her out and they headed to the visiting area where she sat down and laid her hands on the table. She got cuffed and the warder moved away.

"How are you doing?" Her visitor asked

"The phone you got me is very helpful but I'm cold in here and i also need a toothbrush." She said

"You know what our deal is. Have that little thief dead by the end of this month and I'll make sure you get your own cell; bed and good treatment from the warders." He said

"Okay."

"Good i brought you panties and pads for your periods." He said and KG glanced back at the warder then turned to him

"Won't she cause drama?" She whispered

"Don't worry about her."

"Thank you. I promise i will do whatever you want as long as you make my life comfortable in here." She said

The man stood up and smoothed down his suit then bent down placing the plastic on the table. The warder walked closer and removed the cuffs off of Jane then grabbed the plastic. She led her back to the cell and gave her the plastic with a serious face.

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LIKE&COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#16

The next day in prison, Jane grabbed on the telephone attached to the wall tightly as she dialed Jamie's numbers. Her heart beat fast as she thought of the possibility of him hanging up. How she regretted not memorizing her aunt's numbers. She was the only who cared about her. Nobody else did and Jane was determined to change her life around and stop disappointing her.

"Hello?" Jamie answered

"Hi. Can—"

He interrupted "Didn't i ask you not to keep

calling me?"

"I need to talk to aunt Sophia. Please hand her phone." She said

"You should have called her phone Jane. I'm going to be late for work."

She closed her eyes and released puff of air through her nose. "Jamie why are you so hard on me? Do i owe you something? Ke re fa mmangwane phone (i said give my aunt the phone). I don't have much time here."

The line suddenly went silent then she heard shuffling. "It's Jane" she heard Jamie say

"Jane?" She answered

"Auntie please visit me when you get time. Bring me a picture of Rain please." She begged "I also need to get—"

"Time's up!" The warder yelled.

"See you on soon. I love and appreciate you aunt Sophia."

She put the phone back and stepped out. She walked back and turned back checking if she was being followed. The paranoia was getting worse now with the evidence of being targeted. It was a matter of time until she gets brutally killed in prison and stripped away from her daughter. That would a shame to her little

girl...she was even beginning to not trust Jamie with her daughter. If he could drop divorce out of the blue, he was capable of anything.

At Nicolas, Nick got woken up by a loud knock on his door and he yawned waking. He stretched his arms then sat up and still stretched. He eventually got off the bed and headed to the kitchen. He opened and his cousin walked in.

"Oh it's you. Why do you know like the damn police?"

"Of course it's me and i knew you were sleeping. You work night shift?" He asked

Nick nodded and pushed the door watching it close slowly. "I hate night shifts man."

"Why do you torture yourself? You have money...you could quit this nonsense job and start a business." His cousin said

He shrugged "I like adventure. What are you doing here so early in the morning?"

"Can't i visit my little cousin?" They both sat down and Nick smiled at him.

"That's nice but i know you need a favor."

"Remember Jamie?"

"Your friend Jamie?" He asked and his cousin nodded

"Yeah. His wife recently got sent in jail." He explained "Now he wants to divorce her. Can you please do me a favor and watch over her. She's the mother of his child and i know how prison can get. Jamie doesn't know what he's doing and he's going to regret this."

"Why are you worried about other people's wives?" Nick asked

"Believe it or not Jane got me out of debts man...Jamie shared some money and i was actually able to save my marriage because you know how my wife is."

"I'm sorry man but i don't think i can be someone's babysitter."

"You're not going to be her babysitter. Just make sure she doesn't get raped or killed in there. Jamie is pissing me off honestly and Jane is a good woman...except for her disturbing behavior." He said. "Just ask around. Thanks man."

"I didn't say yes." He facepalmed

"You owe me."

That evening Char put sleeping Savior in the cot then climbed on the bed. She turned to her side watching as Noel typed on his laptop on the small desk in the bedroom.

"Are you done yet?" She asked

"I have to submit this before 12 and the WiFi is acting up." He replied "Done!" He sighed then closed his laptop.

He stood up and climbed on the bed and laid down comfortably. He shifted closer to Chair and laid on her chest.

"Being a little spoon as a man is suspicious." Char commented and Noel glanced at her

"Char please leave alone babe." She chuckled "i need this after dealing with the workload. I wouldn't recommend school to anyone."

"That bad?" She asked

"Yeah. The workload is what annoys me. I can't wait to graduate honestly."

"Soon babe. Soon. Anyway, what were you and Lawrence talking about?" She asked

"He was just realizing his past mistakes." He replied and raised his head and pressed his lips on her throat. "I'm glad he feels that way you know, means I'm doing a good job." He moved to the side of her neck and planted his lips there making Char close her eyes.

"Are you?" She teased

"Am i?" He hovered her with a smirked

Meanwhile Jane laid in the dark holding the thin blanket tightly. It was silent and with occasional coughs after a while. When she heard footsteps her heart beat quickly and she sat up only to hear flushing of the toilet. She sighed in relief and laid down pulling the blanket to her neck. She closed her eyes and said a silent prayer.

When the footsteps approached her she opened her mouth and screamed.

"What! What is it now?" Ryan snapped in the dark. Her voice sounded far so Jane knew it was her

"I thought the person was back." Jane replied

"You scared me so bad. We are all paranoid in here you can't just scream...Come sleep on the bed with me."

She quickly got up and moved slowly to the direction of Ryan's bed leaning KG standing alone. She internally cursed and then tiptoed to back to her bed.

"Yeah and you can't scream everytime we get up to use the toilet." She said keeping her tone

less suspicious. Vuyo who slept with her turned the other way with her eyes opened many questions filling her mind.

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See you on Monday...i badly need to rest 🤔.

Please LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#17

The next morning Jane waited in the bathrooms

leaning against Ryan. She deeply felt so appreciative of her for offering her bed. The beds were limited she knew that and they had to share but she was grateful that Ryan wasn't a bully about it. She was very confused as to why KG made up lies about her. Ryan was anything but what she had learnt.

"I'm going to go there." Ryan said and Jane nodded.

Fighting for the hot water was not her thing so she let others fight for it. Cold water was not all that bad since it wasn't yet winter. She had no problem showering late also even though it was unsafe for her.

After an hour of waiting, she let the other five women get in then she took off her jumpsuit

and stepped into the shower stall then placed it on the floor just outside. She turned away as usual but tensed when she heard footsteps approaching.

“I saw you walking out of here, what are you doing back here?” A male voice questioned “Get back to the cell inmate!”

Goodness! She finished quickly and bent down picking up the jumpsuit then put it on. The last thing she needed was to get sexually assaulted and pregnant in prison. After she was done, she stepped out and to her surprise, Nicolas was standing by the entrance.

“Are you done?” He asked

“What are you doing in the bathroom? Are you even allowed in here?” I asked looking down at myself.

“No I’m not allowed in, but someone is helpless and I have to be her personal body guard.” He rolled his eyes and Jane’s face lit up.

“By someone you mean me right?” She asked walking out and falling into steps with him.

“Thank you so much Nico. I promise I will give you good sex.”

His eyes narrowed and he sharply turned to her.

“Why are you offering your body like it’s a bubblegum?” He asked

“It has always worked for me. I grew up with

nothing and it was the only thing that brought me money.”

Wasn't she ashamed? Nick stared at her as she walked in front of him. She was beautiful and her body was nice but the fact that she went offering her body on a silver platter made her very hideous.

“You shouldn't do that you know?” He said once they almost reached the door of her cell.

“You should respect your body. Have you heard of ‘your body is a temple’?”

Jane turned to him “I'm not religious.” She snapped

“This isn’t about religion. You are beautiful for a prostitute...I’m serious. Never offer me or anyone sex in here.”

He moved closer and put his hand on the door making it open with a loud buzz. Jane walked in and didn’t even look back. No one had ever rejected her so brutally and even give her a lecture. It hurt so much and at that moment she wished to dig a hole and bury herself.

During lunch Jamie walked out of the hospital and headed to the restaurant. His job as a potter was not a hard job and the pay was decent because his daughter received grant and Jane’s robbery money was probably going to last them years if used wisely.

He got in the restaurant and spotted his friend talking to a staff member.

“Lefa!” He called out and his friend turned and smiled widely walking towards him. He stopped at his table and placed his hands on the edge leaning over it.

“Normalize not calling me like that in front of my customers.”

Jamie laughed a little. “This is a chisanyama not an Italian restaurant calm down.”

Lefa also laughed then sat down with him. “You look better than the last time I saw you.” He told him

“I’m trying to move on and making terms with it.” He replied

“Are you really going to divorce Jane? She could be out on parole I mean she didn’t kill anyone.” Lefa said

“Your problem is that you don’t want to understand me.”

“I’m just saying you are making things complicated for your daughter. Do you even love this mistress of yours?”

Jamie gritted his teeth “Her name is Linda and we are getting there.”

“I hope you know what you are doing man. It would be awful for you to have regrets when it’s too late. I’m going to order us steaks and chips. My treat.”

“Thanks.”

That evening Jane sat beside Ryan as they ate. She glanced at KG and sighed...being distant with her sucked but she suspected her of trying to kill her while she was trying to sleep the other day so she was good being away a little bit.

“Thanks for offering your bed.”

Ryan glanced at her “It’s not a big deal. I know how much it sucks being a newbie in prison.”

“At least you didn’t get bullied. I think my victims are fighting me from the inside. I’ve hurt a lot of people, manipulated their emotions then robbed them their hard earned money. I’m not surprised they are trying to kill me.”

“If only there was a way to go back in time.”
Ryan sighed

“Yeah. Your case is different though, it was an accident while I did those things deliberately.”
She said

“Make sure you survive so you can go and

apologize.”

*

The next day Jane was called for a visitor. She followed the warder to the visiting area feeling nothing but excitement. She liked being visited and she enjoyed guessing who the visitors were on her way to the visiting room. When they got there, her heart skipped. Her eyes widened as she stared at Lawrence.

She walked over to the table and took a seat letting the warder cuff her. She smiled widely at him

“It’s so good to see you.” She said

“You look like you are suffering the consequences of your actions.” He retorted

Jane smiled sadly. “I am.”

“I’m not here to chit chat. Tell that husband of yours to pay back my money, the money you both took before I sue you.”

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I'm well rested, thank you for your patience

50+ comments for next insert

THE PROTECTOR

#18

Jane's face crumbled after Lawrence closed his mouth. He was going to sue her? She didn't have anything. The money she was arrested for was for her daughter

"Lawrence..." her voice cracked.

Did she really think he was going to forgive her? It was clear that he was beyond angry.

"No no no, don't dare make that face. You lied to me Jane, made me fall in love with you then

took my passwords and pins and stole from me. The money may have been a little amount to you but I had worked for it and what did you do? Took it and enjoyed it with your husband.” He snapped

“I will work for you for free to pay it back once I’m out of here.”

“Work for me? Who said I will allow a convict work for me? I want my money Jane and I’m giving you a month to make a decision before I file for a lawsuit.” He said then stood up

“Lawrence please just don’t leave.” She protested

Lawrence smoothed down any wrinkles on his

tux then turned around walking out of the room. He was glad he felt absolutely nothing for her anymore. That would've been harder.

Jane annoyed him so much and he wasn't even that mad the stolen money. What he was mad about though was being made a fool. At least prison was dealing with her.

Linda pushed the trolley in between the isles as she talked to her friend who helped out in picking stuff.

"Are you sure you should give all your heart to Jamie?" She asked

“Friend you know I’ve had a crush on Jamie for a long time. Besides, he’s divorcing his wife for me.” Linda replied

“But you know that married men don’t really leave their wives no matter how many times they say they would. Situations like these can get really complicated, I hope you are ready for a whole lot of drama.”

Linda smiled softly “I’m not forcing Jamie to be with me, he chose to and I’ve been in love with him since forever. I prayed for a man and he came along.”

“God will never give you a married man.” Her friend retorted

“Wow I can’t believe you are judging me!” She snapped

Her friend looked around and shushed her

“Linda I’m not judging you. I’m just correcting you as a sister in Christ. This is a bad idea and you know it deep down. You should stay away until he’s done with the divorce then do things the right way.”

Linda rubbed her face frustrated “Do things the right way how when Jane is behind bars? I’m not getting any younger and I don’t have time to wait for her. God will forgive me.” She said then pushed the trolley roughly leaving her friend behind.

“Linda!”

Later that day Jamie laid on his bed waiting for the call to go through. He had received so many messages from Linda wanting to label the relationship and he was getting worried about her state of mind. Linda wasn't messy or confused. She knew exactly what she wanted which is why he was really worried.

“Hello?” She answered after a while

“Are you okay?”

“I just feel like I'm wasting my time with you

Jamie. Is this even going anywhere?"

Jamie sighed "Of course. You are not wasting your time Linda...I like you and I'm sorry that my situation with Jane is making things difficult."

"What's going to happen then?" She asked

"Jane is stubborn and I doubt she will sign the papers anytime soon. You and I have a good thing going on and I say we should just continue." He said

"Really?" Her voice coming out hopeful

"Really babe. Come see us later alright?"

“What about Jane’s aunt?”

“Don’t worry about her. I will talk to her and explain the situation. I will even call a family meeting and tell them.” He said.

“Alright.”

The same evening Jane queued for food and sighed looking around. The line was not moving at all and the hunger was getting unbearable. Dinner was no longer the same, they gave them small portions of food while knowing that they only ate once a day.

As she got closer she noticed some inmates moving aside with empty plates while others got bigger servings of food. She walked closer and leaned over some inmate's shoulder to see what was going on.

"What are you offering? You can't eat for free!" The lady holding a dishing spoon yelled at a chubby bald woman.

"What are they saying?" Jane asked

"Do I look I want to answer you!" The woman snapped in frustration.

Was that even right? Were they allowed to do that?. Jane looked around and spotted Ryan holding a plate heading back to the cell. She

rushed to her and tapped her on the shoulder

“Why are they not serving us?”

“Some days those ladies can be bunch of ass holes.” She replied “They know that they have the upper hand and can just spit in the food to spite us. Just agree to return the favor or not eat at all.”

“What did you do?” Jane asked

“I have someone looking out for me in here Jane. You and I are not the same babes. In jail you either pay some people or offer something you know they want.”

“Yoh.”

Ryan patted her shoulder then walked away. Jane looked around hopelessly as other inmates returned to their cells empty-handed. She walked to the ladies and intertwined her fingers behind her back leaning closer so they could hear her.

“I’m with Nicolas.” She said hating how her voice wavered.

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50+ comments

THE PROTECTOR

#19

WEEKS LATER

Things became so much easier for Jane outside the cells. She didn't see Nicolas anywhere but she knew deep down that he was the one looking after her. She would shower peacefully and even eat without having to explain herself. She wondered so many times what he had done or told everyone to get them to back off. Whatever it was, she was thankful for it.

As much as she was happy about other things, she was worried about her safety inside the cell now that Ryan was leaving. Apparently today was the day and she was envious as she stared at her from the floor humming softly while twisting her favorite toy with her legs crossed.

“Take care of yourself in here Jane.” She said

“You’ve been saying that since last night.” They both laughed earning few glances from the other cell mates.

“We will miss you Ryan. You were such an awful company.” Vuyo said

“You know, I aimed to please.” She smirked

It was hard to believe she was leaving. It was the fact that she had never said anything about it. It probably came as a surprise to her too. Even though they've known each other for a month and few weeks, she was beginning to become a close thing to a friend. Jane was surely going to miss her

"Do you have a plan?" She asked her

Ryan shrugged "I'm just happy that I'm finally going to feel soil, eat KFC and have sex." She replied and they all laughed.

"On a serious note though, I have no idea what I'm going to do once I'm out but I will cross the bridge when I get there." She said

The door opened and the warder looked inside.
“Ryan you’re out.” She snapped coldly.

Ryan stood up and opened her arms. Jane stood up quickly and hugged her then the others awkwardly shook her hand.

“I will visit alright?” She looked straight into Jane’s eyes.

Jane nodded “Good luck.”

“Ryan you are wasting my time!” The warder yelled making her jump. She handed Jane her Rubik’s cube and smiled walking out. Once the door closed shut, Jane laid down on the bed as feeling of loneliness overwhelmed her.

**

Later Lawrence parked the car in front of an unfamiliar gate then turned to his PA.

“Are you sure this is the place?” He asked

His PA nodded “This is the place.”

“I can’t believe all this time these people have been living this close. I hope that man is home.”

“Should I stay in the car or?” He asked

Lawrence unbuckled his seat belt then opened the door shaking his head gently “No stay here. Thank you for showing me this...I don’t want

you to get involved into my business so it will be better to stay in here. You can finish your work since you brought your laptop with you.”

He got out of the car then closed the door. Taking a deep breath, he headed to the gate and pushed it aside. He stepped into the yard and glanced around for a dog. He headed to the porch and stepped inside knocking on the hard door.

After few seconds the door opened revealing an older woman who looked so much like Jane. “Hello” she greeted with a welcoming smile.

“Good afternoon. My name is Lawrence and I’m Jane’s former employer. I’m looking for her husband.”

“Oh! He just got home, you can come in and sit down. I’ll go call him for you.” She said

He walked in and grabbed chair then sat down. The woman walked away leaving him alone in the kitchen. The house was beautiful, it was probably all his money. He couldn’t understand Jane’s husband. How could a man just sit and enjoy another man’s money without a shame.

Heavy footsteps echoed and Lawrence straightened up and waited in anticipation. He stared at him as he sat across him.

“I didn’t think I would see your face ever again.”
Jamie said

“Why?”

“No I mean you slept with my wife so many times. What are you doing in my house?” He asked

“I’m here to get my 80K. You and Jane took my hard earned money remember? You thought I would just let this slide?”

“Do you see Jane here? I don’t have your money and I never sent her to steal from you.” Jamie said then crossed his arms.

“I guess talking to any of you is pointless. I expect my money to be paid by the end of this month. I have lawyers and I don’t mind fighting you legally.” He stood up and took out a pen

and piece of paper from his pocket then jotted down his details.

“Let’s not make this harder man.”

He walked to the door and stepped out. Jamie stared at the door with his heart pounding.

**

That night Jane breathed comfortably as she turned on Ryan’s bed. The warmth of her blanket mixed with Ryan’s lulled her to sleep. She yawned and fantasized about getting out and seeing her daughter, work out the divorce with Jamie because clearly their marriage was going nowhere.

Finding new love in late thirties was probably

hard, would she succeed though? Get someone who really loves her and not her money?.

Her blood ran cold and sleep disappeared from her eyes as an arm circled around her neck tilting her head upward. She let out a startled gasp and raised her hands placing them on her attacker's head grabbing her hair in a tight grip as the arm added pressure.

"KG..." a whimper like sob forced itself out of her lips.

"I'm really sorry Jane but I'm also trying to survive. I'm sorry. I have to"

She pulled her from the bed and threw her on the floor with a choke slam. Jane screamed

loudly even though she knew that the other wouldn't do anything since KG provided pads and other things.

She felt herself getting lightheaded and with her weak hand she grabbed KG's breast and squeezed it. KG winced and pulled away. Jane got up coughing and ran to the door.

"Help! Help me please..." She cried and suddenly, her forehead collided with the door "No!...Warder! Nicolas!" She screamed weakly as KG choked her from behind. She felt her body giving up and her eyes seeing the familiar blackness.

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60+ comments for next chapter

THE PROTECTOR

#20

The first thing she noticed after waking up was the prison officer standing by the door talking on the phone. His back was facing her so she couldn't tell who it was. The brightness of the room hurt her eyes and made the headache hard to endure. Her lips trembled as her eyes burned. She slowly brought her hand to her mouth and covered it and a soft cry broke out of her lips. With her blurry vision, she saw the man approaching.

“Hey...calm down, you’re safe.” She recognized the voice as Nicolas’s and she took a deep breath then choked not getting enough air.

Her lungs closed and she reached for Nicolas’s hand in panic as she wheezed loudly.

“Calm down. Take a deep breath...” he held her hand then placed his other hand on her shoulder moving his hand in a soothing manner. “Come on do it with me.”

Jane closed her mouth and drew air in with her nose while staring at him following his moves.

“Now release.” He blew air out and Jane followed then they repeated few times before calming down.

“Are you feeling better?” he asked

Jane nodded. Nicolas sighed and let go of her hand then rubbed his face in frustration. “What happened? They said you tried to commit suicide.”

“My cellmate attacked me.” Her voice came out scratchy “Is it the next day?” she asked and he nodded.

“KG is going to kill me if i go back to that cell. Please help me.” She begged.

He stared at her then grunted in frustration. This was the last thing he wanted, getting involved with another woman after his wife’s

death. He knew that his sudden feelings of pity would lead to getting emotionally invested.

“I know you don’t want to sleep with me because I’m a convict and you might lose your job but I don’t have money to pay you and I need to survive so that I can be in my daughter’s life.” She said

“I’m just an officer in here, I go home after the end of my shift.”

“Get me a single cell.”

“Cells are limited in here. This prison is crowded that’s why you have to share with so many people and there no enough beds.” He sighed
“You see the consequences of breaking the

law?"

"Yeah." She replied softly

"Does it hurt a lot?" he pointed at her head

"It hurts. Where's the doctor?"

"Out. Nobody cares that you were attacked you know that right? You have to learn to be stronger than you are now."

"I'm tired of being strong." She whispered then turned his side.

Meanwhile KG dialed the numbers on her phone and sat in the middle of the bed. Her cells

mates were out to showers at least she would get a little bit of privacy. It rang unanswered and she typed a message.

“This is getting risky and I don’t want to get stuck here forever.”

Jamie sat on the edge of the bed holding Jane’s phone. He blew air out then grabbed the paper Lawrence had left then closed his eyes. Eighty thousand wasn’t a lot...he would be left with 40K which would do a lot of things. He didn’t want to get sued extra for wasting Lawrence’s time.

He made a beneficiary and said a little prayer

before transferring the money. A notification came through and he read it through with a heavy heart. 40k was still a lot...he could start a business and benefit from it.

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After few minutes of sitting in silence Jane sat up and balanced her heavy head with her arm.

“Can I ask for a favor?” she asked

“I’m doing you a lot of favors already.” He retorted

“Can I use your phone and call my husband?”
She asked

Nico took out his phone and unlocked it then stared at her. "I could get into a lot of trouble you know?" he asked

"I know. Thank you so much." She said and grabbed it then quickly dialed Jamie's numbers then handed it back to him. Nico called him then put the call on speaker.

"Hello?" Jamie answered

Jane moved closer and Nico handed her the phone but stood beside her. "Jamie I got attacked in here. I think someone is trying to kill me."

"What do you want me to do Jane? I'm not in

prison in case you've forgotten." He snapped.

Jane swallowed "I thought you would be concerned—"

He interrupted "You're stressing me. I had to pay Lawrence because he was threatening to sue me."

Jane's eyebrows shot up "What? You did what? How can you use my money without talking to me Jamie?"

"How was I supposed to call and —"

"You were supposed to come see me you bastard!" she screamed "I can't believe you are

doing as you please with MY money. You have a nerve after dropping divorce bomb on me. Do I not mean anything to you anymore?”

“So you wanted Lawrence to sue me? This is your mess Jane and I’m cleaning it up for you. Why are you making yourself a victim?”

“Did you forget that I was doing it for the both of us? I fed you—”

“That song is getting a little repetitive don’t you think?.”

She furiously pressed the ending button and covered her face with both hands. Nico grabbed the phone then blocked the numbers.

**

Later on KG was escorted to the visiting room and she smiled at her visitor then sat down.

“Are you eating well?” She asked

KG nodded. “Same food everyday but at least I don’t starve.”

“Neo visited right?” she asked

“Yes. He brought me so many things.” KG replied

“I came here because of your message. Why are you backing out now? You will be out soon

and I promised you a job and a house. Come on Kagiso.”

“What if I get caught?”

“They won’t care. Jane’s not important.” She said then smiled “Listen, I’m getting there. Her being gone will not only give me the man I’ve always wanted but it will give me a daughter. You know I can’t conceive, God is answering my prayers.”

“Linda this won’t end well.”

“It will be fine I promise.”

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60+ comments

THE PROTECTOR

#21

The next day Jamie opened the door for Linda then they headed to the living room where aunt Sophia was with Rain watching cartoons.

“Dumelang.” She greeted

Sophia turned to her and smiled “Hello...”

“I’m Linda. I used to babysit this one for Jamie.”
She introduced herself

Sophia glanced at Rain and chuckled “I can see by her wide eyes that she recognizes you. Have a sit and relax...or are you in a rush?” She said

“No ma. Saturdays are my day offs.” She sat down and Sophia placed Rain on her lap then sat up.

“I better go get breakfast ready. Jamie would you mind getting my doek in the room.”

Jamie nodded and left. Sophia turned to Linda
“What do you do?”

“Oh I’m a dentist.” She replied

“You are the woman Jamie is seeing right?” she asked and Linda’s heart skipped.

“He’s a very good friend of mine. He’s married and I respect people’s marriages.”

Sophia narrowed her eyes “No need to be sweet here Linda. I know you two are in a relationship. I don’t understand women who willingly get themselves involved with married men you know? Why would someone opt to be a mistress?. You have a good career and you are beautiful, why don’t you find a man who’s actually on your level? Jamie is married and I’m not going to smile and reveal my gums to you while you are sleeping with my niece’s husband.” She said

Linda brushed Rain's soft hair and cleared her throat. "Jamie told me that he and Jane are divorcing and it's a mutual agreement. I know that it's a bad way to start a relationship but it's his choice. Why should it be only a woman to be blamed when the man was the one doing the pursuing?"

"Jamie is wrong too but right now I'm talking to you." Sophia said

"Yes Jamie and I are seeing each other but we are taking things slow until he sorts out things with Jane. I don't mind polygamy if Jane doesn't. I just love him and Rain."

Aunt Sophia clapped once "Yoh youth of today! I

hope you are not planning to sleep over because I won't let that happen. Today better be the last time I see you here."

Jamie walked in the kitchen and handed Sophia her doek. "You pack your things nicely auntie." He complimented

Nicolas sat on the floor with his back against the wall and his leg stretched while the other one bent with his knee closer to his chest. It was quiet in the room, Jane was probably embarrassed by the events of the previous day.

"I'm sorry I wasted your time by calling my husband." She said

“You don’t need to apologize. You had no idea he was going to turn into a jerk.”

Marriages were hard, he and his late wife had ups and downs and sometimes he felt like giving up on her. That’s probably how Jamie was feeling. It was none of his business though

“Aren’t you going home?” she asked “It’s Saturday.”

“I’m waiting for doc to come back. I don’t want to leave you in here alone.” He said

“Why are you so nice?” Jane asked “You look so intimidating with muscles all over but you are so nice.”

Nico chuckled "it won't hurt anyone to be nice. Plus I know that things are difficult in here." He said

"Things are really difficult. It's crowded, bullying, no privacy and the food is horrible." She sighed

"Of course, it's prison."

"I know but there are nice ones out there. The ones presidents or people with class go to. I bet they eat full English breakfast." She said

"You know there's no such." He chuckled "Tired of soup already? You're going to eat it until you get out of here."

“The same thing everyday is tiring. Is there a way to get a job in here?”

“You want to work?” he asked

“I want something that will keep me busy and out of the cell.”

“I’ll organize something for you. Most work in the laundry room. You could do the dishes for sanitary pads and other things as your pay.”

“Thank you. Can I give you a hug?” she asked

“That’s not a good idea Jane.”

Her face fell and Nico sighed. He stood up, walked to her then leaned down and wrapped his arms around her waist. Jane circled hers around his neck and laid on his shoulder. She sat up still in his arms and sighed against his neck. When was the last time she had a hug? He smelt so good and his body was big covering her tiny frame.

The hug felt so good, probably to him too because his arms remained on her hips rubbing circles with his thumb as he sat on the bed pulling Jane with him. He abruptly pulled away then cleared his throat standing up.

“I’ll see you on Monday.” He said fixing up his uniform. What the hell was he thinking?

“Okay. Thank you again for all of this...and for

the hug, I needed it.”

He nodded then walked out of the ward.

Later on Linda parked her car in her yard then glanced at Jamie who sat on the passenger seat.

“You should’ve heard how that aunt talked to me.” She said

“It’s because you are young.” Jamie replied lamely

“This has got nothing to do with age. It’s about

your wife and she's trying to make her seem like a good person. She even called me loose indirectly and banned me from coming to your house. How am I supposed to see my baby now?" She asked

"I will talk to her."

"Talking to her won't do anything. She's being like this because you gave her too much freedom." She snapped

"Listen babe, I'm sorry she offended you. You have to understand that Jane is her niece and seeing you around made her feel disrespected on her niece's behalf."

Linda sighed and then gave him a fake smile.

“It’s fine. I didn’t think of it that way.”

She switched the power off then took out her house keys and handed them to Jamie.

“I’ll get Rain off the child seat. You can go ahead.”

He walked out and Linda also got out then opened the door of the back. She gently unbuckled Rain and kissed her cheeks.

“I’m going to be a good mom to you I promise. You deserve so much love. Forgive me Lord but I’m desperate and I’m tired of praying for a miracle.”

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60+ comments

THE PROTECTOR

#22

That evening Linda dropped Jamie and Rain at his house then waved at them with a smile. She drove off and after few minutes she got to the house. She noticed her friend sitting on the stoop and she hooted at her. The friend stood up and walked over to the gate then opened. Linda then drove the car inside and parked it in front of the garage.

The friend closed the gate and followed her to the house. They sat down in the kitchen and Linda sighed with a smile.

“You look so happy.” Her friend pointed out

“I am. I spent a day with my man and Rain.” She replied

“I saw your status on WhatsApp. Linda I hope you are not planning to play mother with Jane’s daughter. Don’t get emotionally attached because Rain has a mother.” She said

Linda frowned “Where is the so called mother? Rain doesn’t deserve motherly love?” she asked

“That’s not what I’m saying. I’m saying you shouldn’t forget that you are her temporary mother. Jane will be back and take over her family.”

“Jane is not coming back.” Linda said then stood up walking to the sink. “Kagiso is taking her out.”

“Linda!” she snapped

“I’m desperate and—”

“Desperation shouldn’t lead you to that path. You don’t have to go through so much to get a husband and a child. Let Jamie love you on his own and marry you then you can have Rain as

your stepdaughter. The doctors didn't say you can't completely conceive." She said

Linda walked back to the table and sat down rubbing her face. "You don't understand because you are not the one whose life is on hold."

"I understand very well. You are being stupid Linda. What's going to happen if Jamie decides that you are not the kind of woman he wants? All the work you put would be in vain." She said "You are also being so selfish by using our friend to commit more crimes. Kagiso also deserves a chance to be free."

She reached for her hands and sighed "You could do IVF. Don't lose hope and turn into someone you aren't."

Linda swallowed a lump “Jamie might even dump me after finding out about all of this. What the hell was I thinking?” She rubbed her face

“Call KG and cancel whatever agreement you had. Why did she agree to such nonsense?”

“What if IVF doesn’t even work?” She asked “I have to have a back up plan.”

“Backup plan is adoption, you have money. Use your brain well and stop being a slave to the devil.” She said “Hell is knocking on your door girl...wages of sin is death, never forget that.”

The next morning Jane followed the warder to her cell. She blew air into her hands and stopped by the door. The warder turned to her

“Next time we won’t let you out of here until you are a corpse. It was nice when you were breaking the law right? Reap the benefits.” She said then opened the door.

Jane walked in and jumped a little when the doors closed. She headed to her bed avoiding everyone’s eyes then laid down.

“I’m glad you are fine.” Vuyo said.

Jane glanced at her “No need to pretend. I’m not here to make friends. Do what you must to

survive.” She said then her eyes moved to KG
“Next time don’t hesitate, finish me off so you
could get life supply of pads from whoever sent
you because you won’t get out of here.”

Lefa handed Nico a bottle of beer then sat
down on the couch across him. Nico opened
the cap with his teeth then downed it.

“I’m glad you came to see me. I get paranoid
when I don’t see you.” He said

Nico licked his lips “I’m not a trouble maker. I’ve
just been working a lot these past weeks.”

“Oh. How’s Jane?” he asked wiggling his eyebrows “She’s hot, I’m sure you already tapped it.”

Nico chuckled “I should’ve known you were playing matchmaker. She’s hot but not my type. I like innocent and quiet women...Jane is wild and doesn’t respect herself.”

“Mosadi wa mo traina mon (A woman can be trained)” Lefa said shaking his head “Jane needs good discipline, Jamie can’t handle her that’s why their marriage is not working.”

“Nah man.”

Lefa shrugged “Well don’t let her get killed. I can’t wait for her to get out so she could leave

Jamie. He's irritating me these days."

"He's your friend. Why can't you talk to him?" he asked

"He won't listen to me."

"Enough about that. How is sister in law and the kids?"

"They are good. We are planning to go on a vacation as a family. We are just waiting for schools to close."

Nico smiled at him and listened as he talked about his family. How he wished to have that

Later that morning Jamie walked outside the hospital and leaned against the huge flower pot dialing his uncle.

“Hello?”

“Yes uncle. How are you?” he asked

“I’m good nephew and yourself?”

“We are getting there uncle. I called to inform you about my situation with Jane. I didn’t want you to hear it from other people.” He said

“Yes?”

“I don’t want her anymore. We are not good for each other—”

His uncle interrupted “That’s not your real reason. You are seeing someone right? Jane’s aunt called and told us that you brought someone over. We don’t do that in this family and you are not a child. Why are you behaving like a teenager?”

“Oh you already heard?”

“Jamie, Sophia sounded so furious. You are embarrassing us...why can’t you just wait for Jane?” he asked

“I don’t want her anymore uncle. Do you want

me to be miserable? I'm almost fifty. I want happiness before God decides to remember me."

"Then take the new woman as your second wife because divorce is not allowed in this family. Take her as your second wife or stop this madness." He said

"Okay. I'll take her as my second wife...please call a family meeting on my behalf so we can talk about this properly." He smiled widely.

THREE YEARS LATER...

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60+ comments

THE PROTECTOR

#23

THREE YEARS LATER

Jane remained silent as the car drove away from the correctional facility. She swallowed a lump as the building disappeared from her vision, she couldn't believe her luck... after all the years of torture and depression she was finally going back home. she was finally out of the hell hole and was going to be on her best behavior on her parole. She glanced back and watched as the car of her parole officer

followed then glanced to the front. Lefa drove while her aunt kept left.

“So Jamie couldn’t even come to fetch me...is he busy with his mistress?” She asked

The fury she felt at her husband for taking a second wife. They were going to know her well. She had received a visit by her aunt a while ago and came to know that her husband was marrying another woman, traditionally meaning his family was okay with what he was doing.

“He said he had to take care of business.” Lefa replied

“Just focus on correcting your mistakes my baby and forget about your husband’s

shenanigans.” Sophia advised “God had mercy on you Jane, were you going to survive eight years in prison? Focus on what’s important.”

She sighed “I miss Rain. I can’t wait to see her.” She smiled “I’m sure she’s a big girl now.”

“She’s loud and chatty.” They all laughed

“I can’t wait to give her a big hug. Talking about hugs, I didn’t get to give Nico the biggest hug for being my protector, emotional support and just someone I relied on in jail.” She said

“I’ll give you his numbers.” Lefa smirked and Jane thankfully hummed and leaned on the seat with a smile.

Minutes later they parked at the gate and walked into the yard. The yard was clean and there were flowers planted beside the fence and they looked well taken care of. The Linda woman was surely having time of her life in her house huh?

Her aunt walked ahead of them and unlocked the door. Lefa turned to Jane before she could step inside

“I have to go back to work. Good luck on Freedom.” He said with a smile

“Thank you for coming to fetch me.” She said softly

Lefa took out a pen and a piece of paper then

jotted down Nicolas's numbers then handed it to him. He stared at Jane suggestively as she put the paper away. "Bye."

He walked away and Jane walked into the house. It looked like it had gone into an intense renovation. Her parole officer walked in after then the door was shut. After sitting down they heard footsteps coming from the bedrooms. Linda walked in dragging her feet. Jane glanced at her stomach and noticed a small bump

"Dumelang." Linda greeted before taking a seat
"Sorry I locked the door. There are thieves around here." She glanced at Jane.

"Okay you have shelter." The parole officer said then made a tick "Permanent right?"

“Yes it’s my house.” Jane agreed unnecessarily loud

“All you have to do is find a job that will keep you from committing more crimes. I advise you to volunteer at the local school or hospital because it’s required for you to have a job.” She said “I’ll come check on you randomly so be on your best behavior.”

“Okay” Jane asked

“You don’t go anywhere out of this town without informing me. I’ll be watching you Jane.” She warned sternly

She then reached in her bag and handed Linda a

card. "Contact me if she does something unusual." She turned to Jane "Any violation to parole conditions will result in immediate return to prison. Understood?"

Jane nodded solemnly then the officer bid everyone goodbye then walked out. Jane then turned to Linda.

"Who are you and what are you doing in my house?" she asked

"I know you know who I am Jane. I'm actually offended that you are trying to pretend like you don't know that you and I share the same penis." Linda said

Aunt Sophia shook her head "We don't talk like

that my girl...Jane is your sister wife not your friend. Your in laws are coming later and we will talk about this further.”

“Where’s my daughter?” she asked

“out with Jamie.” Linda replied

Jane shook her head then clicked her tongue walking out of the room.

Lefa parked the car at the taxi rank and greeted the other taxi drivers.

“Where’s Banda?” he asked the guys

“He was here few minutes ago—”

His voice interrupted “Came to check on me buddy?” Lefa turned around and walked over to him. They fist-pumped and bumped shoulders then he leaned down and brushed Rain’s hair.

“I just dropped your wife number one home.”
Lefa said shoving his hands in his pocket

“Do I need to go put out the fire?” he asked and
Lefa chuckled

“I don’t think Jane would violate her parole
conditions.”

“Well I’m leaving now. I just wanted to check how things are going and give Ross the taxi. I didn’t want Jane to see it before explaining things.” He said “Mind giving me a lift?”

“Let’s go.”

Later that day Jane finally walked out of the guestroom. What was supposed to be a great day for her turned to be a horrible day. Not only did he cheat, he also made a baby while at it.

When she got to the living room her eyes widened. Her in-laws were in the living room and a man and a woman who she didn’t recognize, probably Linda’s people. Her aunt

and her so called sister wife was there along with her husband, Rain was sleeping on the single couch and she yearned to cuddle her.

“Good afternoon.” She greeted

“Good see you out Jane.” Jamie’s uncle replied after everyone returned her greetings “Have a seat.”

She sat beside her aunt then her mother in law opened her mouth “I’m sure you already know what’s going on here.”

“I know that Jamie married another woman.”
She said

“Yes that’s right and we couldn’t inform you well about this because you were in jail. We agreed because we had no idea when you were going to be out. As a pedi woman you know that a man can take another wife as long as he’s not satisfied in his marriage.” Her mother in law said

“I hear you but what is Linda doing in my house? You all are disrespecting me by allowing another woman in my house.” She said

“This is also her house.” The woman she didn’t recognize said

“Her house how? I don’t remember her helping with funds to build.” She said

“But she’s married to your husband and did a great job at raising your daughter.” The woman said “Please don’t abuse my daughter because I know how ex convicts can be.”

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60+ COMMENTS

THE PROTECTOR

#24

But she's married to your husband and did a great job at raising your daughter." The woman said "Please don't abuse my daughter because I know how ex convicts can be."

"Please don't insult my niece. Linda has a house and her stay here is temporary because she's pregnant. This is not her house and please watch your mouth because this daughter of yours is the one who went ahead and slept with a married man." Sophia said

"At least my daughter is not a danger to the community. She's also educated and independent—"

"No we are not going to do this. This meeting was called to discuss the marriage between three of these people. Let's respect each other

and let's never forget that we are not children. We should be setting an example to these adults." Jamie's uncle said firmly then focused on Jane "Jane, Linda is pregnant and she needs to be nursed and attended by her husband so asking her to leave is unfair."

"They should go nurse each other at her house. Why do you want me to tolerate disrespect that badly?" Jane asked

"I was never disrespectful to you Jane. You just came here with an attitude." Linda defended

Jane took a deep breath "I don't want to go back to jail so please don't force me to agree with whatever you are saying. I didn't agree with this so I don't have to accept this."

“I support my niece in this. Linda being here will complicate things and I don’t want her to go back to jail because of what anger might lead her to do.” Sophia said

“How are we going to solve this then?” Jamie’s uncle asked

“The only solution to this is that, Linda has to go back to her house. Jamie will sleep over at hers when he wants to see her. We can’t have two bulls in one kraal.” Jamie’s mother said

“What do you say Jamie?”

“I agree.” He said

The uncle smiled “Looks like we are done here. I have to get home quickly so I can’t wait for dinner.” He said

Linda’s parents also stood up and the mom stared at Jane bitterly. “Are you leaving today Linda?” she asked

“I need to pack up my stuff. I’ll leave tomorrow.”

Jane glanced at her aunt as the other chatted loudly then pulled her into a hug. “Thank you for always being on my side.” She said

“You are my niece, you are a daughter to me Jane. Who’s going to stick with you if not me?” she smiled at her.

Jane stood up and picked up a sleeping Rain on the couch then headed to the guestroom. She got in, closed the door with her foot then laid her daughter on the bed. Rain opened her eyes slowly.

“It’s okay. Go to sleep, mommy is back and I promise to be on my best behavior.” She said

“Where’s mommy?” Rain asked

“I’m mommy.” She said tearfully then swallowed a big lump. She leaned down kissing her forehead then her tear fell on Rain’s nose as she sniffled “I’m sorry okay?”

Nicolas got to his house that evening and changed out of his clothes, put his phone on charger then quickly ordered some meal. The phone rang and he unplugged it then went to his bedroom.

“Hello?” he answered

“Hey.”

“Jane?” he sat on the bed not believing his ears

“You’re already home?” he asked

“Yeah. I got your numbers from Lefa.” She said

He furrowed his eyebrows “Why do you sound

down? Shouldn't you be excited for finally being free?" he asked

"I am but things aren't the same anymore. My daughter thinks my husband's side piece is her mother and the side piece is now Jamie's wife and is pregnant. I don't know what to do Nico and I feel like these people were just sent by the devil to make me go back to jail." She vented

"Do you still love Jamie?" he asked

"I sacrificed a lot for this man and—"

He interrupted "That's not what I asked Jane."

"I think so. It hurts seeing another woman here

but I'm no longer in love with him. Do you have an advice?" she asked

Nico closed his eyes and sighed "Divorce him. He doesn't respect you and has clearly moved on."

"I would've divorced him a long time ago if it wasn't for my daughter. I'm on parole and i don't think I will be able to handle another stress of fighting for my daughter in court while dealing with divorce." She said

"Good point. What's the plan then?" he asked

"I don't know Nico. I just need to think about this clearly." She said "I also need to find a job and make sure that I mend my relationship with

my daughter.”

“Am I allowed to see you?” He asked

“Yes. That would make me feel so much better...I’ll sent you my location or you could just ask your cousin.” She said

“Okay. We’ll talk about this properly tomorrow...I’m tired and I need to rest.” He said
“Good night.”

“Good night.”

The next morning Jane woke up really early and

sat on the bed. She grabbed her phone and logged into Facebook. She searched Ryan and went through all sorts of profiles until she across one with her picture. The picture was of her younger self but it was worth a shot. She sent a friend request then typed a request message.

‘Hey its Jane...your former cell mate. I got out on parole yesterday. I haven’t seen you since you got out and I’m wondering how you’re doing. We should catch up.’

She then logged into her banking app and checked her balance. Her heart skipped at the balance, R270 was what was left. She stood up with her heart on her throat and walked out of the room barefooted. She marched to the main bedroom and knocked furiously on the door.

“I’m gonna come...” she heard Linda moaning as the bed squeaked. She balled her hand into a fist and pounded on the door.

“Jamie open this door!” she screamed.

Seconds later the door opened and Jamie stood in front of her with sweat tickling his bare chest. “Yes?”

“Where’s my money?” she demanded

Jamie’s smug face fell and he cleared his throat. “About that...I bought a quantum for school transport. I planned to tell you yesterday but things were tense.”

“What?”

THE PROTECTOR

#25

“What?”

“I bought a quantum and—”

Jane snapped “I heard you the first time Jamie. Why would you use my money like it’s yours?”

“Listen I make a lot with this thing and I already have 2K...I can give it to you and pay you

another 2K next month.” He said

“You are prospering in business with my money...I want my eighty thousand. The one you gave to Lawrence without saying anything to me. What’s wrong with you Jamie? When did you turn into such a selfish prick. When are you going to find a job and be responsible without leeching off of me?” She asked

“Don’t talk to me like that, I said I’ll pay you Jane.” He snapped

“I have eighty thousand in my account. I’ll ask Jamie your bank details so I could transfer it.” Linda loudly intervened “Babe come back to bed.”

A lump choked Jane and she turned away and went back to the guestroom. Rain was up when she got in there...she sat on the bed and faced her.

"What's your mommy's name?" she asked

Rain shrugged "I don't know."

"Your mommy's name is Jane Roxanne Banda."
She said

"Okay."

"I am Jane Roxanne Banda." She said softly and
Rain shook her head

“You’re not my mommy. My mommy is with my daddy.” She said and Jane swallowed and tried to smile.

“But I am and you are hurting me when you deny that Rain.” She said and tears gathered in her eyes. “I know I was gone and I wasn’t here when you were a baby but I’m back.” She said

Her phone rang on the dresser. She rubbed her eyes as she stood up and walked over to it. She picked up her phone

“Hello?” she answered

“Jane...how are you today?” Her aunt asked

She sighed "Aunty everything is just falling apart. Jamie used my money to do whatever he wanted with it and even lied to my child about her mother. Rain thinks Linda is her mother. The so called Linda is so disrespectful and I wish to just grab a knife and stab her with her stupid husband."

"Calm down. Rain is just a child Jane, she doesn't know anything. Play with her and make up for the lost time...don't overwhelm her. Don't mind Jamie and Linda, she's leaving today anyway. Make sure you don't let anger control you because I don't want you to go back to jail." She said

"I hear you aunty but it's hard. I'm trying to be strong and pretend like none of this is affecting me but I'm failing. When I got out of that prison

yesterday, I was so happy because I had fantasized about reuniting with my daughter and maybe fixing things with my husband because I thought me being in prison was the cause of our problems but now I see that he loves that woman. They are having sex as we speak...I was hoping to get some love because it's been three years and months without being touched. Why are men so heartless?" Her voice cracked

"There are some good men out there ngwanaka, Jamie has always been useless and you excused his behavior because of your love for him. I will be praying for you to get strength so you can leave him." She said

"I can't deal with divorce right now." She said "I can't lose Rain."

“You can just separate.” She said

“Okay aunty. Thanks for the call...I have to get ready for the day.”

