

AFRICAN BLOOD EPISODE 11

Written by

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1 EXT. FOREST - DAY

Queen Nandi stands beside a massive tree shooting targets with a bow and arrow. She is an impeccable shot - bullseye every time. After each shot she glances out at a distance, afar, expectantly. She grinds her jaws, shaking her head, annoyed.

Just as she takes her next shot, a shabbily dressed young man approaches her from behind. Before he even has a chance to speak, Nandi has his back against the tree, with her arrow to his throat.

NANDI

Who the hell are you? What do you want, peasant?

YOUNG MESSENGER

(trembles, tripping over his words)

Sorry honourable Queen, please don't hurt me. I'm Zembe, sent by his highness King Ngcuka of the Okuhle nation. He's asked me to relay a message to you.

NANDI

(eyes the boy wearily)

Spit it out.

YOUNG MESSENGER

The King says ... the king advises ... that your alliance with the Okuhle Nation is no longer favorable at this time. Perhaps ... perhaps my Queen, you should both consider its termination, just for now. He wishes you and your people all the best.

Fuming, Nandi gives the boy a small cut in his shoulder as she steps back from him.

The boy squeals, pressing his wound.

YOUNG MESSENGER

I'm just the messenger, your highness.
I'm sorry.

NANDI

No longer favourable, huh? Give Ngcuka a message for me. Tell him that I don't forget. I don't forgive, and I don't miss my target. Tell him that no one crosses me and gets away with it. Do you understand me?

YOUNG MESSENGER

Yes Madam. Yes your highness, I do.

NANDI

Repeat it, peasant.

YOUNG MESSENGER

I'm to tell his highness that the Queen says nobody crosses her and gets away with it. She won't forgive or forget.

NANDI

(with emphasis)

Thank you for sparing my life, your majesty.

YOUNG MESSENGER

Yes, thank you for sparing my life,
your majesty. I thank you kindly,
Queen. And I'm sorry for whatever's
going on.

NANDI

Go.

The boy sprints away, as fast as he can, without looking back.
As Queen Nandi takes one more shot, aiming and pulling back,
she breaks the bow string.

TITLE SEQUENCE

2 INT. OKUHLE ROYAL PRISON CELL - DAY

A dishevelled Musa stands behind prison bars, chatting to his
sisters. They are all huddled in front of their brother,
hurting. They're all eager to have their turn to speak.

ZINKANYEZI

Don't worry brother. We'll find a way
to get you out. We know you didn't do
it.

KHAZIMULA

I'll speak to Maphikela and see what he
can do ...

Three royal guards storm inside the prison cell, grumbling at the sisters.

ROYAL GUARD

Please leave. You can't speak to the inmate.

The sisters are baffled, groining about the guards' insolence.

ROYAL GUARD (CONTI'D)

It's not allowed. You have to go, now.

KHAZIMULA

(to the main guard)

I'll have you whipped, commoner. By who's authority are you ...

NGCUKA

(o/s)

By mine. The supreme King of the Okuhle nation.

Ngcuka appears from the shadows, chewing grapes, with more guards tailing him. He's dressed in fur skins and medallions, revelling in his role.

ZIMBALIKAYISE

I think you mean the place holder of the king, our father. And just for a short while.

NGCUKA

I should have you arrested for your cheek, niece. Anyways however you phrase it, I am the sovereign ruler of the land.

KHAZIMULA

Please then, your highness. We just want to see our brother for a little while. Is that okay, uncle?

NGCUKA

(smug)

I'm afraid I can't allow it. Musa committed treason, you see. Treasonous murderers don't get visitors. Not in this kingdom. Not on my watch.

MUSA

I'm innocent! Let them stay just a little while longer, please, your worship. I beg you.

NGCUKA

You shut up, boy. I'm not in the habit of negotiating with murderers.

Ngcuka motions for the guards to whisk the girls away. He's proud of himself, still munching red grapes, smirking.

The sisters protest defiantly. They don't want to be touched as they are gradually led out.

Mandisa has just stepped out of the bath. She has only her night gown on, pampering her face with lotion opposite a steel plate as a mirror.

Draped in King's flashy garments, Ngcuka enters Mandisa's chamber.

NGCUKA

(sniffs animatedly)

Oh how I'd missed that smell. Sweet beautiful odour. Reminds me of ... well us, all those years ago. I'm sure you sometimes think about it too?