“Okay bye.”

After hanging up, she logged into Facebook and checked her messages. She sighed in frustration when she found no message from Ryan.

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Meanwhile Linda rolled onto her stomach breathing heavily as Jamie grabbed her hips

and lifting them up in the air. He thrust in grunting loudly and leaned down kissing her neck.

“Oh my gosh Jamie...” Linda mewled loudly turning her head to the side as he slapped her ass cheeks repeatedly.

“Such a good girl.” He complimented and Linda fisted the sheets screaming loudly as she reached her high. Jamie groaned loudly then emptied inside her

He pulled out and moved away then grabbed the towel nearby and gently wiped her clean. He wiped himself with it then threw it on the floor. Linda laid on her back eyes closed with a little smile.

“Tired babe?” He asked

“mm. You wore me out” She said and Jamie climbed onto the bed.

“I love you.” Jamie said then leaned down kissing her lips.

“I love you too. I feel so lucky to be your wife you know, even though I have to share you.” She said

“Jane and I are done. It’s just going to be a little harder to file for divorce when she’s on parole. I don’t love her anymore but it would be cruel to do this now.”

“Yeah. So you are leaving with me right?” she asked

“Of course.”

“Give me her banking details so i can transfer the money. I want her off our backs.”

“I promise I will pay it back after two months. I swear making that quantum a school transport was the best decision of my life.”

He reached for Linda’s phone and typed Jane’s details on her notebook app then put it away. He cuddled her and kissed her cheek.

Later on Jane walked out of the room talking to Nico on the phone.

“I can’t get through Lefa. Text me the address.”

“Okay. Bring some snack and wine if you have it...I have too much stress and I want to drink a little.” She said

“Anything else?” He asked

“Bring a pack of condoms.” She said

“I’m going to pretend I didn’t hear that. I’ll see you later.”

The call cut off as she made her way to the kitchen and she quickly texted him the address. She opened the freezer and took out a packet of boerwors then closed it taking it to the sink. Cooking always made her relax, maybe she needed to cook.

Wheels rolling against the tile startled her and she quickly turned around. Linda pulled her suitcase to the kitchen and then Jamie walked in with his.

“We are taking Rain with us.” Jamie said

“Excuse me? Don’t you think I deserve to spend time with my child after being away from her for some many years?” She asked

“Jane, Rain doesn’t know you. Please don’t be selfish.” Linda said and Jane closed her eyes gritting her teeth as her hands balled into fists.

“Don’t try me Linda!”

She walked past them and grabbed Rain’s hand. Jamie bent down and kissed Rain on the forehead

“We will come get you soon okay?” he said

Rain frowned then started crying “I want to go with you!” she bawled. Jane picked her up and walked away as Rain kicked her legs screaming

“They will be back baby please stop crying.”

Rain kept kicking and roughly grabbing her hair as she cried. Jamie followed after them and stood with his arms crossed.

“She doesn’t know you. Don’t force the child to stay here...Linda is the only mother she knows.”

“Daddy!” Rain reached for him and Jane gently put her down then rushed to the bedroom where she slammed the door then slid down against it.

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LIKE&COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#26

Minutes later Jane got up from the floor and went to the bathroom to freshen up. She had to get herself together because this seemed like it was just the beginning of her problems. She couldn't understand why Jamie was treating her like that. She would understand if it was all the people she had wronged, even if it was them...she paid for her sins. She went to jail and suffered for years. How long was she going to keep suffering? Why wasn't the people giving her a chance to be a better version of herself?

A while later, she grabbed a towel and wrapped it on her body then walked out of the bathroom. She went to the room and put on her dress and simple sandals before checking her phone. There was a message from Nico.

‘I’m outside.’

She grabbed a hair bonnet and put it on then texted back inviting him in. She went to the kitchen and took a seat on the high chair. A knock sounded on the door.

“Come in!”

The door opened and Nico stepped in. Jane’s eyes widened and she stood up then checked him out. He really looked good in casual. The

turtleneck hugged his body nicely and goodness, he smelt so good.

“Hey. No hug for your dear old Nico?” he asked teasingly

Jane smiled a little and walked closer. She stood on her tiptoes and wrapped her arms around his neck. Nico’s arm held her waist while the other one remained on his side holding a plastic bag.

“Thanks for coming. I’m not having a great day”

“I can tell.”

He put the bag on the table then Jane led him to

the living room where they sat on the couch.

“My child doesn’t know me and I feel like I’m losing her.” She said then sighed “They took her with them to the second wife’s house. I don’t know why Jamie is doing this. He should’ve brought her to visit me while I was in jail to avoid all of this.”

“She’s your child at the end of the day. I’m sure they are trying to make you suffer. Just don’t give them the satisfaction of seeing you furious...they will eventually get tired of their games.” He said

“You don’t get it Nicolas, I’m not a robot—”

“I know you aren’t and you are allowed to be

furiously but what's going to happen when you end up doing something stupid and your probation officer finding out?" he asked

She sighed "Okay I get your point."

Jamie's phone rang and he stood up from the couch then went outside.

"Hey man" He greeted

"Hey. My wife went home to see her parents and she took the kids with her. I'm bored...come watch a match with me, I have drinks ready."

Lefa said

“Sorry man but I have to pass today. I just moved in with Linda and Rain and I have to help her adjust.”

“You moved in with Linda?”

“Yes. It was getting suffocating in that house and we just thought we should leave Jane alone. I don’t love her like that anymore so there’s no use staying together.” He replied

“Okay so you took Rain with you?” he asked

“Yes I did.”

“Was Jane okay with it?” Lefa asked

“She was not okay with it but Rain wanted to leave with us. I mean she doesn’t know Jane and leaving her with her is like leaving my child with a stranger.”

“But that’s not fair. How is Rain supposed to get familiar with Jane if she’s not around her?”

“She will visit.”

“Man I know that you love Linda and all that but is this cruel treatment towards Jane necessary? I thought you were hard on her because she was in jail but now I see that it’s deeper than that. What’s going on my man?”

“Cruel treatment? Lefa I moved out of that

house to give her space. I'm not divorcing her because she still has stress...I'm actually being an angel to Jane right now."

"Listen, I don't think I want to continue with this friendship anymore. You are getting on my nerves every single day Jamie and I wonder what that girl is feeding you because you've turned into a fool. Really man? Yes Jane did a lot of shit to people but do you really have to help out making her life more miserable, you know that she's on parole but you keep provoking her like you badly want her to go back inside."

Jamie released a sigh of annoyance "If you want her just take her as your second wife and stop lecturing me."

“You think I’m stupid like you? Don’t ever talk to me again man.”

The call cut off and Jamie rubbed his face then clicked his tongue.

Later on Jane poured her third glass of wine and smiled taking a long loud sip as she sat comfortably with her legs crossed on the couch.

“That’s your last glass. Women shouldn’t drink like this.”

“I’m not like other women. That’s why I’m not your type right Nico?” She asked and moved

closer to his face “Tell me why I’m not your type.”

“I like women who submit and you are anything but that. You are wild and—”

“So you want a woman who you can control?” she raised her eyebrows getting “Men like that are cowards. You are coward, you men are useless.” She said

He stared at her as her eyes quickly filled with tears and she downed the whole drink and grabbed the bottle. Nico grabbed it and took it out of her hand.

“That’s enough.” He said and Jane’s head fell on his shoulder and she got on his lap and

clung on him crying.

“Jane.” He sighed in defeat and put the bottle on the table. Maybe bringing the wine was a bad idea.

“You smell so nice. Like a real man.” She said then removed her head on his shoulder and grabbed his face both hands as tears streamed down.

“Will your late wife haunt me if I kiss you?” she tilted her head back and brought her hand to her lips to smell her breath.

Nico brushed her cheek and he gently wiped the tears with the tips of his thumb . “Yes she will. I'm going to get you off my lap then you will

drink water right?”

She nodded and someone knocked. Nico stood up and Jane clung on to him even more and he walked with her to the sink and then shifted the curtain a little bit. “Shit!”

That was definitely the parole officer.

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#27 

She nodded and someone knocked. Nico stood up and Jane clung on to him even more and he walked with her to the sink and then shifted the curtain a little bit. "Shit!"

That was definitely the parole officer. He quickly pushed Jane down to her feet and watched her as she wobbled staring at him in confusion.

"The parole officer is outside." He whispered

Jane's eyes widened and she sobered up faster

than lightning then quickly ran to the living room with Nico on her tail then grabbed the bottle on the couch. Nico grabbed her arm as she turned around in panic.

“Calm down.”

“What if she gets me back to jail? I shouldn’t have asked you to bring drinks.”

“You are not going back to jail for having few drinks. You aren’t even wasted...calm down and be normal. You didn’t do anything wrong.” He said

Nico reached for the bottle and the glasses then followed her to the kitchen. He put them in the sink as Jane walked to the door. She

breathed out before opening the door. She stood aside letting the parole officer walk in.

“Hello Jane.”

“Hi. What brings you here?” Jane asked nervously

“No I wanted to see what you were up to...I see you are having too much fun with beverages while you are on the verge of going back to jail.” She hummed

“But I’m not doing anything wrong. I’m drinking wine in my own house.” She swallowed “I didn’t know that it wasn’t allowed.”

The officer hummed again and walked around the kitchen checking the cabinets. Jane walked over to Nico and stood beside him. Her shoulders tensed up as the officer walked to the sink and grabbed the bottle checking it.

“I will mark this as strike one Jane. Your freedom is in my hands and you are just lucky because I’m understanding. I hope you are not also doing drugs.” She raised her eyebrows at Jane

Jane shook her head “I’m sorry and I promise this will never happen again.”

“Don’t promise me anything, just make sure it doesn’t because it would a pity to drag you back to cell after tasting two day freedom.”

She glanced at Nico then shoved her hands into her coat then walked to the door. Jane held her breath as the door opened and quickly released after hearing the clicking sound. She turned around and Nico pulled her head to his chest.

“I’m so sorry.” He said

“It wasn’t your fault. I’m the one who asked you to come with drinks.”

“I should’ve just thought about consequences. I didn’t think she would come at this time.” He sighed “Juice?”

Jane laughed and led him back to the living room.

At Linda's, Linda tucked Rain in then walked out of the guest bedroom. Instead of going to her bedroom, she headed to the living room and sat on the couch. She dialed her friend and put the phone on her ear as she leaned on the armrest.

"Hey boo!" her friend answered followed by loud music and cheers

"Hey. Where are you?"

"Hubby took me to this party and it's going down and before you say some judgmental stuff, we are not drinking." She said

“Oh sounds fun.”

“It is. You are welcome to join us.”

“I would come but I don’t think partying is Jamie’s thing and besides, Rain is here with us.”
She replied

“Yoh!” Her friend laughed out loud “That’s the consequences of marrying older men. Sex is the only fun thing they know.”

“I don’t like your attitude Kano.” She snapped and her friend stopped laughing

“Okay but you should get out more and enjoy

yourself before you give birth because nursing a small child is hard work and there are no breaks in between.” She said

“I know. Jamie moved in with me so it will be a lot easier to do fun things.”

“What about Jane?”

“Jamie is waiting for this parole thing to go smoothly before divorcing her. Her daughter doesn’t even know her.”

“I hope you are not happy for this Linda. This could backfire very badly.” She said

Linda closed her eyes in annoyance “Why can’t

you be happy for me without judging me? Did I ever judge you when you stayed with your cheating man?"

"You know what, maybe I should hang up because I'm trying to have fun here." She said

"Yeah do that."

The call cut off and Linda clicked her tongue. She stood up and went to the door then locked and also switched off the lights.

Later that night Jane pulled the fleece over hers and Nico's legs as they sat on the couch in the

living room. Her head laid on his shoulder as his arm circled around her waist.

“Do you ever regret of falling for someone? For being in someone’s life?” Jane asked

“I regret falling for my late wife. Her death hurt me so bad but what hurt the most was the fact that she had been unfaithful and kept it from me. I had to find out that the toddler I had was someone else's after the funeral.”

“Yoh I never expected that.”

“Yeah well it’s life. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. Do you regret marrying Jamie?” he asked

Jane nodded "So much. I wasted my time with him now I don't even want to breathe the same air he breathes."

"At least he showed you his real self when you were still in prison." He said "Even though it was horrible for you, I'm glad I met you."

Jane raised her head a little. Her hand cupped his chin and gently massaged his beard. She raised her head and baby kissed him then pulled away clearing her throat.

She moved the fleece and stood up "Sorry I thought—"

Nico grabbed her arm and yanked her down to his lap. He grabbed the back of her neck and

traced his thumb on her bottom lip as he stared intensely. He leaned in and kissed her.

He pushed her down on the armrest and hovered her as they kissed passionately. Jane's arms circled around his neck and pulled his body down to hers. She let out a shaky breath as she spread her legs and wrapped them around Nico's waist. His lips kissed her neck softly moving to her collarbone and her throat.

Jane reached her hand into his pants and took hold of his member drawing a startled grunt from him. She closed her eyes massaging it as his lips moved to her boobs. She felt his hand on top of hers helping her massage him gently

"F*ck that feels so good." He moaned out coming to kiss her then pulled away. He

grabbed the waistband of Jane's shorts and gently pulled them down to her knees with her underwear then raised her legs up.

"remove your pants." Jane said softly while staring into his eyes. She sat up and pushed his sweatpants down revealing his junior. She swallowed thickly and leaned in to kiss him.

"I don't have—"

"I'm not sick. Don't forget to pull out please" he nodded and pushed in making them gasp in unison. He leaned down and kissed her holding both of her legs over his shoulder as his hips moved slowly. Jane pushed his chest a little bit with her eyes tightly shut.

“Relax your muscles a little.” He said kissing her cheek. Jane balanced herself with her elbows trying to move away

“Jane babe?”

“It hurts...” she said softly and Nico pulled her to his chest and hugged her. He sat back on the couch with her still on his lap attached to his member as he rubbed her back.

“I’ll be gentle I promise.” He kissed her lips then thrust up holding her waist in a tight grip. She gripped his shoulders and bounced on his lap as his abs rubbed against her creating a sweet friction.

“mmh Nico...” she moaned softly against his

lips

He kept drilling her with a balanced speed while moaning her name quietly and grunting sexily. His smell, how he held her and how good he hit her spot drove her over the edge and she found herself screaming and clawing his back as her p*ssy pulsed around him. He grabbed her head and kissed her then quickly pulled away shooting to her stomach.

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The next morning Jane woke up and yawned sat up. She was still naked, covered by the fleece. Nico was nowhere to be found but his car keys were still on the table. She heard footsteps on the opposite direction then turned her head

“Hi.” He said approaching her

“Hi.” She wrapped herself with the fleece and stood up “Last night was amazing.” She said and moaned softly when he leaned down to her level kissed her neck.

“Have you seen my phone?” He asked “I need to go to work.”

“I’ll call it for you.”

Meanwhile outside Jamie stepped out of Linda’s car and walked to the gate.

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LIKE&COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#28

Jane stood with her phone on her ear and Nico's phone rang in between the couch. He reached for it and slid it in his pocket.

"I would have loved to cuddle you and probably get some but I'm running late. I'll call you alright?" He said

“Okay.”

He leaned down and baby kissed her then walked to the door. He grabbed the handle and the door almost hit his face pushing forward. Jamie walked in shoving the keys in his pocket. He looked at Nico who also stared at him in confusion then pushed the door closed.

“who are you?” Jamie asked

“Who are you?” Nico repeated the question

Jane walked in the kitchen and tightened the knot on the fleece staring at the two men.

“Jamie what are you doing here?” she asked

“I’m here to pick up the rest of Rain’s things.”

“Okay.”

Jamie looked at Nico again then walked out of the kitchen. Jane cleared her throat and then smiled at Nico.

“Aren’t you getting late?” she asked him

“I want to make sure you are fine.”

“I’ll be fine. Jamie is not violent and I can defend myself.” She said “Go before you get a warning for tardiness.”

“Okay we’ll talk on the phone.”

She watched him leave then headed to her bedroom where she opened the wardrobe and took out the clothes she was going to wear after shower. She turned around and screamed when she saw Jamie standing by the door watching her.

“oh my gosh you scared me! Why are you standing there?” she snapped

“I thought you were over your wh*ring ways you know Jane? It hasn’t been a week of your freedom but you are already bringing men over in our matrimonial home as if you are not a married woman.”

She scoffed “I’m surprised you are calling me names after marrying another woman and having her take my daughter.”

“You and I are different because I chose to marry Linda. I made her known to you because I respected you. You’ve always been loose and I was a fool to hope that you would change.”

“Jamie wee I won’t entertain your nonsense because I don’t owe you nothing. You chose to leave with your precious Linda right? Please take whatever you want to take and go back to her.”

“Oh this is your little revenge?”

“You think I have time for that? I don’t care enough about you to go around planning revenges. Please leave my house.” She said

“That man won’t come back after learning that you are nothing but a wh*re who is a jail bird. No one will ever settle for something like you.” He said

“Okay”

The fleece shifted a little and Jamie saw a glimpse of hickeys on her chest and her neck as she turned. He swallowed and moved away from the door heading to Rain’s room. His mind flashed to the guy...he probably slept with her out of pity, she wasn’t better than Linda. He grabbed his phone and dialed Lefa

“What do you want Jamie?”

“Jane had a man over. I can’t believe her nerve of bringing muscle man into our house and sleeping with him.”

“Kante what did you expect her to do? You moved out and told me that you didn’t want her anymore.”

“She’s still married to me—”

“I don’t understand you Jamie. I’m pretty sure you never even touched her since she got out of jail. Three years of dryness and you want her to remain single waiting for you to get tired of your games. O tlwaela Jane masepa and wa gafa. I

hope you don't regret this in the future...if you do, please don't come to me for comfort.(You're disrespecting Jane and you're going insane)."

"When are you ever going to side with me?"

"When you start acting right!" he snapped
"Listen man, call me when you want to talk about something other than your complicated love life, sharp."

At the correctional facility, Nicolas's phone rang as he stepped out of his car. He closed the door and answered as he pressed his key locking the doors.

“Cousin?”

“Hey man. Where are you?”

“I just got to work and I’m going in. Do you need something?” he asked heading to the main entrance.

“Were you with Jane last night?”

“What?”

“Jamie told me that a muscle man was with Jane this morning. It was you wasn’t it?”

“Yes it was me. We spent a night together. Don’t tell me that man is trying to shame Jane

for it.”

“Listen man I think you should distance yourself from Jane until she sorts out things with Jamie. Sleeping with married women? That’s not a good look buddy and as much as I approve your thing with her, I don’t want you to get hurt. The possibility of Jane getting back together with Jamie is very high. Once they get over their frustrations, probably work them out in bed it would be over for you.” Lefa said

Nico sighed “I don’t think Jane can fix things with that man after all the things he put her through, still putting her through.”

“You can never be sure with women Nick. Just promise me that you will leave when it’s too much.”

“I promise. I’m a grown man Lefa, I know when I’m not wanted and I will never be stubborn about it. I’m inside, I’ll talk to you later.”

“Bye.”

Later that day Linda dished for Rain first then grabbed two plates and walked back to the table in the dining room. She placed them down and sat down.

“How was your day?” she asked

“Fine.”

“What’s wrong?”

“Jane is disrespecting me you know? She’s bringing men over and don’t care about our vows.”

“Shouldn’t you be happy that she’s moving on?”
Linda asked

“I just hate that she’s doing all that nonsense in that house, the house that Rain has to stay in.”

“Rain lives with us Jamie.” Linda said
impatiently

He stood up and headed to the bedroom

leaving his plate full of his favorite meal. He closed the door then called his uncle.

“Jamie?” he answered

“Malome Jane is cheating.”

“Then what must I do? Should i dance?” He said then the call cut off.

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#29

Jamie stared at the phone in disbelief and then dialed Jane's aunt.

"Hello Jamie" she answered

"Hello aunt Sophia, how are you?"

"I'm fine thank you. How are you?"

He took a deep breath "I'm not okay. Please talk to Jane because she's bringing men into our home and cheating on me. Even before she went to prison, she did this. I've been quiet for too long and I'm tired. She always cheated with

men that are better than me so I couldn't say anything to them. Please talk to her."

"I don't know what you really want from my niece because you made it clear that you didn't want her anymore. You even brought another woman into her house, denied her the opportunity to see her daughter and you also humiliated her by impregnating another woman. Why are you bothered that she's moving on? Akere you two are no longer in love and your marriage became an open marriage after you brought Linda into it so please leave Jane alone. Let her enjoy her freedom in peace and stay with your wife."

"I can't believe you are supporting—"

"Yes I'm supporting her. I never liked you Jamie,

you gave me so many reasons to hate you. You are too old to be behaving like a teenager.” She said “When are you going to grow up and be a man?”

“How am I wrong in this situation? Jane slept with so many men for money and I stayed with her without complaints. I tolerated her behavior and now that she’s out of jail she’s suddenly a saint?”

“Jane is not a saint and I’m not excusing her past but she has a right to move on because you said you didn’t want her. You took papers of divorce to jail three years ago remember?”

“I don’t want divorce anymore Sophia. She’s my wife and my anger is justified.”

“I don’t have time to exchange words with you Jamie so you can take your complaints to your uncle. Do me a favor and take Rain to Jane because I’m coming later. I will stay with my niece until Rain gets familiar with her.”

“Rain doesn’t know her.”

“But she knows me. Don’t be difficult. Linda has her own child on the way...Rain will never be hers.” She said

The call cut off and Jamie gritted his teeth. The door opened and Linda walked into the bedroom.

“Do you still love Jane?” She asked

“I’m not in the mood.”

“It’s simple question. Do you still love her or not?”

“I’ve never stopped loving Jane.” He replied and Linda’s face fell. “I love you more but...”

“no need to explain yourself. Aren’t you going to eat your food?” Linda asked then swallowed a lump on her throat

“I don’t have an appetite.”

“Really Jamie? After spending hours cooking your favorite meal for you this is the thanks I

get? All because your precious wife found someone else? You lost your appetite because of a woman who you never cared about when she was in jail?" Linda shouted

"Babe—"

"Don't babe me!"

She grabbed a pillow then walked out of the room. Jamie laid down and focused on his other issues and didn't bother following her

That night Jane answered a call and laid on her side on the bed.

“Hey. Already home?” she asked

“Yeah I just got in. Still good?”

“Good.”

“I had a great night with you and that got my mind a little busy.”

“And you said I’m not your type.” Jane said and his chuckle filled her ears

“The idea of a woman hustling, doing things herself is not really appealing to me” he said and Jane bit her lip with her eyes closed

“So you want to be the one to provide?” she asked

“Yes but that doesn’t mean my partner shouldn’t go to work or anything like that. I enjoy spoiling my women, do things for her...I want her to call me and ask for things you know?” he said

“Oh now I understand you.”

“Yeah, It’s not that complicated.” He said

“Okay I have to get my beauty sleep now.”

“Let me take you out tomorrow.”

“Uhh...”

“Call your parole officer and ask if it’s okay.”

“Do you usually take the women you sleep out on dates?”

“No. Just you.”

The following day Jamie walked in the yard holding Rain’s hand then headed to the door. He took out his keys and unlocked then walked in. Jane removed the pan off the stove and placed it aside.

“Please give me the key.” She said

“Excuse me?”

“The keys mister. You can’t come and go as you please in my house. Did you forget that you do not live here anymore?”

“Your aunt called me and told me that she’s coming to stay with you until Rain gets familiar with you.” He changed the topic

“Oh that’s very nice of her. Did you bring Rain’s clothes?”

“Yeah everything is in the car” he sighed and pulled a chair and sat down. Rain followed him

and stood in between his thighs. “I’m sorry for how I acted yesterday. I was really angry when I saw that man in here. I felt so disrespected but I shouldn’t have insulted you.”

Jane crossed her arms staring at him. The apology didn’t even feel like an apology.

“Okay I hear you. I just want peace Jamie, I want to have a relationship with my daughter without drama. Please give me the keys.”

Jamie reluctantly handed them over and Jane took them and shoved them into the pocket of the apron.

“Thank you. Anything else?”

“I have to wait for your aunt to get here. I don’t want Rain to throw a tantrum.”

“Okay.”

She opened the bread bin and took out a loaf of bread then glanced at Rain.

“Should I make you a sandwich Rain.” She asked and the little girl nodded.

Jane smiled and grabbed a knife cutting the slices in triangles.

Jamie cleared his throat “I was thinking of going to marriage counseling.” He said

Jane turned to him "For what?"

"To work on our marriage. I want us to fix things."

"Jamie I'm not a fan of polygamy. I thought you wanted divorce."

"Not anymore. I will leave Linda if you promise to stop sleeping around."

"No thanks."

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Sorry I'm late

LIKE& COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#30

Jamie's smile dropped

"What do you mean no thanks? I thought working things out was what you wanted."

Jane touched her chest "Me? I don't remember asking you to fix things ever since I got back. The only thing I wanted was my daughter and you sure made it very difficult for me to get

her.”

“Okay then I’m asking then. Can we go to marriage counseling and work on our marriage?”

“Jamie I said no. Don’t you have ears? Why are you even begging me because just yesterday you were insulting me.”

Jamie sighed impatiently “I already apologized for that.”

“Okay but I don’t want to continue with this marriage because I’m tired of being taken for granted. You weren’t there when I needed you the most. You were so impatient when I called and sometimes threw nasty words at me. Jail

was very difficult for me Jamie and talking to my husband on the phone nicely was going to make me feel better but you were so focused on Linda. I'm doing so much better without you so please leave me in peace."

Jamie swallowed "All it took was that guy to come and fool you—"

"Aren't you tired of acting like this Jamie? Your age mates have stable jobs waiting for more years for pension while others have business...what do you have on your name because the only thing you know is to open that mouth?"

"Don't provoke me."

“What are you going to do? This is my house and I will get you arrested if you dare lay your hands on me. Aren’t you ashamed of yourself?”

She clicked her tongue then grabbed a plate then made sandwiches. She handed Rain one and headed to the living room leaving Jamie with Rain in the kitchen.

Minutes later there was a knock on the door and Jamie opened. Sophia walked in and Rain immediately rushed to her.

Sophia picked her up. “Hey big girl. Who made you the bread?”

Rain shrugged then Jane’s footsteps echoed from the living room. She walked to her aunt

and hugged her.

“Thanks for coming aunty. This means a lot.”

“Anything for my niece.”

Jamie stared at Rain. “I’m leaving you with granny okay? I’ll be back to take you.”

“Okay.”

He leaned in and kissed her cheek then walked out of the house. Jane switched on her phone and texted Nico.

Jane: Let’s do lunch on Saturday. My aunt is here with my daughter.

She grabbed her aunt's bag then headed to the guest bedroom. Her phone vibrated on the way there.

Nicolas: Saturday it is. Keep me updated with the bonding session.

She smiled and stepped into the room. She sat on the bed and logged in on Facebook. She saw a message on her message icon then clicked it.

Ryan: Hi Jane. I'm still used to not having a phone so I barely check my Facebook. I'm so glad you are out and starting over. I would love to meet and catch up. 082 956****.

Later on at the hospital, Linda grabbed her bag and headed out to her car. She got in and took out her leftover lunch and started eating. Her phone rang seconds later

“Hello?”

“Hey Linda. You’ve gotten quiet, is everything okay with the baby?”

She sighed “Everything is fine with the baby. I’ve just been so busy mma.”

“Busy to call your mother in law? You shouldn’t even overwork yourself. Why don’t you quit and focus on your family?”

She scoffed “I can’t quit.”

“Jamie’s business is growing akere? I heard that taxi drivers make a lot of money in a month and imagine as a taxi owner. He’s going to take care of you.”

“Ma I don’t think Jamie will be divorcing Jane anytime soon. What if he leaves me after I quit my job?”

“He won’t leave her now because they’ve been together for so many years. Just enjoy the benefits of being his wife and stop thinking about the other wife. Men hate nagging women so please remain classy.”

“What if he realizes that he loves Jane more and wants to work on their marriage? I can’t go through that while I’m carrying his child.”

“Why are you being so negative? Did he say something to you?”

She bit her lip “He was really jealous after finding Jane with someone else and he came home and turned down my food. I’m worried mma.”

“Don’t be. Jamie really loves you...he went against our warnings and paid magadi for you. Men don’t go bother themselves with women they don’t love. Listen, I will call you later.”

“Thank you for calling ma.”

She put the Tupperware away then started the car and drove out of the hospital. After forty minutes she got home and parked the car in the garage. She sighed getting out of the car then took off her shoes.

She walked to the front door barefooted then opened the door. The windows were closed meaning her husband was home. She smiled and walked to the couch and sat down.

“Babe I’m home!” she yelled out

She rested for few minutes then stood up heading to the bedroom. She got in and spotted Jamie lying on the bed with his arms over his head.

“Are you okay?” she asked

“I’m fine. I just woke up from a nap. You just got home?”

“Yeah. I’m exhausted.”

She got on the bed and crawled like a predator over to him. She reached her hand inside his sweatpants and Jamie sat up. He gently grabbed her arm and removed it from his pants.

“I thought you were exhausted.”

Linda frowned “Babe you know I didn’t mean for this. This is our way of relaxing akere.”

She leaned down and pressed herself against him and kissed him. Jamie pulled away and gently pushed her away then got off the bed.

“I’m going to take a walk.”

“Jamie What’s wrong kante?”

“You tell me, you moved to the guestroom and left me to sleep alone.”

Linda gritted her teeth in disbelief “I left because you were moping about Jane!”

“Not everything is about Jane, Linda. I just don’t think we should continue having sex anymore.

Your stomach is getting big and I don't want to hurt the baby and you are really getting heavy, I don't want to get backache. It's nothing personal."

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#31

Later that night Linda sat in the living room with her phone on her ear.

“He denied you?” Her friend asked

“He said he doesn’t want backache because my stomach is too big and he also doesn’t want to hurt the baby. We’ve been having sex without issues and he never complained about hurting the baby or his back. He doesn’t want me Kano.”

“What started all of this?”

“Jane getting back from prison.”

“But Linda I told you that going for married men

is not a good idea even if you're his wife by tradition, he won't let go of his first wife. He still loves her and he was with you just to keep his loneliness satiated."

Linda swallowed "What do I do? I love him and I want what we have to last."

"There's nothing to do at this point. Just hope that he doesn't fix anything with his wife because that would be game over for you. Just focus on your unborn child and wait for him to decide. I mean it's not like you need him to do anything for you. You have a good job, loving parents and best friend and soon you will have your first born. Marriage is not for everyone and it's not a sin to be single...some women out there are single mothers and they go on solo dates and sometimes take their children on

vacations and they are really happy.”

“I hear you friend. Can you believe his mother wanted me to quit?”

“Quit your job?”

“Yes. She called me earlier and told me that I should leave my job and focus on my family.”

“And what did you say?”

“I said no obviously. I will never leave my job for a man who doesn’t even know what he wants.”

A throat cleared and Linda whipped her head to the side seeing Jamie standing on the door way

from the bedrooms.

“Friend I’ll call you back.” She cut the call and stood up

Jamie approached “So this is what we are doing now? Telling outsiders our business?”

“As if you don’t tell Lefa our business. Since you heard me, I might as well continue because I’m getting fed up. I’m pregnant and it’s my first child after struggling to conceive so please don’t give me stress with your games. I honestly don’t know what you want Jamie, few days ago you were prepared to divorce and get full custody of Rain now you suddenly care about who she’s seeing and refusing me. Make up your mind because I don’t have patience for your indecisiveness.”

She walked past him and headed to the bedroom where she got on the bed and covered her head with the blankets.

The next morning Jane yawned and turned on the pillows as the phone rang. She reached for it and answered

“Nico?”

“Good morning.”

She smiled “Good morning.”

"I woke you up didn't i?" He asked

"Kind of but I was supposed to be up by this time."

"My bad. I wanted to check on you. You said your daughter is there with you so I got worried a little bit because the first attempt to bond with her failed miserably."

"I'm trying to take this slow. I can't believe something like this is happening to me. The hours I spent in that labor ward trying to push her out all gone to waste."

"There's still time. She's still young and you know that kids are impressionable."

“I guess. So where will you be taking me on Saturday?”

“Any restaurants you want then I was thinking of going ice skating.”

“Ice skating?. I’ve never done that before.” She cleared her throat

“That’s okay. I want us to do something fun. I don’t want us to eat and then go home like old married couple.”

Jane laughed “I’m offended because that’s what I’ve been doing with you know who.”

“I want you to unlearn stuff babes. I love fun

dates and it's been so long since you've had fun."

"I would really love that. I didn't know you were this interesting."

He chuckled "Because I'm a prison warder?"

"Because you are a former military soldier and yes a prison warder. The first time I saw you you were so serious and very intimidating, you're still intimidating but I've seen your cum face and I'm not intimidated anymore."

He laughed out loud and Jane joined in
"Crushing my ego are you? I get it thought, working in prison is not fun and there's nothing to be happy about in there but the pay is

satisfying and there's not much to do."

"I guess that's explainable." She sighed

"Yeah. I just got to work so I'll talk to you later sweetheart."

"Bye."

She cut the call off and rolled onto her stomach. A knock came through and she sat up

"Come in aunty."

The door opened and her aunt walked in. "I heard that they are hiring cleaners at the hospital. Draft your CV and take it there. No

online applications, hurry up.”

“Okay thank you.”

Later that day Nico leaned over the counter in Lefa’s steakhouse laughing softly with his cousin.

“Shouldn’t I get the steaks free of charge? I’m your cousin man.”

“I’m running a business here. Pay up. The only free meal you will get is at my house cooked by my wife.” Lefa said and then spotted Jamie walking in.

Nico turned around and the smile on Jamie's face dropped and he increased the speed approaching the counter. Lefa took the takeaway and handed it to Nico and he placed the money on the counter.

"I saw you at my house with my wife. What game are you playing man?"

Nico turned to him "I'm not playing games."

"Then stay away from my wife."

"You mean soon to be ex wife?"

"Wife! What are you going to gain by sleeping

around with my woman? Jane is sick and you will be by the clinic soon getting treatment because you love playing in other men's territories."

"Nick go home." Lefa warned softly and Nico turned to him then sighed walking past Jamie. Jamie pulled him by his shoulder and pushed his forehead with his open palm.

Nick touched his forehead in shock. "Fight me! Show me who you are. You are a little boy and sleeping with my wife won't make you a real man!." He yelled and the customers stared and started gossiping.

Lefa walked around the counter and stood between them. "Nick go home and forget that this happened. Please."

Nico looked around the place then left peacefully and Jamie followed him fuming.

“Jamie!” Lefa yelled at him as Jamie walked out the door. He rushed to Nico as he was about to get in his car.

“You’re running away?”

“Listen man, I don’t want issues with you.” He said “But you are provoking me. I don’t want to go to jail for knocking you out cold so please step away from the car. Drama is the last thing I want.”

Lefa rushed out of the restaurant “Jamie! What’s wrong with you? You are married to

Linda but busy fighting for Jane. Listen man, my cousin is the last person to mess around with.”

Jamie stared at him fuming then the realization hit him like a ton of bricks and turned to watched as Nico started the car.

A WEEK LATER.

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LIKE&COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#32

A WEEK LATER.

Jane grabbed on Nico's shoulders laughing as her legs wobbled from the glass floor as they skated.

"I'm letting you go." He said and Jane held him tighter yelling no.

"Don't!"

"Come on babe we've been doing this for a week. How come you're not good at this?"

“I don’t want to fall and lose my front teeth. I have beauty to maintain.”

Nico removed her arms from his shoulder then took ahold of one. He skated pulling her to the benches then sat down. He helped Jane down then bent down pulling her leg. Jane stared at him in awe as he took off her skates then handed her her sandals.

“Thank you.”

“Did you have fun?”

“You know I always do. Thank you for bringing me here again.”

“You’re welcome.”

She leaned in and baby kissed him then Nico leaned down and took off his own skates then put on his shoes. Jane put the skates in her bag then they walked hand in hand away from the field.

“How’s everything going.” He asked

“Better than I expected. Cleaning has always been something I loved so it doesn’t give me problems at work. My daughter is getting used to me but she doesn’t call me mommy which really sucks but all that matters is that we are getting there.”

He glanced at her and smiled “Jamie is not

bothering you is he? I don't understand that man honestly and he had the nerve to embarrass me at Lefa's steakhouse and called me names."

"He did what? How I wish it was really easy to divorce his ass. He annoys me so much because he thinks he can just get whatever he wants."

"His entitlement is scaring me, people like that aren't afraid to barge into other people's houses and take things forcefully including the women. Does he still have access to the house?"

Jane sighed "I took his keys last week but knowing him, he might have a spare."

“I’ll have someone come there and change the locks for you. Toxic exes are really draining.”

“Jamie is not toxic, he’s delusional and it’s embarrassing for him because he’s old to be doing the things he does. Where to from here?”

Nico checked the time “I need to go see Lefa and his wife before going home. I’ll drop you off, I’m glad you had fun.”

They walked to the car and Jane smiled all the way.

After few minutes Nico’s car parked two houses

away and Jane grabbed her bag and her . Nico grabbed her arm and turned her then kissed her and gently brushed Jane's hair to the back. She smiled at his act of affection and then opened the door.

“Call me.”

She closed the door then waved at him walking away. She glanced back and Nico's car reversed then hooted two times making her blush. She walked to her place and frowned when she saw Linda's car parked outside the gate. They were probably there to see Rain.

She opened the gate and stepped into the yard. Her phone vibrated and she checked the message.

Aunty: I went out with Rain to buy Ice cream.
The queue is really long but the key is under the
mat if you are back.

She hurried to the house and bent down flipping
the mat. There was no key. She pushed the
door open and walked in. She could hear voices
in the living room. She took deep breaths before
marching to the living room. Jamie's mother,
his aunt and him were seated on her couches
drinking tea.

"Sit down mma, we've been waiting." Jamie's
aunt said.

Jane chuckled humorlessly in disbelief "Who
opened the door for you because my aunt is not

here?”

“We used your key. The sun was hot outside so we opened for ourselves.” His mother said
“Have a seat we have to talk.”

She sat down still angry and stared at Jamie who kept quiet staring at his aunt as she began to speak.

“We heard that you are bringing men into your matrimonial home and dishonoring your vows. Why are you doing that?”

Jane laughed “Really? That’s why you are here?”

Jamie’s mother shook her head “Aowa please

talk to us nicely Jane. I don't know if the man you are sleeping with knows that you are a married woman with a child because this is truly embarrassing."

"Embarrassing?"

"Yes. Cheating is in men's nature and nothing changes when they sleep around but women are a different story. You can't be going around getting stretched by every penis and making babies. Respect your body."

Jane stopped laughing and stood up and went to the kitchen. She filled the kettle with water and plugged it then walked back to the living room.

“First of all you break into my house, gang up on me because my aunt is not here then dare to question me when Jamie was happily sleeping with another woman in my house and married her with you present. What do you want from me exactly? I don’t want Jamie anymore and I certainly don’t want anything to do with batho ba Banda. Why are you forcing yourselves on me?.”

She then turned and pointed a finger at Jamie. “And wena Jamie, why are you letting your people talk for you? Didn’t you hear me when I said I wanted nothing to do with you? Koore you will never change. You’ll always be a fool who has no brains and I now see where you get your brain from.”

Jamie’s aunt stood up “Girly—”

“Get out of my house! I don’t know what you are trying to prove by coming into my house and doing as you please. You could go to jail for this you know? I can’t believe this. I’m trying to be a decent human being but you are provoking me.”

“The new man is making her behave this way and I won’t hesitate to slap you if you insult me again. We are here to talk and you’re just spewing nonsense.”

Anger clouded her mind and she felt a lump of frustration and hurt block her throat.

“Jamie please take your mother and your aunt out of my house.”

“Jane we are trying to talk to you. I’m sorry I hurt you. I regret it and I want us to work things out. Imagining you with another man is hurting me.”

“Just get out of my house. Our marriage is over and there’s nothing you can say or do to change my mind. Please get out of my house.”

The aunt crossed her arms and leaned on the couch exposing her beard on her double chin.

“We are going nowhere.”

The kettle switched off in the kitchen and Jane walked out and then came back holding the kettle with boiling water.

“I’m tired of you and I’m not afraid to go back to jail. I will boil an old lady nna, what right do you have in my house? Le ntlwaela gampe...get out!”

She opened the lid and the steam of the water rushed out. The old ladies quickly stood up and rushed to the door. Jamie approached Jane with his arms raised.

“What are you still doing here? I want you out of my house and my life Jamie. Go back to your Linda akere you love her so much?.”

“Jane...”

Jane threw the water at him and Jamie moved to the side quickly before the water could reach him and watched as the hot water splashed on

the floor. He ran to the door with his heart pounding.

Still fuming, Jane called Nico.

“Hello babe?”

“Hi. Please get me a lawyer...I want this man out of my life.”

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LIKE&COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#33

“When?”

Tears streamed down her cheeks as she held the phone tighter. “Anytime.” Her voice cracked

“What’s wrong? Did something happen?”

“I found him and his family in my house. They broke into my house and started insulting me. I almost burned them with boiling water. I’m so angry and scared that they nearly drove me back to jail.”

“I’ll deal with him. This is very alarming Jane...what if he was alone. I’ll sent my neighbor there tomorrow to change your locks.”

She sniffled “Thank you.”

“Don’t cry okay? He doesn’t deserve your tears. All of this will be over after changing the locks. I can’t believe they went this far.”

“Don’t do anything to him. I don’t want you to get your hands dirty for me. I just want to divorce him and be free from his family. His family is emotionally abusive and I can’t be around them anymore.”

“Do you want me to come over?”

Jane wiped her tears “I would love that but my aunt is here and I don’t want her to see you. I’ll be fine...I needed to lash out and release all the pent up frustration because I’ve been letting him do as he pleases and today was the time I defend myself.”

“Okay. I’ll get you a lawyer and you should talk to your parole officer and ask if you are able to go to court?”

“I will do that.”

Meanwhile outside, Sophia spotted Jamie and his family standing by the car parked at the gate and looked down at Rain.

“Go wait for me inside okay. Sit on that chair in

the porch I'll be there. I need to talk to those people."

She nodded and ran to the gate. Sophia approached the car and smiled at them.

"Hello. I didn't know you were coming to visit."

Jamie's mother glanced at the house before turning to her. "We were there to reprimand our daughter in law but she plugged kettle for us and threatened to boil us with hot water. A simple discussion was what we wanted to sort out what is going on in their marriage. They are doing everything wrong and you know how we don't approve divorce in this family but Jane refused to listen and proceeded insulting us."

Jamie's aunt nodded "She shows that you never reprimand her. Jane was never disrespectful, she cared so much for her family and respected us all. Her disgusting behavior is caused by the man she's sleeping with. Gona now we are standing outside the gate because she's threatening us. How are we going to come up with a solution."

Aunt Sophia nodded in acknowledgement "I hear what you are saying and you are right by saying Jane has never been disrespectful until today. It's not because of the man she's seeing. It's because you have been expecting too much of her. Jamie abandoned her when my niece went to prison, you never reprimanded him at all. You kept quiet then started filling up the house when he wanted to take another wife. I'm the one who went to visit my niece in jail every chance I got and supported her because I love

her. You don't love Jane, you don't care about her Jamie. You love her things...you love her money and the idea of her being your wife—"

Jamie swallowed "I do love her which is why I'm trying to correct my mistakes."

Sophia shook her head "If you loved her like you claim, you would've taken her child to see her in prison. You wouldn't have gotten another woman pregnant and paid magadi for her."

Jamie's aunt walked closer "Mistakes happen and he's learning. Jane should give him a second chance to rectify them."

Sophia placed her hands on her hips "Heeh! Jane shouldn't have to do anything to benefit

your nephew. She doesn't want him anymore because you Bandas don't like peace. You emotionally abused my niece and it's enough."

Jamie swallowed and turned to his mother. "We are making things worse, let's just leave and let Jane cool down. As much as I want to stay here and be stubborn, i don't want Jane to resent me. I was wrong and I admit it. Pretending to not hear her didn't work so let's just leave. I brought this to myself so I will just bear the consequences. If she wants us to work, she will reach out to me."

Sophia stared at him then nodded "Thank you for admitting your faults. Go home to your other wife and take care of her, pregnancy is draining. She probably needs you more than ever."

She walked to the gate and stepped into the yard then closed the gate.

The next morning Jane packed her lunchbox and then grabbed a broom and swept around the kitchen. Her aunt walked in holding Rain's hand.

"Kante why do you always work before going to work?"

Jane stopped sweeping and checked the time
"I'm trying to buy time. There's someone who's coming here to work on the locks."

Her aunt walked closer and took the broom away. "Jane go to work. I will wait for that person."

Jane sighed and grabbed the lunch box and put it in her bag then slung it over her shoulder. "There's cash under the mattress, pay him. Let's go baby. Let me fix your bag for you."

She bent down adjusting the straps of her small bag pack then grabbed her hand. "Say bye to auntie."

They walked out of the house and her phone rang as they headed to the gate. "Hello?"

"Hey it's Ryan. Sorry I missed your call the other day. I was at work."

Jane furrowed her eyebrows "You work?"

"Don't you?"

"I do but I'm just doing it for the sake of my parole."

"Oh. I'm a primary school teacher...I was really lucky they hired me despite my criminal record. When are you free? We have a lot to talk about...what happened when you got out, how was life inside for you and all that."

Jane chuckled "Let's see each other on Saturday. I can't wait to catch up...I also need to know about you. I'm currently on my way to work so we will chat."

“Bye. See you on Saturday.”

She smiled and almost skipped in excitement.

“left me when I was a baby.”

Jane’s heart skipped and she glanced down at her daughter. “I will never leave again I promise.”

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LIKE& COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#34

Jane glanced at Rain as she nodded

“I will never leave you again okay?”

“Mommy told me that you went to jail because you stole from people.”

Jane’s heart broke and she cleared her throat trying to get her feelings in check. They stopped walking and Jane picked her up and stared into her beautiful clean eyes.

“Yes I went to jail because I stole from people. That was bad and I learnt my lesson. I don’t do that anymore baby and I shouldn’t have done it to begin with. You are young and you probably won’t understand my explanation but I was fooled by other things and thought making money by stealing was good. I’m sorry sweetheart and I promise I won’t leave you again. I will be the best mommy to you like I should have.”

“So you’re my real mommy?”

“Yes. I’m your real mommy. I carried you in my tummy and breastfed you when you were a baby. Linda is daddy’s other wife but she’s not your mommy.”

“Oh. She’s carrying a baby in her tummy too. She’s the baby’s mommy?”

Jane nodded “Exactly but she’s your aunty because she raised you akere? Please respect her and don’t ever steal anything because it’s bad. Don’t be like mommy okay?”

Rain nodded and Jane put her down, grabbed her little hand then they continued walking. Few minutes later they got to her crèche and accompanied her inside. She kissed her cheek and waved at her then turned around to the gate. She swallowed a lump suddenly feeling emotional and rubbed her eyes sniffing.

At Linda's, Linda laid on her side brushing her sore stomach then quickly emailed the HR. She slowly sat up and sighed grabbing the massaging oil on the drawer.

"Jamie!"

She squirted small amounts on her tummy then slowly massaged it. Closing her eyes, she hissed at the discomfort and slowly moved the blankets from her feet then got off the bed. She went to the kitchen where Jamie was staring longingly at his phone.

"I think I need to go to the hospital. I'm not well."

Jamie ignored her and zoomed the picture of

him and Jane on their wedding day. The pictures didn't look well because he had shot them from already printed pictures. He sighed and bit his lip. He heard Linda talking and he turned to her only to find bent over hissing quietly. He stood up quickly and rushed to her

He touched her shoulder and Linda flinched away. "Babe—"

"It's fine. I will drive myself to the hospital akere you don't care about me. I've been trying to get your attention Jamie but you kept staring at your phone. Is your phone more important than your wife?"

Jamie gulped down his guilt "I'm sorry. My mind has been busy. What's happening? Is the baby okay?"

“Don’t ask me questions. I will drive myself to the hospital.”

“Babe you can’t do that in your condition—”

Linda glared at him “I will call Kano!”

She put her hand on her back balancing herself then walked out of the kitchen. She got in the room and slammed the door before Jamie could get in and locked it. She then dialed her friend and sat on the bed waiting.

“My friend?”

“Are you already at work? I think something is

wrong with the baby. I don't want Jamie to be the one to drive me. I don't understand him these days."

"Are you in too much pain?"

Linda sighed "Just small discomfort. Please hurry before it becomes something worse. I don't want to lose my baby."

"You're oddly calm about this."

"I don't want to panic and give my baby stress. I just want to get checked and be assured that he's fine. Please hurry friend."

She hung up and Jamie let himself in and

stared at her in guilt.

“I’m sorry.”

Linda nodded staring at him. Getting mad at him was pointless, Jane was probably going to be in his mind for a very long time.

“Don’t apologize. At least now I know what your priorities are. I just want to have a healthy baby and live peacefully. I’m tired of being desperate and I wish I had someone to tell me that I didn’t have to.”

Jamie swallowed “Don’t say that.”

Linda’s eyes filled with tears “Don’t say what?

You barely give me attention these days and I get so lonely as if I don't have a man. This is not how I imagined my pregnancy. Maybe it's punishment for all the evil deeds I planned."

"Jane and I are going ahead with the divorce. She doesn't want me anymore."

"mmh."

An hour later at the private hospital, Linda laid on the bed staring at the doctor as she explained.

"You did great by coming here. Some people

just brush things off and end up losing their children. Your baby is fine and he was just getting into position.”

Linda and her friend sighed in relief “Thank God. I was so worried and immediately thought the worst.”

“You’re good mommy. Just make sure you don’t stress yourself.” She turned to Kano “Please make sure you avoid stressors and keep an eye on her.”

She handed her the paper towel and Linda gently wiped her stomach and pulled her dress down. Seconds later they walked to the parking and got in the car.

Kano turned to her “Why aren’t you taking a leave?”

“I did this morning.”

Kano shook her head “You should go to your mothers and have her take care of you until you give birth. You can’t be with only him in the house.”

She sighed “I’m not really in the mood to talk.”

“I will talk and you will listen. Babes I can see that you are not happy. I don’t think that will do boy boy any good. Just go home to your mother and get fresh air.”

“I need to pack few things.”

“Okay I will go with you then drive you to your parent’s.”

At the hospital, Jane walked outside and discarded the water she used to mop then walked to the tab to wash her hands. She sighed and sat on the benches outside opening her lunchbox. A car parked at the gate and two men stepped out, she spotted one as Lawrence and her heart skipped.

She faced away as they got closer and could hear their conversation.

“You go ahead. I’ll wait for you here.”

The other man’s footsteps faded away as Lawrence’s cologne filled Jane’s nostrils. He stood there until Jane stood up and cleared her throat. The last thing she wanted was to violate her parole conditions by having contact with victims.

“I heard that you were out on parole. I’m glad you were given a chance to change your life around.”

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unedited

LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#35

She nodded with a tight smile then walked past but Lawrence gently grabbed her arm and pulled her back. Jane pulled it away and stood with her arms crossed.

“You look better than the last time I saw you.”

He looked really good in a tuxedo and clean haircut. The cologne he wore smelt really good and expensive. Business was probably doing

great and he was probably taken care of.

He sighed "How have you been?"

"Fine. Lawrence I don't want to go back to jail for talking to you please go and do whatever you came here for. I'm not being rude but it's against my parole conditions."

"I don't think it counts. I don't think it's wrong to chat for two minutes."

"What's there to even talk about because it's been three years without saying anything to each other."

Lawrence glanced at her up and down noticing

the lack of ring on her finger then licked his lips.
“I’ll see you around then. I hope you take care of yourself”

He walked back to the car and Jane stared at him until the door was closed.

At Linda’s, Jamie watched as Linda packed her clothes in a small bag and stood by the door panicking.

“I’m sorry about earlier. I should’ve went with you to the hospital to make sure you were okay. Please don’t leave.”

Linda zipped up the bag then turned to him “I’m going to my parents to give birth because I don’t feel well taken care of in this house. I also need fresh air, I haven’t had that weeks.”

“When will you be back?”

“After giving birth. Use my absence as an opportunity to do self retrospection maybe you would feel my frustrations. I won’t be here forever Jamie. I want to teach my child to not settle for less.”

He swallowed “Akere I told you that Jane and I are continuing with the divorce.”

“And I said okay. I don’t want to argue Jamie so see you tomorrow if you find it in your tight

schedule to come and see me.”

She grabbed her bag and walked out of the room and headed to the kitchen where Kano was waiting. They walked out and headed to Kano’s car.

“Leaving feels like I’m opening doors for Jamie to move on.”

“You are not leaving him. You are going to your parent’s house because you are soon going to have a baby. Your mother can either move in with you or take care of you in her house. That’s how things go and Jamie won’t cheat because of that. If he does you can leave. It's not like you don’t get men pestering you anywhere you go.”

“No but I want my child to grow up with two parents who are in a relationship. Have you seen how children who were raised by two parents who don’t get along behave? I don’t want that for my child Kano.”

Kano shook her head then started the car “You don’t know your worth.”

“Says a woman who stayed with a cheating husband.”

Kano chuckled angry “You use that as your comeback every time to hurt me yet I’m the one who’s always by your side comforting you. I will no longer advise you anymore because I’m tired of getting offended every time.”

Linda sighed "I'm sorry Boikano. I'm really not having a great day or week. I'm sorry my friend."

"Let's just go."

That evening Jane stood up and took the dirty dishes to the sink and cleaned the table. Her aunt went to the living room with Rain and switched to her favorite soapie. Jane remained in the kitchen and started washing the dishes.

Her phone rang and she quickly wiped her hands and took it out of her pocket.

"Hey babe. Thanks for sending the guy and for

paying. You didn't have to you know? I had the money."

"I know but I wanted to something nice for you. How was your day?"

"Great. I had a very important conversation with Rain and I feel like it's going to make our relationship better."

"That's great. She understood?"

"She did. She asked questions and I tried to explain as simple as I could. I love her so much and it feels so good to be her mom."

"I'm so glad to hear that." He sighed "I was so

busy today so I couldn't find time to get that lawyer for you. I'll find time during the day to make phone calls."

"Thanks baby. We will talk when you get home, I can tell you are driving."

"Okay sweetheart. Bye."

"Bye."

She hung up and another phone call from Ryan came through. She answered and put it on speaker then continued washing the dishes.

"Hey cell mate."

“Hi.” She laughed “I was just telling my man how we met and he couldn’t believe you reached out. The term reminds me of so much you know.”

Jane laughed “We’ve been through a lot. I kept the toy you left for me you know? I’ll bring it as a gift when you have a child.”

“I have one.”

Jane’s eyes widened “You do?”

“Phela I didn’t waste time when I got out. Gave a man a chance and he gave me so much love and a baby. He’s actually paying the bride price this week.”

She gasped “Ryan! Congratulations. Oh my gosh things are going well for you. You told me about a job now this? Let’s quickly meet because talking on the phone is not enough.”

Ryan chuckled “I know right? God is giving me a chance and I’ll hold on to it. Wena? Are you still with your husband?”

“We are actually getting a divorce. I’m seeing someone though. Remember the hunk prison warder?”

“Which one?”

“Chocolate complexion, tall with a beard. Nicolas?”

“Really? Is it serious?”

Jane smiled “It’s still new but we got to know each other while I was still inside and he cares Ryan. I like him and he’s good at he does.”

“I hope you don’t get too attached because he works with women most of the time and men are easily tempted. There are very beautiful women in prison.”

Jane frowned “No Nico doesn’t sleep with prisoners.”

“ He slept with me countless times when I was still new. I made sure he was satisfied and he kept me protected so I don’t know what you’re saying. I’m not trying to ruin things for you and

I'm sure he doesn't do that anymore but just be careful."

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#36

Jane's frowned deepened and she cleared her throat.

“I’ll be careful. I don’t trust men fully after what went on with my soon to be ex husband.”

“Okay. If you say so.”

“I have to finish washing the dishes so good night.”

“I’m sorry if I offended you. I just wanted to let you know so that there wouldn’t be awkwardness between us if Nicolas decided to let you know before I did.”

“I won’t get mad at meaningless sex you had with him Ryan. Him and I aren’t that serious...we were close and decided to try this out. I just didn’t expect this.”

“I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said anything.”

“Well you did and you can’t take that back. I should’ve kept my mouth quiet and not trust you enough to share something like this. You didn’t even bother to visit me in prison so...”

“Listen I was going to visit but—”

The call cut off and she sighed feeling like the biggest jerk for her behavior. She wiped her hands and dialed Nicolas.

“Babe?”

“Hi. When were you going to tell me that you slept with Ryan?”

“Who is Ryan?”

“My ex cell mate. You once told me that you didn’t sleep with prisoners. I begged you out of desperation and offered my body for protection and you made me feel like a whore* for it kante you were sleeping with another prisoner.”

“I don’t know who Ryan is and I don’t remember fuvking someone in there.”

She leaned against the cabinet massaging her forehead “Why would she create such a huge lie?”

“Jane calm down, I don’t know what you are talking about. Gona why does it matter because

you and I weren't together then? I'm not pissed off about Jamie so why are you pissed off about my past?"

Jane opened her mouth then closed it feeling a wave of embarrassment. "I have to go. Forget we even had this conversation."

"Wait Jane i—"

She hung up and put her phone on silent then resumed her dish washing. Maybe reaching out to Ryan was a bad idea but she could be trying to help? She sighed in frustration and finished off then walked out of the kitchen. When she got to her room she found seven missed calls from Nico and a message.

Nico: Answer your phone. Don't make me drive there.

She sighed and his name flashed on the screen calling again.

She answered "I was busy."

"Busy? You hung up on me. Why did you do that because I was talking to you? The relationship is still new so please don't make me get me bored Jane. I like you but I like peace more."

She swallowed "I just feel really offended Nico. You made me feel like I was worthless back in jail, when you were talking about respecting my body. This is like telling a guy who's interested in you that you are not ready for a relationship

then proceeds to get into one with another guy.”

“Can I see you so we can talk properly?”

“No it’s late.”

“I’m on my way there. I want to have this conversation in person. All you have to do is walk out of your gate then walk to the car.”

Minutes later Jane dragged her flip flops outside the gate and a car flashed lights at her. She hurried to it and stood by the passenger side with her arms crossed. The door opened and she got inside.

“Firstly I’m sorry I made you feel worthless.

You're not, you are amazing woman with a good heart. Having those short conversations with you back in that hell hole made me happy and seeing your face right now makes me happy babe. Secondly" he sighed "I once slept with few prisoners but that was so many years ago and I don't do that anymore because it's not worth losing my job and my life."

She nodded without saying anything and Nico gently touched her chin and leaned in kissing her neck. Jane closed her eyes and bit her lip thoughtfully.

"I hear you." She mumbled and Nico brought his face up and kissed her lips then pulled away placing his hand on her bare thigh moving her skirt higher.

“Don’t ever hang up on me. I hate that more than anything.”

Jane looked into his eyes and nodded. His hand gently parted her legs and he moved to kiss her as her hand found her slightly wet center and massaged through the cloth.

At Linda’s parents, Linda packed her clothes in her old wardrobe then the door opened. Her mother walked in and sat on the bed.

“Are you and Jamie fighting?”

She closed the wardrobe door and turned to her

mother. "We had a disagreement but we are cool. Does me being here bother you?"

Her mother shook her head "I'm just surprised because most daughters in law go to their in laws for confinement."

"I chose to come here because you are my mother."

Her mother shook her head with a look of disapproval. "What will she say? She will be very offended thinking that we have a problem with her."

"Can I just stay here in peace? I don't want anything to do with Jamie's family at the moment. I don't want stress mama so please

don't ask too many questions."

"Okay then."

She stood up and walked out of the room. Linda's phone rang and she sighed before answering the call.

"Yes?"

"Are you well settled?"

"Yes Jamie."

"I'll come there in the evening. I miss you and I really need us to talk and I want to apologize. I've been acting really childish and I want things

to go back to normal. I love you and you know I do.”

She sighed “I’ll see you later then and I love you too.”

“Bye.”

At Ryan’s house, Ryan watched as her fiancé disappeared to the ensuite and she laid on her bed searching Nicolas on Facebook. She started by searching the name and she saw bunch of profiles and then typed out his occupation. After getting tired, she cleared her search history and sighed. Maybe wanting to apologize to him was a bad idea.

“Ben? I’m going to take a walk!”

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#unedited

Let's see each other on Monday. Like and comment

THE PROTECTOR

#37

The next day Jane woke up to her phone ringing and she quickly answered.

“Hello?”

“Hey Jane. I know you probably don’t want to hear from me but I’m sorry for the things I told you.”

Jane sat up and rubbed her eyes “Why did you tell me in the first place?”

“I just wanted to show my loyalty. I want to be friends and I should’ve known that opening my mouth would ruin our friendship before it started. I’m sorry.”

Jane sighed "I hear you but that's not the only thing I'm mad about Ryan. Why didn't you visit me in jail? We were a little close and I expected to see as a free woman."

"Things were hard and believe it or not, I didn't want anything to do with that place. I wanted to be truly free from it. I would've reached out but I had no idea you were out on parole. I'm sorry."

"Okay I hear you."

"So can we be friends?"

"I don't trust you Ryan so I really don't know. You're telling me half truths and that makes me very paranoid. Your explanation for ruining wanting to ruin my relationship doesn't satisfy

me.”

She heard her sigh “I understand but I have no ill intentions I promise. I wish you were with Nicolas so I could apologize to the both of you.”

“Let’s meet and talk in person. Tomorrow.”

“Really? Where?”

“I’ll text you. I have to get ready to work.”

“Okay bye.”

Jamie walked into Linda's parents' house and followed his mother in law with a little smile. They sat in the living room and then Linda's mother brought teapot and mugs.

"How's Linda?"

"She's fine here. I'm glad you came by to see her. She's been dealing with stress because of you and by being here I hope you're going to make things easier for her."

"I apologize mma. I was just so confused about everything."

"Jamie when you and Linda decided to get married her father and I were so happy because my daughter deserves the best. She deserves to

be respected and to be called someone's wife so I don't like what you are doing to her. Do you still love her?"

"Yes I love Linda with everything I have and I'm trying to be the best man for her."

"Don't just say things you don't mean. If you are not in love with her anymore you can leave her and continue with that jail bird."

Jamie swallowed "I'm in love with her and I don't want to leave her."

His mother in law stood up and walked out of the kitchen. Jamie poured himself tea as he waited anxiously. Seconds later Linda walked in alone and sat on the opposite couch.

“Hey babe.”

“Hi.”

Jamie smiled “You look exhausted. Let me give you a foot massage.”

Without waiting for her reply, he got up and walked over to the couch and then knelt before her. He grabbed her feet then massaged them. Linda closed her eyes and tilted her head back enjoying the relaxing sensation.

“I know you and I are not okay right now and we probably won’t be for a while because Jane and I are still married but I want you to know that I love you and I don’t want Jane anymore.”

“You have a very funny way of showing it. Right now you are waiting for her to be the one to divorce you as if you’re still hoping for another chance to fix things.”

Jamie glanced at her guiltily and Linda opened her eyes and stared at him with a serious face “I’m young and chances of getting someone else to love me are very high but I’m here with you, I chose you and stayed with you despite my parents’ disapproval. They thought I deserved better, I deserved a man who would love me and choose me always and now when I think about it, they were right. I do deserve better. I can’t believe I wanted to kill Jane for you kante you don’t even care about me.”

Jamie let go of her feet and grabbed her hands

“I care and I want us to work. I’m sorry for driving you away. I’m choosing you.”

“How Jamie? By being here and massaging my feet?”

He took a deep breath “I have an appointment at Jay attorneys. I’m going to divorce Jane before she divorces me.”

Linda’s eyes widened “Really?”

He nodded and leaned in kissing her lips “Really. I want us to have a peaceful marriage and I want Rain to grow in a healthy environment.”

“Thank you Jamie. This means a lot to me.”

At the hospital, Jane stepped into the toilets cleaning and her phone rang.

“Auntie?”

“Jane. Your little cousin Bopaki impregnated someone so I have to go back home. I would’ve loved to stay with you my girl but hei my home will fall apart with Bopaki shem but don’t worry, Petronella found a job here and asked to stay with you until she sorts herself out.”

“Where did she find the job?”

“The local high school. She was hired as a clerk and she will be starting soon. I know you two are not close—”

She chuckled “Auntie it’s fine. Petronella is my cousin and she can stay with me as long as she will be contributing in the house.”

“Thank you Jane. I’ll call her, yoh she will be so excited to hear this. I have to leave. I already cooked so you and Rain could have something to eat. Don’t forget to pick her up.”

“Okay. Thank you for coming here to help me with Rain aunt Sophia. Our relationship is good because of you. Pass my regards and tell Bopaki to visit after sorting him out.”

“I will. Bye.”

Few minutes later Jane dragged the mop bucket outside and released a tired breath as she took off her rubber gloves. She spotted Lawrence’s car parking at the gate and watched as he got out and stepped into the yard. She turned ready to go on her business but Lawrence’s voice startled her

“Wait I’m here for you!”

She waited until he was really close then crossed her arms.

“I feel like you are on a mission to get me back in jail. What do you want?”

“My company is looking for receptionists. You did office administration right? I thought I should invite you to apply in person.”

“Why?”

She watched his adam apple bob as he swallowed with a smile. “I still love and care about you. You paid back my money so there’s no reason to keep punishing you.”

“What’s the catch?”

“I believe I have a child with you and I want to be in his or her life.”

Jane uncrossed her arms with a frown “She’s

not yours.”

“Proof me wrong by allowing me to paternity tests. Closing date of the applications is on Friday. I haven’t changed my contact info.”

He smiled her then walked away. Jane bit her lip as her heart pounded.

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#38

Jane watched as Lawrence's car drove off then dialed Nicolas. It rang twice before he answered

"Baby?"

"Are you free to talk?"

"Not exactly. I'll come see you later though. Is it serious?"

"Kind of but you're right. We need to talk about this in person. Just come straight to my house after work. My aunt is leaving today so I'll have the house to myself."

“Don’t cook then. I’ll bring food...will Rain be there too?”

“Yeah but I was planning on calling Jamie to come take her. She needs few clothes and I’m sure my baby is tired of going to crèche by foot.”

“Okay. I guess I’ll meet her some day. Will ribs be fine?”

“Yes babe thanks. See you later.”

After hanging up she breathed shakily then went back inside.

At Lefa's restaurant, Jamie sat with Lefa on one of the tables and he rubbed his face sighing.

"So Linda left you alone in the house?"

He nodded "It's only for confinement period then she'll be back home."

"That's what she wants you to believe. She could've easily called her mother or yours to move in with the both of you. I wouldn't be surprised if she doesn't come back. You played with her for a while and she's tired. I've been telling you to leave Jane alone and focus on her but you didn't listen."

“No she won’t leave me. That woman loves me man. I don’t know how many times she tried getting us together and failing. She risked her reputation and slept with me. She’s a churchgoing woman and I’m sure her church members judged her and gossiped about her but she’s still with me despite all of that. Just earlier she talked about wanting to kill Jane for me...she loves me.”

Lefa shook his head laughing “I would behave if I were you. Women like Linda are very dangerous and can even bewitch you just to make sure you stay.”

“Don’t worry about me man. I filed for divorce. Jane already wants out so it won’t be a long process. There won’t be a trial because this is a mutual agreement. Linda is a catch and

honestly way better than Jane. Just that the idea of losing her to another man was really hard to come in terms with but..." He sighed "I still have another win so good luck to your cousin."

His phone vibrated and there was a message from Jane.

Jane: Come get Rain later. My aunt left and I have plans tonight.

He switched off his phone without replying and continued chatting with his friend.

That evening Jamie parked his taxi at the gate then stepped into the yard. He headed to the porch and the door opened and Jane stepped out holding Rain's bag. Rain ran to him and he bent down and picked her up. He approached Jane with Rain in his arms and Jane handed him the bag without saying anything.

She leaned in and kissed Rain's forehead "Bye baby."

"Bye mama."

Jamie cleared his throat and stared at her "I had my lawyer draft the divorce papers. Don't worry about having to handle the costs and all those things."

“Thanks for being thoughtful for once. I hope you are not planning to take my daughter—”

“I’m not heartless.”

Sounds of a car parking snapped them out of their conversation and Jamie turned around and waited for the person to step out of the car. He then turned back to Jane.

“I’ll see you next week.”

Jane nodded and crossed her arms with a relaxed face. “Bye mama!” Rain yelled as Jamie turned around and walked to the gate. He opened the gate then walked out. The door of the car opened and Nicolas stepped out. Jamie looked at him up and down and headed to his

taxi.

Nico watched as Jane approached the gate and pushed it wide open then stepped aside. Nico got back in the car and then drove in. Jane closed the gate and turned around walking to the house. Jamie watched them until they disappeared into the house then drove away.

“I forgot to ask what you wanted for drinks so I just got fanta.”

“Perfect. Let me grab the plates.”

He pulled her arm and leaned down and kissed her then spanked her butt as she walked away laughing. Seconds later Jane came with the plates to the living room and both started

sorting out the food.

“I received a visit at the hospital from Lawrence. He offered me a job.”

“What kind of a job?”

“receptionist. He also wants to do DNA tests to prove that he’s Rain’s father.”

Nico turned to her “Do you think he’s her father?”

“I don’t know. I had slept with the both them two weeks before finding out I was pregnant.”

He nodded in understanding waiting for her to

continue.

“What do you think about all of this? Do you feel comfortable with it as my man?”

“I don’t mind both of the men coming here and getting Rain to spend time together. What I care about is the boundaries you set. I will never feel comfortable with men parading around your yard because I love you babe but this for Rain and Rain is someone special to you and you’re special to me.”

She smiled and leaned and kissed him then smiled widely looking down.

“But don’t take the job offer because you don’t know what he’s up to.”

She sighed “At this point I’m praying that Jamie is the father because Lawrence can use Rain for vengeance.”

After eating Jane took the plates to the kitchen and Nico gathered the empty takeaways and followed her. He threw them in the bin and walked to the sink where Jane was washing the dishes. He wrapped her arms on her waist and kissed her neck.

“Jamie will be bringing a lawyer so don’t bother yourself anymore.”

“I want it to be over so I can talk to my family to do introductions and probably negotiate on the bride price.

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LIKE AND COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#39

Jane turned to him and blushed then turned back to the dishes.

“Prepared are we?”

“I’m not here to play. We are not getting any younger and we both have been married before.”

She turned with her whole body and wrapped her arms around him then kissed him. Nico touched her butt then lifted her higher. Jane wrapped her legs around his waist as the kiss deepened and he moved her away from the sink.

Later that night they laid in bed. Jane in his arms while his hand played with her hair.

“Tell me about Rain.”

“She’s amazing. She’s so smart and really peaceful to be around. I’ve never imagined

myself being a mother before her and right now, she makes me want to have more. She's my lovebug."

Nico smiled "There's something attractive about motherhood. Your love for your daughter even shows on your face."

Jane chuckled and closed her eyes "I will introduce you some day. I don't want to overwhelm her when she just found out that I'm her real mother and might turn out that Jamie is not her father."

"I get it babe. I want her to be natural around me so I don't mind waiting."

"You can meet my cousin if she gets here

yesterday.”

“Your cousin?”

“My aunt’s first daughter. She found a job here so she’ll be moving in with me.”

He hummed “I can’t wait.”

At Lawrence’s office the following day,
Lawrence sipped his coffee as he scrolled down
his ipad.

“I don’t understand why you are bringing up the paternity after saying that you wanted nothing to do with Jane and what about Kim?”

Lawrence raised his head “Kim will be fine. It’s not like I’m cheating on her. I just want my child.”

“If she’s not yours?”

“I will back away. I just want to be sure because the last thing I want is to die without enjoying fatherhood and I want to be sure so that I don’t have a issues at the serious stage of my relationship with Kimberly.”

Bailey nodded then slurped his coffee “Are you sure that’s all? You’re not going to do

something to Jane?”

“No. I will leave her alone if her child is not mine. She paid back my money so revenge is the last thing on my mind. I still care about her even though she’d made a fool out of me. I need to do this in order to heal properly, I bonded with that child when she was pregnant only to have her snatched away.”

Bailey sighed “Okay I understand all of this man. Just promise me that after the tests you will leave peaceful and move on.”

Lawrence chuckled “I promise.”

“Anyway does she look changed? Do you think she has changed?”

“Jane?”

Bailey nodded “Jail changes people akere? Do you think she’s over her ways?”

“I mean she works as a cleaner in the hospital and she didn’t even snap at me when I went there. That said a lot about her character.”

“I hope she’s happy. I hear that jail can be traumatic for some people.”

Lawrence sighed “I hope so too.”

His friend finished his coffee then stood up tossing the plastic cup into the bin.

“Let me leave you to work. I’ll see you later man.”

They fist-pumped then he walked to the door and stepped out of the office.

At Jane’s house, Jane sat on the bed waiting for the phone to ring while listening to the shower running. She brought her knees to her chest

“Hello?”

“Hey. Lawrence is convinced that he’s Rain’s father so I want the three of us to go do

paternity tests together before we deal with divorce because I don't want complications."

"That one is crazy. What makes him think he can be the father?"

"Jamie I was sleeping with the both of you at the same time. I want the process of divorce to be fast because I don't want to see myself doing ups and downs at courts. Make sure you make time today."

"Where was he all these time? Why is he coming now to demand the paternity tests?. He probably paid doctors to mess around. I'm not going anywhere."

"Jamie wee please don't make things difficult

for me. How are we going to discuss the custody of Rain when we aren't sure who the father is."

"The father is me!"

"Then let's go prove it. I will text you after talking to Lawrence."

She hung up and looked for Lawrence's numbers then called him.

"Hello?"

"Hello. It's Jane...when are you free to do the tests?"

“For that I’m always free.”

“How about later today. I will choose a doctor and you will pay because you are the one who came up with this idea.”

“I don’t mind. Just text me the location and the time...did your husband agree?”

“Yes.”

“Did you think about the job offer?”

“Yes and I decline. I don’t want to work for you Lawrence and please stop coming to my workplace to harass me. I paid for my crimes so whatever you are planning to do to me

wouldn't be fair."

"I don't want to do anything to you. I just want to heal."

She swallowed "I'm sorry for everything. I'll see you later at the hospital."

She hung up and texted Jamie then released a long loud sigh. Someone knocked and she got off the bed and put on her gown then headed to the kitchen. She unlocked the door and her cousin smiled at her

"Cousie?"

She walked in and they hugged. Jane grabbed

some of her bags and pulled them inside

“Thanks for agreeing Jane. Accommodation is expensive this side.”

“You’re welcome. As long as you buy electricity and food you and I will get along fine.”

Petronella smiled then hissed crouching down
“I need to use the bathroom. It’s been a long drive and I had milkshake on the way.”

“There’s someone showering. Just make your presence known. Last room with a white door.”

She dropped her hand bag then rushed to the bathroom. The shower was running so she

went to the seat and pulled her pants down sighing in relief.

“There’s someone else in here.”

She finished then stood up with her back bent down and shaking pee from her. The shower stopped running and she quickly pulled her pants up. Nico stepped out naked and Petronella quickly covered her eyes.

“Oh my goodness!”

She walked to the door with her eyes closed then accidentally collided with the wall and let out a startled sound of pain. Nico grabbed a towel and covered himself then walked over to her

“That must have hurt.”

Petronella turned to him holding her forehead and Nico noticed her young innocent features... she was probably in her early twenties. Jane walked in and kissed Nico

“Babe this is my cousin Petronella. Cousie, this is my man Nicolas.”

“Nice to meet you. Sorry for invading your privacy.”

She smiled politely then walked away her little butt jiggling in her jeans.

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#40

They both stepped out of the bathroom and Nico followed Jane to her bedroom. He grabbed his changing clothes and changed.

“How long will your cousin stay with you?”

Jane smiled as she took out her clothes in the wardrobe. “For a while. Accommodation is expensive around here so it’s better for her to stay with me. She will obviously buy things in the house and help out with the Bills.”

“She looks young. I hope she won’t give you problems and cause you to violate your parole.”

Jane laid out her dress on the bed then bent down putting her shoes down. “yes she’s young but Petronella is not a trouble maker. She’s reserved and if I don’t like something I will simply tell her.”

“Okay babe. I was just checking.” He finished

dressing "I better get going before I get late."

"Aren't you going to have something to eat?"

"I'll grab something on the way. See you later."

He walked to her and kissed her then grabbed his bag. Jane waited for him to leave then she headed to the bathroom where she showered. Minutes later she changed and went to the guest room. She knocked before twisting the handle then peeked her head in.

"Hey are you busy?"

Petronella stopped unpacking and shook her head with a smile. Jane walked in and sat on

the bed with her

“You know that I just got out of prison right?”

Petronella nodded “And on parole. I don’t wish to go back so I’m trying by all means to behave and live an honest life. I want your stay here to be as peaceful as possible because even a slap can send me back there.”

Petronella nodded again “I’m not looking for trouble. I’m going to start working day after tomorrow, you won’t have to worry about me wrecking your house.”

“Good. I also hate too much noise. No parties are allowed in this house Petronella. Company is allowed just not parties. You can invite your boyfriend over as long as you tell me beforehand.”

“Okay.”

“What’s important is Communication. If you’re going to a party somewhere and you feel like you might come home late or not come at all please let me know.”

“Okay I hear you ousi Jane. I respect you and I will respect your home. I will pay rent and you—”

Jane gently interrupted “You don’t have to do that. Your mother is my second mother and she took care of me when I had no one. Wena just make sure you help out with bills once in a while.”

“Okay. I really appreciate this.”

Jane smiled then stood up “I won’t be home the whole day so make yourself at home. Feel free to buy food and cook, electricity is enough.”

She walked out of the room then closed the door. She quickly texted Lawrence the time and location then forwarded the message to Jamie.

At Lawrence’s, Lawrence checked the message as he laid in bed and smiled widely. Kim smiled then shamelessly looked into Lawrence’s phone. She frowned and turned to him

“I thought you were smiling at something good.”

Lawrence stopped smiling and put his phone away as Kim continued talking “Why are you chasing after your ex wanting to father her child?”

“You know why I’m doing this. You don’t want to have kids with me so I’m looking at other alternatives.”

“I didn’t say I didn’t want kids with you Lawrence. I’m not ready because our relationship is still new.”

Lawrence nodded “Then don’t mind me.”

“Does that sounds fair to you?”

He turned to her and sighed "Babe this has been bothering me for a while. I've had dreams of having a child with Jane and that must have meant something right? I just want put my heart at ease. If she's not mine then I'll back off."

"I'm just worried because I've been hurt so many times Lawrence. I've been betrayed, lied to and heartbroken so many times and it's difficult to completely trust someone."

"I understand that. I won't hurt you."

He cupped her face and pecked her on the lips then got out of bed.

Later that day at the private hospital, Jane sat in the benches talking on the phone.

“We can see each other some day. I’m busy today.”

Ryan sighed on the other line “I hate how we keep postponing but I understand.”

“How are the dowry negotiations?”

“His uncles are coming this Saturday. They were supposed to come tomorrow but something came up. I’m really nervous.”

Jane let out a small smile “I can imagine. The most important thing is for them to show up.”

She spotted Jamie walking towards her holding Rain's hand and Lawrence walking behind them.
"I have to go. Talk later."

She hung up and moved over making space for her daughter. Jamie picked her up and placed her on his lap as he sat close to Jane.

"Why did you choose this hospital? Do you have money to pay?"

Lawrence sat beside Jamie and glanced to him
"I'll be paying."

Jamie frowned staring at him "Nya nywill be nywaying. This is my child and I will be leaving here with her. Even if you use your money to bribe the doctors I still wouldn't give her to you."

“I’m not scared of you. You think I’m scared of your threats? What do you think you are going to do to me?”

Jamie raised his fist then glanced at Rain then lowered his hand to his lap. Jane side eyed them then looked away.

“Next!” The receptionist announced and Jane stood up and took Rain from Jamie then sighed nervously.

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#41

At the hospital, Jane watched as the doctor zipped up the plastic bags containing their DNA samples then sighed standing up.

“We will sent you the results on Email addresses you provided on the forms.”

Lawrence nodded “It doesn’t take a while right?”

The doctor shook his head then later on they walked out of the hospital. When they got to the

parking Jamie unlocked the door for Rain and then went to Jane and Lawrence.

“I don’t like this.”

Jane turned to him and crossed her arms in silence as Jamie continued “I don’t like this at all. I raised Rain alone while you were enjoying yourself with women and money from your company. Now that you feel incomplete you want to take my child from me? Over my dead body boy.”

Lawrence chuckled in disbelief “If she is mine I will have her. There’s nothing you can say or do that will stop me. You are very stupid for not doing this sooner when your wife was sleeping around. What kind of naivety is that?”

Jamie walked to him fuming and pointed a finger at him “Oh is that so? Wa nyela (you’re mad)”

“Lwena wa nyela (you’re also mad)”

Jamie raised his fist and punched Lawrence’s face sending him stumbling backwards. Jane stepped away from them and crossed her arms leaning against Linda’s car watching as Lawrence marched to him then grabbed him by the neck and punched him. Jamie pushed him off breathing heavily with a bleeding nose.

“O tla nyela boy. I’ll beat you up.”

He bent down picking up a rocks then threw

one at Lawrence then turned around threw one at his car hitting the door. Jane covered her mouth in shock and then marched to them.

“Are you two crazy?”

Lawrence furiously spat saliva mixed with blood from biting his tongue while Jamie blocked his bleeding nose with the sleeve of his blouse.

“Are you seriously fighting in the parking lot where my daughter is watching? What’s wrong with you Lawrence?”

Lawrence frowned in disbelief “Your husband attacked me first. Was I supposed to just stand and let his old ass beat me?”

Jamie charged at him and Jane got in between them and pushed Jamie back “Who are you calling old ass?”

Lawrence pointed a finger at him from behind Jane “I’m calling you!.”

“Can’t you see that people are watching us? Jamie please be a grown up for once. None of you deserve to father Rain after the nonsense you just pulled. You are embarrassing me in front of those people and you are also embarrassing yourself.” She sighed “This how things will go, the three of us will co-parent if Lawrence turns out to be Rain’s father.”

“Excuse me?”

“Yes. Jamie raised her and where were you? You were focused on hating me and demanding money from us that you didn’t think about this. I don’t want issues please. If she’s not yours you will leave me alone and stop coming to my workplace.”

Lawrence sighed “You’re right. I don’t want issues either.”

They both turned to Jamie and he crossed his arms “We will see after getting the results.”

Jane smiled “I’m glad we understood each other.”

She turned away and Lawrence watched her walking away from the cars as Jamie walked to

his without looking back.

“Jane?”

Jane turned around and Lawrence jogged to her
“Sorry about all of that. Your husband just
doesn’t like me. Can I give you a ride home?”

“No need. I have a taxi fare.”

“Okay but I’m offering. I know you don’t trust
me but it’s not like I will kill you.”

She shook her head and walked away only to
have Lawrence grab her arm and pull her back.
“A lot has happened between us and changed
everything and I understand why you’re so

difficult but you are the one who wronged me Jane. Why are you acting like I'm the villain?"

She swallowed then removed her arm from his hold "I never said you were a villain. Being around you is not right for my parole. I'm only here because I also want to know who Rain's father is."

Lawrence sighed defeated "Okay then. See you around."

Jane nodded and walked to the gate. Lawrence went back to his car and leaned on the seat with his eyes closed.

At Jane's house, Petronella stirred the meat in the pot as she talked on the phone.

"I'm settling in very well. My cousin and I aren't close like that but she's actually nice. I mean she trusted me enough to leave me alone in the house. I'm going to enjoy staying here."

"I'm sure the house is beautiful."

"A lot."

"Are you sure you should stay with her? Isn't it dangerous to live with an ex-convict?"

Petronella removed the spoon then closed the lid "Friend it's not like she killed someone and

she's my cousin. She's harmless."

"If you say so. I hope I'm allowed to visit."

She smiled "Of course."

Someone knocked and Petronella quickly bid her friend goodbye and hung up then headed to the door.

"Who is it?"

"Nicolas."

She furrowed her eyebrows then remembered. She opened the door and smiled at him

“Hi. Jane is not here right now.”

“I know but she should be back any minute from now. Can I come in?”

Petronella reluctantly stepped aside and Nico got in. She kept the door open and walked behind him. Nico pulled a chair from the table in the kitchen and sat down while Petronella awkwardly stood beside the stove.

“How old are you?”

Petronella turned to him and cleared her throat
“Twenty two.”

“I can tell. You look fresh.”

Petronella frowned and Nico chuckled “Not in that way. I just mean you look way younger. Jane told me that you found a job here. You’ll like it here.”

“Yeah.”

She checked the time on her phone then texted Jane.

Petronella: Your boyfriend is here. I hope you are not far.

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LIKE&COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#42 #unedited

Petronella put her phone away and glanced at Nico. He also stared at her then cleared his throat.

“You look uncomfortable. I’m sorry about my comment. I meant it as a compliment but it came out disrespectful. I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine.”

Nico shook his head “I’m really sorry.”

Petronella sighed and walked to the chairs and sat down. “I already said it’s fine. I’m just not used to being around men that are older than me.”

“You don’t have uncles?”

“I do but they don’t live with us.”

“Alright I get that.”

“How long have you and Jane known each other?
Where did you guys meet?”

Nico leaned on the couch with a little smile “I’m

a prison warder in women prison so we met there almost four years ago. We started dating after she got out on parole and after separating with her soon to be ex husband.”

The door opened and Jane walked in. Her eyes lit up when she saw Nico. She walked to him and hugged him then sat on the couch with a sigh.

“You didn’t tell me you were coming.”

“I just wanted to surprise you with my presence. How did it go?”

“Let’s go talk in the bedroom. Petro thanks for cooking. Remind me to give you the grocery list and money so you could do grocery shopping. I

won't have time to go to the mall this week."

Petronella nodded "Okay."

Nico stood up and pulled Jane with him. He slung his arm over Jane's shoulders as they headed to the bedroom. They walked in and Jane closed the door and let him to the bed where they laid down with their legs still on the floor.

"We managed to get everything done even though Jamie ended up having a fist fight with Lawrence. I'm just glad it didn't escalate to something horrifying."

"How long are you supposed to wait?"

“Three or more days. It doesn’t take a while since we did it at the private hospital.”

“I’m crossing fingers for you babe.”

“Thanks babe.” She turned her head and kissed him. The kiss got heated and Nico ended on top of her kissing her neck. He removed his shoes then they moved to the middle of the bed. Jane opened the drawer and grabbed condoms.

Jamie walked into the house and ordered food then put his phone on charger.

Rain removed her shoes “I want to bathe.”

“Don’t you want to eat first?”

“But you didn’t cook.”

“I’m waiting for someone to bring food and I will pay. Go switch the TV on and I’ll join you soon.”

She ran off and Jamie sat down and let his mind wonder. What was going to happen if Rain was not his? Was Lawrence even going to allow him to see her. Things between him and Jane didn’t work out but Rain was the best thing that came out of that marriage. Losing her would change everything.

His phone rang on the charger and he rushed to it and answered.

“Malome?”

“Jamie. How are you?”

“I’m good. How are you?”

“Good. I’m calling because I heard from Jane’s aunt that you are divorcing. What’s going on over there?”

“It’s true. We are going to divorce because our marriage is over. There’s no love and respect so what’s the point of holding on?”

“You are right. You tried nephew but some things are just not meant to be. Focus on Linda,

she's carrying your child and you love her."

"Please don't call family meeting. We both want this divorce to happen."

"I won't call a meeting. For once I'm proud of you for choosing to do something sensible. You are finally using your brain and that makes me so happy."

"Thank you malome."

"Gona go lokile (all is well) I will by to visit soon."

"I moved in with Linda. I will send you directions when you are coming to visit. Bye."

The next day Jane and Petronella watched as Nico walked out and Petronella turned to Jane as they stood in the middle of the kitchen.

“He told me that he’s a prison warder. Won’t you get in trouble for sleeping with him?”

“I’m not breaking any law by falling in love.”

Petronella nodded “Does he treat you great?”

Jane smiled “Yes. I used to work hard to be appreciated in the past but he just does that without me having to beg. He’s thoughtful and

gives me his time. He comes to see me even when he's tired from work."

"That's nice. You sound like you really like him."

"I do. I love him and I just want this divorce thing to go as quickly as possible. He was talking about telling his family about me and hopefully pay the bride price."

Petronella nodded and opened her mouth then closed it. She walked to the cabinet and took out cornflakes and Jane opened the fridge and took out a bottle of milk.

"What do you think about him?"

Petronella grabbed the bowls and spoons "Your boyfriend?"

"He's not bad. He's a good guest."

"I'll make you my maid of honor when we get married."

They both laughed and Petronella. Jane sat down and they both had breakfast.

"Your boyfriend said something to me earlier that really made me uncomfortable."

Jane furrowed her eyebrows "What did he say?"

"He said I look fresh."

"Don't overthink. Nicolas is not interested in kids."

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#43

Petronella looked at her in disbelief

“Are you serious?”

Jane shrugged “Kante don’t you get compliments? You look fresh yes. You look young for your age Petronella.”

“Telling someone who’s way younger than you that she’s fresh is not a nice compliment Jane. It’s uncomfortable and sounds very perverted. He apologized for it but you shouldn’t relax and think we want your man. He came here unannounced and made that comment. What was I supposed to think?”

Jane sighed “Sorry. I’ll talk to him.”

“Please and make sure he doesn’t come here unannounced. I know this is your house and

he's your man but you don't live alone anymore. I will start paying rent so I can get a say in this house too."

"Petronella I said sorry. I will talk to him so don't worry."

"Don't be nonchalant about it when you know my past. I don't want to be violated again."

Jane's eyes softened and she guiltily grabbed her hands. "I forgot I'm sorry. I will go to his house from now on. I'm sorry cousin"

"I would really appreciate that."

They finished eating and Jane grabbed her bag

and walked out of the house. Her phone rang just as she stepped out of the gate. She checked it and it was Ryan.

“Hey. Sorry I postponed again...I had to do something with my husband.”

“You’re fixing things?”

“No. We are still divorcing. It’s just peaceful right now and I hope we get it finalized quickly.”

“That’s good to hear. How are you?”

“I’m not complaining. How are the negotiations? I’m sure you are more than nervous.”

“They postponed again but they are certain that tomorrow is the day.”

“I hope things go well. You deserve a chance to be happy after so many years behind bars without visits from anyone. You know what? I’ll text you my address so you could come later. Right now I’m on my way to work.”

“Okay then bye.”

“Bye girl.”

She hung up and texted her afterwards she typed a message for Nico.

Jane: Hi. Please call or text me next time you

decide to come by. I live with someone now and I don't want to see her men coming in and out of my house thinking it's a normal thing to drop by unannounced.

Nico: I'm sorry babe. No more surprises and I'm sure she told you everything. I'm sorry about that too. I promise I meant no harm. I love you

Jane: I love you.

She put the phone in her bag then crossed the road and walked on the sidewalk heading to the hospital.

At Linda's parents', Jamie walked into the house holding Rain's hand. Linda led them to the living room where they sat down.

"I don't see you for a day and you already have bruises"

Jamie took out his phone and checked his face on the screen.

"Bruises where?"

Linda narrowed her eyes "Your nose is clearly crooked."

Rain twisted her doll's hair "Daddy was fighting."

“Really Jamie?”

“It’s not a big deal. I had a fight with Jane’s ex while we were at hospital. Jane wanted to confirm paternity before going through with the divorce. The other man thinks he’s the father.”

Linda’s eyes widened “Wow. I bet that man is not the only man she slept with before her daughter was conceived. That woman is loose I tell you and I’m thankful that you are divorcing her.”

“Can you not say things like that in front of Rain? Jane is her mother don’t forget that.”

“So what? It’s not like I’m lying. Going to jail was

definitely good for her. I mean what was she going to teach Rain? The child was going to become a wh—”

“Linda!”

“I’ll stop.”

“Thank you. Where are your parents?”

“They went to church. I left my phone in my room, let me go get it.”

She stood up and walked away. Jamie grabbed the remote and switched on the TV. Seconds later came back holding her phone and then she froze and Jamie noticed her leggings getting

wet. She touched herself and smelt her fingers

“I think my water just broke.”

Jamie stood up in panic and rushed to her and cupped her face.

“Are you sure?”

“What do you mean am I sure? You think I can just pee myself. Go start the car I’m going to call mom.”

Jamie ran out of the house leaving Rain in confusion. Linda dialed her mother and she frowned in pain as the phone rang.

“Hello?”

“The baby is coming. Meet us at the private hospital.”

“Oh my goodness we are coming.”

She hung up and balanced herself with the walls walking to the couch. Rain approached her and she grabbed her hand

“Are you sick mommy? Is the baby coming out of your belly?”

“Yes sweetie.” She hissed in pain then grabbed Rain’s little hand “Are you excited?”

“Yes.”

Jamie rushed back in and helped her up. They walked to the car and when they got there Linda started screaming louder. Rain stared at her with tears in her eyes as Jamie strapped her with the seat belt.

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At the hospital an hour later, Jamie held on Linda's hand as she rotated on the exercise ball. Her eyebrows were pinched tightly and the grip on Jamie's hand tightened occasionally.