MANDISA

Cute. I'm tired Ngcuka. What do you want?

NGCUKA

What I've always wanted, my love ... you. You know that.

He stands right behind Mandisa, looking at her through her blurry mirror.

MANDISA

Maybe you should go back to your chamber, stand-in King. We don't want rumours spreading.

He massages her shoulders seductively. Mandisa rolls her eyes, deeply annoyed, but lets him.

NGCUKA

Now I don't think I'm being unfair when I say the Queen owes me. Am I? I was banished out in the wilderness for years, for a crime I was innocent of. I took the wrap for you, darling. Did I not cover for you?

Mandisa shrugs, bored.

NGCUKA (CONTI'D)

We were in love, but you chose my brother because of the crown. You did what you had to do, I guess. I forgive you, darling. But I'm king now. So I guess we can rekindle our flame. You can make it up me.

MANDISA

I don't know why you're dredging up ancient history. Old forgotten buried-away history. That was then. And if I owed you anything, I've definitely made it up to you, King! Goodnight King.

NGCUKA

Then for old time sakes, come here.

He tries to kiss her forcefully, rubbing his lips on her neck and mouth.

Mandisa slaps him away and stands. She isn't scared of him as they face off.

MANDISA

First of all, you're just the stand-in interim king. A mere commoner, actually. A nothing, from the wilderness. Nothing about you says you have royal blood beating through your veins. My son Thando is the real king. He'll soon be inaugurated. Don't you forget it. Enjoy your short stint on the throne because we're gonna need that crown back soon. Then you can go back to whatever dungeon you crawled out from. Do you understand me, little King?

NGCUKA

I'm getting tired of people telling me what kind of King I am. Regardless of the circumstance, I'm still the supreme leader of this nation, and you will respect me. I'm your leader. That fact remains.

He begins to walk off.

NGCUKA (conti'd)

My patience is wearing thin, my Queen. Be careful.

He leaves.

Mandisa remains standing. She rolls a fist, fuming.

4 INT. OFEZELA CAVES/ROYAL COMPARTMENT - EVENING

A frustrated Nandi paces up and down. Phikiwe has an axe in her hand, looking heated.

PHIKIWE

Just the fact that he sent a dirty peasant boy to deliver the message speaks volumes. Bloody snake!

NANDI

He couldn't even meet with me face to face, after all I've done for him. Says our relationship is no longer favourable. He wishes me and the Ofezela well. Imagine ...

PHIKIWE

(sickened)

Dirty Ngcuka. A hobo! How sweet it is to lead the Okuhle. But you're also to blame, Ma.

NANDI

Excuse me?

PHIKIWE

I told you not to trust an Okuhle. In fact you taught me that. And then you go against your own teachings. I don't know, maybe you're getting old or something.

NANDI

Watch it! You're getting a bit too emotional, my girl. Sounds like you're

implying that you can do a better job than me.

PHIKIWE

Maybe. All my life you've taught me about how twisted those people are. They're reptiles. Their king wiped our people out unfairly by using the sacred drum, but then you still get in bed with them?

Nandi marches up to Phikiwe and snatches the axe from her.

NANDI

You're not about to lecture me on the Okuhle. Do you hear me, Phikiwe? I'm your mom, yes, but I'm also the Queen of this nation. You tread carefully when you speak to me, young girl. You walk on eggshells when you speak to me about how to deal with our enemies. Got it?

They stare daggers in each other's eyes.

5 INT. OKUHLE COUNCIL CHAMBER - AFTERNOON

The council members are all seated in an oval shape. Ngcuka is at the head with his chest out and chin up, proud as ever. The air is grimly tense. There's a fire burning by the head of the table, where Ngcuka sits.

XHANTILEKHAYA

This will not be a long meeting, your excellencies. It is merely to map out our way forward. Hopefully his highness will agree with our proposal.

Ngcuka nods as Xhantilekhaya takes a seat.

MKHONTO

Your excellencies, we have been dealt a rough couple of days. We've had to adjust to some tough circumstances, but we've done well. We've followed protocol. The king is buried and we've captured his murderer. The next step is to inaugurate the rightful King, King Khombindlela's heir, Thando. It is not right that we haven't yet set a date.

The council members agree.

Ngcuka frowns, staring coldly at Mkhonto.