“Are you good babe? Well despite the pain?”

“I will be fine after giving birth Jamie!”

She stood up and Jamie walked around the ward with her. The midwife came back and Linda walked to her screaming “I’m ready to push.” She gritted her teeth groaning loudly as the veins on her neck popped. Two nurses walked in and they helped her on the bed. After several minutes of her pushing, she collapsed onto the bed breathing heavily as the midwife took the baby.

“It’s a boy.”

Jamie tearfully leaned down and kissed Linda’s lips then walked closer to the midwife. He sniffled as he stared at his son who didn’t look pleasant at the moment.

Later that day Lawrence walked to his car after knocking off and he sighed loosening his tie. He unlocked his phone and checked his emails. An email from the hospital caught his eye and his heart skipped. He clicked on it then read

“Mr Lawrence...

He skipped the beginning and his eyes stayed on the numbers. He sighed in disappointment at the “ is the biological father of Rain Banda with the probability of 0.00%. “

EIGHT MONTHS LATER

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THE PROTECTOR

#44

Eight Months Later

At Sophia's, Jane tapped her foot against the floor as she sat in the bedroom with Petronella anxiously. She opened her mouth and gagged loudly feeling the urge to throw up. She covered her mouth and swallowed.

Petronella sighed “I don’t know why you’re worried because you are sure that Nicolas loves you. He made sure to get things right with me for your sake. He was yours the minute he started looking out for you in jail.”

“I know and I’m sure he loves me but dowry negotiations don’t usually go well Petronella. My friend Ryan’s negotiations went so horrible because the families couldn’t agree on nything.”

“Did the fiancé stay?”

“He stayed and they’ll be having a white wedding before this year ends.”

“See? Everything will go well don’t stress

yourself.”

“Why don’t you go and eavesdrop?”

Petronella cocked her head in disbelief “No Jane I can’t do that. Just relax and wait for mom to call you.”

Her phone rang and it was Ryan. She stood up and headed to the window where she could see the cars of Nico’s uncles then answered her phone.

Meanwhile the elders sat in the living room and one of Nico’s uncles shook his head.

“You are demanding too many cows here. We

heard that your daughter has a child and is freshly out of another marriage. Let's not forget the fact that she's an ex convict and we are not sure—"

Jane's younger uncle interrupted "Don't come here and disrespect us. Your son is the one who wants our daughter right? We have a right to demand akere Jane is still young and she's educated."

Nico's uncle bowed "I didn't mean to offend you. I'm just saying the money you are demanding is too much and you also want cows on top of that and let's not forget that these white weddings are expensive too."

Nico's aunt nodded "We don't mind paying with cows as long as you lower the amount. We are

not from a royal family please don't bankrupt us."

Jane's uncle facepalmed then laughed. Sophia covered her mouth joining in. The tension evaporated as everyone giggled along.

Nico sat with Lefa outside his chesanyama with drinks on the table.

"Do you think everything is going well with the negotiations?"

Nico nodded "I hope everything is well because I don't want issues. The sooner I get done with

the negotiations the sooner Jane and I can start with the wedding preparations.”

Lefa shook his head “Hold on man, don’t you think it’s too soon for a wedding? I mean yeah I get the customary marriage thing but a whole white wedding after knowing this woman for few months?”

“Jane and I got to know each other when she was still in jail. I thought you were cool with Jane, what has changed?”

“I’m still cool with Jane but let’s not forget that she just got divorced. Why not wait for another year before having a white wedding?”

Nico sighed “I’m not getting younger Lefa. I

want to do this while I'm still alive. Life is too short. Maybe it's all rushed to you but I love Jane and I respect her enough to make her my wife."

"She'll be your wife after today mon."

"I hear you but you don't understand what I'm saying. Christian couples usually marry after few weeks of meeting each other. You know how much I hate sneaking around and moving from one place to another. I want to be able to see Jane whenever I want. Have her body and not feel ashamed for walking around the house nude."

Lefa raised his arms in surrender then grabbed his drink on the table "As long as you love her. I'm happy for you." He took a sip and Nico

stared at him suspiciously

“Do you have a crush on her?”

Lefa swallowed his drink then laughed then his face hardened “First of all I’m married to the most beautiful, kindest and loving woman in the world, secondly don’t disrespect me like that by asking such questions. You are rushing this relationship and I’m telling you as it is. Since when did advising turn into wanting people’s women? Don’t disrespect me like that Nico I’m way older than you.”

“Sorry but let’s not talk about my relationship and focus on something else. I’m still anxious because nobody called with feedback.”

Later on Jane cleared the dishes off the table with a small smile on her face. Her aunt walked in the kitchen and crossed her arms with a smile then ululated. Jane turned to her and blushed then laughed.

“I’m so glad everything went well. You and Nicolas better discuss the dates for the wedding. The Leopengs are really nice people you know?”

“We will auntie. I’m so glad things went smoothly. Where’s Petronella?”

“She dolled herself up and went out with her friend. I’m so happy for you Jane. Nico is a nice

young man and I'm glad he's treating you well."

"Me too. Let me finish up here and get going."

Sophia frowned "I thought you were going to stay here for the night."

"I can't aunty. I don't want to get in trouble with my parole officer. This place is far and you have no idea how much I had to beg her to allow me to attend my lobola negotiations."

Her aunt nodded "I understand, I will visit. Will Nico be the one to fetch you?"

"No no. I'll just hitchhike. Tell Petronella to not come late."

She walked to the gate and hiked a taxi passing. A while later she got in the yard feeling nauseous from so many scents in the taxi. She bent down vomiting then she pushed soil to her mess then headed to the house with her heart pounding. Once inside, she rinsed her mouth then opened the cabinet and took out a pregnancy test kit. She peed on it and put it in the basin then washed her hands.

Nerves wrecked her body as she texted Nicolas..

Jane: Just got home. Don't bother going to pick me up. I'm glad things went well. I can't wait to be Mrs Leopeng.

Nico: You're already my wife. I miss you so

much...I'll come see you tomorrow.

After switching off her phone she walked closer to the sink and peeked closer. Her heart skipped a double the two clear lines.

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2nd insert coming soon

Like & comment

THE PROTECTOR

#45

She stared at the pregnancy test and released a shaky breath. She flushed the toilet then grabbed the test kit and broke it then threw it in the bin. She walked to her room then dialed Ryan.

“Darling?”

She blew air into her fist before saying “Ryan I’m pregnant.”

“Congratulations mom—”

“Don’t Congratulate me Ryan I’m panicking.

Nick and have been using condoms and he sometimes pulled out.”

“Jane akere you know that these things are not to be trusted. You can still get pregnant even after taking morning after pill. Congratulations mommy. It’s a blessing plus Nico just paid the bride price and you are deeply in love.”

She sighed “I’m not sure if he wants kids. I love kids and I want Rain to have a sibling but I don’t know about him friend.”

“You never had the baby talk?”

“No and he’s always using condoms so I’m not sure. He never said anything about children so I was nervous to ask him. What if he doesn’t

want kids?”

“Why wouldn’t he want them? He wants to marry you. Stay positive Jane. Don’t ruin this beautiful day...you just got married traditionally and the Lord decides to bless you. Don’t overthink. Tell him then you’ll decide from there.”

“How do you think he will react?”

“I don’t want to give you hope for anything babes but most men want children. I suggest you tell him in person.”

“Okay. Sharp...I’ll call you tomorrow.”

“Bye. Congrats once again.”

“Thank you.”

She sat on the bed and took off her bandana then grabbed her satin bonnet and put it on. She laid on the bed and rubbed a hand on her belly. It's been almost a year of dating...were they ready for a child?

She called Nico and the phone rang for a while and she hung up.

Ryan joined her fiancé in bed and laid on his chest. He gently pushed her hair back and

started massaging her scalp.

“Ben?”

“Yes baby?”

She glanced at him then laid back down with her eyes closed “What do you think it’s the right time to get married?”

“After a year or two of knowing each other. It depends on whether you’re ready or not babe. Why are you asking?”

She shook her head “I’m worried about Jane. She’s rushing to get pregnant and now she just found out that she’s pregnant. I can’t even say

anything negative because I don't want to be called a fake friend but the guy she's marrying is a womanizer. He used to sleep with every newbie in prison to 'protect' them.

"Ohh that guy?"

"Yes him. I'm not sure if he's still doing that but I'm worried. Jane loves him so much."

Ben removed his hand from Jane's head and turned her face "Your friend is a big girl and I'm sure she knows what she's doing. You are doing great by not being too much in her business but sometimes just advise her and if she calls you names then your friendship is not meant to be."

“She’s my only friend babe. You know that nobody here wants to be associated with someone who’s a murderer.”

“It was an accident Ryan and it was a long time ago. You can’t be crucified for that for life. I’ll be your friend.”

Ryan giggled “You’re my man. I want to gossip phela.”

“We can gossip.” And with a high pitch voice he asked “Or you want to be called chommie too?”

Ryan burst out laughing and got off of him. She hit his chest and Ben laughed along with her. She laid back beside him and turned kissing his cheek.

“Are you sure Junior is asleep?”

“He was pretty out and didn’t even want a bed time story. Too much playing helped us out.”

She smiled mischievously then palmed him through his pants. Ben groaned a little then sat up pulling her into a kiss.

Linda walked into their bedroom after putting their son to sleep and got on the bed.

“I need that eighty thousand babe. Don’t forget to send it.”

Jamie furrowed his eyebrows “Which one?”

“The one I paid Jane. I need to do something with it so please make sure you send it this month.”

“Give me another month. Business is not doing great and the new taxi driver is giving me issues with payment. I’ll make sure to pay it the first of the second month.”

“Okay but don’t give me excuses next month. I need to extend the house. I think you should start another business and not rely on your quantum to bring you money at least be the driver. Paying someone won’t do us good.”

Jamie frowned "Is everything okay?"

"Everything is fine Jamie. I just want you to be responsible and provide. I don't think I can be a wife and provider at the same time."

"I bring money in the house Linda. It's not like I'm not doing anything."

"Ee but you don't know how to use money. I don't want to argue, just drive the quantum and fire that guy. You can't always roam around the house. People talk and I hate it."

He swallowed and put his phone on charger then faced the other way. Linda looked at the baby monitor before switching the lights off.

At the club, Petronella grabbed her friend's shoulder balancing herself as she twerked to the fast beat. She laughed loudly and took a sip out of her bottle not forgetting to block the opening with her thumb. Lefa tapped Nico on the shoulder then pointed forward.

"Isn't that Jane's little sister?"

Nico turned and cursed "Dammit!"

He marched to her and grabbed her arm and Petronella turned around and met Nicolas's eyes, she was clearly wasted. He stared at her long and hard before tightening his hold on her arm and pulled her outside.

“Uh-uh man Nicolas! Let me go...eish!” She protested as she stumbled after him. Nico dragged her to his car and opened the door.

“Get inside.”

“No you’re not my father.”

“Petronella don’t dare piss me off. Get the fvck in.”

She got in the car and Nico slammed the door then walked around to the passenger seat. He turned to her and glanced at her mini skirt and moved to her silky crop top that exposed her perky breasts.

“You are not even wearing a fvcking bra. Why would your mother allow you to get out dressing like a harlot? Does Jane know you’re here. Do you know that this club is only for prostitutes?”

Petronella pointed a finger at him “Wena what are you doing in this place? I want to go back inside. I’m not a child who you can babysit.”

“I’m taking you home whether you like it or not. I can’t have you acting like this on my watch.

She grabbed the door and Nico grabbed her arm and pulled her. Petronella let out a drunken sob and leaned to Nico’s chest then raised her head. Nico stared at her beautiful innocent face

and her lips parted slightly probably to protest.
He swallowed hard

“You’re gorgeous you know that? I know I shouldn’t say such things to you especially since you’re Jane’s cousin but you are so pretty.”

“Why?”

“Why what?”

“Nick you shouldn’t say things like this when you are marrying my sister. The lobola negotiations were today for goodness sake.”

“I can’t help it.”

“Then don’t go through with the wedding.”

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#46

“What?”

“You clearly have your eyes on someone else. You can’t tie someone to you then explore. Let her go if you are not ready to commit Nick.”

“I love her but I like you too. I tried to ignore this because I didn’t want to make you uncomfortable but I can’t anymore. I know this is very wrong and I feel ashamed but I will tell Jane and—”

“Stop. I can’t Nico. I can’t do that to Jane and I’m seeing someone. Please never try something like this again if you love her like you claim.”

She opened the door and stepped out. Nico watched her as she headed back inside. He covered his face groaning in frustration. The thought of other men touching her annoyed him

and he stepped out and went back inside. He stepped Lefa and walked to him.

“What took you so long?”

He shrugged then looked around for Petronella. He spotted her dancing with her friend and sighed in relief. Lefa stared at Nico then tapped his shoulder.

“Are you okay?”

“Yeah.”

“No you’re not. You’re anxious and who are you staring at?”

“No one Jamie. Let’s leave, I don’t want to be here anymore.”

He clicked his tongue then walked out. Lefa looked around before following him outside. He watched as Nico threw the can of the drink away and headed to his car.

“Eh mon what’s going on? What did Jane’s sister say to you?”

“She doesn’t want to go home. I want to leave I’m tired.”

Lefa stared at him then looked away without saying anything which Nico was really thankful for. He started the car then drove away from the place.

The next morning Petronella knocked on Jane's bedroom door and waited with a pounding headache. The door opened and Jane yawned

"What time did you get home?"

"Around one in the morning. I'll never do that again."

Jane laughed "You always say this but keep going."

"I'm out of painkillers. Do you have some? I have a headache that is out of this world."

“Go check in the bathroom cabinet.”

She rushed to the bathroom and opened the cabinet taking out tablets. She walked to the basin and grabbed a plastic cup and filled with water. After swallowing the pills and washed her face and stared at her reflection in the mirror. The conversation she had with Nicolas came back and she sighed and walked out of the bathroom. Someone knocked and she headed to the door. She pulled the door opened and Nico walked in.

“Hi.”

“Hi.”

Jane walked in putting on her gown. She walked over to Nico and hugged him. He leaned down and kissed her lips.

“Good morning Mrs Leopeng.”

Jane giggled loudly and her arms stayed on his neck. She laid her head on his chest and Nico met Petronella’s eyes. Petronella watched him as he pulled Jane’s chin and kissed her. She turned away and walked back to her bedroom.

Jamie leaned on the wall outside his house as he talked on the phone.

“I don’t know man. I feel like Linda is cheating.”

“For asking you to pay her money back?”

He sighed “Not only that Lefa. Her tone was not the one I’m used to. She doesn’t even care if she offends me.”

“That is not a sign of cheating. That’s a woman showing you that she’s fed up. You are going to turn Linda into Jane. Linda is a very smart woman who’s educated and I don’t think she enjoys hearing about her colleagues’ successful husbands while you laze around the house.”

“It’s not like I’m not bringing anything to the table.”

“It’s not enough man. You have to start doing more...she’s probably depressed. Raising a child is a hard job. Do the dishes and help out with the pots. Take your son and Rain then walk around. Women are complicated but they are easy to please.”

“You think that might work?”

“Yeah and pay her money back.”

“Thanks man.”

“I should’ve done psychology. I’ll start charging you for the advices I give everyday.”

Jamie smiled a little “it’s your responsibility as

my best friend to advise me. Make sure I don't mess up."

"Talk to you later man, I have my own paradise to fix."

"Sharp."

He hung up then walked back in the house. The sink was full of dishes and the house was a mess. He walked to the sink and folded the sleeve of his vest before draining the water then sorting out the dishes.

At Jane's house, Jane nervous grabbed on

Nico's hands and they sat on the couch. She bit her lip nervously then take a big breath before releasing.

"I have something to tell you but I'm not sure how you'll feel about it."

Nico nodded encouraging her to go on. "Feel free to talk babe."

"I'm pregnant."

He searched his face and Nico smiled then leaned in and kissed her. The kiss was long and Jane relaxed to it and smiled pulling away.

"I found out today. Are you okay with it?"

Nico nodded still smiling "That's my child you are carrying of course I'm okay with it. Go freshen up so we can go out to celebrate."

Jane giddily stood up and walked to her room. Petronella who was eavesdropping followed her into her bedroom.

"You're pregnant? You're keeping the baby?"

Jane turned to her and frowned "What kind of a question is that?"

"I just think you are rushing this whole thing."

Jane crossed her arms "How am I rushing? This

man just paid lobola for me.”

“The same man told me that he likes me. He’s hitting on me and he’s been hitting on me. He was even staring at me while he was kissing you. He doesn’t respect you Jane.”

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Like & comment.

See you on Monday.

THE PROTECTOR

#47

Jane's eyebrows narrowed as her lips pulled into a straight line.

"What did you say?"

Petronella uncrossed her arms "He hit on me. I know that you won't believe me because he paid magadi for you just yesterday but I'm telling you the truth."

"Nicolas will never do that. What would his reason be because we are so in love?"

Petronella chuckled in disbelief "Jane you like

vouching for this man right? Men don't need reasons to cheat. It's up to us women to stay away when they start showing signs of not being appreciative."

"You know what, thank you for being honest with me. Thank you for looking out for me but I've been married before and I've also been in love and foolish. I won't be a fool twice so don't bother yourself worrying about me."

Petronella nodded "I'm glad you are listening to me. That's all and congratulations on your pregnancy. I hope you know what you are doing Jane because a baby is a big responsibility and—"

Jane raised her hand in annoyance shushing her "I have a child and you don't, what makes

you such an expert?”

“I’m just saying”

“Don’t forget that I’m way older than you. Watch your tone when you talk to me. Why are you talking to me like I’m a teenager?”

“Because I care about you and I think you are making a big mistake of giving Nico a child when you don’t know him that well. You’re so confident that he loves you and you don’t even take few seconds to consider what I’m saying. Your man wants me and it started when he made that comment.”

Jane closed her eyes calming herself then opened

“Let’s have this conversation another day. It’s beginning to make me really angry.”

“Ee akere deep down you know that I’m right? You are so naïve for someone who went to jail and i—”

Jane yanked her by the braids and slapped her so hard in the face. Petronella’s head turned to the side as a shocked gasp escaped her lips. Jane pulled the braids down twisting her head upward as she came closer.

“I will beat you do you hear me? Never ever talk to me like I’m one of your friends.”

She pushed her back and Petronella swallowed

as her eyes welled up with tears. "You will regret putting your hands on me!"

Jane walked to her and slapped her again. Petronella let out a sob then slapped Jane across the face.

Jane pushed her back "You're fighting me in my house? Get out of my house!"

Petronella walked out of the room and went to her room and shut the door and started packing.

At Linda's that night, Linda walked into the kitchen yawning and walked to the fridge while

fastening her loose silky gown. She glanced at the dishes and noticed they were washed, dried and nicely packed. She smiled and opened the fridge then took out two bottles of drinks and went back to the bedroom where Jamie was lying on the bed with his arms above his head.

“Catch!” Linda said and threw the bottle at him.

Jamie caught it then sat up with a lazy smile. Linda got on the bed and sat beside him. She opened her drink and took a sip.

“Thank you for doing the dishes. Seeing them clean really made my night.”

Jamie smiled “You don’t have to thank me. I know how hard you work to keep this family

together and I'm the one who should thank you. I'll help out from now on babe. I'll help out with the chores and start driving my own quantum to make more money."

Linda leaned in and kissed him "That would make things way better. I'm sorry I've been so difficult to deal with these past few days."

"I understand. How about we take the kids to the park tomorrow and buy ice creams, just to get fresh air?"

"Isn't it Jane's turn to spend time with Rain?"

"Her lobola negotiations were yesterday if I'm not mistaken. She has to be busy."

Linda nodded "Okay then we will take the kids out."

The next day Jane knocked furiously on Petronella's door. She twisted the handle and the door was yanked open.

Jane stared at her nicely applied make up "I hope you got time to pack because I want you out of my house by the end of today."

"Sorry about yesterday. I didn't mean to raise my hand but I had to defend myself."

Jane scoffed "Defend yourself? In my house? I

don't want to hear apologies right now. I want you out. You are very disrespectful Petronella and I now understand why you and I never got along. Out of my house!"

"Jane please. Where am I supposed to go?"

"You should've thought of that when you were behaving like a bull."

Petronella shook her head in disbelief "Please let's not be irrational—"

Jane pushed her aside and got into the room. She grabbed the suitcase and pulled her duvet on the bed. Petronella rushed to her and grabbed her bag.

“Jane...”

She ignored her and pulled them outside.
Petronella followed her protested as her duvet swept the floor until Jane got outside.

“Jane!”

Jane turned around and pointed a finger at her
“I really don’t want to go back to jail Petronella so please leave peacefully.”

The gate opened and Nico walked in. He frowned at the scene and approached the ladies.

“What’s going on?”

Jane glared at him then dropped Petronella's bag and duvet on the dusty ground then walked back inside.

Nico bent down and picked up the things as Petronella swallowed multiple lumps.

"Kante what's going on? What happened to your face?"

Petronella's tears dropped and she sniffled embarrassed. Nico glanced at her tear stained face then took out his car keys and handed them to her.

"Jane's pregnant, it must be the hormones. Go stay in the car I will sort this out."

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LIKE& COMMENT

I guess we'll see each other tomorrow with our normal schedule. Please reach the target

THE PROTECTOR

#48

Nico folded the quilt for her then handed it to her. He watched as Petronella headed to the gate and stepped out of the yard. He sighed then walked to the house. He pushed the door open and walked in.

“Jane?”

He headed to the bedroom and peeked in watching as she furiously made her bed.

“Babe kante what’s going on? Why are you throwing Petronella out of the house?” Jane stopped what she was doing “What do see in Petronella because she’s a child? Why are you hitting on her Nicolas? Le gona why would you even do that to me?”

Nico's heart skipped "What are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about you hitting on my cousin who's way younger than you."

Nico composed himself and his face turned serious "Forgetting that Petronella is your cousin, why would I even look at another woman when I just paid the price for you?"

Jane crossed her arms "I'm asking you that question Nico. Petronella is disrespectful and it started after you started giving her attention."

"I see Petronella as a little sister and I have never done anything with her. I'm surprised you are doubting me when we are in the process of

getting married. I feel so offended and also disappointed because I never expected this kind of behavior from you. I should've been the one with doubts considering your past but here we are."

Jane swallowed "Petronella told me—"

"And you believed her without hesitation. Have I ever given you a reason to not trust me because I've been nothing but a good man for you. I make time for you, communicate, I love you and also love your daughter."

Jane looked down "Put yourself in my shoes and—"

"Just stop. I'm going to confront to Petronella

because this is unacceptable. Why would she tell you such lies?"

He walked out and Jane sat on the bed swallowing. Nico walked out of the house and breathed out when he got outside. He walked to his car and found Petronella on the phone. He got in and closed the door

Petronella sighed "Yeah I'm not going to work chommie. Thanks for offering to accommodate me." She paused "Okay we will talk when I get there. Sharp."

She hung up and glanced at Nicolas. He reached forward and cupped her face and Petronella shifted her head to the side and cleared her throat.

“You told Jane that I hit on you.”

Petronella crossed her arms “And look where that got me.”

“I’m sorry. All of this is my fault I know. I will take you to your friend as an apology and I’ll convince Jane to let you stay with her.”

“No. She humiliated me. I don’t think it’s a good idea to drive me around. You’re her fiancé and I don’t want to get caught in whatever you are doing.”

Nico sighed “It’s just from here to your friend’s place. I can’t let you ride a taxi with your belongings. Please let me just do this. I will

leave you alone after that...I like you but I know it's going to cause a lot of problems."

"Okay."

At the hospital later that morning, Jane walked behind the desk sighing and sorted out the files. Her head pounded as her mind flashed back to the conversation she's had with Nico.

After handing out the files to their owners. She grabbed her phone and called Ryan.

"Hey boo."

“Hi.”

“You don’t sound cheerful this morning. Please don’t tell me Nico is not excited about the baby.”

Jane sighed “He is. We argued about something else this morning and he’s not answering my calls. I made him angry and I don’t know what to think. Petronella told me that he was hitting on her and I just lashed out now he’s mad because I don’t trust him.”

“You think Petronella is right?”

“I don’t know but she can’t make up something like this. I’m so conflicted and I wish I wasn’t pregnant right now. What if she’s right and I’m

waiting for a heartbreak? What if she's wrong and I'm ruining a good thing? Nico treats me so good Ryan, he's so good to me."

"I don't know what to tell you honestly because I don't know your cousin that well. Don't let this affect the baby."

"Yeah." She sighed "I have to work friend but we will talk."

"Bye."

She hung up and sighed heavily.

Later that day Petronella woke up to giggles and a male voice. She opened her eyes and got off the bed walking out of the room, she looked outside and her friend Masego was sitting with a man. When her friend spotted her standing on the doorway she stood up and pushed her in the room then closed the door.

Petronella frowned "What's going on?"

Masego glanced back then smiled "I'm not kicking you out neh? But my man is here and is very stressed. I want to cheer him up so I need you to be scarce tonight."

"Masego where am I supposed to go?"

" make a plan Petronella. You shouldn't have

provoked Jane.”

Petronella laughed in disbelief “Wow.”

“Don’t act like you don’t know that I’m in a serious relationship and my man lives far from here and right now I want him because I missed him. I won’t explain myself in my own place... make a plan for tonight.”

“Sorry. I’m just not having a good day. I have to look for a place to stay because I don’t want to end up cramping your style.”

Masego smiled “I’ll help you out.”

Petronella nodded and walked over to the bed.

She grabbed her bag and took out a phone then sent a text to Jane and her phone vibrated as the text didn't go through. Her thumb hovered on Nico's contact and she clicked on it.

Petronella: Hi. I need a favor. Jane blocked me and I'm in need for a place to sleep tonight.

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Thanks for reaching the target.

LIKE&COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#49

Later that morning Jane stepped outside the hospital and looked around the cars before crossing the road. Her phone rang as she headed to one of her favorite fast food restaurant.

“Jamie?”

“Hey. Rain wants to talk to you.”

Jane smiled and stepped into the restaurant
“Give her the phone.”

She walked to the machine and started ordering

as Jamie handed Rain the phone.

“Mama I miss you.”

Jane smiled emotionally “Ncoo I miss you too my baby. Tell daddy to bring you home after school okay? I miss you so much. How was school?”

“Not fun.”

“Why? Is someone giving you trouble at school? Are the big kids teasing you?”

“Ae...I don’t like eating the food they give us. Please mommy make me lunch when I go to school. Auntie can’t make me lunch because

she's always busy. She goes to work early and daddy doesn't cook nice food."

Jane laughed and swiped her card in the machine. She grabbed her receipt then walked over to the seats waiting for her order.

"I'll make you lunch okay?"

"Okay. I'm giving daddy the phone but I will talk to you tomorrow after school okay mommy?"

"Okay baby. I'll see you tomorrow."

Jamie laughed after few seconds "Hei Rain is reporting us. I'll bring her over tomorrow."

“Okay thanks.”

After hanging up, she called Nico. The phone rang few times before going to voicemail. She sighed then sent a message to him.

Jane: I know you can see my calls but you are choosing to not answer any. I don't like how we left things earlier and I'm sorry but put yourself in my shoes, you would have acted the same...probably more dramatic. Ignoring me won't solve anything and all of this is stressing my baby.

Minutes passed and she went to collect her order. Her phone dinged with a message and she checked quickly.

Nicolas: I'm not ignoring you. I'm just giving you space because you are still angry and I don't want us to throw words at each other. I'm your husband and it stings a little that you don't trust me. I will come over before going to work later so we can talk properly.

She sighed and put her phone away without replying.

At the B&B, Petronella looked around and then turned to Nico.

"Thanks for bringing me here. I will pay you for petrol when I get paid."

Nico shook his head shoving his hands in his pockets “Don’t worry about it. You should get your own place as soon as possible to avoid things like these. It’s really hard to do whatever you want in someone’s home.”

Petronella sighed “It’s just that accommodation is really expensive this side, even a shack is expensive and my workplace doesn’t have an accommodation for employees. Jane and I had a nice arrangement and...” she sighed

Nico checked the time and glanced at her “I need to get going and get a nap before going to work.”

He moved closer and wrapped his hand around her neck and leaned down kissing her cheek. Petronella felt her nunu throbbing as his nice

cologne filled her nose and his hand tightening on her neck. He pulled away and Petronella stared at him with her lips parted. Nico leaned in again and baby kissed her

“I’ll see you tomorrow.”

He stepped back and she grabbed his arm and shyly looked down as she held onto it. Nico pulled her to him and hugged her then leaned down capturing her lips. He slowly walked them to the bed and gently laid her down. He balanced himself with his elbows as he hovered above her. He kissed her neck and Petronella moved her head away and pushed his chest.

Nico frowned “Are you okay?”

“She’s pregnant. What if she—”

“She won’t find out. We will be careful. I like you Petronella. I like your beautiful face and personality. I love Jane but I can’t stop thinking about you.”

“This is so wrong and—”

Nico kissed her and lowered his hips down to hers sending shivers down her spine. She breathed shakily as he kissed her neck while gently grinding against her. Petro opened her legs slightly and moaned as he grinded straight to her core. He pushed her leggings down and unzipped his pants. Petronella reached for her handbag and pulled out a condom.

That evening Petronella laid comfortably on the bed as she talked on the phone with her friend.

“I didn’t know you had it in you.”

She sighed and massaged her head “I regret it for so many reasons Masego. Firstly this man is older than me, I know nothing about him and he’s my brother in law. I shouldn’t have slept with him.”

“But you did. He’s handsome on the pictures, I can’t imagine in person especially in bed. Was he amazing?”

Petronella blushed “So good. He was in control and made me feel loved. I’ve never enjoyed sex since the sexual assault but he made me feel so good after so long.”

“But you know that this is not a good idea right?”

“I know Masego and I won’t let him close to me like that again and I’m not doing it for Jane. I just don’t want to divide our family.”

“Yeah and sneaking around never ends well. Did you use protection?”

“Always.”

Another call came through and Petronella's heart skipped as Jane's name flashed on the screen.

"Chommie I will call you later." She hung up and answered Jane's call.

"Hey I thought you blocked—"

"Come take the rest of your things tomorrow and make sure you call auntie while at it and tell her that you are moving out. She'll be disappointed to know that you are a home wrecker hiding behind a façade."

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#50

The next day Petronella walked into Masego's house and grabbed her bag for work. Masego finished tying her head wrap and turned to Petronella.

"I talked to my close co-worker and asked her to help out with accommodation. I hope you don't mind traveling thirty minutes to work."

Petronella shook her head “No as long as I don’t spend money in B&Bs. How much is the rent?”

Masego grabbed her phone and glanced at her. “R900 and that one is a little close. It’s a shack.”

Petronella’s eyes widened “No friend I don’t have that kind of money. I can manage with R700.”

“Petronella safety also counts here. Rooms that are below 1K are not safe. Do you want to always complain about break ins? You messed up your thing with Janee so make a plan or go back home to your mother and travel 4hours everyday.”

She sighed “Fine ask your colleague give me her

landlord's contacts."

"So..." Masego started as she grabbed her makeup brush and walked to the mirror "What are you going to do with Nicolas?"

Petronella shrugged "Nothing. What happened will never happen again."

Masego laughed "I doubt it. I've been with a married man before and it was hell after the wife found out. I'm so glad I didn't get pregnant because that would've been another disaster."

"I'm not going to continue with Nick, Masego."

Masego raised her hands in surrender "Okay

okay. Let's finish up so we can leave."

At Jane's, Nico parked at the gate yawning and grabbed the plastic bag full of goodies on the passenger seat then sighed walking out. He opened the gate and walked into the yard. Once at the door, he knocked and waited few minutes.

"Who is it?" Jane's voice echoed from inside

"Your hubby."

The door opened and Nico smiled at her. He pulled her by waist and kissed her. Jane giggled as he leaned down kissing her stomach.

“I brought you some things. I don’t know what you feel like eating but I got almost everything I know you like.”

He handed her the plastic bag and Jane peeked inside and gasped “You bought marshmallows? Babe I love you. Thank you.”

He walked in and Jane closed the door. They headed to the living room where they relaxed on the couch.

“I’m sorry about yesterday. I shouldn’t have lashed out. You have every right to question me Jane. I was supposed to assure you and not get defensive like I had done something. I don’t want to stress you, you are carrying my child.

I'm sorry."

She smiled "It's okay. We both overreacted. I was so angry at Petronella and I just took some of the anger out on you."

"So we are okay?"

Jane nodded and Nico leaned in and kissed her forehead. She opened the plastic and took out the packet of marshmallows and started to eat.

"Does your aunt know about the baby?"

"No. I haven't had time to say something."

"Can we keep it to ourselves for now? I know

family is family but pregnancy is something really sensitive.”

Jane nodded in understanding “Okay I don’t mind but Petronella already knows so she might tell her.”

“I don’t think she will especially after your disagreement. I’m not saying hide it from them but family can get too involved when it concerned pregnancies and ends up ruining things.”

“Okay I hear you.”

His phone vibrated and it was Petronella. He glanced at Jane then stood up checking the message.

Petronella: What happened was a mistake. I can't continue with something that might divide my family.

He put his phone away and cleared his throat.
"Sorry about that. I have to go see Lefa before going to my place to sleep.

"Oh? I thought you were going to nap here and leave later."

"Akere you have to go to work? I can't just sleep here in your absence. Next week I will be working day shift so we will spend a lot of our nights together. Make sure you book an appointment for a check up. I'll be going with you."

He grabbed her arm and pulled her up. He leaned in kissing her and Jane hummed a little as she wrapped her arms around him.

“I have few minutes to spare. Let’s take this to the bedroom.”

Jane squealed loudly and then laughed as Nico bend down picking her up in a bridal style.

Later that day Petronella walked out of the school and stood by the road waiting for a taxi. She took out her phone and called her mother.

“Hello?”

“Hello mama. How are you?”

“I’m good my girl. How are you?”

“I’m also good. I wanted to tell you that I moved out of Jane’s house.”

“Why? Is everything okay?”

“We had a disagreement and that got me thinking that I’ve overstayed my welcome. I’m looking for my own place because Jane just got engaged and I don’t want to intrude in her house.”

“Oh gona it’s fine my girl. I will come see you once you find the place. I hope everything is alright there and I hope you and Jane have fixed whatever you disagreed on. You are both my daughters and I want you to get along.”

Petronella swallowed her guilt and hiked a taxi
“Yeah we did. Taxi just got here. We will talk later mama.”

“Bye bye.”

She hung up and the taxi stopped. She got in and sat down closing the door. A message came through and she checked the name. She clicked on it then read through

Nico: I was with Jane earlier but I’m home now.

474 Moloi street. I'm sure you've knocked off by now. I prefer to talk about this in person.

Petronella: No. I'm serious about this Nico. We can't continue like you're not someone's man.

Nico: I know you felt what I felt when we were together. Let's just talk about this.

Petronella: Yes I felt it and I loved it but I refuse to be someone's dirty secret Nico and I can't share you with my cousin. Tell her that you don't want her anymore. Choose because juggling between the two of us won't work.

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#51

At Nico's, Petronella watched as the taxi drove off and then glanced at Nico's house and opened the gate. It was a decent house with a clean yard. She grabbed her phone texting him.

Petronella: I'm outside

After few seconds with no response, she walked to the door and knocked. His voice sounded from inside and she pushed the door. She stepped in and stood awkwardly in the middle of the kitchen. Nico walked in with only a towel on. His abs were on full display flexing as he applied lotion on his arms.

“Hey.”

Petronella shyly waved then put her phone in her bag. “Hi.”

“I’m really surprised that you are shy after sending me that message.”

Petronella frowned “I was serious.”

“That won’t happen. You can’t expect me to choose between the two of you. I love Jane because she’s a wife material and a really good woman and you on the other hand, so beautiful and flexible. I’m not going to choose or entertain games.”

“Then it’s fine. I can’t continue with this.”

She turned around to leave but Nico grabbed her arm and pulled her closer to his body. He placed two fingers under her chin and tilted her head up so he could look into her eyes.

“Deep down you know that you like me too. I see how you look at me. I know that I’m in your wild fantasies.”

Petronella looked away “Don’t flatter yourself.”

“But I’m telling you what I see babe. You couldn’t say no yesterday when we slept together. We had three rounds until you fell asleep. I don’t know why you’re being difficult.”

“I’m not being difficult. I just will never allow myself to be second best to someone. I refuse to be used for sex either.”

“How am I using you for sex? Akere you also enjoyed yourself?”

“It doesn’t matter Nico.”

He leaned down kissing her lips “You talk to

much you know? You like to reason and have too much attitude.” He dipped down kissing her neck. He grabbed her hand and moved it slowly on his front making her feel his bulge.

“Nico...”

“Just give us a chance. Stop playing hard to get. I know you’re enjoying this.”

“What if she catches us?”

“How? She has to contact her parole officer before coming here because it’s way too far from her place.”

He picked her up easily and Petronella wrapped

her legs around his waist capturing his lips.

By 6PM Jane was already outside the gate of the hospital waiting for a taxi. The wind blew her with cold her and she glanced up to the clouds noticing how dark it had gotten. A familiar fancy car parked by the road and she stared as the window lowered.

Lawrence hooted "Let's go."

Jane crossed her arms "No thank you."

"Let me take you home it's going to rain soon and you'll get soaked waiting for a taxi. There's

a taxi strike do you know that?”

“I’m good.”

“How are you going to get home then?”

“My fiancé is coming to get me.”

Lawrence nodded then the window closed but didn’t drive off. Rain started drizzling and Jane checked the time. She swallowed before walking closer to the car. She walked around it to the passenger side then opened the door. She frowned as it didn’t budge. The window lowered

“Didn’t you say your fiancé was coming?”

Jane crossed her arms feeling really embarrassed. "I will go wait for a taxi."

The door opened and she quickly got in. The car ride was silent and Jane only talked when gave him directions. The rain poured harder as Lawrence took a turn to her street.

"Do you have a business around here? I see your car pass here a lot."

"There's a project we are working on."

She noticed that he was still wearing tuxedo. Lawrence glanced at her "I came from a meeting."

He parked by her gate and Jane took out a plastic bag from her handbag and took off her wig and shoved it inside. Lawrence looked at her hair net and burst out laughing

“The things you women do.”

“Forever my wig. I spent so much money on it. Thanks for the lift. Drive safely.”

“Bye.”

She stepped out of the car and ran to the house. The car drove off and Jane took the key and unlocked her door.

The next morning Petronella woke up and glanced at Nico who was still sleeping. She glanced at the marks and love bites on his neck and blushed. The man was doing things for her. To think he even called in sick just to spend a night with her.

Leaning in, she pecked his lips. Her phone vibrated and a message came through. She yawned clicking on it.

Jane: This is the last time I'm telling you to come take your things Petronella.

She rolled her eyes feeling a little annoyed

Petronella: I will take them on Saturday. I haven't found a place to stay yet. I can't move around with a lot of stuff. I will come get them.

Her phone rang seconds later and Jane's name flashed on the screen. She answered and laid on Nicolas's chest.

"Hello?"

"It's not my problem that you haven't found a place to stay. I need you to get your things if you don't want to find them outside my gate."

Petronella sat up "Kante what's wrong with you? Akere ke re ke etla ka Saturday (I said I'm coming on Saturday). Why are you being so bitter? Is it because I told you about your

boyfriend?”

“Don’t dare disrespect me. I’m going to call aunt Sophia that you are running after married men and—”

“Go ahead and tell her Jane. You have issues, deal with your man and leave me alone.”

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Like and comment

THE PROTECTOR

#52

“I can’t believe you are talking to me like that after I gave you a place when you didn’t know anyone here. You are so ungrateful—”

“Jane wee you can’t call me names, threaten me and not expect me to clap back. Your man your man always as if he’s perfect. My advice to you ausi is that you shouldn’t put all your trust on your man because men get tired and don’t even think twice before looking at another—”

Nico snatched the phone and hung up.
Petronella narrowed her eyebrows as her
mouth hung open.

“I was still talking.”

Nico sat up with a long face “Talking nonsense.
Kante what’s wrong with you? Why do you enjoy
provoking Jane? She’s older than you.”

“She’s threatening to throw my stuff away. I will
never let someone disrespect me and keep
quiet.”

“Your behavior will make her suspicious
Petronella. You need to be humble because
Jane helped you out when you needed help. You
sound ungrateful and calling out for drama

when it's not even there. This thing was going to be peaceful if you were not a brat."

She swallowed and Nico cupped her face and pecked her lips "Just don't make this obvious okay?"

"I'm not trying to ruin things. I'm not even trying to provoke Jane. I'm just standing up for myself. She shouldn't have agreed to accommodate me in the first place. All of this would have been avoided."

He nodded "I know. Do me a favor and let her be. Go and get your stuff. I'll keep them for you until you get your new place sorted out."

"Okay."

Lawrence sat in bed typing on his laptop as Kim brushed her blond wig in front of the mirror.

“Babe I think you should move into a new house or just upgrade the furniture you know? What do you think?”

“Mmh?”

Kim turned to him “You should upgrade the whole furniture.”

Lawrence looked at her “Nothing is wrong with the furniture.”

“The couches are leather.”

“So?”

“They are old fashioned. I would understand if they were black but brown? I want us to have a YouTube channel and we can’t film in here. I was thinking maybe you should replace the ceiling and get—”

“I have bigger plans for my money. I can’t be upgrading every year. I don’t see anything old fashioned in this house.”

“Akere you are not a woman—”

“I don’t know why my house bothers you so much because you don’t even live here. You don’t want to give me kids but you have so much to say about making my house suit your lifestyle with my money even.”

“It was just a suggestion...I didn’t say you are obligated to do whatever I say.”

“I’m just stressed babe and those kind of things are not what I want to talk about.”

Kim sighed “Have you thought of giving someone else your job? You work too much and hardly make time for me. You’re always stressed and tense because you don’t rest.”

“I already have people working under me but I’m

the CEO and I can't just ignore my responsibilities."

He closed his laptop and beckoned her over. Kim walked over to the bed and kissed him. "Let's have an indoor picnic, will that make up for my errors?"

Kim smiled "Yes babe."

Later that morning Nico parked at Jane's gate and stepped out of the car walking into the yard. He got to the door and knocked. After few minutes the door opened and Jane moved aside without saying anything.

“Hey babe. What’s wrong?”

He walked in and Jane closed the door

“Petronella annoys me you know? I wish to just grab her and strangle her to death. I will even go back to jail for her.”

“What did she do?”

“A lot of things Nico. I don’t want to stress my aunt but she needs to know what kind of person her daughter is.”

They walked to the living room and they sat down. Nico turned her shoulders away and placed his hands on her neck massaging her.

“I have to go to work, don’t let me fall asleep.”
Jane said as she closed her eyes.

“I won’t. Listen babe, I think Petronella might be dealing with her own problems that’s why she’s giving you a hard time. The best thing to do is to just let her be and cut contact.”

Jane shook her head “I don’t care about her problems. She’s taking advantage of the fact that I can’t beat her because of my parole.”

“Just let her be. You’re pregnant and this is unhealthy. I don’t want my woman to go around fighting other women.”

Jane sighed “fine. Anyway have you thought of the date of the wedding? I was thinking we

should reveal the pregnancy the day we announce the date of the wedding. What do you think?"

"I haven't thought of it. I think we should wait while saving up money."

"You were rushing this, I thought we had enough."

"I know but we don't. I want our honeymoon to be outside of South Africa plus you're pregnant."

His phone rang and he took it out. He recognized the number and rejected the call.

“Who was it?”

“Ah it was these spam calls.”

The phone rang and he quickly rejected it. It rang again and Jane stared at him with a serious face.

“Answer it. It must be serious if the person is calling twice. Answer it.”

The phone stopped ringing and a message came through. Jane snatched the phone held it tightly as Nico furiously grabbed her hands.

“What the fvck is this?”

Jane glared at him “let me read the message. Why are you angry that I took the phone? Why didn’t you want to answer the calls. I’m not stupid.”

“Have I ever taken your phone and invaded your privacy?”

Jane pulled the stood up quickly reading the message.

Unsaved number: Can you get me the emergency pills? We didn't use condom.

Nico snatched the phone as Jane sat back down with her heart on her throat.

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Sorry i forgot to schedule this

LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#53

Nico glanced at his phone and read the message and his skipped a double.

“Babe...”

Jane kept staring at him as her eyes burned. She swallowed a lump and a tear dropped. Another one slid slowly down her cheek as she blinked. Nico knelt before her and grabbed her hands. Jane tightened her fists and closed her eyes tightly feeling her chest getting tight.

“Jane please let me explain. Someone is trying to—”

Jane opened her eyes and slapped him so hard that his head turned to the side. He held his cheek in pain and Jane stood up.

“Please get out of my house.”

“Jane please let me explain—”

“Explain what? You’ve been sleeping with someone behind my back Nicolas. Two days ago you were paying bride price for me acting like you love me kante you are busy sleeping with someone else without condom behind my back. And I asked you Nicolas and what did you say? You said you wouldn’t even look at another woman. You gaslit me, making me feel like I was crazy for questioning you. Why would you do that to me? Why did you engage me and got me pregnant knowing that you didn’t love me?”

She drew her knees to her chest and covered her mouth crying loudly. Nicolas stood up speechless as Jane cried with her shoulders shaking.

“I’m sorry. It wasn’t serious and I regret. It

happened once and I was going to tell you about it.”

He walked closer and sat beside her. He wrapped his arms around her and Jane fought in his arms and pushed him off. She got off the couch still crying and walked to the door. She opened it and screamed at him “Get out of my house!”

Nico stood up defeated and walked to the door. Jane waited for him to walk out then she slammed the door and ran to her bedroom. She got under her blankets and placed her head over the pillow crying until her cries turned into screams. She grabbed her phone and dialed Ryan.

“Hey babes.”

She wiped her tears with the back of her hand sobbing "Ryan..."

"Jane? Friend what's wrong?"

She hiccuped "You were right..." her throat blocked and she swallowed the biggest lump.

"I'm coming okay? Don't do anything stupid."

The call cut off and Jane laid back on the bed and tried to think of her happy moments.

Meanwhile Nico swallowed down his guilt and started the car. He drove around then parked by the road ten minutes away from Jane's place then called Petronella.

"Hello I got the pills—"

"You sent the message on purpose akere? You knew that I was with Jane but you sent your dumb message."

"I couldn't care less about your whereabouts Nico. The only thing I care about is not getting pregnant. I was panicking and I wanted to make sure I didn't catch anything. What, did Jane find out? I hope you didn't mention my name."

"That's all you care about? You shouldn't have

contacted me in the first place!. I know you sent that message just so she can see it. Well thank you so much because she did and my relationship is over.”

“Jane loves you. Come up with a better explanation and you will win her over.”

“You don’t take this seriously do you? You actually take pleasure in this don’t you!”

“What do you want me to say? You knew the outcome of cheating but went ahead and did it anyway. Things like these happen and Jane will get over it. She’s been hurting people so her tears won’t even move God. I know you feel bad, I do too but at least she knows.”

Nico sighed speechlessly

“I’ll go over to her house to comfort her though I doubt she will dump you. Give her a little space. Please delete the message and block my numbers. I don’t want her to do her investigation and get more heartbroken.”

Nico cut the call and blocked her then leaned on the steering wheel massaging his head.

At Jane’s Minutes later Ryan got out of an uber and stepped into the yard. She walked to the door and pushed the door open then turned to close it. She walked around the house until she spotted a door that was slightly opened. She

knocked twice then walked in. Her heart broke when she heard sniffled from the lump on the bed.

“Oh friend...”

She took off her shoes and climbed on the bed. She put her bag on the side and laid beside Jane. Jane wrapped her arms around her and sniffled on her shoulder.

“He’s been sleeping with someone without a condom.”

Ryan rubbed her back wordlessly

“I should’ve listened to you and not fell for him

harder. I'm such a fool."

Ryan shook her head "Jane you're not a fool. He's the one who's a fool for doing this. Why pay for magadi when you're messing around?"

"He was just going to make me his play thing."

"I'm so sorry friend. You don't deserve this after all the torment you endured in jail. I'm sorry."

Jane broke down "What am I going to say to aunty? She was so excited for the wedding. How can I marry someone like this? I don't even think I want this baby anymore."

"Don't talk like that Jane."

Ryan wiped her tears with the tips of her thumbs shaking her head at Jane. "Things like these happen. Some people are just with us for a while."

"Why did he give me hope then Ryan? Why did he make me believe that he was the one? You have no idea how excited I was to become Mrs. Leopeng. Hadn't I taken the phone, I would've remained a fool and married him."

"I'm sorry. It will pass."

She sniffled then wiped her tears "Please accompany me to the clinic to get rid of the baby."

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#54

Ryan gasped staring at her

“No Jane. Don’t do something that you might regret. It could be a big misunderstanding. It could be someone trying to get between the two of you. I know it’s painful friend but don’t make big decisions while you’re hurt and

angry.”

Jane wiped her tears “There’s no misunderstanding. You warned me about him and who would sent that kind of a message? I don’t have an enemy. He fought for the phone before I could even see the message.”

“But killing your child? It’s a huge decision and you need to think about it carefully before doing it. I will support you either way but I don’t want you to live with regrets.”

She covered her face and Ryan sighed before pulling her into her arms.

“I’ve made up my mind.”

“Are you going to tell your family? They will want to continue with the wedding.”

Jane sniffled “I don’t know. Why did he do this friend? Raw on top of that? He slept with her without condom.”

Ryan kept rubbing her back as Jane started to cry. Jane opened her eyes and then closed them letting the tears slide down. Her mind flashed with the imaginations of Nico on top of the nameless woman and enjoying her while she stayed home thinking that he loved her.

That evening Lefa opened the door and Nicolas walked into his house. He followed Lefa to the

living room where they sat down.

Lefa glanced at his kids “Go play in the bedroom. Adults are talking.”

His kids stood up gathering their toys then left the room. They stared at them until they were out of sight then Lefa turned to Nico.

“You never visit unannounced and you look gloomy. Is everything okay?”

Nico shook his head and rubbed his forehead “I messed up really bad and I need an advice.”

“What’s up?”

“I cheated on Jane and she found out. She wasn’t supposed to find out but—”

“You did what? How can you be so reckless? Why did you cheat on her...I thought you were okay. You just paid the bride price for her?”

Nico sighed “We are okay. I just like the other woman. I love Jane believe me and she’s an amazing woman. The woman I want to grow old with but I can’t help how I feel.”

Lefa shook his head “That can’t be the reason. You can’t just like another woman...if you are fully satisfied you won’t even look at another woman Nick. Is she not satisfying you in bed?”

“She does—”

“Then what’s the problem? Why are you ruining such a good thing? I know that some women are pretty out there and tempting but you shouldn’t have sent uncles to her family. You need to fix this before you embarrass us. Who’s the woman Nico?”

“No one you know—”

Lefa gritted his teeth “If you are not ready to hear my advice get out of my house.”

“Are you serious?”

“The woman is Petronella right?” Nico looked down and Lefa face palmed

“Are you serious Nico? And I saw you two that day at the club...I suspected it kante I was right? I know men cheat and sometimes it's just for the fun of it but we never go that far because that's the little respect we can give our women but you didn't even care that she's Jane's little cousin. She's practically her sister man and you went ahead and fvcked her. What were you thinking?”

“You don't know what I feel for that girl—”

“I don't care about your little feelings Nico. You shouldn't have paid magadi for Jane...you sent the uncles knowing that deep down your dic was craving that little girl. You knew what you were doing.”

Nico clenched his jaws “I didn’t come here to get judged. You messed up in the past and I never said anything.”

Lefa shook his head “You call this judging? Jane found out! What are you going to do to get her to stay?”

“I’ll work something out.”

“Yah neh? After all the mess with Jamie I don’t think Jane will forgive you. You disappointed me so much. Did you even call her and try to apologize?”

“She kicked me out. I’m trying to give her space.”

“No man leave that little girl and fix things. You will lose someone who loves you Nick. Fix this mess before it gets to the elders.”

“I will talk to her. She’s still hurt I don’t think she will call anyone. I need to come up with a better explanation.”

“And be humble if you want to fix things. Lie if you have to...you can’t lose your woman because of Petronella. Go now and beg her.”

Minutes later at Jane’s, Jane sat on the high chair in the kitchen as she watched Ryan making them coffee.

She turned “How many spoons of sugar?
Should I add milk?”

“Don’t add milk. Four spoons.”

Ryan hummed and added sugar into Jane’s mug then took it to her. She smiled and sat across her sipping her own coffee.

“Thanks for coming Ryan. You didn’t have to but you’re here and taking care of me.”

Ryan put the mug on the table “That’s what friends are for. I will always be there for you.”

Someone knocked and Ryan stood up before Jane could. “I’ll go check.”

She walked over to the door and pulled the door open. She frowned as she stared at Nicolas.

“What are you doing here wena? Leave before you cause more damage.”

Nico stared at her “Please I need to talk to her. I need to explain.”

Jane walked to the door and stood beside Ryan
“I’ll handle him.”

Ryan glanced at Nico from head to toe then clicked her tongue and walked away. Jane stepped outside and closed the door “What do you want?”

“I’m here to apologize. I messed up Jane and I have no excuse. I was drunk, I don’t remember what happened. I normally handle my alcohol but that day...” He sighed “Please forgive me Mma Leopeng. I love you and I don’t want to lose you. Please punish me however you want, just don’t leave me Jane.”

Jane’s lips trembled as she opened her mouth to speak. She swallowed and Nico moved closer and hugged her “I’m sorry.”

“You broke my heart and my trust Nico. I thought you were my soulmate.” She cried

Nico gulped down the guilt “I will never hurt you intentionally. Please forgive me. Don’t give up

on us please.” He knelt down and held her hand
“Please.”

“Stand up.”

“Do you forgive me?”

“I don’t know. Please go home it’s late. We will talk tomorrow and I won’t say anything to the elders.”

Nico stood up and dusted his knees then leaned in to kiss her but Jane turned her face to the side. Nico cleared his throat then walked to the gate. Jane walked back inside then locked the door.

The following morning Jane followed Ryan into the private clinic and released a heavy sigh. Ryan turned to her

“Are you sure you want to do this?”

“I’m 100%.”

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THE PROTECTOR

#55

At correctional facility the same morning, Nicolas's phone rang and he took it out internally cursing at the name.

"What do you want?"

"What did I do now?"

“Petronella I don’t want to talk you now. Talking to you won’t help fix things with Jane. She’s giving me a chance so please lessen the calls.”

“Okay then I guess our journey ends here.”

Nico frowned “What are you talking about?”

“Akere I told you that I will never be someone’s dirty secret, I meant that Nico. I promised myself that I would never play the role of a side chick but here am i. I’m not continuing with this. I thought you were going to come clean to Jane and give her a choice to stay or leave but I don’t think that will happen judging by how you are talking to me.”

Nico scoffed "Why are you acting like you are doing me a favor by sleeping with me? You know very well that you like me and I like you too. That won't change because you suddenly can't handle being a secret. You got into this knowing that Jane is around."

She went silent and Nico sighed "Babe?"

"What?"

"Listen I know this is complicated and I understand your frustrations but let me fix things on the other side because she's carrying my child. I love you okay?"

"Fine. I can wait."

“Good girl. I’ll see you later, the key is under a flat rock by the door behind the house. Make yourself at home.”

“Okay see you later.”

“I love you Petronella. I know things are very tight but I really do love you. Give me a chance to sort things out please.”

“I love you too. I’ll see you later...don’t disappoint me.”

He hung up then called Jane. The phone rang unanswered then he sighed and typed a message.

Nico: I'm going to fix this because I love you. I want to marry you and have children with you. Don't give up on me please I'm begging you. I'm going to give you space but that doesn't mean I wouldn't call or text to check on you. Have a great day at work and please drink enough water, stay away from stress.

He sent the message then slid his phone into his pocket then walked to the kitchen where inmates were.

At Lawrence's, Lawrence opened the door and his stepfather walked in. They sat down and Lawrence grabbed glasses and placed them on the table.

“I drink juice for breakfast.”

His stepfather shook his head “I had breakfast at home. Why are you not taking care of yourself monna?”

Lawrence frowned glancing around then at himself. “What do you mean?”

“You work too much. Your girlfriend called your mother saying that you don’t care about anything except work. Your mother is worried.”

Lawrence sighed “Kim is dramatic. I take days off work and I get enough rest.”

“I hear you Lawrence but maybe she’s worried because you never said anything about marriage.”

“Uncle, Kim and I aren’t that serious.”

“You are not getting any younger mon. I can’t believe you still have time to play around when nothing is stopping you from settling down. Kim is a very nice lady...your mother likes her and she’s very respectful.”

Lawrence sighed “I know I’m not getting any younger but that doesn’t mean I should settle with just anybody. Kim doesn’t want children. She shuts me out whenever I bring the topic...I can’t marry someone like that.”

“Then why are you playing around?”

“I’m hoping she changes her mind.”

“I hear you son. You will come spend a weekend with us akere?”

“Yeah. I’m working from home this week so I’ll be free on the weekend. I’ll visit.”

Later that day Petronella walked around Nico’s house then took the key under the rock. She walked back to the front and unlocked the door. She walked around the clean kitchen then her phone rang.

“Hey chomz.” She answered

“Hey. How are things going at your new place?”

“Fine. I don’t have much furniture but the people are nice.”

“That’s nice and Nick?”

She walked to the couch in the living room and sat down “Friend I know I said I would end things but he’s amazing. He’s great in bed. He doesn’t take time to release that you get bored while waiting and he also makes sure that I’m satisfied. Energy ya gona...out of this world I tell you and he loves me. I love him too.”

“Petronella...”

“Masego what if he’s my soulmate? He can’t seem to stay away from me and I’m done pushing him away. I know this will hurt Jane but maybe it was not meant to be.”

“This will be a disaster Petronella.”

She sighed “I know but we will work it out.”

“Whatever girl it’s your life. Just be careful okay? The last thing I want to see is you lying on a hospital bed because of a man.”

Minutes later Jane laid in bed sighing. Her hand brushed her stomach sadly. She swallowed a lump and sniffled a little grieving. It was for the best. It was not meant to be. Her phone vibrated and she reached for it

Ryan: How are you feeling? I wanted to come see you but my in laws came to visit. Please tell me you are alright.

She smiled and typed a response

Jane: I'm fine friend. I won't lie and say it doesn't hurt physically and emotionally but I'm fine. I just have to hope that God heals me from this and forgives me.

Her phone rang and It was Nicolas. She answered and closed her eyes ready to hear his nonsense.

“Yes?”

“Hey. I wanted to check on you...are you alright?”

“What do you want me to say Nico? You think I can just get over the fact that you slept with someone two days after my magadi negotiations? Without a condom even?”

“I apologized and—”

Anger overwhelmed her “I don’t care about your

apologies. I want to know who that woman is.”

“Babe—”

“Don’t call me babe!”

“Jane I don’t know her name. I was drunk and ended up in bed with her. I don’t know how she got my number but I promise I don’t know her. Please forgive me. Something like this will never happen again.”

Jane sighed “I don’t think I can forgive you.”

“Jane please we are going to get married. We are even expecting a child. Please just think about this.”

Tears rolled down her cheeks “I got rid of it. You broke my heart when I thought you were my—”

“You did what!”

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#56

Jane closed her eyes sighing

“Jane what the hell did you just say?”

“I said I got rid of it. Don’t act so angry after cheating on me without hesitation. You thought I would keep that baby after all of that? Don’t dare act like you didn’t start this.”

“I apologized and explained that the whole cheating thing was a mistake that I don’t remember. You killed my child Jane. You killed my first child because of what? Because your evil heart can’t forgive?. I can’t believe you. That was my fuvking kid!.”

Jane gritted her teeth “My child ya masepa!

None of this would have happened if you hadn't gone to that bar and slept with another woman without a condom. You will get that first child you are talking about from her."

"I'm calling a family meeting—"

"Go ahead. You think you scare me? Go ahead and call your relatives, your chickens and dogs. When you were on top of another woman did you think of a family meeting? Hadn't I found out about the woman you would've continued with her."

The call cut off and Jane stood up and grabbed the pillow then hit the bed with it as she screamed out in anger.

Meanwhile Nico walked into his house and a smell of fried chicken hit him. He stared at Petronella dishing up wearing nothing but a red lingerie and black stilettos.

“I made you a snack and you get another snack as a bonus.”

Nico kissed her then hugged her. He secretly rubbed his eyes as they burned with tears. He cleared his throat as the lump choked him. Petronella frowned hearing how heavy his breaths were.

“Are you okay?”

“Y-yeah.”

She tried to pull away but Nico held her tighter. His heart felt so raw and heavy as he thought back to the conversation with Jane.

“Nicolas?”

“Yes baby?”

She sighed “What’s wrong?”

He cleared his throat and pulled away. He glanced at the food and sat down. Petronella walked around the table and stood beside him.

“What’s wrong? Why are your eyes red?”

“Jane got rid of my baby.”

Petronella's eyes grew large “What? How can she do something so horrible? Was it some sort of a revenge?”

Nico covered his face “Revenge? She can't do that with my child. That was my first child Petronella. She should've cheated back if she wanted revenge so bad not kill an innocent soul. I will never forgive her for this...do you have any idea how much I wanted a child?”

Petronella moved closer and pulled Nicolas's head placing it on her stomach. He turned his body and embraced her.

“It’s going to be okay. I’m here Nico.”

He sighed “I need to call the uncles and let them know about this.”

“Are you sure it’s a good idea to call them right now? What if Jane brings up the cheating issue? They will obviously support her Nico. I know you’re hurt and angry but please calm down before taking decisions.”

He shook his head “I don’t care if she brings up the cheating thing. I wanted to surprise the family about the baby Petronella.”

She nodded and Nico stood up walking to his bedroom. Petronella looked down at herself then sighed covering the food. Nico closed his

bedroom door then dialed his older uncle.

“Hello nephew. How are you?”

“Hello malome. I’m not fine at all. Will it be possible to gather around tomorrow and discuss the wedding?”

“Oh you already decided on a wedding date?”

“I don’t want to discuss anything on the phone. Please call Jane’s aunt and we will meet at her house because this is about Jane.”

“I can’t call a family meeting without a reason Nicolas. What’s going on kante? Are you having cold feet?”

“Jane had an abortion. I just found out and I’m very hurt that she got rid of my child without talking to me.” His voice wavered “I know we make mistakes but my baby?”

“What? Why did she decide to do that?”

Nico swallowed “Please call a family meeting. I can’t talk about this.”

“Go lokile I will do that. (It’s fine). Yoh ai youth of these days ...firstly Jail then this?. Everything will be fine nephew.”

The call cut off and Nico laid on the bed with his eyes closed.

The next day Petronella walked into Jane's yard and sighed before stepping into the porch and knocking on the door. She waited for few minutes before the door opened. Jane stared at Petronella and held the door as she talked on the phone.

"Alright be sure to drop her on Friday Jamie. It's been a while and I miss my little girl." She paused "Alright see you then."

She hung up then pursed her lips

"Yes?"

“I’m here to get my things.”

Jane silently let the door go and moved aside. Petronella made her way in and Jane closed the door then followed her to the guest bedroom. She stood by the door watching Petronella as she gathered the rest of her bags.

“I shouldn’t have let Nico get between us Petronella. I should’ve listened when you told me about him...he cheated on me.”

Her shoulders sagged as Petronella turned to her “I’m sorry Jane. I understand why you were so defensive...love is something else cuz. He didn’t deserve you.”

“I should’ve sat down with you and tried to set some boundaries instead of kicking you out like a dog. I hope you stay somewhere safe.”

“Yeah it’s a decent place. Rent is expensive but at least it’s safe. I get why you kicked me out I’m sorry for being disrespectful.”

Jane walked closer and pulled her into a hug. Petronella reluctantly wrapped her arms around Jane’s. Guilt crushed her heart and she closed her eyes pushing it down.

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#57

At Sophia's house the next day, Jane sat beside Lefa on the couch staring at Nico's uncles and his mother and her aunt with her favorite uncle.

Nicolas's older uncle cleared his throat and pointed at Jane then turned to Nico. "The both of you are the reason why we are gathered here instead of getting important stuff done." He paused "We are here because Jane had an abortion."

“What?” The whole room exploded with murmurs.

Sophia turned to Jane disappointment evident on her face “Jane?”

Jane crossed her arms not saying anything as her in laws showed nothing but disappointment.

“Yoh ae.” Her mother in law clapped her hands.

Jane’s uncle cleared his throat “Niece what’s going on? Why did you resort to such a thing? Don’t you know that terminating your pregnancy will only bring you bad luck?”

Sophia nodded “Don’t just keep quiet and

explain yourself because we were supposed to meet here to discuss the wedding not something like this Jane. When did you even do it?”

“It doesn’t matter. I didn’t want that child and I don’t think I had to have a discussion with someone regarding my body.”

Sophia shook her head “Aowa my girl we don’t talk like that. Nico is your man and he’s the one who gave you that baby. You were supposed to talk about it.”

Mmagwe Nico nodded with her arms crossed “This is so disrespectful to Nicolas and our family and—”

“Let’s give Jane a chance to explain herself. There must be something that led her to have an abortion. Let’s not throw words without hearing both sides.” Jane’s uncle interjected “please explain yourself motlogolo (niece).”

Jane took a deep breath “Nico cheated. I found messages on his phone.”

Nico threw his hands up “I told you that I was drunk and I don’t know what happened. I explained myself more than twice and even apologized Jane. You are so evil for terminating my child just to punish me.”

Jane pointed a finger at him “And you’re not evil for cheating on me?”

“Motho wa modimo how many times do I have to say it was a mistake?”

Jane’s veins popped as she tried to swallow down her anger “A mistake? A mistake ya masepa. You called a family meeting on me when you are the one who started all of this. When did you get time to get drunk because you always go to work? I’m not a fool Nico!”

“Maybe you are because I’m trying to explain—”

Lefa pinch his thigh and glared at him “Man just keep quiet.”

He swallowed and leaned on the couch. Jane rubbed her eyes looking away.

“We understand that Nicolas disrespected you by sleeping with another woman but abortion was not the right decision Mmagwe Rain.”
Mmagwe Nico said

Jane wiped her tears swallowing “You don’t understand and it’s easy for you to take sides because he’s your son.”

Sophia nodded “I don’t support abortion but your son drove her too far.”

“I’ve never cheated on Jane before. What happened was a mistake.” Nico said calmly

Nico’s uncle raised his hand “Nico you were wrong to sleep with another woman. Drunk or not, there’s no excuse for cheating. Own up to

your mistakes and accept that you've wronged your woman."

"I hear you malome." Nico said then turned to Jane "I'm sorry for cheating on you. I'm sorry for disrespecting you and not talking to you before calling a family meeting. I was hurt but I understand that you were hurt too."

Jane's uncle sighed "Now we are getting somewhere. You were wrong too motlogolo. Yes it's your body but that baby was part of Nico and he had a right to be a father."

Jane swallowed "I'm not going to apologize."

"Jane!" Sophia snapped

“I’m not going to apologize to him aunty. He cheated two days after my magadi negotiations and didn’t even confess. I had to find out by myself. I don’t even want to continue with this wedding.”

Sophia and Nico’s mother gasped

“That’s fine by me.” Nico shot back and Jane’s eyes widened

“You thought I would beg you? I will never settle for someone who is capable of killing my child. Who knows how many abortions you’ve had since—”

“Nico!” His uncle warned

“I’m going to be late for work.” Jane said before standing up. She walked to the door and her tears rolled down her cheeks as soon as she stepped out of the house.

She heard footsteps as she headed to the gate and turned around. She stopped walking and wiped her tears. Sophia walked closer and pulled her into a hug

“Aw my baby...”

She let out a sob as she laid on her shoulder “Is it karma? When does it end aunty? I thought he was the one.”

“Shh...it’s going to be okay. Relationships are unpredictable Jane because you can’t look

straight into someone's heart. I'm not happy that you terminated your pregnancy but I'm happy that you know your worth. Don't go to work, go home and relax."

She took deep breaths calming herself then pulled away nodding.

"I'm sorry I'm such a disappointment. I've never done anything good to make you proud. I know you were looking forward to seeing me getting married."

Sophia sighed "Jane you are not a disappointment. I'd rather see you single and happy than married and miserable. Please do yourself a favor and book yourself into therapy."

She nodded then walked to the gate. Sophia sighed and walked back to the house.

Meanwhile Lefa pulled Nico to his car and shook his head after they got in.

“Not you leaving an eight for a two. Are you serious man? What makes you think they will support your relationship with Petronella after the bullshit you spewed back there?”

“What was I supposed to do? Jane killed my child.”

Lefa sighed shaking his head “You will regret this and I don’t support your stupid relationship with Petronella. Don’t ever come to me looking for an advice.”

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#58

Nico stared at Lefa in disbelief

“When are you going to be on my side? You’re always on Jane’s side and it makes me wonder

what you want from her.”

“I’m not on Jane’s side. I’m on the right side Nico. You can’t mess up and expect me to back you up. Cheating is never right and you don’t know how much it damages a person. Jane already had trust issues because Jamie cheated on her while she was in jail. She decided to give love another chance but you did the same thing Jamie did but with her cousin. I will always support you because you are my favorite cousin out of all cousins but this time I’m letting you sort out your mess because it’s too much.”

Nico shook his head “You are judging me—”

“If you call telling you the truth judging then yes I’m judging you. You don’t know Petronella first

of all...maybe you do but not that well. Secondly a woman who betrays her sister without hesitation is not a good woman.”

“Any woman who get rid of her baby because she’s angry is not a good woman and a wife material.”

Lefa raised his hands in surrender “Whatever man. I really hope this doesn’t explode on your face in the future.”

Hours later Jamie walked into the hospital and spotted Linda on the benches laughing with her colleagues. He took out his phone and sent her a text.

Jamie: I brought you lunch. Meet me in the quantum outside

He stared at her as she stared at her phone. He then turned around and walked back to the taxi. He waited for her for few then Linda opened the door stepped in.

“So nice of you to remember me.”

“I missed you and we haven’t been spending time together because of Botshelo and Rain.”

He leaned in and kissed her then handed her the Tupperware containing her lunch. Linda opened and smiled widely

“You went all out. The sausage is burnt though babe.” She laughed and Jamie joined in. “Thank you babe. This is sweet.”

She started eating and Jamie grabbed the burnt sausage and ate it.

“How’s your first day back here?”

Linda smiled “It feels good to be back you know? I love spending time with Botshelo and Rain but working feels great. It was so nice of your mother to babysit for us.”

“She’s lonely. Having her grandkids is such a blessing to her.”

“Does Jane know that Rain is with your mom?”

“No but it’s not a big deal. She’s Rain’s grandma.”

Linda hummed “But you know how Jane is. She can cause a whole lot of drama.”

“I don’t think she will mind.”

“She will mind. Jane is something else...don’t act like you don’t know her.”

Jamie put the sausage back in the Tupperware annoyed “Why do you like to bring up Jane when we are having a nice conversation?”

Linda frowned "I was just saying."

"You were badmouthing her like always. Koore we can't talk about Jane without you saying bad things about her. Don't forget that you are the one who took her man and tried to kill her but I bet she doesn't go around bad mouthing you."

"Bathong Jamie i—"

"Ae I don't like your style. If you have nothing to talk about keep quiet. It's like you are trying to make me hate her forgetting that she's Rain's mother. Please don't be bitter for nothing...there's no competition here."

Lawrence walked out of the board room massaging his temple. His PA followed after him holding an iPad.

“You look exhausted sir.”

He glanced at him “I was supposed to be working from home you know? Maybe I work too much.”

“Are you trying to avoid something?”

Lawrence shook his head “Not really. I guess I’m a little lonely. Please get me coffee, I’ll be in my office.”

His PA nodded and walked away. Lawrence took the other way to his office and walked to the desk where he took a sit and grabbed his phone on top of the desk. He switched it on and there were five missed calls from Kim and a message.

Kim: I thought you were working from home, imagine my surprise when I found your gates locked. I tried to be patient with you Lawrence but I failed because you are clearly not serious about life. You're always stingy and I'm honestly fed up. If you don't call me by the end of today it's over between us.

He dialed her number and called her

"Lawrence..."

“Babe I’m sorry I was in a meeting.”

“What about the things I complained about?”

“I’ll send you money for shopping after this call.”

“Thank you but I’m more worried about you not taking time off from work.”

He sighed “Next weekend I’m all yours.”

After work Petronella sat with Masego outside

on the stoop outside Masego's room. She grabbed the glass and took a sip

"You have a little glow on you...I hope you are not pregnant."

"Don't say that please. I'm on my periods right now and I've been careful. I wouldn't make that mistake so soon."

"Anything can happen when you are comfortable girl but I still don't support this thing with Nicolas. You will ruin things with your cousin."

"Jane and Nico are probably over."

Masego sighed “But that doesn’t make it okay to sleep with your cousin’s man. There are many single men out there babes who are on your level. Please don’t get pregnant.”

“Masego I’m not a fool.”

Behind the closed door in the next room, a woman shook her head not believing her eyes. She glanced at her daughter.

She clapped her hands “I don’t know this Jane woman but I feel sorry for her.”

Her daughter took out her phone and logged in on Facebook. She typed a post as her mother walked out heading to the toilet.

Post: {If your name is Jane and your man is Nicolas, I'm sorry to say this but your cousin is sleeping with your man and she's proud about it. You're welcome.}

With her large following she sighed in satisfaction knowing that the post will get to the owner.

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#59

Later that night Ryan covered her fiancé's food and took them to the oven. She dished for herself and her son then sat down eating.

"Thank you for food mommy."

She smiled softly "you're welcome my baby. Daddy will be home soon okay?"

"Okay."

She hummed eating her food. Sound of a car driving in broke a large smile on her son's face and they waited for few minutes and her man

walked in the house.

“Daddy!” Her son ran to Ben and he picked him up ruffling his head a bit. “Hey buddy.” He walked to Ryan and kissed her cheek.

“Sorry I’m late babe. Traffic was hectic...there was an accident on the road.”

“As long as you’re home and safe.”

Ben put his son down then walked to the oven and took out his plate.

“You know I heard these women talking about a post at work and got really curious and asked them to show it to me. I’m not sure if it’s about

your friend but I searched it and took a screenshot, I will show it to you after eating.”

“Now you are making me curious, is it bad?”

“Kind of. I don’t want you to lose your appetite let’s eat.”

He sat down and they ate while chatting about their days and listening to their son’s rumblings. Minutes later Ben tucked their son in then went to their bedroom. He took off his clothes and grabbed his towel.

“Wait let me see the post then we can go shower for bed together.”

Ben unlocked his phone and handed it to her. Ryan scrolled through his gallery and got into his screenshots. She clicked on the first picture and read through

“What?”

“Is it about her?”

“Babe! It’s about her...remember when I said something about not trusting her man? This can’t be a lie. I can’t believe Petronella. Oh my goodness she’s going to be so hurt.”

“Yoh! You women are so dangerous.”

Ryan pointed a finger at him “You men are so

dangerous. He went to her knowing that she's the cousin. Petronella le ene shouldn't have agreed. Mara she once told Jane that Nico was hitting on her."

"And she ignored it?"

"She confronted him about it."

Ben walked to the bed and sat down. "Please don't tell her tonight. Let her have a good night rest."

"I don't want that girl to see the post then run away."

"Babe..."

“Ben I would want to know the same day. Jane needs to see this, cry all the pain out then move on.”

She grabbed her phone and searched the post. It had 2K likes and 1.5K comments of people mentioning their friends. She took a screenshot then sent it to Jane then typed a message.

Ryan: My Fiancé showed it to me. I’m sorry bestie. You really deserve better.

Petronella laid on Nico shaking and breathing out loud as he pulled out. He rubbed her back his breathing also heavy

“I’ll never get used to how good you make me feel. I love you.”

“Me too.”

He reached for his shirt and rolled Petronella to the side then wiped her clean.

“I’ve never slept with anyone on her periods before. That was a weird yet great experience.”

Petronella chuckled a bit then quickly reached for her panties then adjusted her pad before pulling it on. “It helps with the pain for some people you know.”

“Really?”

“I don’t get cramps so I wouldn’t know. You never told me how the meeting went.”

“I don’t really know how it went. All I know is that we won’t be continuing with the wedding.”

“Well at least there won’t be drama in our relationship. I want my family to think that we dated after things ended between you and Jane. I don’t want to be labeled a home wrecker.”

Nico nodded without saying anything.

Meanwhile Jane finally stepped out of the bathtub and removed the chain letting all the water out as she dried her body. She headed to the bedroom and sat on the bed reaching for a lotion. She applied it on her body then got in bed. She took her phone and went to her gallery deleting pictures of Nico. She sighed sadly and logged in Facebook going through her profile. She deleted the pictures she once posted of them.

She saw a message as she was about to log out and opened it. She click on the picture from Ryan and her heart dropped. She covered her mouth letting the phone fall on her lap. Her heart raced and she felt like something was choking her while her heart felt like it was stabbed multiple times. She immediately dialed Ryan breathing shakily

“Hello?”

“When did you see this?”

“Few minutes before sending to you. Petronella is such a witch you know? I never expected something like this from her.”

Tears clouded her vision and she sniffled
“Please drive me to Nicolas’s tomorrow.”

“Jane do you think it’s a good idea? I don’t think you should go there while you’re angry.”

Jane slapped her hand on her thigh countlessly
“Ryan wee don’t tell me about anger right now.
Will you be able to drive me there? Talk fast so I

can call Jamie and ask him. Nico doesn't know me watseba? He will know me tomorrow."

"What time?"

After hanging up she laid on her bed covering her mouth as she cried loudly.

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At 6 AM Jane got in Ryan's car and crossed her arms anxiously. Ryan drove away from her house and Jane handed her a piece of paper with Nico's address jotted down.

"When we get there don't do anything stupid Jane. Don't hit him or do anything to hurt him because that could land you back in jail. We are going to confront him then go to work right?"

Jane nodded absent-minded “Right.”

“What matters now is that you are no longer marrying him.”

Jane swallowed “My cousin out of all people? What did even do to him to deserve this?”

“You didn’t do anything Jane. Men are dogs. Disgusting selfish dogs!”

After few minutes they arrived and Ryan parked the car a house away from Nicolas’s then they walked to the gate. They opened and stepped in. Meanwhile Petronella put on her earrings and slid her lip gloss in her bag. She glanced at Nico who was putting on his uniform

“Are you going to ask for your magadi money back?”

“If my uncles want it then yes I will.”

Petronella’s phone rang and it was Masego. She answered as looked around for her shoes

“Hello?”

“Jane is trending on Facebook and your relationship with Nico is involved.”

“Screen shoot it then sent it to me.”

The call cut off and someone knocked on the door. Nico buttoned up his shirt then walked to the door. He pulled it open and was pushed aside as Ryan walked in followed by Jane.

“Jane?”

Meanwhile Petronella checked the picture and her heart raced. She ran to the kitchen to tell Nico but froze in place when she saw the ladies fuming in the kitchen.

Jane marched to her and grabbed her hand pulling her closer then slapped her so hard in the face. Ryan pulled Jane as she furiously grabbed Petronella by the braids.

She pointed a finger at Petronella with tears

rolling down her cheeks. "I trusted you. I took you in when you were stranded...made sure you were okay kante you would stab me in the back? You are even staying with him."

Petronella held her cheek as her heart palpitated and her legs feeling weak.

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THE PROTECTOR

#60 #unedited

Nico grabbed Petronella's hand and pulled her behind him glaring at Jane.

"What the hell is wrong with you Jane. What makes you think you have the right to come into my house and do whatever you want? You are really unbelievable you know that? Did you suddenly forget that you called off the wedding?"

Jane's lips trembled as she looked at him. The fact that he was protective of her instead of explaining himself broke her heart to pieces. Ryan pulled her a little "Let's just go babes. It's not worth it."

Jane shook her head and sniffled as she wiped her tears with the back of her hand. "What did I do to the both of you to deserve this? There must be something because this is the worst punishment. All these time you were together and I was bragging about you like a fool. Petronella, doesn't family mean anything to you?"

"I'm sorry you had to find out like this but it is what it is. I want deny it or make up excuses because you caught me so it's honestly pointless to lie. I love him and he loves me."

Ryan gasped and Jane charged at her but Nico grabbed her forearm

"Let me go Nico! Why did you do this?"

“I’m sorry you’re hurt right now. I didn’t mean to fall for Petronella and I’m sorry you had to find out like this. I don’t want anyone getting hurt so I suggest you leave here peacefully. I also don’t want to involve your parole officer.”

Jane yanked her arm away and glanced at Petronella one last time before running out of the house. Ryan pointed her finger at the couple.

“I hope you two regret this. You’re so vile and really disgusting...especially you little girl. You had no reason to go ahead and sleep with your cousin’s man but you did. You should know that your cookie jar won’t be delicious forever and wena Nicolas...heeh I don’t even know what to say. I’ve never been disappointed in humanity before.”

Petronella paused her lips “Your opinion of me has got nothing to do with me—”

Ryan grabbed her by the braids and Nico pushed her off pointing at the door.

“Sies! I will beat you nna...Jane would’ve mopped the floor with your face and torn you apart if it wasn’t for this parole thing. You’re so disrespectful and you are not even beautiful. Sies!” She pointed a finger at Nico “Jane made a great choice to abort. You are a fool of a man...I bet you suck your thumb too, disgusting immoral man.”

She walked out of the house and slammed the door. Walking out the gate, her anger turned to

sadness as she looked at Jane wiping her tears right outside the car. She walked closer to her and pulled her into a hug. Jane sniffled on her shoulder and wrapped her arms around her waist.

“It wouldn’t have hurt this much if the other woman was someone else.”

“It was going to hurt Jane. Being cheated is not nice...I’m glad you saw this and now you can move on. Nicolas doesn’t deserve you and your tears and you are going to be fine and find someone who will love you.”

She pulled away from the hug and looked at Ryan wiping her tears.

“I want to be a lesbian and date you. I can’t handle another heartbreak.”

Ryan cracked a smile then they both chuckled and Jane sniffled. “Let’s date then.” Ryan grabbed her hands and sighed “It will get better friend I promise.”

“Thank you for being here for me. You’re the sister I never had.”

They got in the car and drove off from the place.

Sophia looked into Bopaki’s phone and her eyebrows narrowed in confusion then grabbed

the phone reading properly.

“Are they talking about my Jane?”

“Is there another Jane whose man’s Nicolas? It’s obviously her and it means Petronella is busy with Nico. I can’t believe this...next thing she’ll be crying rape after willingly going after someone’s man.”

Sophia shook her head “They are not talking about Jane here. Let me call Petronella and ask. This is not like my daughter.”

She took out her phone and called Petronella. The phone rang for a long time and eventually went to voicemail. She tried two times before Petronella answered

“Before you say anything, yes it’s true. I’m sleeping with Nico and I’m not going to break things off.”

“Petronella! Are you crazy? I called hoping to hear that the post doesn’t talk about you kante you will tell me nonsense. I want you here by the end of today...you will know me!”

“Know you? Jane doesn’t want Nico anymore. Please let us be together in peace. The world doesn’t revolve around your niece. She slept with other people’s men but nobody said anything, now when I’m trying to keep my happiness I’m the bad guy?”

Sophia gasped covering her mouth “Are you

talking to me like that?”

“I’m not being disrespectful. I know this is a very complicated situation but Nico and I love each other.”

“Love each other my foot! Where did you get this foolishness? Listen here, you better start relocating because when I come there there’s going to be a warzone. I will grab you by the neck and hang you Petronella...don’t try me. Don’t make the prayer woman in me evil.” She snapped and hung up then clapped once.

Bopaki clapped and his mother turned to him
“Petronella wants to kill me.”

Her phone vibrated and a message came

through from Petronella.

Petronella: Disappointed, angry and devastated?
I don't know how you are feeling right now ma
but you need to accept this because I'm not
going to leave him. Jane had her chance, now
it's my turn. I'm a grown woman and I don't
need coaching.

Sophia tilted her head on the couch muttering a
defeated "Yoh."

A YEAR LATER

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#61 #unedited

A year later

In a restaurant, Ryan peeked into Jane's phone staring at beautiful pictures of her wedding with Ben. Jane zoomed in on their picture smiling so brightly.

Ryan chuckled “The way you are smiling here...you were happier than me like you were the one getting married.”

Jane laughed “I was happy for you. You’re my first real friend and I was the maid of honor. I had to be happy bathong hau.”

“I have to prepare myself to smile like that on your wedding day.”

Jane rolled her eyes “I doubt that day will never come. The date yesterday didn’t go so well. That man was so childish, imagine bragging about cars and your houses. Honestly love is not for me friend.”

“Love is for everyone. You just haven’t found someone who’s capable of giving you that love. The person might be right under your nose...like that waiter.”

Jane turned back then covered her mouth laughing “That’s a kid...I’m not that desperate Ryan. I’m glad those things that happened happened you know? I wouldn’t have gone to therapy. You know going there made me realize that I didn’t love myself. I always felt like I needed a man to complete or something, like I had to prove myself that I’m a good woman.”

“I’m so glad you went too. I like how you even changed things up. Short hair suits you.”

Jane patted her hair smiling “Really? Maybe I should go to gym and get my body back. Get

the ass snatched.”

“Right?” They both laughed then high fived.

Petronella smiled widely as her colleagues wowed her engagement ring.

“It’s so gorgeous. Your man has a good taste.”
One said

“And it looks expensive too. Your man must be loaded to afford something like this.”

Petronella blushed “Not really but he has a decent job. I was so excited when he proposed.

I wasn't expecting it because our relationship was so rocky in the beginning. I didn't even believe him when he told me that he loved me."

"Aww that's so sweet. Congrats babes...this is great. Don't forget to Invite us to your wedding."

She laughed nodding and the teachers stepped out of the office leaving her to work. She took a picture of her hand and uploaded it on Facebook. Her phone rang minutes later and she answered the call from Masego.

"Hello?"

"I saw the picture. Congratulations."

Petronella frowned "You don't sound so happy."

"No I just expected to see the picture before you posted it on Facebook. Did he pop the question this morning?"

"Last night. I'm so happy friend. God is really blessing me, firstly a job now marriage."

"Don't say God blessed you. You know I hate it when people start mentioning God after destroying other people's lives. God didn't bless you. You took your cousin's man and caused her pain."

"Friend..."

“No you are not cool. I saw Jane earlier this month when I went to the hospital and she’s very thin. Poor woman lost weight because of you and Nicolas now you are posting engagement rings on Facebook acting like you deserve it.”

Petronella gritted her teeth “So I’m not supposed to be happy because Jane lost weight? I don’t owe anyone anything. I didn’t come into this world holding someone’s hand.”

“Heeh!”

“And I’m beginning to think you are jealous of me because nothing in your life is moving.”

“Is that so? Sesi my relationship was not

building on someone's misery. Yoh you are so arrogant these days and it's painful to talk to you. I hope that relationship of yours works because it would be such a shame to see life humbling you."

She hung up the phone and swallowed as anger overwhelmed her.

Jane walked in the hospital and her phone vibrated. She checked the message and smiled as she read it.

Jamie: I've never seen Rain this happy. Next time take her to Cape Town.

Under the message was a video. She quickly downloaded it then watched as Rain ran around with other kids at the beach. She could see Linda in the distance splashing water at Rain as she laughed loudly.

Jane chuckled then typed a message to Jamie.

Jane: I will definitely take her. Take more pictures...my baby is growing you know. Tell her I miss her. When are you coming back?

Jamie: In three days. I'll definitely take more pics for memories. She says she misses you too.

Jane smiled then headed inside. She walked around the desk then put her phone down.

Later that day Nico called his uncle and sat on the couch in his house as he waited for the phone to ring.

“Hello?”

“Hello malome how are you?”

“I’m okay. How are you? How can help you?”

He cleared his throat “I have a request and I know it’s going to sound really bad because of my failed marriage with Jane. I don’t want to waste anyone’s time so I wanted to check with

you before telling mma.”

“Get straight to the point Nico. I have so much to do.”

“Will it be possible to meet up with the Tlokanas again. I want to pay magadi for Petronella.”

“Nico are we your children? What makes you think that family will hear us after embarrassing us. What you are doing is not smart boy and we can't be used to play your games.”

“Malome I know that and I'm sorry to do this to you but Petronella and I love each other. Please explain to the Tlokanas and convince them to let me marry her. Jane and I tried but failed, I didn't plan to fall in love with her cousin.”

“I don’t want to be disrespected by the Tlokanas and I also don’t want to disrespect them. I can’t help you motlogolo. Bye.”

The call cut off.

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#62

****sponsored by Mbanzi Mamthwaii Pozie****

The call cut off and Nico stared at the phone in disbelief. The door opened and Petronella walked in holding her bag and dropped it on the table.

“You won’t believe what Masego said to me.”

She pulled a chair and sat down. Nico rubbed his face and stared at her.

“I received her call thinking that she would Congratulate me then hung up but no she had to open her mouth and tell me that Jane has

lost weight because of us.”

“Malome doesn’t want to meet up with your uncles to negotiate magadi and please do me a favor and remove the picture on Facebook before making things more difficult.”

Petronella frowned “What? When did you call him?”

Nico sighed “Just few minutes ago. Nobody is supporting us babe and I don’t want to get married without the family’s blessing. Please talk to your mother and convince her.”

“Mama doesn’t want to hear anything about you. Things are rocky between us at the moment.”

“Then what are we going to do?”

“We will get married at court without them. I know that magadi is important but things are impossible right now and I’m sure Jane is the one who cried to them to not accept anything.”

Nico shook his head “Jane doesn’t have anything to do with this. This doesn’t look good babe. We have no one on our side.”

Petronella sighed defeated “Yeah. I’ll go see mama tomorrow and beg her if I have to.”

“Thanks babe.”

He grabbed by the name and kissed her then

Petronella stood up grabbing her bag and went to the bedroom.

Minutes later at the hospital, Jane gathered her things and put on her shoes. Some nurses passed by and waved at her

“See you tomorrow.”

“Bye. Don’t forget to bring the oranges sister May. I’m craving them.”

She grabbed her phone and slipped it in her bag then slung her bag over her shoulder. She checked the time then headed to the exit. She

walked to the gate shivering at the chilly wind. How she wished she had a car to make things easier for her. She got out of the hospital premises then waited for a taxi by the road.

She spotted a familiar car passing and it hooted. She waved then it reversed then parked by the road. The window lowered and Lawrence flashed his smile at her. She noticed there was another person in the car.

“Hi. Need a ride?”

“Yeah thank you.”

She walked around the car and opened the door. She stepped in at the back and warm, fresh air hit her face sending shivers of relief down her

spine. She closed the door and soaked in the smell of lavender before placing her handbag on her lap.

“Dumelang.”

Lawrence’s stepfather glanced back and smiled “Agee my girl.” Then glanced at Lawrence with a suspicious look.

Lawrence glanced at her “Do you mind if I drop timer first then take you home afterwards?”

Jane shook her head “No I don’t mind. Thank you.”

She relaxed on the seat watching as he gripped

the steering wheel and turning the car to the road. She closed her eyes sighing peacefully as the car drove off and it's sound filling her ears along with Lawrence's laughter as he talked to the man beside him. After a while the car parked at an unfamiliar gate and the man opened the door

"Make sure you visit son. We will celebrate your mother's birthday, don't miss it."

"I won't."

The man stepped out and Jane watched as he headed to the gate. The car reversed and Lawrence glanced at her

"Short hair suits you."

“Thanks. Your uncle?”

Lawrence hummed “He married my mom after dad’s death...you know how culture is sometimes. Are you good?”

“Yeah I’m okay.”

He drove away from the house then parked somewhere ahead “Come to the front.”

“I’m fine here.”

“I won’t bite you come on. My neck gets tired when I glance back after every five minutes to look at you. Come on please.”

She sighed then opened the door and walked out then closed it. She took a deep breath before opening the door to the front and got in.

“Happy?”

“Uh huh.”

It got quiet as he drove and Jane looked out of the window.

“I miss you.”

She whipped her head to him “What?”

“Well despite all the drama I miss you Jane. You hurt me so bad but I still see something in you...call it stockholm syndrome.”

Jane laughed “Stockholm syndrome is when a hostage falls in love with the captor.”

Lawrence laughed a little “You know what I mean.”

Jane sighed “I have nothing to offer you Lawrence. Don’t miss me...I really have nothing to offer.”

The following day Petronella opened the gate

and stepped into her mother's yard. She walked to the house and spotted Sofia moping the porch. She approached her and smiled standing a little distance away from the porch.

"Hello mama."

Sophia glanced at her and then shoved the mop into the bucket then took it out and squeeze the water out.

"Hello Petronella. I bet you didn't come here because you missed me."

She sighed "Can we go inside and talk please?"

Sophia scoffed and moved the mop across the

floor with her eyebrows pulled together. “We have nothing to talk about akere wena o mosadi...you are a grown woman right? The way you are so disrespectful my child, I don’t want my day to be ruined.”

She glanced at her front head to toe then noticed the ring on her finger and shook her head.

“Did you come here to tell me about the wedding proposal?”

“Nico’s uncles want to come and talk about magadi. They are afraid to come because of what happened with Jane.”

“Every single day I ask God why He gave me a

daughter like you Petronella, do you know that? Worst part is that I can't disown you because you are my love child and I spent more than five hours in the labor ward to get you but my blessing yona...forget about it. Forget about your so called magadi because I don't want the Leopengs in here."

"Mama please..."

"I'm busy as you can see here so if you have nothing else to say...you know where the gate is."

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#63 #unedited

Petronella stared at Sophia in shock

“You’re kicking me out? In my own home?”

Sophia stopped mopping then balanced the mop with the wall. She stepped off the porch and approached Petronella with her arms crossed.

“What do you want me to say Petronella? You spent months without calling and visiting, Bopaki got sick but you couldn’t come and see him or even send a simple R100 for electricity now you come back because you me to accept money for magadi from Leopeng people...do you think what you are doing is fair?”

“I didn’t want to come here because you were all judging me and I didn’t know that Bopaki was sick.”

Sophia shook her head “That’s not the point Petronella.”

“Then what is the point? When Jane stole from people and banks you never judged her. She even went to jail for years and you welcomed her back with your arms open yet you shame

me for falling in love with someone. I understand that you are having a hard time accepting it because Nico belonged to Jane first but that's not a reason to put me down everytime and even want to kick me out of my own home."

"What am I supposed to do then my child? Let you mess up and keep quiet? Difference between you and Jane is that you are my responsibility Petronella and you are still a child to me. Jane is a grown woman and the only thing I can do to her is be around when she needs me because she's an orphan. You did her very dirty and never once felt remorseful, that's what disgusts me."

Petronella bit her lip and swallowed a lump as Sophia took a pause before continuing

“I was going to accept magadi if Nico hadn’t cheated on Jane with you. You are settling for someone who cheated on the person the claimed to love...do you know that you are next?”

“All I’m asking is for this chance to experience true love and you are refusing.”

“Tell them to come. The life is yours...I’ll never stand in your way my girl because I’ve lived my youth and make choices that I’m satisfied with.”

Petronella nodded with a smile releasing a sigh of relief “Let me go tell Nico the good news. I will send R500 for electricity. Thanks mama.”

During lunch Jane sat on the bench alone and called Ryan. She opened her lunch box while she waited for her friend to pick up.

“Honey bunny.”

“Baby...did you knock off?”

“Close. What’s up? Need to vent?”

“Yesterday late Lawrence gave me a lift and he drove around to drop off his uncle then on our way to my place he blurted that he misses me. This thing has been bothering me since morning and I can’t get it out of my mind.”

“What do you feel wena? I mean you did tell me that this guy loved you and was willing to do everything for you. Maybe he still loves you.”

Jane sighed “Friend I stole from this man, made him believe that I was carrying his child while plotting to take the money he had worked for. His business was still small at that time Ryan and I just took his money to spend it with Jamie who didn’t even love me enough to provide for me. Gosh I feel so guilty everytime Lawrence smiles at me or just say something nice to me.”

“I understand where you are coming from friend but you paid back the money and went to jail to pay for your crimes...Maybe you should apologize again.”

She swallowed “I will but I don’t think that will help.”

“Then what do you think you should do?”

“I don’t know Ryan. I don’t know what he wants from me...what if this is just a recipe for disaster?”

“Maybe or maybe not. Now you know better and you love yourself enough. You’ll surely distance yourself if the situation turns toxic. I suggest you talk to him and discuss the past. Let things out then apologize. If he still loves you like I’m suspecting, he’ll forgive you.”

“Should I call him now?”

“He’s probably busy. Maybe later.”

“Thanks friend. Get back to work...love you.”

“Love you back.”

She hung then sighed heavily. She grabbed her phone and searched for Lawrence’s profile on Facebook then typed a message then deleted it sighing in frustration.

Later on Petronella got in Nico’s yard and walked to the house with a smile. She walked into the house and found Nico cooking. She wrapped her arms around his waist

“I have good news.”

“Your mom agreed?”

“Yes.”

Nico turned around and picked her up then placed a kiss on her lips. “Took a lot of convincing but she finally agreed.”

“That’s really good news babe. After this we can marry peacefully knowing that we have their blessing. I was really worried.”

“Me too.”

“I’ll call malome before going to bed and beg him to reconsider because he was really not feeling me when I called.”

“Yeah do that.”

She headed to the bedroom then dropped the bag on the bed. She sat down and texted Masego

Petronella: Can we talk without biting each other’s heads off. I don’t want to spend this week miserable because you and I aren’t talking. Drinks on me on Friday?

She waited and a message came through

Masego: Your problem is that you get so defensive whenever someone says something to advice you. You've thrown so many harsh advices at me but I've never insulted you but yeah we can have drinks on Friday.

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LIKE & COMMENT

See you on Monday I need to rest and recharge you know?

THE PROTECTOR

#64

Later that night at Nico's house, Nico stepped out of the bedroom and headed to the living room where he relaxed on the couch dialing his uncle.

"Hello?"

"Hello malome. How are you doing?"

"I'm fine. I still decline Nico. I don't want to be caught in drama...I'm too old for that."

"Well I have good news for you then. I had Petronella talk to her mother to find out if she's actually okay with you coming there to pay the

price and her mother agreed.”

“Her mother agreed?”

“Yes. Earlier today...I know you are afraid of being insulted but I promise that nothing like that will happen. Please call the other uncles and aunty then discuss this. I’m desperate malome and I can’t wait anymore.”

His uncle sighed "Tell me Nicolas, is this a game to you? Are women a game to you?"

He furrowed his eyebrows “I’m not sure if I follow.”

“We didn’t forget that you cheated on Jane the

day after you asked us to go to her family. Now you are begging us to go back there to pay for the cousin. I want to understand because there's nothing I hate more than wasting my time on the things that wouldn't benefit me."

"I really love Petronella."

"Nice to hear that but you need to know something Nephew, there's always going to be a woman better than your woman. You will meet women smarter, more beautiful, more bodically gifted, more well spoken, classier than your own woman, are you going to fall for her and drop your wife because she's no longer giving you that thrill or she's no longer ticking all the boxes? If you want to live like that, you'll never be satisfied. I know how love works because I've been your age before and I've

experienced the things that you are still experiencing. What I can tell you motlogolo is to be careful with the choices you make so you don't end up living a life with regrets."

He sighed "I hear you uncle and thanks for advising me but I really love Petronella and I really want to make her my wife."

"Okay then that's fine. I will talk to the family and let them know about your request."

"Thank you. Good night."

He hung up and stood up. Sounds of sleepers dragging across the floor echoed as Petronella walked into the living room.

She covered her mouth yawning “Who was that?”

“Oh that was uncle. I didn’t want to wake you...I explained and he agreed.”

Petronella smiled and stood on her tiptoes then pecked his lips. “Perfect. Now let’s go to bed...I can’t sleep without you.”

She grabbed his hand and then they walked back to the bedroom.

Jane laid on her bed and sighed for the second time. Her mind was racing with thoughts and

they kept bothering her. She grabbed her phone and texted Jamie.

Jane: Kiss Rain for me and tell her mommy loves her and can't wait to see her.

She sighed and laid on her side. She covered herself with the quilt then scrolled on Facebook. A message came through from her inbox and she tapped on it checking the profile. The profile was spongebob and the name was just gibberish

Lawrence: Hi. It's Lawrence...you blocked me on my main account so I had to make a plan. Can I call you?

Jane laughed in disbelief and typed a response

Jane: So brave of you to even ask that.

Lawrence: I thought we were getting somewhere. Why are you so guarded when it comes to me? I know things happened and we both got hurt in different ways but I want us to try again Jane. We were so good together and I loved you so much even though my love was not returned. Please let's give ourselves a chance to talk things out...we really need to talk.

Jane swallowed and her mind flashed back to their good moments together then she bit her lip typing.

Jane: Tomorrow.

Lawrence: I'll pick you on your lunch break.
Sweet dreams sweetheart

The next day Sophia sat on her couch holding a cup of tea then switched on the TV. She switched to a gospel channel then hummed along as she sipped her tea. Someone knocked on the door and her son Bopaki who was in the kitchen went to open.

"Uncle..."

His uncle pulled him into a side hug then walked in.

“Nephew. Are you great? How’s school?”

Bopaki smiled “Good. Everything is good.”

“That’s refreshing to hear. Where’s your mother?”

He pointed to the living room and the uncle made his way and sat down on the couch. Sophia lowered the volume of the TV then placed her cup on the small table.

“Brother...I didn’t expect your visit.”

“Good morning. I’m sorry to come here this early but I’ve received a call from the Leopengs earlier today regarding magadi and I was told

that you agreed. Sophia how can you agree to this nonsense? I don't like that Nico boy...he's full of games and a lot of shit I don't know why because he's not a celebrity. How can you allow him to marry Petronella after what he did to Jane? Petronella is also foolish for giving herself to men like that. It shows that you are failing to control her."

Sophia frowned "I agreed because I want her to feel the consequences of poor choices. Petronella doesn't respect anyone including me and I thought I had taught her well but no...so I'm stepping away so she can teach herself. As much as I don't support this, I don't want my daughter to disappear with a man to another country because I didn't want her to get married."

“Fine. We will wait for the Leopengs and after that I’m no longer involved. I won’t even attend the wedding because this is more than embarrassing.”

Sophia sighed “I failed as a parent. I should call Jane and let her know about this before she hears it from someone else.”

The uncle nodded and Sophia quickly dialed Jane.

“Hello auntie. How are you?”

“I’m hanging there. I called to let you know that Nico is asking for Petronella’s hand in marriage. I didn’t want you to hear it from someone else.”

“It’s okay auntie. Let them do whatever they want. I’m done crying and I’m trying to move on.”

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THE PROTECTOR

#65 #unedited

At Jane’s, after hanging up Jane sighed and grabbed her bag. She swallowed a lump and looked up preventing the tears to stream down. Even after a year it still hurt, not the cheating part but the betrayal of a family member.

She sighed then walked out of the house. She locked the door and headed to the gate.

In Durban, Jamie dried Rain with the towel then picked her up going to the bedroom where Linda was feeding their son.

“I can’t believe we are leaving tomorrow.”

Jamie smiled “This was a nice get away you know, we should do this more often when you are on leaves.”

“I will. Next time we will leave the kids to Jane

then go somewhere we can get time alone.”

“Why should we leave the kids with Jane?”

“Isn’t Rain her daughter? Jane has been slacking off with this parenting thing. She never gives Rain her time...it’s always us babysitting.”

Jamie sighed and grabbed the lotion “Rain is my daughter and Jane was going through something that’s why she asked me to stay with Rain for a little bit. I don’t want to sound like I’m always defending her but you need to stop complaining.”

“I’m not complaining Jamie. I’m just tired of motherhood...I need to enjoy myself away from the kids. I hate how my life revolves around the

kids and my job. I don't even remember the last time I hung out with Kano and had drinks."

"Okay I understand babe. We can talk to my mother or yours and ask them to babysit and we can take the kids only on weekends. I need to talk to Jane about this first."

Linda nodded "Okay. Thanks for listening."

Lunch time, Jane walked out of the hospital yard and walked over to Lawrence's car that was parked by the road. She walked around it and Lawrence opened the door for her from the inside. She got in and closed the door then turned to Lawrence.

“Hi.”

“Hi. I’m glad to see you. I thought you would bail out on me.”

“You were right about what you said. You and I have unfinished business and we really do have to talk things out.”

Lawrence sighed “I wanted us to go to a restaurant but restaurants are usually packed and it doesn’t give the ‘I’m comfortable’ vibe so we’ll just go to the park.”

“And parks aren’t crowded?”

“Not really. I want us to have our space as we talk.”

Jane just nodded and after few minutes Lawrence parked in front of a beautiful park then opened the door. Jane opened the door and stepped out watching him as he opened the boot. He took out a medium-sized picnic basket and a fleece towel and closed the boot. She turned her gaze to the parked. There were few people in a distance sitting in circle holding books, probably a bookclub so the place was quiet.

She followed Lawrence in and he headed to a small tree and put the basket down then glanced at Jane

“Do you regret coming here already? I told you I

don't bite."

Jane face palmed "I'm nervous okay? I didn't think you would be so romantic for just talking."

Lawrence chuckled "I want to make you relax so we can talk without biting each other's heads off."

She sat down and opened the basket and took out the bottle of wine. "You forgot the glasses."

"Shit...it's okay. We'll drink from the bottle."
Jane made a face and Lawrence crossed his arms "It's not like you haven't sucked my lips before."

He sat down and took out snacks from the basket and laid them on the towel as Jane cleared her throat and looked at him in the eyes.

Lawrence sighed "I loved you the first day you walked into my office taking the PA position. You looked beautiful with your pencil skirt and blazer. When we first slept together I couldn't look at Char the same and I ended up hurting her. I left her thinking that I would find true happiness with you but instead I got heartbroken and almost bankrupt. I was hurt but I forced myself heal quickly because I had hurt another person the same but when you were in jail I kept thinking about you. I loved you still Jane, I was worried about you and I kept myself if you were eating or safe." He swallowed his eyes getting glossy and he cleared his throat "Why did you hurt me like that? What did you gain?"

Jane shook her head “I didn’t gain anything. I...I was stupid. I was doing that to support a man who didn’t give a damn about me. I regret that day believe me Lawrence. I wish I could take everything. I’m sorry. I’m really sorry.”

Lawrence looked away and cleared his throat then closed his eyes. He sighed “I would’ve given you the money and even brushed off the fact that you were married because I was in a relationship too. All of those things were very unnecessary Jane. You almost ruined your life...thank God you didn’t die while in that hell hole.”

She looked down and swallowed the guilty that was suffocating her.

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay. It’s all in the past. I just want us to start over and forget what happened. I will punish you in bed someday.”

Jane’s frowned dissappeared as she laughed in shock “You’re getting way ahead of yourself.”

Lawrence smirked “I’m a grown man. I don’t like to beat around the bush...you coming here with gives me hope.”

He grabbed the banana and peeled it then brought it to Jane’s lips. Jane moved her head closer and took a bite then Lawrence bit from it with a relieved smile.

At Petronella's job, Petronella shifted uncomfortably on the chair feeling the urge to scratch her nunu. She stood up, grabbed her phone and glanced at the principal

"Going to the loo ma'am."

Without waiting for her response, she rushed to the toilets outside and got in the teacher's toilets then sat on the seat after pulling her pants down. She scratched herself then took her phone and took a picture of it to look properly.

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THE PROTECTOR

#66

Minutes later Lawrence parked by the hospital and sighed with a smile as he turned to Jane.

“I had a great time with you.”

“Me too. I’m so stuffed...thanks for spoiling me with snacks. It’d been a while.”

Lawrence bit his lip and nodded “Let’s do this

again soon. Call me after knocking off alright.”

“Alright.” She opened the door and Lawrence gently grabbed her arm and pulled her. He leaned closer and pecked her lips then fixed his suit as he relaxed back on the seat.

“Be safe at work yah? Don’t be rude to patients.”

Jane snorted “Bye motho wa modimo.”

She stepped out and closed the door. She walked to the gate and heard it driving away. One of her colleagues rushed to her ready to gossip.

“Please tell me you aren’t the one who just

stepped out of that big car.”

Jane held her bag tightly and shook her head “It wasn’t me.”

“Where do you guys get rich and classy men with nice cars? We have to ride taxis and eat fat cakes everyday while you get taken out for lunch.”

Jane shook her head smiling “Men are just around and you should know that when I date I don’t date for money. I used to but it backfired badly. Don’t chase after big cars...the owners could be devils.”

Her colleague laughed "Not you giving me advice with a stomach full of prawns and

shrimps. Anyway remember to hook me up with his brothers if they are single.”

She waved and headed to the other direction. Jane sighed and walked to the entrance with a little smile on her face.

That evening Nico got in his car and closed the doors. He started the engine and connected his phone to Bluetooth. It rang as he drove away from the correctional institution.

“Eita!”

“I heard that you are paying the bride price for

Petronella. Congratulations.”

“Thanks cousin.”

“Are you sure about this man? I know you no longer love Jane and stuff but are you ready to commit? Don’t forget that you were rushing to marry Jane then ended up cheating on her.”

Nico rolled his eyes “Can’t you congratulate me normally without dragging Jane into this? Petro and I have been dating for a year and we used that time to get to know each other better. I know exactly what I’m doing. I wouldn’t have bought the ring and asked for her hand in marriage if I wasn’t ready for commitment. You have to let me live my life Lefa...I don’t try to give you advices and tell you what to do right so please.”

“I’m not fighting with you man. I’ll back off. Congratulations.”

Nico sighed “It’s fine. Will you be able to go with the uncles?”

“I’m sorry man but I can’t. I have to accompany my wife somewhere.”

Nicolas sighed “It’s okay if you don’t want to. I know how you feel about this whole thing. I’m glad we are still cool though. You are my brother and I don’t want us to lose our bond because of women.”

“I can’t help it sometimes when you are ruining things for yourself. I get where you are coming

from. Let's just stay out of each other's business and we'll be good."

"Great. I'm heading home so I'll see you...probably tomorrow."

"Sure man."

That evening Jane sat relaxed on the couch with a plate of hot food as she talked to Ryan on the phone.

"I'm telling you....i thought we were just going to talk in a restaurant and order a cheap burger or something kante he would take me to the park

and have a whole picnic.”

“A whole picnic friend!”

“And I was nervous too.” She paused “And we talked a bit about the past. I apologized and he listened and told me it was okay.” She covered her face blushing “He then fed me a banana and kissed me goodbye.”

“Aww that’s so cute friend.”

Jane’s smile fell and she sighed “I hope he’s not doing this for revenge. I can’t go through another heartbreak Ryan. My heart is fragile right now...another pain would send me straight to ICU.”

“Don’t think like that. I think he’s genuine...I mean isn’t he the same man who badly wanted your daughter to be his? I get why you’re so skeptical about this but think positively for once Jane. Some men are just lovers and will never be understood. Let him in and see where this goes, it’s not like you are getting married tomorrow.”

She smiled “Yeah. How’s Ben? How’s my godson?”

“They are both good. Ben and I are thinking of trying for another bundle of joy. My son is getting lonely.”

“I’ll keep you in my prayers.” She yawned “Let me eat and get ready for bed. I’ll see you when I see you. Love you girl.”

“Love you too. Good night babes.”

She hung up and saved Lawrence's numbers then texted him

Jane: I got home safe. I hope you did too. I really had fun earlier Lawrence and I'm looking forward to more lunch break chats. Good night.

At 6PM Nico got home and found Petronella sitting in the kitchen with a long face. He closed the door and approached the table then sat down. He placed the keys on the table and stared at Petronella in concern.

“Are you okay? What happened?”

“I got a vaginal infection...want to explain that Nico?”

Nico furrowed his eyebrows “What are you talking about baby?”

“I have rash inside my coochie. It hurts when I pee. I have an infection Nicolas so I want an explanation.”

“It could be the dirty toilets you use at school. Did you go to the clinic? when the toilets are unhygienic—”

Petronella threw her arms in the air “ I've been using those toilets since i started working there and I've never had a problem. Don't lie to me! I'm not Jane and I will paralyze you if I find out that you are cheating on me. Tsk! Unhygienic my foot!”

She stood up and walked out of the kitchen.

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#67

Nico's lips hung wide open in shock as Petronella disappeared into the bedroom. He stood up and followed her. He got in the room and closed the door.

"I didn't know that trust doesn't exist in this relationship. How can you easily accuse me of something I don't know?"

Petronella crossed her arms "Because you can't get an infection out of nowhere. I'm the one in pain and I won't keep quiet."

"What makes you think you got the infection from me?"

"If it's not from you then where did I get it

because I only sleep with you?”

Nico rubbed his face in frustration “I’m asking you the same question because I’m telling you that it could be the toilets but you don’t want to listen to me. I’m not sleeping with anyone and if I were sleeping around you would have seen me whining in pain from the same infection. I can’t believe you are accusing me of nonsense while wearing the symbol of my love for you.”

Petronella kept quiet and Nico leaned on the door “I promised myself that I would never stay where I’m not trusted. I won’t be able to handle everyday interrogations Petronella.”

“Are you cheating on me?”

“Didn’t you hear what I just said?”

“Nico wee...it’s a simple question. It’s not solve for X.”

Nico shook his head “No I’m not cheating on you. I don’t even think about cheating on you.”

“Mm good night.” She laid on the bed and faced the other way. Nico frowned then clicked his tongue

“What do you want me to say? I tell you the truth you get mad, you will get even mad if I lie...what do you want from me? No tell me because I’m tired from work and this is the last thing I wanted.”

“Can you let me sleep? I’m in pain.”

Nico walked out of the bedroom and headed back to the kitchen where he took a plate and dished for himself then sat down.

At Bailey’s, Lawrence raised his glass as Bailey poured him a drink.

“You look oddly happy today...what, did you some earlier?”

Lawrence chuckled “No I didn’t get anything and what do you mean I’m oddly happy? I’m always happy even when life shows me flames.”

“I’m your best friend and I know you better than anyone. Come on...out with it.”

“Alright.” He sighed “I’ve been talking to Jane and we had a picnic earlier and managed to have a heart to heart conversation about the past.”

Bailey shook his head “Don’t do this to yourself man. This girl nearly drove you to insanity.”

“I know what happened but I’m trying to move past it. Jane has changed man. Jail was good for her and you know that I never stopped loving her.”

Bailey sighed “What if the change you see is

just a façade? What if she's trying to fool you so she could take your possessions? Don't fall for this Law. There are many women out there...you travel a lot, I'm sure you meet very beautiful women."

"You know that most women just want to milk me dry."

"And Jane won't?"

"Listen man, I want her and I will deal with the consequences. That's my woman dude...that's my Hun. Forever Jane."

Bailey laughed out loud and fist pumped Lawrence as they laughed together.

“Your mother will have a heart attack after hearing this.”

The next morning Jane put on her earphones and grabbed the rake then went outside. She vibed to the music as she raked the yard. Her phone rang and she pressed the middle part of the earphones and continued raking.

“Hello?”

“Hey. It’s Nico.”

She stopped and frowned her eyebrows. She took out the phone and checked the numbers.

“I blocked you for a reason. Why are you calling me?”

“I wanted to let you know about the engagement. Petronella and I will be getting married soon so I thought I should let you know before hearing it from other people.”

“I already heard. Congratulations.”

“Listen Jane, You and I tried but I didn’t—”

“Why are you explaining yourself? You don’t owe me an explanation, in fact you owe me nothing Nico. So I would really appreciate it if you don’t call again.”

“I just called to let you know. It’s not to brag or anything. I know I hurt you but you also hurt me so let’s not fight. I just want a peaceful relationship with Petronella without bitter exes.”

Jane gritted her teeth “Okay good for you.”

She hung up and blocked the number then continued with her work.

At the clinic, Petronella looked at the nurse as she explained to her. She twirled with the chair and grabbed pills and a tub of cream. She jotted down and then peeked at the pregnancy test.

“Make sure you apply the cream to your vagina and abstain from sex until you get better. I advise you to use condoms in the future to avoid things like these. Next time it won’t be STI only...it will be HIV & AIDS.” She glanced at the pregnancy test on the table then looked at her “Unfortunately you are not pregnant. Stay careful sweetheart.”

“Thank you.”

She took the medication and stood up. She walked to the door and walked out. She released a breath and swallowed as she headed to the exit. She couldn’t relax as she headed to the taxi rank as the nurse’s words repeated themselves in her mind.

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sorry I'm late

LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#68

Later that day Jane stepped out of the tub and walked over to the dresser. She grabbed her lotion and other things then walked to the bed. Sitting on the edge, she grabbed the lotion and squirted some in her hands then massaged her

arms. Her phone rang...she turned and glanced at Lawrence calling her.

"Hi."

"Hey baby. You good?"

"Mm I'm great."

"You're not busy right?"

"Not really. I just finished bathing and was about to go watch my favorite drama series."

"I want to take you out. Put on your comfy clothes and I'll be there to fetch you so we could go eat dinner."

She face-palmed “I already cooked Lawrence. Why didn’t you say this sooner.”

“That’s fine babe we can go out for breakfast.”

She bit her lip “No how about you come over and have dinner with me? We could watch the series together afterwards.”

“Seriously?”

“Yeah. I made beef stew...you used to love it and I know you have a big appetite. When was the last time you had a home cooked meal?”

“Let me freshen up and I’ll be there in an hour.

See you then.”

“Bye.”

She hung up and looked at the phone. A smile broke out and she found herself blushing thinking of having a male presence in her house. She finished moisturizing her body then put on her clothes and wore a clean gown on top.

At Jamie’s, Linda followed Jamie inside dragging a suitcase. They got in the bedroom and Jamie stepped out to tuck in the kids then came back minutes later.

Linda took off her shoes “I’ve never been this tired. My butt is asleep.”

Jamie yawned “I just want to get in the sheets and sleep. I’ll shower tomorrow.”

“You are not getting under my blankets with sweat please. Let’s go shower together.”

Jamie took off his clothes and walked to the ensuite. Linda took off her wig and her earrings then followed him. They stepped into the cubicle and stood under the warm water and Jamie wrapped his arms on her waist then kissed her.

“You’ve been off lately. What’s going on in your mind?”

“I’m fine.”

Jamie shook his head “Don’t say you’re fine when you are not fine. We said in our vows that we would communicate. We’ve been communicating and I’ve never gave you a reason to not tell me things.”

“I’m no longer happy about our sex life Jamie. We no longer have sex and it’s affecting me. I don’t want to cheat because that’s not who I am but I’m unhappy.”

“We’ve been having sex...what do you mean we no longer have sex? We do it twice a week.”

Linda wiped the water off her face “That’s the

thing. I want it everyday.”

“Babe you know that my bones are still...I’m getting old so what you are asking is a little challenging.”

Linda rolled her eyes “You’re not old. You’re just lazy. How about we go to the gym.”

Jamie frowned “Gym?”

“Yes. It will help us stay fit, healthy and increase your stamina. This is actually a great idea...we’ll get membership then go there everyday.”

“Will that make you happy?”

She nodded and leaned in to kiss him. She hooked her leg on his hip and Jamie lifted her up and started massaging her honeypot before plunging in.

Minutes later Lawrence pulled in the driveway then stepped out of the car. He opened the gate and walked into the yard. He knocked softly after reaching the door and the door opened.

Jane smiled "Hey. Come in."

Lawrence walked in and Jane led him to the sitting area. He looked less serious in casual and it made the atmosphere comfortable.

“I cooked pap too and other things. Should I dish for you now or you want to start with the series?”

Lawrence smiled softly “Dish for me please then we will watch the movies later.”

She dished into two plates then served him and placed a damp cloth which they used to wipe their hands and sat on the other chair holding her own plate.

“My heart can’t take anymore pain Lawrence, so please be straight with me. Do you want something physical or what? I don’t understand because some men just want sex then once they get it they leave.”

“I just want all of you. I will treat you good if you do the same for me. I’m too old to not know what I want. I know what I want. I want something solid.”

“Oh is that so?”

He nodded grabbing a piece from the plate.

“Really babe. Does that mean you are giving me a chance?”

“Yes.”

He stood up and walked to her side then tilted her head kissing her chin then moving to her lips. “Perfect. I missed these lips.” He kissed her again then gently bit the bottom lip then pulled away.

Jane smiled then giggled as he leaned in and kissed her nose “Stop being goofy and go eat please.”

He went back to sit down then started eating. After few minutes they settled on the couch with his head on her lap as the drama played on the TV.

Petronella finally dished then washed the dishes. She cleaned around a bit then heard Nico’s car driving into the yard. She sat down waiting and minutes later the door opened.

“It smells nice in here.” He said as he walked to

her. He kissed her forehead and Petro remained tense.

“I went to the clinic and my suspensions were correct. I got sexual transmitted infection Nico.”

Nico’s smile dropped and her face pulled into annoyance “Is it going to be like this everyday? You didn’t get that from me. I’m getting tired of this Petronella...don’t tire me so soon.”

She stood up and grabbed her plate of food.
“Tell your uncles to wait with the negotiations. I don’t think I’m ready to get married.”

She turned around and walked to the living room.

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THE PROTECTOR

#69

Nico chuckled softly in disbelief before following her. He grabbed the remote and switched off the TV then stood in front of the couch Petro sat on.

“Are you serious?”

“Yes. I don’t want to dug myself a hole Nicolas. You clearly have something going on and I

refuse to be part of it. I love you but I hate to have doubts in a relationship. You are giving me so many doubts and worse you deny the truth.”

He threw his hands up "So I should just say yes to everything because you are insecure and delusional?”

“Delusional? Me? My coochie is burning and has red rash and I’m delusional for questioning the man I sleep with?”

“Petronella I told you that it could be the toilets—”

She shook her head “The toilets are safe. They clean them everyday with chemicals that kill germs. Just tell me the truth!”

“I slept around akere that’s what you want to hear? I slept around and got infected.”

Petronella swallowed and Nico laughed in disbelief

“Why is that easy for you to believe and not the first statement? I won’t stand here and keep repeating myself like a toddler. The uncles are still going to your mother’s house to pay for the bride price. Nxla I don’t have time to entertain your childish games so I’ll go eat in the kitchen.”

He walked away and Petronella swallowed in anger then grabbed the remote and switched the TV back on.

Around 11PM Jane stood by Lawrence's car with a smile mixed with tiredness on her face as Lawrence leaned against the car.

She yawned "Are you sure you don't want to sleep over? I'm worried that you are driving home this late."

"I'm sure. I can't sleep over because I don't want to jump steps and also because I don't have my toiletries on me. I'll be fine babe. Come here."

He pulled her to him and Jane wrapped her arms around his neck and laid on his chest shivering. "I'll see you tomorrow. I will pick you up from work if I fail to come around during your lunch break."

“Okay.”

He leaned down and kissed her “Good night.”

“Good night.”

He let her go and Jane walked back into the yard and locked the gate then Lawrence got in his car and started the engine.

Jane got in the house and heard the car driving away. She touched her lips then went to her bedroom. She grabbed her phone on the bed and found four missed calls from Sophia. She immediately called her

“Hello Jane?”

“Hello auntie. My phone was in the bedroom and I was in the living room. I’m sorry I missed your call.”

“I was so worried Jane. I was thinking of the worst because you didn’t sound okay when I told you about Petronella’s engagement.”

“I meant what I said auntie. I don’t care about what Nicolas and Petronella are doing anymore. I’m moving on and trying to get happiness because I haven’t been fully happy for a while.”

“Please promise me that you will tell me when you’re drowning. I don’t want to bury you Jane...please promise me.”

“I promise. I won’t do that. I’m not suicidal. You don’t have to worry about me auntie. I’m fine...I cried and went to therapy to deal with everything.”

“Okay. Where’s Rain?”

“I’m sure she’s home with Jamie and Linda or still in Durban enjoying their holiday.”

“Oh I’m glad Jamie is showing her things.”

They chatted for few minutes and Jane went to bed and rested.

The same night Nico walked out of the guest bedroom and got in his bedroom. He got on the bed and laid down beside Petronella. He wrapped an arm around her and sighed listening to her snoring.

He shook her “Baby?”

Petronella turned and slowly opened her eyes
“What’s wrong?”

“I love you okay?”

“Okay.” She closed her eyes and yawned “Me too.”

“I promise I’m not cheating. I don’t like this tension and sleeping while angry is not good.”

Petronella sighed and opened her eyes “Nico it’s late and people are sleeping. I’m tired and need my beauty sleep.”

“Five minutes.”

“Five minutes for what? We failed to talk earlier, what makes you think we will be able to talk properly without tearing each other apart this time? Please sleep we will try again tomorrow.”

He sighed In defeat and closed his eyes trying to sleep.

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The next day Petronella walked into the yard of the place Masego rented. She walked to her door and knocked on the door then stepped back. Loud laughed sounded from the inside and she checked the time. She stepped closer and knocked again

“I’m coming!”

The door opened and Masego stepped outside and closed the door. Petronella glanced at her short night under the gown dress and could see love bites on her neck.

“Your man is here?”

She nodded "He's on leave so we are spending time together."

"Sorry I came unannounced. It's just that I have an infection and I think Nico might have slept with someone. He keeps denying it but I know an infection from dirt and from sex Masego. I think I should wait for few months before continuing with the dowry negotiations."

Masego crossed her arms "Why are you telling me?"

"Askies?"

"Why are you telling me? Akere I warned you about him and you told me that I was jealous of your relationship because nothing was moving

in my life? What made you come here to complain about the same man? Petronella I'm busy okay? I have a man waiting for me inside so Please."

"Aww Masego..."

"No. I have no advice for you...I've ran out of advices."

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THE PROTECTOR

#70

At Masego's, Petronella stared at Masego not believing her ears and watched as she opened the door and stepped in but held it without closing.

"Is that all?"

"Why are you being so rude?"

Masego leaned against the doorframe and Petronella could see her man inside.

“How am I being rude Petronella? You were rude to me every time I told you how horrible the idea of dating Nico was. You called me names and even insulted my relationship so now that the relationship is showing you flames I’m suddenly rude when I don’t want to listen to your rants. Please get over yourself my dear. The arrogance you possess will be your downfall especially since you and I are equal.”

Petronella’s throat closed up “So in other words we are no longer friends?”

“We are friends but I will not be your therapist as long as you are still dating your cousin’s ex fiancé.”

“Wow.”

“As I’ve said few minutes ago, my man is here and we were in the middle of something. You and I will talk on the phone alright?”

Petronella just turned and walked to the gate. Masego closed the door and laughed in disbelief as she walked to her man.

“Honestly I’m better off without friends. Being Petronella’s friend is an extreme sport.”

At Lefa’s steakhouse, Lefa listened attentively as Nico narrated his story.

“So she thinks you are the one who gave her STI?”

He nodded “She’s been cold towards me ever since she found out. She was even about to cancel the negotiations because of it.”

“That’s hectic mos. So you aren’t the one who gave it to her? I know that women in prison are beautiful but do you really have to sleep with them?”

“Not you too. I didn’t cheat on Petronella, I’ll never do that especially after everything.”

Lefa shook his head “Then what happened because something clearly happened. One of you cheated and caught this thing.”

“I didn’t do it. I’m always honest with you Lefa you know that. I don’t know what to think anymore. There’s a lot of tension at home that’s why I’m eating here today. I want to avoid having dinner with her.”

“I don’t want to say this but you made your bed man. This is the woman you threw away everything for. The woman you fought the family for so deal with it. Endure the tension and find a way to deal with it because I don’t think it’s going to get better from her.”

“I really do love her man. We will work this out and prepare ourselves to get married.”

Lefa nodded in understanding “Let’s hope you

do fix things because it would be so embarrassing for the relationship to collapse after the drama you caused and the disrespect you served Jane's family that day."

His phone rang and his face lit up as he stared at Petronella's name on the screen.

"Hello?"

"Hey. Are you free to talk?"

"Yeah. It's not crowded where I am. What's up?"

"To resolve the issue we are currently facing, it would better to go and get yourself tested then we go back to using condoms."

His face changed and Lefa noticed then looked away.

“Babe I didn’t do anything. Why should I be punished for something I didn’t do?”

“It’s not about being punished Nico. It’s about playing safe...I don’t want to get sick and depend on medication for the rest of my life. Using condoms won’t kill you so please don’t be difficult. I’ll see you when I get home. Bye.”

The call cut off and Nico sighed putting his phone away. He looked at Lefa

“Man help me out here”

Lefa raised his hands and shook his head with a little chuckle “No man. You and I agreed to stay out of each other’s businesses to avoid arguments right? You’ll have to deal with this on your own man.”

Petronella took a turned and walked to Nico’s place. Her phone rang and she glanced back before answering.

“Hello?”

“Hey I saw your message. You said you needed to discuss something urgently?”

“Are you sleeping with someone else? I got an infection and my fiancé is denying. We were both drunk then but I remember that you didn’t use condom.”

“No I didn’t give you that infection. I’m clean and I always use condom. That’s the issue you need to discuss with your husband that you replaced me with. Whatever happened between us will never happen again.”

“Of course it will never happen again. I’m getting married and I love my fiancé.”

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#71

That evening Petronella walked into the yard and saw the garage door opened and the car inside. She walked to the house and put her bag down then sat down waiting. Minutes later the door opened and Nico walked in.

“Oh you’re here.”

She nodded “I want us to talk because I’m tired

of this tension.”

Nico sat down “You’re the one causing this tension Petronella. You are accusing me of something I don’t know. How am I supposed to be all smiles when you do that?”

“I was confused and scared Nico. You are the only man I’m sleeping with.”

“Let’s go get tested together then. I don’t want to use condoms with you. We are an engaged couple for goodness sake. The only way to end this is to get tested together.”

“I already got tested. It doesn’t matter anymore.”

Nico shook his head in frustration “Don’t say it doesn’t matter Petronella. I want trust in this relationship and to go to the hospital or clinic to get tested would put my mind ease because I’m tired of being accused.”

“Fine. I’m going to change...please order us something to eat.”

She stood up and walked to the bedroom.

The next day Lawrence parked at the gate and stepped out of the car. He opened the gate and was surprised to find it unlocked. He walked to the door and knocked

“I’m coming!” Jane yelled from the inside

The door opened and she gasped in surprise.
Lawrence smiled “Surprised”

She walked to him with a smile and leaned in to kiss him then invited him in. “What are you doing here?”

“I wanted to take you to work. I’m going to Capetown for business and I won’t be back until next week. So I wanted to spend few minutes with you before I leave.”

“When are you leaving?”

“Later today. Have you had breakfast?”

“I was about to.”

“Grab your bag we will start with breakfast then I’ll take you to work.”

She grabbed her bag and hooked her arm with Lawrence’s as he led her to the car. Few minutes later they got in the car and Law started it and glanced at Jane.

“Lawrence?”

“Baby?”

“I’m so glad we are trying again. I want to be happy and I’ll make sure you are happy too.

These past years haven't been so good to me."

"I know babe. We've got this. All I want is Communication. I know you love money—"

Jane laughed as Lawrence continued "I know you love money and I don't mind giving it to you as long as you talk to me about it."

"Okay I will ask if I need something and I'm good at communicating."

"Good."

He placed his hand on her thigh and massaged it as he drove. Jane glanced at him then smiled placing her hand over his. The fear of her heart

getting broken faded a bit by bit.

Petronella got to work few minutes later and her phone rang the minute she sat on the chair. She answered the phone and relaxed switching on the computer

“Hi.”

“Hey. I called because I know you have too much pride to call me first. Are you feeling better?”

“Yeah kind of. They gave me a cream and pills to swallow.”

“What did Nico say?”

“He’s denying it.”

“Are you sure you are not sleeping with someone else?”

“It doesn’t matter what I say because you will judge me either way. I’m not sleeping with anyone else...”

Another call came through

“Let me take another call. I’ll call you during my lunch break.”

She hung up and answered the other call

“Hello?”

“Did you mean what you said yesterday?”

“About what?”

“About loving your fiancé?”

She sighed “Of course I meant it Thabang. I love him and I will marry him.”

“What about what we have Petronella? I know I said what happened was a mistake but I miss you. We can work something out.”

“No Thabang. You infected me with STI. I wonder what your wife is thinking. She’s probably infected too or the one sleeping around. I don’t want messy situations when I’m about to get married.”

“One last time then.”

“Thabang I can’t. I love Nico.”

She heard him chuckling “The so called Nico of yours is probably fvcking prisoners and you are out here wanting to be loyal?”

“Stay out of my business. You don’t know Nico.”

“And you do? I’m a man and I know how men think. Just come see me one last time before you tie yourself to him. You know I’m the only one who can make you scream. You don’t have to fake it.”

The principal walked Into the office and Petronella quickly hung up. She typed a text

Petronella: Let’s meet later. Book a guestroom but it’s the last time. We won’t even talk about this after that. Don’t forget to bring condoms.

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THE PROTECTOR

#72

After breakfast Lawrence drove Jane to the hospital and parked at the gate. He turned to her and pulled her chin and then kissed her.

“I’ll see you next week.”

Jane nodded with a sigh “Travel safely and don’t forget to call me when you get time.”

She leaned in and kissed him then wrapped her arms around his neck for few seconds before pulling away. She grabbed her bag and got out of the car. He watched as she walked to the gate and waited for her to disappear before driving off. His phone rang as he focused on the road and he grabbed it and placed it on his ear balancing it with his shoulder.

“Mommy dearest.”

“Hello Lawrence. How are you my son?”

He smiled “I’m great mma and you?”

“Great. You sound so cheery this morning, does it have to do with the mystery woman you are

often seen with?”

“I’m excited to go to Cape Town. I don’t know what you’re talking about and you having people watch me?”

“Now why would I do that? I hear things Lawrence and I can tell by your happy mood that something is going on. Who’s the woman...does she make you happy?”

“I got back together with Jane and she makes me happy.”

“What? Out of all of women in the world you chose that woman? The woman who stole from you and almost left you broke. You broke things off with Kimberly so you could fix things with

that thief?”

He sighed “I understand why you are surprised but I love her. She paid my money back when she was still jail. Jane is a good woman mma...life just forced her to behave horribly.”

“I’m disappointed in you Lawrence. I thought you were smart.”

“I know you are but my heart is refusing to let her go so you’ll have to get used to it.”

“It’s your life Lawrence and you are a grown man so I won’t tell you what to do and who to keep in your life. I don’t like Jane but I’m glad you are happy.”

Later that day Nico got in his car and answered his phone. He leaned on the seat and closed the door.

“Uncle?”

“Hey man. Tomorrow is the day...we talked to Tlokanas and agreed to negotiate tomorrow.”

He smiled “Thank you malome. I’ll transfer everything later tonight.”

“Are you sure about this my boy? Marriage is a huge thing and you can’t just throw yourself in it without being sure.”

“I’m sure. I love her and I want to give her my surname.”

“If you are sure then it’s fine. I will keep you updated. We are not sure if that family will agree. They might just demand an insane amount just to drive us away. I don’t think we’ll be welcome there.”

“Petronella talked to her mother. You’ll be fine uncle don’t even stress about this. I have to go back to work so we’ll talk after I’ve sent the money.”

“Okay. Bye.”

He hung up then called Petronella, the rang

twice then went to voicemail.

The same evening Petronella checked the location then texted Thabang.

Petronella: Are you here already?

Thabang: Yeah I'm here waiting for you.

Petronella took a deep breath then checked the location one more time before walking towards the first room. She knocked the door opened revealing Thabang's gym body.

He pulled her to him and kissed her. Petro put

her bag down and wrapped her arms around him to kiss him properly.

“I missed you.”

“You miss what’s between my thighs.”

Thabang chuckled “That and you. No one gets me like you do Nella. I don’t know why we broke things off.”

“You wanted to marry to marry your woman and start family. I missed you too”

“I brought the condoms. Want to show me how much you miss me? I want us to play around tonight.”

He leaned in and captured her lips then walked them to the bed where he laid her down. He unbuttoned her jeans and unzipped it then pulled the pants down.

“You are so beautiful.”

“Don’t romance me. I didn’t come here for that and you know it. We both have people to go back to. Stop wasting time and fvck me.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled his head down and kissed him. She hummed as they kissed and Thabang shoving his hand in her panties.

At 11 PM Nico sat on the bed with his back against the headboard. He tried Petronella's phone for the fifth time.

"Petronella where the heck are you? Do you know what time is it? Just text or something because I'm worried about you."

He hung up and sighed thinking of so many things that could've happened to her. He dialed Jane but the call failed to even go through.

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THE PROTECTOR

#73

The next morning Petronella walked into the yard and headed to the tap. She slung her bag over her shoulder then opened the tap and cupped her hands letting the water fill in then washed her face. She closed it then walked to the house. She reached the door and opened it while praying to find Nico gone. She walked in and found him sitting on the chair with his arms crossed.

“Where are you coming from?”

“Huh?”

“I’m not going to repeat myself.”

“Oh sorry my mind is not really here. I stayed with Masego...she was going through a tough time and I couldn’t leave her alone.”

Nico frowned “So you couldn’t take your phone and sent a text or something? ‘Hey babe I’m sleeping over at Masego’s. She’s going through some things’ was difficult to type?”

“I was panicking because she wanted to end her life. I’m sorry for worrying you.”

“You think you’re just going to apologize and we’ll let it go? You know that you are going to be a married woman soon Petronella but you

are still acting like you are single. Don't start pissing me off now because we still have a long way to go."

"I'm sorry."

He sighed "It's fine. What matters is that you are here. Oh... and my uncle called letting me know that they are going to your family today to negotiate the dowry."

"Okay I'm glad to hear that. The sooner the better. I'm going to freshen up and prepare myself for work."

She walked out of the kitchen and released a sigh of relief as soon as she got in the bathroom.

Jamie parked the car at Jane's gate and unbuckled Rain's seatbelt. They stepped out of the car and walked to the gate. Rain pushed the gate ran inside leaving Jamie behind. Jamie chuckled at her excitement

"Remember, we knock when the door is closed. We don't just barge in right?"

"Right!"

She balled her hand into a fist and knocked on the door. Jamie finally stepped into the porch and knocked on the door.

“I’m coming!”

Few seconds later the door opened and Rain hugged her mother’s legs and Jane picked her up with a smile.

“Me and aunty and daddy and my little brother...we went to the beach and watched waves. Daddy built me sand castle and we saw dolph...” she turned to Jamie “what was it daddy?”

“Dolphins.”

She nodded and turned to Jane “Dolphins and big birds. We got on swings too mommy.”

Jane chuckled “Really?”

“Yes. Next time you will go with us right?”

“Yes I will go with you my darling. I’m glad you had fun. Daddy will send me the pictures and I’ll put them on the wall. I made eggs and sausages. Go sit at the table and I’ll come eat with you. I’m no longer going to work.”

She put her down and she ran to the table. Jane then leaned against the door frame with her arms crossed.

“You are bad at other things but you deserve a trophy for being a good father to Rain. My baby is always happy and I’m glad I don’t have to call

every time to insult you and demand child support like other baby mamas.”

Jamie chuckled “I love her so much. My first born and my only girl. I don’t understand why some men don’t care about their kids because kids are precious. Anyway I was thinking of taking Rain to my mother since we all have demanding jobs. We could share the weekends we spend with her. It’s just that Linda is going through something now and it’s getting difficult for her to focus on work and also take care of the kids.”

“You don’t have to take Rain to her grandparents. I’m her mother and I’ll never get tired of her. Bring most of her clothes and school uniform later today. I will manage.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. It’s not like I leave at 6 to work. I’ll manage.”

“Thank you. See you later then.”

“Bye.”

He nodded and walked away. Jane closed the door and walked to where Rain was seated.

“Tell me more about the Dolphins. Did you shake the Dolphin’s hand?”

Later that morning Nico's uncle and mother sat down on the long couch across Sophia and Jane's uncle.

"The other uncles couldn't make it because they had to go to work. Excuse us for doing this on a week day."

Sophia shook her head "It's alright. The sooner we get this over with, the sooner we can forget about it. I won't lie and say I'm happy to be negotiations my daughter's bride price because your son clearly disrespected us. He made his family a laughing stock."

Nico's mother smiled bitterly "Had your daughter kept her legs closed we wouldn't be

here. Don't blame my son only when they did their nonsense together."

Sophia opened her mouth but Jane's uncle grabbed it and cleared his throat "insults won't help with anything. Let's get this done as quickly as possible."

Later that day Nico walked into the house and smiled as the aroma of stew hit his nostrils and he slowly closed the door and approached the stove. He opened the lid then closed it with a smile. It seemed like knocking off early was a blessing in disguise.

He went to the bedroom and when his

footsteps halted by Petronella's words.

"You promised that you would let me be after last night. That was the last time Thabang..there won't be more nights together. Don't be so annoying!"

Nico opened the door and her back was facing him and airpods were stuck in her ears.

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THE PROTECTOR

#74 #unedited

Petronella felt a shiver down her spine as she the feeling being watched overwhelmed her. She took out her ear buds and turned around. She gasped loudly and almost dropped her phone on the bed as she came face to face with her fiancé. He wasn't supposed to be early

“Babe? You’re home early.”

Did he hear her? His face was hard and he ignored her statement. He gently closed the door and took off his shoes then got on the bed. Petronella anxiously smiled at him then put the phone on the nightstand.

“Who were you talking to?”

“I...uh...I was talking to Masego—”

He gripped her chin so roughly and Petronella let out a startled sob as fear wrecked her body. Her lips trembled and tears gushed out of her eyes.

“Why are you lying to me? Why are you even crying because nobody beat you?”

“You are hurting me”

“Petronella, I’m going to ask you a question and I hope you tell me the truth because I will do more than this and I’ll make sure you scream

for the neighbors to hear. You didn't sleep here last night and when I asked you told me that you slept over at Masego's only to hear you loudly talking to your boyfriend and your nights together. Who is Thabang Petronella?"

"It happened once I'm sorry."

He let her go and stood up placing his arms over his head. He walked to the door and locked it and Petronella's heart pounded as Nico paced around the room.

"I'm sorry. Baby? Please calm down."

Nico turned around furiously and grabbed her by the leg and dragged her to the edge of the bed where he leaned over and grabbed her by

the neck.

“Do you know what I’m capable of?”

She shook her head and her chest moved up and down as she took shaky breaths. Nico squeezed her neck pressing her on the bed.

“Nicolas! Please....I’m sorry.”

“All these time you were accusing me of sleeping around kante you are the one behaving like a wh*re!. My uncles are out there paying the bride price while you were offering your cookie on a silver platter.”

Her eyes rolled back her gasps coming out as

coughs and Nico let her go and got off the bed as she sat up coughing while choking up cries. He grabbed her phone on the nightstand then walked to the door and unlocked it, took the key then turned to her.

“You clearly have time to play so I will leave you here so you can play peacefully.”

He opened the door then walked out and Petronella ran to it as Nico locked it from the inside. She banged on it crying and went to the window and it was it was so far to jump. She walked back to the bed and wiped her tears as fear, guilt and embarrassed mashed up.

Meanwhile Nico checked the pots and took them off the stove then sat down. He swallowed the thickest lump ever picturing

another man enjoying his fiancée. He switched on her phone but it was locked. An overwhelming urge to cry came to him and he cleared his throat many times.

Jane laid in bed with Rain letting her play with her hair. Her phone rang and she smiled widely before answering.

“If it isn’t my person.”

“Hey love. How are you?”

“I’m good. I didn’t think you’d actually find time and squeeze me in your tight schedule you

know.”

“I miss you so much and I wouldn’t not want to spare at least five minutes with you.”

She blushed “I miss you too. I’m great, Rain is home and I took a day off to spend time with her. What about you? I hope things are going well.”

“Things are going well babe. I’m just exhausted. Say hi to the little lady for me.”

She turned to Rain “Say hi”

“Hi!”

Lawrence chuckled from the other side “it’s so good to hear her voice. I love kids and you don’t know how much I wished she was mine. We bonded while you were pregnant.”

She sighed “I didn’t know that.”

“It’s okay baby. We’ll talk about that one day. Listen I just received an email and I have to tend to it. I’m sorry babe, I’ll make it up you? What do you want? Text me whatever you want and I’ll give it to you.”

“Nothing Lawrence. I don’t want you to spend money on me.”

“I know how you feel about this but I just want to do something nice.”

“Bring me beautiful rocks and sea shells from the beach that’s all I’m asking for.”

“Okay babe. Have a great night.”

“You too. I—”

“I love you.”

The following day someone knocked on the door and Nico button up his shirt and walked to the door. He pulled it open and smiled at the neighbors.

“Hello. How can I help you neighbors?”

“I don’t know how to put this but we don’t tolerate women beaters in this area and we never talked about it because nobody has ever given us problems. We won’t hesitate the police if you don’t leave the poor woman alone.”

Nico furrowed his eyebrows “Women beaters?”

“Your woman has been standing on the window since morning crying for help.”

Nico crossed his arms “Oh is that so? I’ll go get her so she can apologize for worrying you. I caught her cheating and she’s embarrassed that’s why she’s being dramatic.”

The neighbors looked at each other.

“Yes akere you are nosy? She’s cheating on me and made me a fool. Go on and call the police, I didn’t do anything to her.”

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THE PROTECTOR

#75

The neighbors glanced at each other again

“We are not trying to be nosy. We are alarmed because lots of deaths in the hands of abusers happen because people like turning the blind eye.”

Nico sighed impatiently “And I’m telling you that I’m not abusing Petronella. Everything is not fine yes but that doesn’t mean there’s violence and abuse in the house.”

“If we see it again we will call the police so they can come and check. Have a nice morning Nicolas.”

He watched them walking away and closed the door. He sighed rubbing his head and switched

on Petronella's phone. He sat down and swipped up and the phone unlocked. He went to her recent calls and dialed the numbers on his phone then called.

"Hello?"

"Eita."

"Sure. Who's this?"

"You are sleeping with my wife my bruh. Do you know what I'm capable off?"

"Why would I mess around with anyone's wife while I have my own? Who is this?"

Nico gritted his teeth "I will find you Thabang and it won't be nice. Petronella is mine and I didn't sign the sharing agreement with anyone. Stay away from her if you still enjoy having legs."

"You're threatening me? I'm not scared of you. I didn't force your woman to open her legs for me. I gave her a choice to decline my invitation but she came. Made me wonder why she was so eager...she must have been so starving to go around looking for another man to satiate her hunger."

Nico swallowed hard and quickly hung up and blocked the number from his phone. He massaged his forehead and looked up the ceiling to stop the tears welling in his eyes. He stood up and walked to the bedroom and

unlocked the door. Petronella was lying on her back looking at the ceiling. She quickly sat up

“It was a one time thing only.”

“Your boyfriend was even bragging about me not satisfying you. Probably heard all of that from you while your legs were on his shoulder. I thought you were a good woman Petronella, why did you betray my trust like that?”

She stared at him and tears filled her eyes “You do satisfy me and...I’m sorry Nico. He’s my ex and I went there to get closure but things got complicated.”

Nico rubbed his face and threw her phone on the bed with full force that it almost bounced to

the walls. Petronella squealed loudly in fright

“Closure! Closure for what when another man is paying the bride price for you? Do you think I’m a fool?”

“No...I’m sorry.”

“You know what, let me just go to work because I will end up committing a sin if I stay here. You disgust me.”

He walked out and Petronella reached her phone while swallowed blocks of guilt. She called Thabang and stood up as it rang then it went to voicemail.

Jane walked into the hospital yard as she talked on the phone with a lazy smile on her face.

“I miss you too. Are you coming soon?”

“Mm. I’m almost done with everything. I want to take you out...we’ve never gone out to a nice restaurant.”

“That sounds good but Rain is staying with me these days. I’ll have my aunt stay with her next week then we can go wherever.”

“You can dress her up then come with her to the date if you are comfortable with that.”

She smiled "That's really sweet. Let me talk to her father first."

"Okay."

"Let me get started with work babe. I'll talk to you during lunch...stay safe."

"I will. Have a great morning."

After hanging up she walked in and headed to the desk. Another receptionist grabbed her things and greeted her then walked out.

Petronella breathed out and turned to face away from the dusty wind as she waited for a taxi by the road. Her phone rang and it was Thabang.

“Hello?”

“Hey. Sorry I missed your call...I ignored it thinking it was your man.”

“Listen Thabang, I shouldn’t have slept with you. I meant it when I told you that I love Nico. I don’t want to lose him because of you so let’s never talk.”

“Are you serious? You are ending things for that stupid man. A man who threatens another man over the phone is not a real man. I wonder why

you're with him because clearly he can't satisfy you."

"Nico is a former soldier and currently a prison warden. The last thing I want is to mess with him. I'm scared of him."

"Fine suit yourself. I know you will be back."

She hung up then a taxi stopped and she waited for two teenagers to get in before she did.

Later that day Jamie leaned against the quantum in the taxi rank waiting for passengers to fill in. His phone vibrated with a message and

he quickly opened it.

Jane: I was thinking of taking Rain with me to my date. She already knows him so I don't think it will be a problem.

Jamie: No. I won't allow you to expose my daughter to different men who clearly have no good intentions. Go alone and leave my child out of it.

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THE PROTECTOR

#76

Jane stared at the message in disbelief and immediately dialed him.

“Hello?”

“Why are you talking to me like I’m your child? Please don’t disrespect me like that Jamie. I simple no with a reason would have been nice.”

“I’m not disrespecting you. I’m just saying I’m not going to let you take my child to meet men you don’t know.”

“Who said I don’t know Lawrence? I actually

don't need your permission to take my child wherever I want. I just thought it was a good to let the other parent know."

"I don't care Jane. I'm coming there to take Rain because you clearly can't take care of her properly."

Her mouth hung open "Are you serious? You are questioning my parenting skills when you spent years coaching my child to hate me with that wife of yours. You cheated on me in front of her while I was in jail thinking things were alright. I can't believe your nerve Jamie."

"Okay now that we are done talking about the past, let's focus on what you texted me. I don't feel comfortable knowing my child is going out on dates with her mother. You can be stubborn

and insult me but it's not a good idea."

"I hear what you are saying and I totally respect that because she's also your daughter. One thing that I will not tolerate though is your tone when speaking to me. I'm not your friend or your kid so I don't appreciate that."

"Sorry gee."

"What is sorry gee? You think I'm playing?"

"I'm sorry Jane. I was just surprised."

She hung up and stood up going back inside.

A whole later Nicolas got in the car and leaned against the seat with a heavy sigh. He took his phone and called Lefa.

“Hello?”

“Hey man. Are you busy?”

“Not really. What’s up?”

“I really want to talk to someone. I just need to vent.”

“Vent about what? The negotiations went well despite few arguments here and there mos. Is it about work?”

He sighed "Petronella cheated on me and I don't think it was a one time. I walked in on her talking to him on the phone. I don't know how to feel about this man...I had the worst day at work because I kept thinking of it. I called the guy and he disrespected me so bad. I..."

"Eish man that's bad. Did you ask her why she did it?"

"No. I didn't want to end up slapping her. I can't believe she did this to me. What if she's only with me to retaliate on Jane's behalf?"

"She also betrayed Jane. You need to ask her and understand why. Some women are afraid to be honest about certain things...especially

involving sex.”

“But to opt for cheating Lefa? That doesn’t make any sense because I give her money. I spend time with her and give her all my attention. I satisfy her in bed too but...” he cleared his throat as the tearful lump blocked his throat.

“Talk to her man. You are going to get married soon so avoiding her is a waste of time. Talk to her and find the issue then fix it. I don’t know her that well to confirm that she’s not that kind of girl but I know that women her age are wild. They need to be tamed.”

He swallowed a lump thinking of her throwing herself to men “I’ll call you when I get home.”

He hung up without waiting for him to reply then laid on the steering wheel with another sigh.

That evening Petronella walked into the house and found Nico lying on the couch. She faked a smile and sat beside him

“Hi.”

“Didn’t you knock off by 2?”

“I did—”

“Then where were you this whole time? Were you with Thabang?”

Petronella swallowed guilt struck and sighed. Nico sat up and Petro immediately reached for his hands.

“I’m sorry babe. I know it doesn’t erase everything but I mean it. I’m sorry. Thabang is my ex and I went to see him to talk I promise. I didn’t mean to disrespect you and his wife. I love you Nico and I appreciate everything that you offer and there’s nothing that would make me happy than being your wife. Please forgive me.”

“Why? Why did you do it? I don’t want excuses Petronella. There must be something that I’m not doing right. Please tell me so we can fix it.”

“I just...I don’t want us to fight.”

“Let’s be honest with each other. I didn’t sent my family to yours so we can just play around. Please tell me the trutt so we can move past this.”

She took a deep breath and then stared it too his eyes “You’re too vanilla and it’s boring sometimes.”

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Like & comment

THE PROTECTOR

#77

Nico frowned as he stared at her

“I’m too vanilla? What are you saying?”

“I’m just saying that you’re too soft in bed—”

“I know what being vanilla means!” He snapped
“You mean to tell me that you didn’t like the so called vanilla when you said yes to my marriage

proposal? Don't tell me nonsense here
Petronella? I made you scream and cry out like
your life depended on it."

"You told me to be honest—"

"Tsek with your honesty! You disrespected me
for that? For sex? Why did God give you a
mouth if you can't use it to communicate?"

She swallowed and shifted a little on the couch
"I'm sorry."

Nico pointed a finger at her "You're getting too
familiar with me. You're getting so used to me
Petronella and you don't know what I'm capable
of. I've been so sweet with you kante you are a
demon hiding behind innocent act."

“I’m sorry.”

He threw his hands in the air “Stop apologizing maan! You did it knowing the outcomes of it. You did it knowing that there was a man who loved you and cared for you.”

He stood up and walked to the bedroom then locked the door. He walked to the bed and laid down with his face covered. He rubbed his stinging eyes and sniffled a bit.

Meanwhile Petronella stood up and headed to the bedroom. She twisted the handle trying to open the door but the door didn’t budge.

“Nicolas? Please...I’m sorry. This will never

happen again.”

She knocked couple of times before walking out of the house. She walked to the gate and leaned by it as she dialed Masego.

“Hello?”

“Hey. Are you busy?”

“I just got home from work, what’s up?”

“I messed up. I messed up so bad and I don’t think Nico will forgive me.”

“What did you do?”

She looked around then sighed “I slept with Thabang and he found out.”

“Petronella!”

“I know it’s bad but you know how Thabang is. He’s my first love, my first everything Masego. When he asked to meet up I couldn’t resist him.”

“First of all Thabang is married and secondly, why are you always making stupid decisions? Hurting people you love is your talent right?”

She sighed “Masego don’t be like that.”

“You don’t know what you want and I actually feel sorry for you because you will always live with regrets. Aren’t you getting tired of this? If you called to ask for an advice, I don’t have it.”

“I messed up friend. I didn’t think it would get far.”

“That’s the problem Petronella. You never think about the pain people experience after destroying their lives. You don’t think at all.”

“What should I do?”

“I don’t know Petronella. I’ve never cheated on my man so I don’t know what to say to you. Stay away from your ex.”

The next day Jane opened the door and her aunt walked in. She closed the door then turned around and hugged her.

“What a lovely surprise auntie Sophia.”

Sophia smiled “I was around visiting a friend and I decided to drop by. Is Rain still with her father?”

“She’s in her bedroom right now getting ready for school. Rain! Granny is here sweetie!”

They sat down and Jane smoothed down her skirt and sighed.

“I got back together with Lawrence.”

Her aunt narrowed her eyebrows “Lawrence?
Your ex Lawrence?”

“Yes him.”

Sophia shook her head “Why are you looking for trouble when it’s not there. Lawrence can’t be trusted after everything you’ve done to him years ago.”

“Aunty all men can’t be trusted. I trusted Nico and he shredded my heart into tiny pieces. I don’t trust Lawrence fully but he’s good to me. I like him. He’s the only who genuinely loved me Aunty.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. I will handle the heart break if he hurts me.”

“You are responsible for your own happiness and you are a grown woman so I will not say anything to stop you from see Lawrence. We will see.”

“We will see.”

Nico waited until Petronella walked out of the house and dialed his uncle.

“Nephew?”

“Hello. Are you well?”

“I’m okay Nicolas. What about you? I know you only call when you need something from me. Out with it.”

“Will you be able to call a family meeting on my behalf? I’m going through a lot in my relationship. Petronella is sleeping around and I feel like I’m going to drown if I keep quiet about this.”

His uncle sighed "Okay I hear you but you chose her right? You chose her and even begged us to go to her family and embarrassed ourselves.

You betrayed another woman's trust for the same Petronella so no Nico, we are not calling a family meeting to discuss someone who we've always known was loose. Deal with her your own way."

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I'll see you on Wednesday. I need to rest so i can deliver the best. I'm so tired guys...physically and mentally.

THE PROTECTOR

#78

Nico swallowed as he listened to his uncle

“That doesn’t justify cheating.”

His uncle sighed “I get it nephew but what are we supposed to do? You embarrassed us to that family and they are fed up at this point. We all have our lives but instead of focusing on our own problems, you want us to drop everything and solve your problems because you can’t handle the heat brought by the woman you chose?”

“I’m not saying that. I just needed her family to talk to her.”

“And say what? Akere it’s not the first time she’s done this? Her family can’t reprimand someone who doesn’t think she’s wrong.”

“Okay it’s fine. Let me go to work.”

He hung up without waiting for his response and sighed massaging his head. He dialed Petronella and sighed as the phone rang

“Babe?”

“Make sure you come home early. We need to talk.”

“Are you breaking things off? No Nico please give me another chance. I’m so sorry. I don’t

want to lose you.”

He sighed in annoyance “Did you hear me talking about breaking things off? I said come home early so I can find you here when I get back from work. We need to talk about this. You really disappointed me Petronella and it’s a shame you can’t see my heart and how broken it is.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Sharp.”

“Have a nice—”

He hung up on her then walked back to the

bedroom where he gathered his things and sat on the bed for few minutes getting his emotions in check.

The same morning Lawrence parked by Jane's gate and checked the time then called Jane.

"Hello love"

"hey baby. I'm outside...are you done yet?"

"You're outside! When did you come back and why didn't you tell me?"

“I wanted to surprise you.”

Jane giggled on the other side “I’m very surprised. I’m done but I’m making Rain’s lunch box. We’ll be there in few minutes.”

“Okay love. Don’t take too long, I have a meeting in an hour alright?”

“I won’t.”

He cut the call and his phone vibrated with a message from Kim. He checked and rolled his eyes as he read it.

Kim: I heard from your mother that you went back to your crazy ex. I trust whatever she’s

using. It's strong shame...it's really strong and I actually feel sorry for you. You left a good woman Lawrence. I was going to be good to you.

Lawrence: Move on and stop sending me messages. They won't change my mind.

He blocked her then called his mother

"Hello?"

"Does uncle know about your friendship with my ex and talking about me behind my back?"

"Excuse me?"

“With all due respect, I don’t like your little friendship with Kimberly. She and I will never work out so please stop encouraging her to sink her claws into me. Things like these are what cause witchcraft.”

“Are you talking to me like that?”

Lawrence massaged his forehead “Mma...”

“You’re disrespecting me because of that jail bird akere?”

“Leave Jane out of this. Stop telling Kim my business, she’s no longer in my life. Let her remain my ex. Whatever friendship you have with her, let it be about the two of you not me.”

He spotted Jane walking to the gate holding Rain's hand

"I have to go." He cut the call and opened the door and Jane walked out of the gate and locked it then walked to the car. Lawrence stepped out and walked around the car to her side and pulled her chin then baby kissed her.

"Hi."

"Hi."

His gaze went to Rain and he smiled. "Hello. O sharp?"

"Yes."

“My name is Lawrence, I’m mommy’s friend...what’s your name?”

“My name is Rain Banda.”

“Nice to meet you sweetheart. Your dress is pretty.”

Rain grinned and Lawrence opened the door for her then they got in the car. Lawrence grabbed a gift bag and handed it to Jane then a puppy barked on Jane’s feet startling her.

“I heard she was here so I got her something. Does she like dogs? I forgot to ask. My PA has five and one just had six puppies. It’s healthy and won’t make her sick I promise.” Lawrence

said laughing

Jane laughed "It scared me. I don't know we never had something like this in our house." She turned to Rain "Do you like dogs?"

"Dogs?"

Lawrence bent down and picked it up then raised it on the air. Rain excitedly reached her hands and Lawrence gave it to her. She gripped it by the neck and Jane frowned.

"No no you are hurting it. Hold it nicely...it's alive like you are Rain."

"Oh sorry mommy. Thank you mr Lawrence."

“You’re welcome. Do you want to name him? It’s a boy.”

Rain hugged the puppy to her chest as it barked occasionally. “I’m gonna name him Robby.”

Jane shoved her gift bag in her bag then grabbed Lawrence’s hand and squeezed it.

“You didn’t have to but thank you babe. It wasn’t expensive was it?”

He shook his head and started the car.

Later that day Petronella waited anxiously on the couch. She checked the time then stood up and packed the clean dishes just to pass time. Minutes later Nico's car drove in and she rushed to get herself comfortable on the couch. She heard him parking the garage and later walked into the house.

She stood up and intertwined his fingers
"Welcome home."

"Yeah."

He sat down and unbuttoned his shirt. "You broke my trust and my heart. I can't even cry out to anyone for help because you know how we got together. I want to forgive you because I love you but I want to make sure that you are not sick or pregnant with Thabang's child."

“I’m not—”

He raised his hand “I don’t trust you anymore. We are going to get tested tomorrow after work. I also want us to go to couples counseling.”

Petronella sighed in relief “Anything. This will never happen again.”

She leaned in to kiss him but Nico stood up and headed to the bedroom.

SIX MONTHS LATER

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#79

Six months later

That night Jane pursed her lips applying lip stick then her phone rang. She glanced at it seeing her friend's name flashing on the screen then answered.

“Hey friend.”

“You sound very far from the phone. What are you up to?”

“I was applying my make up. Lawrence just called me few minutes ago telling me about a last minute date. I love this man friend I swear he’s the worst when it comes to planning. I had to rummage through my wardrobe to find something to put on because I’ve been so busy lately and I never had time to shop.”

“It makes me happy hearing you complain about things like these not other things that cause heart aches.”

She chuckled a little “Me too.”

“Are you happy though? I think you are but I want to hear it from you.”

Jane sighed and smiled “I am. I really am happy. It feels like I’ve been with him for years. He spoils me without me having to even beg. He communicates and he’s good with his body. Exactly how I like it...I love him and that thing scares me sometimes. I don’t want to go through what I went through with Nico. I trust him but things change.”

“Right but I hope nothing changes. You deserve a little bit of happiness too.”

A message came through from Lawrence

Lawrence: I'm outside babe.

"Lawrence just got here. I'll call you later and tell you all about it."

"Alright friend. Have fun"

"I will. Bye."

She hung up and checked herself on the mirror then put on her block heels then grabbed her clutch bag on the bed and walked out. She locked the front door after getting out and walked to the gate where Lawrence's car was parked. She opened the door and got in smiling at Lawrence sitting on the driver's seat looking all handsome.

“Romance dies after getting the girl akere?”

Lawrence chuckled “Because I didn’t open the door? Babe have you ever opened a door for me?”

“It’s all about chivarly. You are not even going to get a kiss for your behavior and poor planning.”

He opened the door and stepped out and Jane watched in shock as he walked around the car and stopped by her side and opened the door and stretched his arm to her.

Lawrence laughed as Jane looked away “You’re sulking?”

“We are getting late just get back in the car and I was joking.”

He shook his head going back inside then Jane leaned in and kissed him.

“Where are we going?”

“Somewhere. Long lost friend opened a restaurant and invited me to come celebrate with him. I didn’t see the message until earlier before telling you. You look gorgeous by the way my love.”

She glanced at herself then at him “You don’t look bad yourself handsome.”

Linda glanced at Jamie and sighed in relief as she saw his eyes closed and his mouth parted. She slowly sat up from the bed and grabbed her phone from the nightstand and saw two messages from her friend.

Kano: Hubby and I are chilling outside drinking. It's really good to marry someone who gets you. What are you up to?

She scrolled down reading another message.

Kano: I bet you are already in bed. Honestly Linda, you need to live a little. Jamie is gradually turning you into an old lady I tell you. Who am I to judge you? Anyway I wanted to ask

you to accompany me to this event tomorrow.

She sighed and glanced at Jamie regretting jumping into marriage so soon without exploring first. She was bored if she was being honest with herself. Same routine was getting on her nerves. She didn't want to find herself cheating on her husband so she shook him a little.

"Jammie?"

He hummed then snored. Linda shook him roughly and opened his eyes looking around the room in panic.

"What is it?"

“What do you think about going to a club?”

“A club? Isn’t that for teenagers? You are a grown woman and want to go jiggle your butt at young boys. Is that what you woke me up for?”

Linda sighed frustrated “Maybe I want to jiggle my butt a little. Why are you behaving like you are seventy? You are boring me and it’s going to cause problems in our marriage.”

“Linda you told me that you were unhappy because the kids were too much and I talked my mother about watching them for us but you still weren’t happy then you said you wanted us to go to gym, we did and even started eating plans you called a diet. Now you want us to go out to parties? What do you want from me? When will you get satisfied?”

“Jamie—”

“Ae. I’m going back to sleep and don’t dare shake me again. You are a mother and someone’s wife so act like it.”

Later that night Nico looked at the clock on the wall in the living room and sighed. He called Petronella and as always her phone went to voicemail. Lights flashed through the curtain and he stood up walking to the door. He opened the door and looked outside. Petronella closed the gate and approached him. He squinted his eyes trying to see the car but couldn’t even catch a glimpse of the person inside as it drove

away.

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Not edited

Like & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#80

Nico waited and then stepped aside letting Petronella walk in. He closed the door and

locked then stared at her defeated.

“You don’t even hide anymore. You just do it in front of me. You are letting these boys disrespect me Petronella. Why are you doing this to me?”

Petronella sighed impatiently “What am I doing exactly? This is what makes me come home late everyday. You always have theories lined up for your interrogations.”

“You always get dropped off by different cars at the gate Petronella! What am I supposed to think about that? I have a car but you never call me to pick you up. You are also making sound foolish by saying I’m making this up.”

“You know what? I’m going to change and get ready for bed.”

She walked past him and Nico grabbed her by her hand and span her around.

“Let go of me Nico. I’m not going to talk to you when you are like this. You are so insecure right now and it’s no longer funny. Let me go...I don’t want to argue tonight.”

He let her go and Petronella walked away. He followed her to the bedroom and stood by the door watching her as she got undressed. His eyes filled with tears and he quickly rubbed the eyes and walked into the room.

He cleared his throat "Were you too busy?"

Petronella turned around “Mmh?”

“Were you too busy? Is that why you came late?”

“Not really. My colleagues and I went out to celebrate one of our little friendship.”

He nodded and his eyes moved to his hands and noticed that she wasn't wearing her engagement ring. He swallowed a lump and rubbed his face.

“Please close the door. It's a little cold.”

“You are not wearing your ring.”

Petronella glanced at her finger and sighed turning to him with only her bra on. "I wanted to take it to cleaning. It totally slipped my mind."

He nodded slowly then walked out of the room. He went back to the kitchen and switched off the lights then went back to the bedroom. Taking off his shoes, he climbed on the bed and laid facing the other side. Tears finally slipped and he discretely wiped them and cleared his throat.

The following day Lefa massaged his wife's feet as they watched TV with breakfast in front of them. Someone knocked and he sighed in

annoyance.

“People don’t have peace you know? This early?”

“Go and check. I’ll go check on the kids and make sure they are not removing my plants in the backyard.”

He removed her legs then stood up walking to the door. He opened and his widen as he stared at his youngest cousin’s disheveled state.

“Eh sure man. Are you good?”

“Yeah. Can I come in?”

He stepped aside “Of course man. Mi casa su casa. What’s wrong? Are you sick?”

“I don’t want to talk about it. I don’t think I can handle talking about it.”

“You are now scaring me. Is everything okay at home?”

He snapped “Lefa I said I don’t want to talk about it damn!”

Lefa kept quiet and crossed his arms. Nico sighed and rubbed his face then licked his face.

“I’m sorry bro. I didn’t mean to snap at you like that. I’m just not really okay and I feel like I’m

going to explode because I have no one to talk to.”

“You have me man. I’ll always listen to you. I know we have our differences but you are practically my brother whom I love and care for. I will never watch you drown and not offer you my shoulder come on man.”

“I don’t think Petronella loves me anymore. She’s cheating on me and always gaslight me whenever I bring it up. I’m so tired. I’m so depressed I can’t even focus at work.”

“Let’s go sit down”

They walked to the living room and sat on the couch.

“Cars drop her off at the gate everyday. We were fine until she got another job. Everything is about colleagues and work but I know it’s just a cover.”

“Just leave me. You are making yourself suffer for nothing. Just leave.”

He stared at him with glossy eyes “I love her. Maybe I am insecure. Maybe I’m just overthinking because of her first mistake.”

Lefa sighed shaking his head “I suggest you book yourself into therapy to avoid driving yourself insane. Can I make you something to eat?”

Later that morning Petronella opened her camp chair and placed it under a shade then walked back to the house and came back with her phone and a water bottle with nicely cut lemon slices. She sat down and a notification came through on her phone.

Thabang: I just set an appointment with my lawyer. I'm leaving her tomorrow. When are you breaking things off with Nico?

Petronella drank the water through the straw as she typed.

Petronella: Later today. I already paid deposit to

my new place so I should be ready to leave by tomorrow. I'm glad things are going smoothly.
No drama

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Like & comment

THE PROTECTOR

#81

Lefa's wife dished for Nico and her husband then gave their kids their plates and walked back to the men and sat down.

“Thank you for food Martha. This looks absolutely delicious.”

She smiled “It’s all a pleasure. I enjoy cooking for my family...it gives me so much peace.”

“I envy your marriage to be brutally honest.”

Martha sighed “It hasn’t been easy Nico. You know that...we went through a lot to get this amount of happiness you see. Cheating, separation and loss of our unborn child drove us apart but I fought so much because I love him and I’m hundred percent sure that he loves me too.”

Lefa nodded “Relationships are emotionally

exhausting but love is a beautiful thing so we just endure the pain until we overcome it.”

Nico sighed “I forgave Petronella for cheating but she didn’t stop. She doesn’t want to stop and that thing is breaking me each and every day. I don’t know how many times she’s postponed our wedding.”

“The problem is that your relationship started uh...what can I say...wrong. Nobody is supporting it so I don’t think anyone would settle knowing that the relationship is going nowhere.”

Nico turned to Martha sharply “It was going anywhere Martha!”

Lefa shook his head “Hold on, don’t attack my wife because you can’t handle the truth. We will never get tired of talking about this because you don’t want to admit your wrongdoings.

Petronella saw how willing you were to dump her cousin to date her...nobody will take you serious after that.”

Nico swallowed “I lost my appetite.”

“I’ll dish into a Tupperware so you can eat at home.”

She and Lefa continued eating while touching on the topic of house renovation.

Jane blew a kiss to the screen after talking to Lawrence then cut the video call. Another call came through from Jamie and she laid on her side answering.

“Hello, is everything okay with Rain?”

“Everything is fine. I just wanted us to talk about your new boyfriend.”

“Why should we talk about my man? Since when do we discuss personal things?”

“Jane don’t forget that this Lawrence of yours will always be around Rain. I want to know what kind of a guy he is so I can be comfortable knowing that my daughter is safe.”

“What makes you think Lawrence is dangerous?”

“I don’t know him Jane which is why I have these thoughts. Rain is too young to be exposed to these men who know nothing but to flaunt their money—”

His voice broke off as Jane laughed in disbelief “Jamie Banda, I’m no longer going to entertain this conversation. I’m not going to discuss my personal affairs with you because you can’t keep your bitterness in check. I’m Rain’s mother and I will always protect my child should anything happen and whether Lawrence flaunts his money or not I don’t think it’s any of your business. It’s his money right? Make yours and spoil your lovely wife. Next time I will block you if you have nothing better to say. Bye.”

She hung up and shook her head then her hand moved to her neck and she played with the necklace Lawrence had brought for her.

At seven Nico walked in the house and placed the container of food on the couch. His eyes widened in surprise when he saw pots covered by dish cloth. He walked over and peeked in. Hope filled his heart and he smiled walking to the bedroom.

He found Petronella painting her nails on the bed and he smiled.

“Thanks for cooking. I got food from Lefa

thinking that I wouldn't find you here."

"I knocked off early and decided to cook."

He walked to the bed and sat down. "How was your day?"

Petronella closed the nail polish and put it away then stared at him with a serious face.

"Great. I want us to talk—"

"Me too I'll start. Babe I know we didn't start this relationship the right way but I really love you Petronella and I never even thought of being unfaithful. Relationships have ups and downs and we can work them out. I don't like

this tension between us and lack of intimacy.”

“You are right about relationships having ups and downs but that doesn’t change the fact that it’s no longer working. I want out and I’m sorry you had hope for us but I don’t want to continue with this anymore.”

Nico felt his heart shattering and a sharp pain followed as a lump blocked his throat.

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UNEDITED

THE PROTECTOR

#82

Nico felt his heart shattering and a sharp pain followed as a lump blocked his throat. He stared at her then chuckled softly hoping that it was some kind of a prank.

“You’re joking right?”

Petronella sighed “No I’m very serious. I can’t do this anymore Nico. I tried to pretend that we were going to be okay but I can’t put myself through that torture.”

His chuckles died down “Torture? I thought we were working on it. We went to counseling Petronella. I even learnt BDSM so I can make you happy. Please don’t do this.”

“Nico don’t be difficult and make this harder than it is.”

His eyes blurred and he bowed down as his tears threatened to gush out of his eyes. Petronella stared at his back and sighed getting off the bed. She walked around and stopped in front of him. She placed her hand under his chin and lifted his head. Nico closed his eyes and Petronella swallowed down her guilt as his tears rolled down his cheeks. He grabbed her waist hugging her

“Please don’t do this. I will try harder...I will go to

sex therapy so I can satisfy you. I will be a better man for you...just please don't give up on us."

Petronella removed his hands and freed herself. She walked to the dresser and grabbed a tissue roll and handed it to him.

"I want to but I can't. I love you but I'm no longer attracted to you. There's nothing you can do to change that I'm sorry."

"Have you met someone?"

"I don't want to continue with this relationship Nico."

“You didn’t answer my question. Have you met someone? Is that way you are breaking up with me? We can have an open marriage then—”

Petronella gritted her teeth “Motho wa modimo accept the defeat. Don’t be a baby. I know you had high hopes but I’m choosing my happiness.”

“Babe please...”

She sighed “I’m going to sleep in the guest room. I’m giving you space to digest this properly.”

She grabbed a pillow and Nico grabbed her waist and pulled her down to his lap. He grabbed her neck and kissed her. Petronella

kissed him back then pulled away and walked out of the bedroom.

The same night Thabang got home and found lights off in the kitchen. He switched them on and looked around for his food only to find clean pots. He sighed and locked the door then switched off the lights and headed to the bedroom.

“Babe?”

His wife barely moved on the bed and he walked closer putting his bag on the dresser.

“Babe are you okay?”

He took his shoes off and climbed on the bed and touched her forehead. His wife opened her eyes then burst into tears. She sat up and reached for him. Thabang held her and rubbed her back.

“Should I take you to the hospital?”

“No”

“Cindy you are burning up and you look really horrible. I’m worried. Did you call your mother?”

“I went to the clinic and I found out that I’m pregnant. Three weeks pregnant.” She said then

laid on his chest sobbing.

Thabang's eyes widened "Are you serious?"

"I know being a father was never on your list—"

"Is that why you are crying? You think I don't want kids with you? Cindy you are my wife and this is something worth celebrating. I can't believe you've been wallowing in self pity because of assumptions."

She pulled away "We haven't been happy for a year Thabang. The only time we spent happy was when we had sex. I didn't know what to think when I found out."

He sighed and touched her stomach "This is our first child. Let's not focus on how unhappy we have been. We will work things."

He leaned in and kissed her forehead then tilted his head and kissed her lips.

"Let me order us food. What do you feel like eating?"

"Pizza. Any flavor."

The next day Lawrence walked into Charlotte's restaurant and looked around for her. She spotted him and walked to him then they went

to the last table and sat down.

“Hi. Excuse my appearance. I know this is a serious business meeting but being a mother to three kids is exhausting.”

Lawrence nodded with a smile “No worries. I can tell motherhood is hard.”

“Tony was supposed to do this but he’s on vacation. Anyway you said to expect 70 people, theme is black and gold.”

He nodded and Char raised her ipad and nodded while scrolling.

“Okay. Allergies?”

Lawrence shook his head “None. Make the theme formal casual.”

Char tiredly chuckled “I don’t know what that means but we will do it. I promised to provide great service.”

“I trust you.”

She stood up “I need to get home so I can rest. Noel is probably going crazy with the kids.”

“I can’t wait to have my own and go crazy too.”

Char shook her head laughing “Good luck with that.”

He stood up and smiled “Thank you for agreeing to do this in such a short notice.”

Nico walked out of the bathroom and headed back to the bedroom. His heart squeezed when he found Petronella packing.

“What’s going on?”

She turned to him “I’m packing.”

“Where are you going?”

“I’m moving out Nicolas. I wasn’t joking last night. I found a place to stay a week ago and paid the deposit so today I’m moving in.”

His voice cracked as he muttered “Okay.”

He stood there watching her as he packed and then walked away minutes later. He went back to the bathroom and closed the door then sat on the toilet seat covering his face as he cried like a baby.

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UNEDITED

THE PROTECTOR

#83

Few minutes later Nico stood at the porch watching as the uber driver loaded Petronella's things in the boot. He sighed in defeat and walked back inside. He waited by the door until the sounds of the car driving faded. He went back to the bedroom and got dressed. He picked up his shoes then walked to the dresser and grabbed a shoe polish. The ring box caught his eye and he grabbed it then opened it. He sniffled as he stared at the ring inside.

He grabbed his phone and called his uncle. It rang for a very long time before he answered.

“Hello?”

He swallowed “Hello. Petronella broke things off and left so don’t bother yourself asking about the wedding date.”

“What? What happened? Why did she leave?”

“I don’t know malome. I mean she’s the one who was unfaithful and I never cheated on her. We went to counseling thinking that things would be fixed. I don’t think she loves me anymore.”

His uncle sighed "I'm sorry nephew. It must be painful. I never liked that girl. She wasn't ready for commitment. You could tell she had time to play."

"Maybe I rushed this marriage thing?"

"The relationship between you two wasn't supposed to even happen. There was no way it was going to be successful after all the drama."

He sniffled "It hurts so bad."

"I know. I'm sorry. Where did she go?"

"She didn't tell me anything. I wasn't even strong enough to ask her. She just stared at me

crying and told me to stop being a baby. I didn't know it was going to hurt like this. I don't even have an appetite. I don't feel like going to work but I don't want to get fired."

"Going to work will help get your mind off things. As much as I want to say I told you so I don't like to see you hurt. Make sure you pack few of your clothes and go to your mother's."

"Okay. I have to go."

"Bye."

Minutes later Petronella dragged her bags into

her new empty place and smiled looking around. Her phone rang and it was Masego.

“Hey I saw your message. Did you really move out?”

“Yep. I’m at my new place now and ready to start over.”

“So you ended things just like that? I thought you loved him...shouldn’t you be miserable or something?”

Petronella huffed in annoyance “I thought you would be happy to hear this. You were so against our relationship remember?”

“This would’ve been much better if it was done right after Jane caught you. Now he was probably emotionally invested.”

“Masego you clearly don’t know what to tell me so let’s not talk about relationships. Are you going to come see my place later?”

“I’ll come see it over the weekend.”

“Alright. See you then bye.”

“Bye.”

She hung up and looked around with a smile. She typed a text to Thabang.

Petronella: Done and dusted. He was difficult but he had no choice but to let me go. I'm currently at my new place...I'm going to work but we'll decorate a bit. Maybe we can spend the night together here tomorrow late?

After not receiving a response, she walked out and locked the door then headed to her workplace that was not even far from her place.

Later on Jane stepped out of the tub and wiped her feet then ran to the bedroom where her phone was ringing.

"Babe?"

“Hey love. Still good?”

“I’m good. Just missing you.”

“I would love to spend time with you but I’m busy. There’s a business function going on and I can’t miss it.”

“It’s fine. Just make sure you call or text me when it’s done. I love you.”

“I love you too babe. Do you want me to get you anything?”

“I don’t want anything. Can you come over later? I also miss what’s between your legs.”

He laughed “I’ll definitely come over. Even if you fall asleep, leave my assets out so I can just shove it in.”

She covered her mouth laughing at their dirty jokes “I hope you are not saying this in front of your PA.”

“I’m outside Charlotte’s restaurant. My associates just walked out of their cars. I’ll see you later babe. I love you.”

“I love you too Lawrence. Bye babe.”

She hung up and grabbed a towel nearby then wiped her body.

Nico parked at the gate that evening and stepped out of the car. He opened the gate and walked back into the car then drove in. Loneliness overwhelmed him as he parked the car in the garage and he felt so alone, so deserted.

His phone vibrated as he walked into the house and it was Petronella.

Petronella: Make sure you tell the family the truth. I don't see myself coming to family meetings. Good luck with everything Nicolas.

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UNEDITED

THE PROTECTOR

#84

Nico stared at the message and swallowed then quickly typed a response.

Nico: The families need to meet up so they can discuss a way forward. Don't forget that they are waiting for us to plan a wedding date. We need to tell them together that the wedding is no longer happening and we have broken up.

His phone rang and he sighed staring at her name before answering.

“Hello?”

“What do you mean we have to tell them together? Are you planning to make yourself a victim in front of the families so they can blame me?”

“I am a victim Petronella. You cheated on me so many times then dumped me like a piece of gum.”

“I explained to you—”

He gritted his teeth in anger “And I heard your reasons. I’m going to call a meeting and we will tell our families together so they can understand better. I’m not even interested in making them blame you...I just want this to be over so I can heal in peace.”

“Go ahead and call the meeting if it will make you happy.”

The call cut off and he sighed swallowing multiple lumps. The way she was talking to him was heartbreaking because she sounded like she has never loved him at once. He dialed his uncle

“Nico?”

“Hey uncle. I know you are probably getting tired of receiving my calls to complain but I promise this is the last one. Can you please call a family meeting on my behalf? Petronella and I want to tell the family everything so they don’t have to keep asking.”

“Good decision nephew. I will definitely do that and I hope you won’t ever give her a chance. In fact you need to stay away from women for a while.”

“Yeah. Thank you.”

He cut the call and looked through his cabinet. He took out a packet of noodles and grabbed a kettle and filled it with water.

Jane slowly opened her eyes as she heard the bedroom door opening. Her heart skipped until she saw Lawrence's silhouette walking in. He took off his shoes and Jane switched off the night light and switched on the light.

Law smiled at her as he unbuttoned his shirt
"Hey baby."

She yawned "I thought you were a thief."

He laughed a little "Akere I told you I was coming."

"I forgot. Did you lock the front door? The gate?"

He nodded and climbed on the bed with only his boxers then crawled on top of her and kissed her. Jane moved the sheets away and wrapped her arms around him.

“I missed you.”

“I missed you too and I missed” he cupped her boob moving to kiss her neck “this”

Jane closed her eyes and spread her legs as he dry humped her. They both sighed in ecstasy and Jane let out a little moan and moved her head to kiss him.

After few minutes Lawrence tied the condom and threw it in the bin then wiped Jane and laid

beside her. She wrapped her arm around his torso and kissed his bearded chin.

“I don’t like this bush of yours. Trim it a bit.”

Lawrence touched his chin and shook his head snorting “This bush is what makes me look manly. Imagine me with a bare face. A beard is like a wig—”

Jane covered his mouth as she laughed “A beard is like a wig how? You can keep it Lawrence. I know where this is headed. Keep it you look handsome eitherway.”

He kissed her hand “Thank you my baby.”

Jane's face turned serious as Lawrence traced his finger on her cheek "What's wrong?"

"Nothing. I just...I don't want us to use condoms anymore. I'm on birth control but you keep insisting on using them. I don't have some sort of illnesses Law."

He sighed "I know that. I just didn't want to rush you into anything. I also didn't want us to argue."

"Okay I'm ready to not use it."

Lawrence looked at her excitement shining in his eyes and Jane's eyes moved to his member that was also getting excited.

She covered her face giggled then leaned in to kiss him.

Meanwhile Lefa walked into Nico's house holding two bottles of beer. They headed to the living area where they sat on the couch and Lefa wrapped his arm around Nico's shoulder.

"I'm sorry my man. I can't relate so bringing you beer was the least I could do to comfort you."

Nico tried to smile "Thank you man. It means a lot to me that you are here. I can't cope with this alone. Petronella broke me."

“Don’t even fight for her. Just let her do her thing and you focus on healing.”

He nodded then suddenly bowed his head down as tears blurred his eyes. “Wow here I am expecting comfort yet I did the same thing to Jane.” He looked at Lefa “I made her cry, I broke her heart man and I didn’t even think it was a big deal. This shit hurts man...I’m so ashamed of myself.”

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THE PROTECTOR

#85

Lefa stared at him and shook his head as his cousin sobbed.

“Nicolas don’t do this to yourself. This is not the time to dwell on the past. Jane is fine now, she’s moved on and I’m sure she’s happy. You crying over what you did to her won’t help with anything. It won’t change the fact that it happened. Just drink beer and forget the pain for a while.”

He raised his head and grabbed the bottle from him then opened the cap with his teeth and

downed it without stopping.

“Slow down you will choke.”

He put the bottle on the table and rubbed his face.

“I regret cheating on Jane with Petronella. Jane never gave me problems. She was a good woman and never once complained about our sex life.”

Lefa sighed not knowing what to say “I don’t know but everything happens for a reason.”

“No Petronella was always like this. I should’ve seen it coming. If she can betrayed her cousin

without hesitation who am i? Just a stranger she met because of her cousin.”

“I told you so man. I know it hurts but I warned you and you didn’t listen. You thought you were slick and I was jealous of you. Look at you crying your eyes out.”

“And you did. I was in love man...I was so much in love and at some point I thought of eloping with her. I’m sorry I didn’t listen.”

Lefa patted his back as he grabbed the bottle and took a long sip.

“You will be fine buddy. Just hang on there. I’m fine with your sappy crying self as long as you don’t kill yourself.”

The following day Petronella sighed stepping aside as the delivery guys moved a bed inside followed by a fridge. Her phone rang and her eyes widened as she saw her mother's name on the screen.

"Hello?"

"Hello Petronella. I was called about a meeting regarding your relationship with Nico. Aren't you tired my child? Aren't you tired of stressing me?"

“I don’t know what you are talking about.”

“You know exactly what I’m talking about. You thought I would be happy that you have finally left him? No my child I’m not happy. I’m so angry because you destroy wherever you go Petronella. What was a point of destroying Jane’s relationship if you were just going to leave the man?”

She sighed rolling her eyes “Okay Petronella is also at fault.”

“I hope that tone you are using is not directed at me. You’re not being sarcastic at me.”

“What should I say? Anything I do is never good enough. When will you tell me that you are

proud of me?”

“I’m proud of you Petronella. I’ve said this so many times. I said this when you stood up for yourself against your bully in primary school, I told you this when passed matric and when you graduated. Don’t try to emotionally manipulate me I’m not one of your little mates!. Make sure you come to the meeting at Nico’s house tomorrow.”

The call cut off and Petronella screamed in frustration. She dialed Thabang and the phone rang for a very long time before it went to voicemail. She typed him a message.

Petronella: Can you believe Nico called a family meeting on me? I didn’t think he would be like this. I hope things are going well on your side.

Thabang stared at the phone rang as he massaged his wife's feet. He cleared his throat and reached for it. Cindy picked it up for him and handed it to him. Thabang turned it to silent mode then slipped it into his pocket.

Cindy sighed "You don't have to hide the fact that you are seeing someone Thabang. I wasn't a good wife to you so I understand."

"I don't want to talk about that babe. I took a day off so I can spend a day with my wife and our unborn child." He walked around her and knelt before her then lifted her shirt. Cindy threw her head back laughing as Thabang

delivered ticklish kisses to her stomach.

“Stop that’s ticklish!”

“Your mother doesn’t want me to kiss you Junior. We are going to ignore her right? Right!”

Cindy grabbed his head laughing as he continued. He leaned in and kissed her.

Later that morning Petronella stopped working and took her phone out of her bag. She checked for missed calls and there was nothing. She opened her WhatsApp and there were also no new messages. She frowned and put her phone

back in the bag. Maybe he was busy

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THE PROTECTOR

#86

Later that day Nico sat with his uncle,
Petronella's youngest uncle, Sophia and his

mother in the living room waiting for Petronella to show up. Nico's uncle checked the time

"Is she even coming or she's guilty of cheating?"

Petronella's uncle scowled at him "She's coming. We are not here to listen to you talking rubbish about my niece. We are here to solve their problems not her problem."

"Didn't she cheat?"

"Your nephew is probably the one who cheated, it wouldn't be the first time."

The door opened and heels clicked as

Petronella made her entrance. Nico stared at her best red stilettos as she took long steps.

“Good day everyone. Sorry I’m late...I was waiting for delivery.”

Everyone kept quiet as she took a seat beside her uncle. She cleared her throat.

“Before you can say anything, I just want to say that I don’t want to be here. I don’t know why he...” she glanced at Nico “bothered to call a family meeting because I clearly told him to just tell you the truth.”

Her uncle turned to her “Let me do the talking.”

“What’s the point of being polite and formal when we just want to get this over with? I cheated because I wasn’t happy, we went to counseling and tried to spice things up in the bedroom but nothing worked so instead of cheating again I decided to leave simple. I won’t let anyone here bully me into staying.”

Nico sighed “That’s all. There won’t be a wedding because there’s no relationship.”

Petronella stood up “Is that all? I have to go to my place and get started with the pots.”

She stood up and walked out. Nicolas’s mother gasped and Sophia stood up in embarrassment and followed her daughter out.

“Petronella!”

She turned around “I don’t really want to listen to you yelling at me mama.”

“Let me tell you something you don’t know. You won’t be pretty forever my girl. You won’t be sexually desirable for the rest of your life. One day you will look like me, you will have wrinkles and the only one who would still want to kiss you will be your husband but you get that if you go around being disrespectful to everyone and messing with people’s lives. You disappointed me and everything I hear about you everyday is an embarrassment. It’s always Sophia’s daughter this...Sophia’s daughter that. I hope you don’t grow old with regrets.”

She swallowed staring at her daughter and then

covered her mouth crying. Petronella swallowed and looked at her for the last time before walking away. Sophia felt a hand on her shoulder and turned around moving into her youngest brother's arms.

"She will come around. Don't expect too much from her because that might put your health in jeopardy."

She nodded and he led her to the car.

On her lunch break Jane stepped outside the hospital and found Lawrence's car already parked there. She walked to it and opened the door getting in. She put her bag on her lap and

turned to him.

He leaned in and kissed her “Baby.”

“Hlabirwa (clan name)”

Lawrence smiled widely “Wow I can totally get used to this. How have you been? Where do you want to have your lunch?”

“All good. How about we just buy takeaways and eat in the car. You can park it at the park.”

“Whatever you want sweetheart.”

He started the car and glanced at her “You need to learn how drive so you can drive the other car

or are you comfortable with being the passenger queen?”

“I’m comfortable with both of them. Thanks for taking out for lunch...I love you.”

“I love you too babe. I love spoiling you...it makes me feel like a real man.”

“You are a real man. I saw it last night.”

He nudged her “You naughty little vixen”

Jane laughed and watched his side profile with a smile as he drove them to the main road.

Later on Nico's mother dished and handed Nico the plate then grabbed hers and sat with him.

"I hope you learnt your lesson. You don't just wife anyone Nico...women are good pretenders. They can pretend for years, you shouldn't have rushed to pay the bride price for her. Honestly despite the abortion, Jane was good for you. I never heard you complaining about her until you cheated on her."

"I regret that."

"At least you are remorseful. Too bad it took a heartbreak for you to realize your wrongs. Eat your food before you faint."

“I’ll remain single forever. I just offer protection for sex at work.”

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LIKE & COMMENT

THE PROTECTOR

#87

That evening Jane knocked on Ryan’s door and

waited for few minutes. Ben opened and smiled in surprise.

“What a lovely surprise auntie wa bana. How are you?”

She smiled moving to hug him “I’m good how are you?”

“All good.”

He invited her in and closed the door. They walked further in and reached the living room. Ryan walked in and rushed to her friend and hugged her.

“Hi. You look beautiful, you are gaining and

glowing.”

“You are also glowing chommie.”

“I am?”

“Yep.”

Ben excused himself and Jane sat with Ryan on the couch. She smiled and reached for Jane’s hands “Ben and I are expecting. We found out this morning.”

“Oh I’m so happy for you Ryan. I know how much you wanted this.” She hugged her

Ryan pulled away and smiled emotionally “I’m

so excited. When are you and Lawrence getting your little one?" She wiggled her eyebrows and Jane cocked her head in shock

"I'm not ready for that. I want to but I don't want to rush into things and regret later. You know what happened with Nico."

Ryan sighed "Babes you won't enjoy the benefits of having a man love you if you have those doubts. Lawrence loves you Jane and even I can see it. He came back to you even after the mess in your past and accepted you with welcoming hands. He makes you smile and I've seen how he looks at you."

"I'm scared Ryan."

“I know you are and I’m not saying give him a baby but don’t let these doubts chase him away. Don’t water them because they will turn into big insecurities.”

She nodded “I hear you. I love him too. I’m glad things didn’t work out with Nico...Lawrence treats me nice.”

“I’m going to be your maid of—”

Jane’s phone rang interrupting them and she sighed and took it out.

“Aunty?”

“You know I’m going to die of stress because of

Petronella, Jane. What did I do to deserve such a disrespectful child?"

Jane frowned "What did she do?"

"She disrespected the Leopengs when we were at Nico trying to understand why they broke off the engagement."

"They broke it off? Aunty I think you should just stop thinking about Petronella for a while because she clearly won't change. She's always been disrespectful, entitled little brat and you never saw it because she wasn't always around."

"Eish please come see me when you get time."

“Okay aunty. Bye.”

The next day Petronella opened the door and let Masego in. She closed then leaned on the door texting Thabang.

Petronella: Babe kante what's going on? Are you ignoring me? Please just tell me if your wife is giving you problems. You are welcome to stay with me if she's giving you problems.

“Who are you texting?”

Petronella's eyes moved to Masego “Huh?”

“Who are you texting so furiously? Is it Nico?”

“I don’t have time to text that one. He annoyed me so much by calling family meeting on me to bully me into staying with him. I should even block him so I don’t have to deal with him.”

“You used to love him Petronella? You can’t suddenly stop loving someone if there is no another person. There’s someone you are seeing...you met someone knew right?”

Petronella smirked “More like someone old. I’m fixing things with my ex.”

“Thabang? Isn’t he married?”

“He’s divorcing his wife for me.”

Masego nodded with a judging facial expression. Petronella crossed her arms
“What?”

“Nothing.”

“Masego if you want to say something just say it.”

“I don’t have anything to say. I’m done telling you what to do so I’m just going to keep my opinions to myself. Your place is beautiful by the way...ready to go?”

Petronella nodded and grabbed her bag.

Hours later Petronella checked her phone for new messages and sighed in disappointment when nothing popped up. She grabbed her bag and walked out of the office. Her co-workers spotted her leaving

“We are having lunch at steers want to join us?”

She turned and smiled apologetically “Next time. I have go somewhere...it’s really important.”

She headed to the gate and when she stepped out she hitchhiked a taxi then got in. She took out her phone and dialed Thabang and it rang unanswered. She glanced at the person sitting

beside her

“Dumelang mama. Can I please use your phone?”

The lady unlocked her phone then handed it to her. She dialed Thabang’s numbers then called.

“Hello?”

“Hello. Kante why are you ignoring me?”

“Petronella listen I will call you after five minutes alright?”

“I’m coming to your—”

The call cut off and she stared at it in disbelief. Minutes later the taxi dropped her off at Thabang's workplace and she took long angry steps as she headed inside. She waited at the reception for few seconds before approaching the desk.

"Is Thabang Nkadimeng in?"

"Yes. Do you have an appointment with him?"

"No but can you please tell me to come to the reception or let me go there? It's urgent. It's about his family please."

"He doesn't have important meetings now but I'll let him know you are here. Name?"

“Petronella.”

She waited until the lady was done and she showed him to the office. She headed to his office and knocked on the door.

“Come in.”

She opened the door and her eyes went to Cindy sitting on the couch and ignored her then sat on the chair across Thabang.

“We are in the middle of something here. Can you please talk fast?”

She frowned then her face lit up thinking of the

divorce. She smiled

“Oh! In that case...” she stood up “I’ll see you later. I just wanted to make sure you are okay.”

She flashed him another smile then walked out.

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THE PROTECTOR

#88

After the door closed, Thabang cleared his throat then stood up and walked to the couch. He sat down with his wife and grabbed her hands.

“I’m sorry about her.”

Cindy nodded “Are you still sleeping with her?”

“It’s been a week since I’d done anything with her. I’m sorry babe...I’m going to end it.”

Cindy’s eyes moistened and she nodded again. Thabang gently kissed her eyes then lifted her face and kissed her lips.

“You don’t have to break things off if you don’t want to. I know you are only staying because of the baby.”

“Cindy that’s not true. I love you and I want us to fix things. I’m tired us living like roommates that have sex. Petronella doesn’t mean anything to me. I was angry at you when I fell into her arms.”

“What if she resorts to witchcraft and does something to my child? Side chicks are dangerous...I hear stories everywhere I go.”

“Nothing like that will ever happen. I promise.”

He hugged her then leaned in to kiss her. Cindy

sighed as he held him and laid on his shoulder
“Can we relocate and start over properly?”

“Relocate to where?”

“Far from here but firstly sort out your job then we will talk about it more. I don’t feel safe with your side chick here.”

Thabang sighed “She’s not my side chick. I don’t want her...it was just a temporary thing and I’m going to end it later when we get out of here. I’m serious about working on our marriage Cindy.”

She wrapped her arms around him and kissed him

Later on Jane bid goodbye to her co-workers as they headed to their cars and she headed to the gate. She waited for few minutes and saw Lawrence's car driving closer to the gate. Her heart warmed and she approached it. She frowned when she saw her mother at the backseat but continued walking to the door. She pulled it open then got in and glanced at his mother.

"Dumelang."

"Agee."

She glanced at Lawrence "Hi babe. Thanks for coming to pick me up. You don't need to keep

doing this you know?”

“I know but I like picking you up. I have to drop Mma off at her house then I can take you home. You don’t mind right?”

“No I don’t mind.”

He drove to the road and Jane sighed feeling Lawrence’s mother’s stare at the back of her neck.

She turned around “I would like to apologize for what happened in the past. I wish I could go back in time and not do it.”

Lawrence’s mother hummed “Whatever you say

Jane. I don't trust you but Lawrence is a grown man and can make his own choices. If it's you he wants, then so be it."

Jane swallowed then turned around looking out of the window. Minutes later they dropped her off at her house and Lawrence drove them off.

"I'm sorry I put you in an awkward situation. My mother hasn't really forgiven you for what happened."

"I can't say I blame her. At least she didn't insult me."

"She knows I love you and she loves me. I'm her only son so yeah."

“I love you too. I really do this time...and i..I’m scared of the future but I want us to be together for a very long time.”

“Me too babe. Less negatives, more positives okay?”

“Okay.”

He placed his hand on her thigh and squeezed in assurance.

That evening Petronella checked the message on her phone containing the location where she was supposed to meet Thabang. She breathed

out before telling the uber driver. Few minutes later the car parked at the guesthouse and Petronella grabbed her bag.

“I can take to places better than these.”

She turned to the driver “I’m not interested.”

She opened the door and walked out heading to the entrance. She checked the message for the last time before heading straight to the room Thabang was. She knocked then opened the door.

“Hey.” She smiled then closed the door.

“Hi. Please sit down so we can talk. I booked

this guest room so we can talk. You are free to sleepover afterwards but I'm going home. I have an early morning meeting tomorrow."

She nodded with a smile and leaned in to kiss him but Thabang turned his head to the side then cleared his throat.

"What's wrong?"

"Akere I told you that we are here to talk, why are you trying to kiss me? Sit down so we can talk."

She frowned and took a seat on the bed. Thabang turned to her with a long face.

“I can’t continue with what we are doing? I’m no longer getting a divorce. I’m going to work on my marriage.”

Her heart dropped “What?”

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THE PROTECTOR

#89

She shook her head not believing her ears

“What?”

“I’m fixing my family Petronella so whatever we had going on has to stop.”

“What do you mean it has to stop? We had an agreement Thabang. I already dumped Nico and moved out...you said you would divorce Cindy and move out. Babe is she threatening you?”

Thabang sighed “Nobody is threatening me. I love her and I realized that I’ve never stopped loving her.”

She shook her head “But you said...you said you weren’t happy.”

Thabang stood up “Like I said, I’m trying to work things out. Fact is that I love her and I’m not going to give up on our marriage because I’m not happy. We will go to counseling and try to do new things.”

Her heart dropped as she stared at him. His face was so serious that there was no ounce of amusement anywhere. He was actually serious and she felt so betrayed

“You should’ve said so in the beginning!”

“I’m saying it now akere. I didn’t want to ghost

you so I'm telling you. I'm being honest unlike other people."

"Wow so I should applaud you for that? I already dumped Nico! My family were there when we broke up officially. I broke up with him so that we could be together Thabang. Please don't do this to me. What am I supposed to do?"

"I'm sorry. That's all I wanted to tell you. I won't be able to stay so I'll see you around."

She stood up and grabbed his arm before he could go to the door then turned his face to him and kissed him. She cupped his manhood through his pants making him grunt. Thabang firmly grabbed her hand and removed it as he harshly pulled his lips away.

“What the hell are you doing?”

“Thabang...”

“No! You can’t feel me up after I just told you that I want to fix things with my wife.”

She felt breathless as her eyes welled up with tears “I thought you and I were on the same page. Why would you betray me like this?”

“I betrayed you? I didn’t force you to break up with your fiancé. I love my wife and I won’t explain to you hundred times the reasons why I won’t leave her. You and I were not in a relationship...it was just friends with benefits kind of thing.”

“You said you loved me.” She whispered shakily

“Me? When? Listen, I already paid so you can stay the night. I’m leaving and I’m sorry once again.”

She furiously grabbed his shoulders and clung to him “Thabang don’t do this.”

“This is the last thing I wanted to deal with. Why can’t you just accept this? I can’t be with you.”

“I will share you with her. Don’t do this.”

“Listen, I’m sorry. I’m sorry you caught feelings but I never promised you a relationship. I can’t

disrespect Cindy by continuing with you when she's carrying my child. I can't be with you I'm sorry."

She closed her eyes and crossed her arms then bowed her head. Thabang patted her on the shoulder then walked out of the room.

Petronella walked over to the bed and took a seat feeling like the biggest fool ever. She rushed out of the room and followed him running.

"Wait!"

She stopped in front of his car and Thabang sighed and walked to the door and opened it. Petronella marched forward and held the door before he could get in.

“What is it now?”

She swallowed a lump and sniffled “You can’t do this. I can’t let you hurt me the second time. Why are you choosing her when she’s been nothing but a cause of misery?”

“Fact is that I love her and willing to fix everything. Get away from my car so I can leave. You are embarrassing yourself.”

“Babe please...”

His tongue poked his cheek as he looked around in annoyance.

“Petronella don’t do this please. Please just accept this and leave peacefully. I don’t want to have to drag you back to the room.”

She swallowed “I love you. Please don’t do this...I’m willing to be a second wife.”

“I’m not polygamous.”

He grabbed her hand on the door and moved it away then got in the car. She watched as the door closed and his car driving off.

Minutes later Thabang got home and found Cindy dishing in the kitchen. He locked the door

and walked over to her and gave her a kiss on the cheek.

“I didn’t expect you to come back.”

He sighed “I was serious about ending things with her and working on our marriage. I want us to be happy Cindy and I want our children to grow in a happy household. You don’t have to worry yourself about Petronella anymore.”

She smiled “Thank you. Go and change then come to eat. I want us to go to bed early tonight...there’s a lot of catching up to do.” She wiggled her eyebrows and Thabang smirked

“Okay babe.”

He headed to the bedroom and his phone rang immediately after the door closed. He stared at Petronella's name on the screen and waited for few seconds hoping she would hang up. He breathed loudly in annoyance as the phone kept ringing then answered.

"Hello?"

"I'm pregnant."

He closed his eyes gathering his thoughts "No you are not Petronella. I know these type of games, I'm not a fool so I won't be entertaining them. I said it's over so please respect yourself and stay away."

She sniffled "Can I talk to Cindy then? Please

tell her I don't mind being a side chick."

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Like & comment

THE PROTECTOR

#90

"Are you serious?"

“I can’t believe you are doing this to me Thabang. You out of all people are doing this...aren’t you getting tired of using me and discarding me when you are done and satiated?”

Thabang threw the keys on the bed and sat on the edge of it “I didn’t use you. You were benefiting from the amount of sex we had. We both got something out of it and I’m sorry things aren’t going where you wanted them to go.” He sighed “This is my last apology and I believe you understood everything clearly. Sharp.”

He hung up and blocked her then left the phone on the bed and changed into his comfy clothes. He then walked out of the bedroom and went to the kitchen.

Cindy smiled as she uncovered their food “Bon appétit.”

He took a sit “Thank you for cooking. It’s been so long since I’ve tasted your food. You were hardly home.”

Her smile dropped as she sighed “I’m sorry.”

“I’m sorry too. We need to talk more so we can fix...” he gestured the space between them
“Whatever is pushing us apart.”

“Book us into counseling. It’s hard to talk about this without arguing and I don’t want us to argue and end up stressing the baby.”

“Okay I can do that during the week.”

The next day Nico watched as Lefa added an extra steak in his takeaway then sighed thoughtfully. Lefa handed it to then walked him out to his car.

“Are you sure you are fit to go to work?”

Nico chuckled humorlessly “I’m not sick cousin. Heartbreak is not an illness. Besides, I can’t afford to lose my job when I don’t even have backup.”

“I’m worried about you man. Talk to me.”

He sighed “I’m fine Lefa. I cried all the pain out, right now I just feel numb. After that meeting I know that it’s really over and I won’t be handing out my heart to any woman anytime soon.”

Lefa patted him on the shoulder and bid him goodbye. Nico got in his car and leaned against the seat watching Lefa walking away. He took out his phone and logged into Facebook then searched for Jane. He sighed as no profile appeared. He was still blocked

He logged out and went through his contacts then clicked on her number and called her.

“Hello?”

“Hi. Hey...thank you for unblocking me.”

“For some reason I knew that you would call immediately after Petronella has left you. What can I assist you with?”

“Nothing. I just want to apologize. You didn’t deserve what I did to you. I had no reason to hurt and humiliate you like that but I did and I regret it so bad. I now understand how it feels to be turned into a fool...to get your heart broken and I’m sorry that I made you experience that. I wish I could go back in time and prevent it from happening. I know I don’t deserve your forgiveness but I’m sorry.”

“I don’t care anymore Nico. I’ve moved on and

I'm very happy. Apologies won't change the past but I'm glad you're seeing your wrongs."

"I just wanted you to know that that's all." He swallowed "I'm glad you moved on and you are happy. You deserve it. Good bye Jane."

He hung up and sighed rubbing his face then started the car.

Meanwhile Jane stared at phone in disbelief and quickly typed a message to Ryan.

Jane: Guess who apologized. Life is really unpredictable...it's teaching people a lot of

lessons. I wonder what is it that Petronella has done to hurt him but hey, it's none of our business.

She put her phone away and focused on her work. On lunch break she took her food and went to the benches and sat with her co-workers eating. A message came through from Lawrence and she smiled widely as she read through

Lawrence: I'm picking you up later so we can spend the night together at my house. I know you've been avoiding my house but you are not running away tonight sweetheart. Anyway I miss you and I can't stop thinking about you. I hope you are having a great day, I am. See you later, I love you.

Jane: I can't wait. I miss you too and I can't wait to see you later. I love you too babe and I love these little messages you sent during the day.

Her co-worked nudged her "Must be nice in the love department huh? You are smiling widely."

"Who said it's love making me smile like this?"

She laughed "Jane your face is written 'I'm in love' and anyone can see it."

Jane blushed then chuckled "You people should mind your business."

Later that day Petronella got to her place and put everything in its place then climbed on her bed then logged into Facebook. She searched for Cindy and scrolled up checking the profiles. After she found it, she went through her timeline then sent her a friend request and a message.

Petronella: Hi. I had no choice but to reach out because Thabang doesn't want to talk to me. I'm sure you already know that I'm sleeping with your husband. You know me Cindy and you know that Thabang and I have a very complicated past but we love each other. Allow us to be together without being difficult...let him divorce you and stop manipulating him or at least let him take me as a second wife.

She logged out and played a game for few

minutes to buy time. She logged back in and found a message

Cindy: I don't know who you think you are but I don't play around when it comes to my husband. I can't believe there are still little desperate girl like you lingering around married men. Shame on you! Where do you even get the nerve to text me? I will sue you little girl, don't try me. You don't want to see yourself unemployed, broke with a tarnished reputation...Don't fuvking try me!.

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Like & comment

THE PROTECTOR

#91

Petronella read the message and felt a wave of embarrassment hit her and she quickly blocked her and deleted the whole chat. She called Masego and the call went straight to voicemail.

That night Jane followed Lawrence into the house and wrapped her arms around herself the memories rushed through her mind. The place was renovated with new colors and furniture

but everything was still the same to her. She felt like crying as she looked at Lawrence excitedly fixing things up for her.

“I’m sorry.”

He turned and furrowed his eyebrows “Huh? Why are you apologizing?”

“I just feel the need to apologize. This house reminds me of a lot. I feel like I don’t deserve you. I don’t think the guilt will ever go away.”

He walked to her and grabbed her hands. “It won’t go away before you don’t want to forgive yourself. Forgive the woman you used to be Jane so you can embrace this changed one. You can’t keep apologizing forever...things

happen and we regret but we can't stay in regrets forever."

She sighed "I'm trying to. Just that...this house.."

"You want me to move out?"

She frowned "What! No! Babe it's my first time here after so many years and I'm trying to adjust. Let's have dinner and go to bed."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm sure. I will never ask you to do that."

She hooked their arms together and walked to

the living room where they sat comfortably on the couch and Lawrence ordered food.

He turned to look at her “Is Rain the last one or do you see yourself having more kids in the future?”

Jane smiled “Definitely more kids. What about you?”

“I want kids too. I crave to be a father...that’s why I wished Rain was mine. You have no idea how desperate I was that time.”

Jane laughed leaning in to kiss him “I’d thought you were looking for some sort of revenge. I love you and Rain will be yours too if we get married.”

“If? When we get married Jane. I don’t have time to play around. I want to settle down and preferably with you.”

She giggled “Really?”

“Really babe. After getting married, I want us to move into a new house where we will start family properly. You will then help out with the company and be the happiest family ever.”

“I would like that. I want a small intimate wedding with a pastor, friends and family. Nothing extravagant. I can’t believe we are talking about this so openly...” she trailed off
“Aren’t we jinxing things?”

“There’s no such thing babe. It’s good to talk about things like these if you don’t want surprises in the future.”

He pulled her onto his lap and kissed the side of her face. “Do you really love me?”

She turned “Yes. I really do...so much.”

The next morning Jamie sipped his coffee as he watched statuses on WhatsApp. He came across Jane’s and waited for the picture to load. It was a picture of her sitting on Lawrence’s lap and they had large smiles on their faces. His eyes looked down on the caption

Caption: In my peaceful girl era.

He swallowed and quickly turned around when Linda's footsteps approached.

"What's that? What were you looking at?"

He handed her the phone and Linda hummed as she stared his WhatsApp statuses. She scrolled down and clicked on Jane then smiled and returned it to Jamie.

"She looks happy."

"That's her ex Lawrence. The one we stole from...I'm sure he's up to something."

Linda shook her head “Maybe he genuinely loves her. Isn’t it too late to be bitter? I think Jane can take care of herself.”

“I’m not bitter—”

“I don’t want to hear it. You married me so you should be focusing on me and our children. I don’t have time to be competing with exes that don’t even miss you Jamie. Take your own advice and stay out of people’s business. We are getting late...Rain! Gomolemo! Come on we are running late!”

She walked past him and Jamie swallowed as he looked at the picture again. They looked so happy...he wondered what they were talking about.

Petronella stood by the road waiting for the taxi to arrive. She took out her phone and called Masego.

“Hello?”

“Hey. How are you?”

“I’m good and you?”

“I’m not good friend. Can you believe Thabang made me dump Nico kante he’s fixing things with his wife and even got her pregnant? Men are dogs you know.” She swallowed a thick

lump “I can’t even call him because the wife threatened to sue me.”

Masego sighed “What did you think was going to happen? You think life was just going to be smooth for you while you destroy people’s lives?”

“Masego...”

“Petronella I want a friend who will motivate me to be a better person. I don’t want negativity in my life. You bring nothing to this friendship except for complaints about men. I can’t have that...the only thing we talk about is men and other people. I’m sorry but I can’t be your friend anymore. Find people who you can gossip with but nna shame, count me out.”

The call cut off and Petronella's mouth hung open in disbelief as the lump thickened on her throat.

A WEEK LATER

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THE PROTECTOR

#92

A WEEK LATER

Jane followed Lawrence into his mother's yard and tightened her hold on Lawrence's arm as they headed to the door.

"I'm nervous."

"Why?"

"Your mother doesn't like me Lawrence. She tolerates me because you love me but—"

"Just relax. I brought you here to meet them officially. Mma will warm up to you. They can't be angry forever right?"

“Right.” She took deep breaths and stepped into the porch then Lawrence knocked on the door.

“Come in!”

He glanced at her and took her hand to his lips and kissed it then pushed the door. They walked in and Jane’s eyes widened at the food placed in bowls on the table. Lawrence’s uncle stood up and approached her.

“Jane this is my uncle/stepdad and he’s the head of the house. Dad this is my woman Jane.”

His uncle stretched his hand and Jane shook it with a smile “Nice to meet you again.”

Lawrence's mother stood up and stood in front of Jane. "Nice to see you again Jane." Jane let out a gasp as she pulled her into a hug then they sat down.

Law's mother grabbed her husband's plate and dished for him then glanced at Jane. Jane grabbed Law's plate and copied MmaLaw's actions.

"Lawrence is my only son Jane. I love him and I want to see him happy. I didn't like how you treated him but he brought it on himself. I've been hard on you not because you stole and went to jail but because you were so comfortable with cheating. I like women who respect themselves. I like women who know the difference between right and wrong."

Jane bowed her head in shame as MmaLaw continued “He loves you I can tell. I hope you treat him right and not break his heart.”

“I love him too and I won’t hurt him I promise. He makes me happy and...and I’ve never had a man love me the way he does. I will cherish his love forever.”

Law’s uncle nudged him playfully “Lwena monna you must take care of this lady. I don’t want to hear stories.”

“You won’t. I actually have to tell you something later.”

He nodded “Alright. Anyway Jane, I heard you

have a daughter.”

“Yes sir I do—”

“Call me George please.”

Jane smiled “Yes I do. She’s turning six soon.”

MmaLaw cleared her throat “And the relationship with her father is good right? He supports her right?”

“Yes. Rain is mostly with him because he’s the one who raised her while I was in jail. I promise he won’t give Lawrence problems.”

MmaLaw’s eyes widened in surprise “Oh that’s

good news then. I hope to meet her one day.”

Jane nodded with a smile and they continued chatting while eating.

“The stew is so delicious.” Jane complimented

Lawrence’s mother grinned “I will give you the recipe. It’s Lawrence’s favorite.”

Petronella stood up from the bed as the knocking got very persistent. She pulled the door ready to give the person a piece of her mind but closed her mouth quickly when she saw her landlord with crossed arms.

“Hello.”

“Hey. Mr Tau. Is everything okay?”

“What’s today’s date?”

She furrowed her eyebrows “The second of August.”

“And you still haven’t paid July’s rent.”

“I will pay it. Money is just tight right now.”

His nostrils flared as he stared at her

“Petronella I’m running a business here. I don’t

care how tight your money is...you are staying here without complaints right? Water, security and everything is sorted right? So don't make suffer for my money. I hate going door to door demanding MY money when under your frontal weave there's a brain that can remind you that you have to pay."

"I will make sure to pay it tomorrow."

"If the money is not paid by the end of this month I'll make sure to evict you."

He clicked his tongue and walked away.
Petronella closed the door and sighed as she leaned against it.

Later on Lawrence drove the car into Jane's yard and parked in front of the house then rushed out to close the gate. Seconds later he came back and picked up Jane who was sleeping on the passenger seat.

She yawned shifting a little in his arms "Babe?"

"Shh. I'll take you to bed. Lay your head on my shoulder."

Jane wrapped her arms around his neck then carried her inside. Once in, he gently placed her on the bed and sat beside her.

"I love you so much." Jane mumbled sleepily

Lawrence chuckled then leaned down and kissed her lips softly. "I love you more. Get some sleep I'm going to go lock the gate."

He walked out and Jane's phone rang. She yawned before reaching for it and answered the unknown number. She kept quiet waiting for the caller to say something.

"Jane?"

She frowned "Petronella?"

"Thank God you answered. Would you mind borrowing me 2K...I promise I will pay it back."

Jane chuckled in disbelief as she sat up. "You are asking me for money? Me?"

"Jane I know that you and I aren't seeing eye to eye but I dumped Nico. I'm sorry I slept with him."

"Slept with him, insulted me, married him and humiliated me do you want me to say more? You're taking this very lightly and it's angering me. You broke my trust Petronella and you won't get a cent from me. I wouldn't give you anything even if they say you are kidnapped by the mafia and they are demanding ransom."

"I said sorry."

"And you think it will fix everything?"

“Please Jane...I’m going to get evicted.”

“That’s sounds like a you problem. Don’t call me again. Find someone else to bother.”

She hung up, took off her shoes then laid down. Lawrence came back and took off his clothes then joined Jane in bed.

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THE PROTECTOR

#93

Petronella stared at the phone in disbelief then dialed Masego. The phone went straight to voicemail. She got off the bed and grabbed her shoes and her handbag. Walking out the room, she locked the door and requested an uber. She waited for few minutes then the car arrived and she got in.

Breathing heavily Lawrence rolled to the side then pulled Jane to him.

She protested “I’m dirty. Let’s go shower”

“Just few minutes then we will go.”

“Petronella called me asking for money when you were gone to lock the gate.”

“What went down between you and your cousin exactly? You don’t have to tell me if you are not ready to but every time you mention her name your face turns sour. It’s a bit concerning.”

“She slept with my ex fiancé while we were still together and even got engaged. I don’t care about it anymore. She just annoys me because she stresses auntie out and she’s an entitled spoilt brat.”

“Wow that’s deep. I’m not looking forward to meeting her.”

“What annoys me more about her is that she doesn’t think whatever she does to hurt people is not wrong. One day she will do something like this to a wrong person and they will hurt her.”

“I’m sorry babe. She doesn’t sound like a good person.”

Jane rubbed her face then reached for the small towel and wiped herself sighing. “She’s not but she’s still my cousin. She’s a little sister to me and I don’t want her to turn into old Jane.”

“Then show her the right way. Don’t let her take

advantage of you but don't give up on her."

She looked at him "I won't."

Minutes later Petronella got out of the Uber and opened Nicolas's gate. She walked with a smile seeing the lights on. Her phone rang and it was Masego.

"Hello?"

"Hey I missed your call. Did you want something?"

"I know you said our friendship is over but can

you please borrow me two thousand rands? I will pay it back I promise. I have to pay rent before they kick me out and I can't afford to be homeless."

"Didn't you get paid month end?"

"I bought a phone."

"What happened to your old phone?"

"The camera quality wasn't right—"

"My camera quality is poor but I can afford to pay rent. This is why I don't want us to be friends anymore...you don't take life seriously and you think it owes you something. Swallow

your pride and sell that iPhone.”

The call cut off and she sighed before knocking on the door. She waited for few seconds before the door opened. Nico’s face twisted in surprise but didn’t say anything.

“Hi can I come in?”

He stepped away from the door and Petronella made her way in. Nico sat down and crossed his arms as Petronella looked around awkwardly before sitting down.

“I missed you.”

Nico’s face remained serious and Petronella

cleared her throat and repeated "I missed you Nico. I miss you."

"Okay?"

She forced a smile "How have you been? Breaking up didn't mean we should be enemies right?"

"What are you doing here Petronella?"

"I didn't like how things ended between us honestly. I had no reason to be so hard on you...I had just been so overwhelmed by life and I thought breaking up would help."

He nodded slowly "Did it?"

“Not really.”

Nico uncrossed his arms and leaned over balancing his elbows with his knees as he cupped his face. “So that’s why you are here?”

She smiled “I would like us to start over. I was happy with you and very stupid for leaving. I promise that will never happen again. I can move back in then we can go ahead with the wedding.”

“Sometimes I fail to understand how your mind works you know? You really think after everything you’ve done to me I will be happy to welcome you back in my life? Are you that delusional?”

Her smile fell as well as her heart as Nico sat properly on the chair waiting for her reply.

“I’m sorry for cheating. I’m sorry for leaving and breaking the engagement off. I wasn’t thinking—”

“Okay you weren’t thinking now it has backfired. I’m not going to take you back Petronella. You wouldn’t have come here if your cheating relationship was still strong. I’m not a fool and I will never let you make me one ever again. Please leave my house.”

She stared at him tearfully and then stood up. She looked at his face hoping he would change his mind. When few seconds without him

saying anything, she headed to the door and walked out.

She walked out of the gate and pulled out her new brand Iphone then swallowed. She would have to swallow her pride and sell it. Her heart felt sore as she thought of moving back in with her mother. She doubted their relationship would go back to normal. Sighing, she unlocked the phone and logged in to Facebook. She searched for Thabang and her heart squeezed painfully as she stared at the picture of him and Cindy that was uploaded 7 hours ago. She turned around and glanced at Nico's house for the last time before standing by the road and hailing a taxi.

TWO YEARS LATER

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THE PROTECTOR

#94

TWO YEARS LATER

Jane walked forward and hugged Ryan then

placed a birthday hats on her sons then they ran to where other kids were sitting with Rain on the long table in a restaurant.

“Hey. I thought you said it was supposed to be a small birthday party.”

Jane sighed “That’s how Jamie and I planned but you know how Lawrence is. There was no need for these water guns and book restaurants.”

Ryan laughed looking at a happy Rain who was surrounded by balloons. “She’s happy. Make sure you take a lot of pictures. She will grow up and be a woman.”

Jane smiled twisting her beautiful ring on her

ring finger “I found out that I’m pregnant...I didn’t tell Lawrence. I want it to be surprise.”
She whispered

Ryan’s eyes widened and she excitedly wrapped her arms around him “I’m so happy for you bestie. I’ve been waiting to hear this for months. When did you find out?”

She smiled “This morning. I was feeling off so I decided to pass by the doctor’s.”

“This calls for a celebration. Tomorrow lunch in on me and I’ll even take you to shopping.”

“That means a lot to me considering how stingy you are.”

They both laughed as they turned and watched as Jamie led the waiters and waitress pass holding a cake. They placed it on the table and started singing. Jane moved closer and grinned as she clapped and sang along with everyone. Jamie walked beside her and leaned to her ear.

“I don’t need another man supporting my child. We had a plan and like always, that husband of yours had to flash his riches on my face.”

Jane gritted her teeth turning to him “My husband which means he’s Rain’s stepfather. He wanted Rain to have the best birthday...it’s not about bragging about his money. Lawrence is not like that.”

“Tell him I will pay his cents back.”

“Jamie I won’t let you ruin my day because you feel like you are in a competition with my man. Yes maybe this was a little too much but he meant no harm. Calm down and enjoy your daughter’s day. No one is taking her away from you.”

Jamie cleared his throat and forced a smile as he continued clapping. Her phone vibrated and she took it out and read the message from her husband.

Hubby: I hope you are all having fun. The meeting went horribly so I’m just going to go home and take a nap just to gather my thoughts.

Jane: Aww I’ll make you feel better later. Save

some energy

Later on Petronella grabbed her phone and slid it in her bag then stood up. She followed her co-workers out and wiped sweat off her face.

“Do you have plans this lovely Friday?” Her co-worker asked

Petronella shook her head “Not really.”

“How come? It’s not like you don’t have money, we just got paid.” Her other coworker asked

“I just don’t like going out anymore. It’s no

longer fun. I spend my money on Netflix subscription and books. They are my kind of fun these days.”

Her colleagues shrugged and they walked out of the gate. A taxi arrived and they got in. Petronella settled at the backseat and logged in to Facebook. She scrolled through posts and then sighed before searching Nico’s profile. She clicked on it and looked at the pictures he recently posted and sighed sadly as she looked at the one smiling with two unfamiliar ladies at some sort of a restaurant. He looked happy. His smile seemed really genuine and she wondered if those ladies were his friends or he had turned into a polygamous man.

Jane walked into the house and put her bag on the kitchen island then poured herself some water to drink. She then took her bag and went to the bedroom where Lawrence was. His back was against the headboard as he typed on the laptop.

“Oh hey you’re back.”

She nodded and put everything away then took off her shoes. She got on the bed and leaned in to kiss him

“Where’s Rain?”

“She left with Jamie. The party was great but I want us to talk about something that might cause problems in the future.”

Lawrence closed his laptop and gave her full attention

He sighed "What's going on babe?"

"Don't be offended but I think you should not be too involved when it comes to Rain's big celebrations. You can contribute and attend because she is your stepdaughter. Renting out a restaurant was unnecessary and it made Rain's father feel like you were trying to show off."

Lawrence frowned "Babe I was trying help. I was trying to make Rain happy."

"I know love but it didn't seem like that to Jamie.

He was jealous and bitter about it because he thought you were trying to take Rain away.”

“That’s nonsense—”

“Lawrence don’t argue please. Just promise me that you will not go overboard again. I don’t mind you spending on me but when it comes to Rain it becomes a problem. I’m trying to avoid difficult co-parenting with Jamie and I actually understand how Jamie is feeling because I once felt like that. I felt like his wife was taking my daughter from me. Rain was even calling her mommy...please love.”

“Okay I understand.”

“Do you? Or you are just saying it to get me to

shut up?”

“I mean it. I also don’t want problems.”

Jane looked at his face that looked nothing but okay.

“Babe?”

He sighed “I’m fine. I’m just...never mind.”

Jane shook her head “Ae. Communication remember?”

“It’s just that... when are we having our own child Jane? I feel incomplete babe, I want a child please.”

Her face crumbled and she felt like crying at his vulnerability. She wrapped her arms around him and kissed his face. "It was supposed to be a surprise. You ruined it."

She pouted and Lawrence furrowed his eyebrows "What are you talking about?"

"We are pregnant Lawrence. I wanted to use it to cheer you up because you said you were having a bad—"

"Babe! We are? We are having a baby?"

She smiled not saying anything and Lawrence put the laptop away and knelt on the bed
"Sweetheart?"

“I found out this morning. I brought the pregnancy test kit checked again just to be sure.”

He connected their lips and they smacked loudly as he pulled away tearfully. “Thank you baby. I thought something was wrong with me. I’m going to be a dad dad. I feel more than better. Can I call mom? Did you tell aunt Sophia?”

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THE PROTECTOR

#95

Jane sighed with a smile as she looked at him

“Let’s wait a bit before telling the elders. You know how they are.”

“Good point. I’m just so happy.”

He leaned in and kissed her then they settled on the pillows as the kiss deepened. Lawrence

pulled away and laid on his side facing her

“Was Jamie really that mad?”

“You have no idea. He even wants to pay back the money you spent on all of that and knowing how he is, he will want to pay it.”

“I don’t know why that old man hates me because I didn’t do anything to him. Or it’s because of that 80K. He probably wanted to build a mansion with it.”

“That was my plan”

They both laughed and Lawrence trailed his fingers on her cheek and leaned in and pecked

her forehead.

“You know babe, our love story is anything but perfect but I’m glad we tried again. I’m glad you gave me a chance...now we are going to have our little complete family with no issues.”

Jane smiled “Me too.”

He sighed “Do you have plans tomorrow? I want to take a day off so we can spend time watching movies...just be indoors. I really need a break from work...it can get mentally exhausting.”

“I was planning to go out with Ryan but we can go the day after. We were just going out for lunch.”

The next day Petronella stood outside Nico's yard and stared at Nico washing his car. She longingly watched as he adjusted his headphones and danced a little as he turned to the other side holding the pressure washer.

She hesitated before walking to the gate and gently pulled it open. She approached him and Nico turned and removed his headphones, hooking them on his neck.

"Petronella?"

"Hi."

“Hi. How can help you?”

She smiled awkwardly “I was around so I decided to pass by and say hi.”

“You have friends around here?”

She cleared her throat “I just miss you to be honest. It took me a while to realize that I lost something great.”

Nico just stared at her without saying anything and Petronella’s gaze turned to his car. “You bought another one. Congratulations.”

Nico sighed “Petronella I’ve moved on. I met

someone and the relationship is still new. I don't want her to come here and think I still have feelings for my ex. You should've texted me on Facebook and saved yourself all the awkwardness."

"You moved on? That was too soon."

"I don't think you have any right to tell me when to move on? Was I supposed to wait for you to grow up and figure out what you really want?"

She swallowed "So we can't be friends?"

"Would you want your man to be friends with his exes? Let's be realistic here."

Petronella kept quiet and Nico sighed switching off the pressure washer. "I really moved on Petronella. I'm not saying it to prove a point. Move on too and please use Facebook to talk to me instead of just showing up here."

"Sorry. It was nice seeing you...I'll just leave."

She turned around and started walking to the gate.

"Petronella!"

She turned around hopefully "Yes?"

"I forgave you a long time ago. I hope you find someone who you will cherish and love

genuinely.”

“Thank you.” She turned around and hurried to the gate. She took out her phone and send her mother a message “Do you want fried chicken? I’ll buy it for you in exchange for a motherly advice.”

Later that morning Char set the table occasionally glancing at their neighbor’s teen daughter who Noel was teaching maths in the living room as her sons ran around in the kitchen. She could hear Noel’s soft voice as he explained to her but the girl’s eyes were focused on his lips. He glanced at her and

pointed something in the textbook while telling her to focus every now and then. He looked so tense and uncomfortable.

“Savior?”

“Mommy?”

“Go play with your brothers outside. I will call you when breakfast is ready okay?...Winter, Mofenyi take your toys.”

Her sons ran gathered their toys and ran outside. She took a deep breath before putting everything down then approaching her man in the living room.

“How’s studying going?”

Noel glanced at her with a smile “Well. You done with breakfast yet?”

She nodded “Go to the kitchen and get started. I want to have a chat with this pretty girl...you will be having breakfast with us right?”

She nodded and Noel stood up walking to the kitchen. Char sat beside the girl “You are a really pretty girl. Very well spoken and smart which is why I didn’t hesitate when your mother begged me to talk to my husband to tutor you because you are shy at school and really needed help but I can’t stand little girls who lust on married men.”

Her little smile fell and she opened her mouth and closed it. Charlotte shook her head “Take my advice and date your own peers because we see young girls like you committing suicide because the men they gave their everything to chose their wives.”

“I don’t want your husband. I’m not like that.”

“Good because I don’t smile around with kids. I would bury you in my backyard.”

She stood up and headed to the kitchen. The girl bit her lip as her heart pounded and fear paralyzed her. She gathered her things and shoved them in her school bag.

“I’m actually going home. Thanks for your help

sir...I actually understand a lot better.”

She rushed to the door and Char stared at her tattoo of a butterfly in her inner thigh exposed by her mini skirt. After the door closed she turned to Noel.

“I’m sorry babe. I shouldn’t have agreed.”

Noel shook his head “you didn’t know. She’s too young to be behaving like that. I was kind of scared that she would do something and twist the story and get me to jail. Thanks for helping out.”

He leaned in to kiss her then Char called the kids in. “Tony wants to partner with me.”

“At the restaurant?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s a great idea. He’s your best friend and you trust him and at least he will lessen the work load.”

She nodded “It’s time I focus on my hubby and my boys.”

He smiled “How about we try for a girl?”

She sighed exasperated “The boys are still young Noel.”

“Sorry babe I was joking.”

She snorted “You never joke when it comes to kids. You’re always ready to fvck me and get me pregnant.”

He glanced at the door seeing as the kids walked in “My pull out game is weak you know that babe. I love you too though.”

Later that day Linda removed her gloves and sighed sitting on the chair as she talked on the phone that was on loudspeaker.

“You’re exaggerating Jamie. I always spoil Rain but Jane never complains. Please stop competing with Lawrence.”

“I’m not. I’m still paying the money.”

“Suit yourself. Take aways tonight? I’m too tired and I don’t feel like home cooked meal today.”

“Yeah get us pizza and nuggets for kids.”

“Alright. See you later.”

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THE END♡