MKHONTO

(to Ngcuka)

Your highness. We were thinking of perhaps inaugurating Thando within seven moons from today. It isn't right for a nation to be led by ibamba for too long, I'm sure you'll agree. It makes us seem unstable and indecisive.

Mkhonto takes a seat.

With a plastic smile on his face, Ngcuka stands.

NGCUKA

Thank you gentlemen. I hear and respect your views. I couldn't agree more. A nation shouldn't be with its leader.

The council members nod in contentment. Some relax and sit back.

NGCUKA (CONTI'D)

However, we have a few hurdles to jump through, first. Thando must find himself a wife, before he's inaugurated. This is critical, gentlemen. He isn't ibamba, he'll be thee King. Secondly, the people are still mourning for King Khombindlela, my brother. They need some time to get over it, to adjust. They shouldn't be rushed. So I've set the mourning period to a year. I trust Thando will have met a fine dignified girl within that period.

The council grumbles in disbelief.

MATHAMAHLE

A year? Pardon me your highness. No, no we can't allow such. How did you even get to that duration? A nation can't sit without an actual King for that long.

NGCUKA

What do you mean without an actual King. Then what am I?

NTSIMBIKAYIGOBI

With all due respect, you're ibamba, Sir. We need someone ...

NGCUKA

(interrupts)

You need someone who will take charge and instill executive orders. That's what I'm here for, gentlemen. I'm a great leader, as some of you have said. I will lead this nation back to prosperity. That's what I've signed an oath to do. I'm here to look after the welfare of this beautiful nation. It's my mandate by blood.

They shake their heads, grumbling and murmuring under their tongues.

MAPHIKELA

An entire year, your highness? I don't know.

NGCUKA

Yes, only a year.

FIRST AD BREAK

6 EXT. OKUHLE MARKET PLACE - AFTERNOON

Forty wild men, dirty and weathered enter the city. They are all accompanied by pet animals - hyenas, wild dogs, snakes, owls, baboons and more. They're rowdy, harassing the citizens.

NGCUKA'S VOICE (O/S) (V/O)

You need someone who will take charge and instill executive orders. That's what I'm here for, gentlemen. I will lead this nation back to prosperity.

A baby screams and runs to its mother, seeing a man carrying an albino python coiled around his neck. Grown men flee for their lives, scared of hyenas. There are snakes everywhere, big and small, slithering inside food baskets and clothing stalls.

NGCUKA'S VOICE (O/S) (V/O)

That's what I've signed an oath to do.
I'm here to look after the welfare of
this beautiful nation. It's my mandate
by blood.

Spiders and rats infest the stalls in the market while monkeys steal. The filthy people laugh merrily, tickled by all the frightened Okuhle citizens.

MAPHIKELA'S VOICE (O/S) (V/O)

An entire year, your highness? I
don't know.

Okuhle store owners run away, being bitten by large spiders.

MKHONTO'S VOICE (V/O)

It isn't right for a nation to be
led by ibamba for too long. It
makes us seem unstable.

There chaos and pandemonium in the city. Rats eat the food supplies sold in the streets. The dirty men and women loot freely, without any pushback.

NGCUKA VOICE (V/O)

I'm a great leader. I'm here to look after the welfare of this beautiful nation.

FADE TO:

7 INT. OKUHLE ROYAL COURT - MIDNIGHT

The royal council members meet up secretly, whispering in the shadows of night. They all stand, looking anxious about their gathering.

MATHAMAHLE

He hasn't changed one bit. His true colours are showing now. He's the exact same Ngcuka we knew and got rid off, twenty years ago. A whole year! He wants to sit on the throne for another full year, when Thando is ready right now. Imagine.

MAPHIKELA

In all fairness, Thando hasn't yet found a wife...

MATHAMAHLE

(to Maphikela)

A matter which can be solved in a week or two. Simply. We ask Mandisa to speed up the process, find a good girl for the boy, in a week or so they wed. Done.

XHANTILEKHAYA

I agree with honourable Mathamahle. A year is just not on. No gentlemen. Plus he's bringing in he's filthy savages

from the wild to harass our people.
It's disgraceful. We can't allow it.

MKHONTO

Allow it? ALLOW IT? Gentlemen this is
ibamba you're talking about. He stands
in for the King, regardless of the
condition. He's still the sovereign
ruler of Okuhle, for now.

MAPHIKELA

(interrupts)

Whom you voted in. What did you think
would happen?

NTSIMBIKAYIGOBI

Okay yes, but let's bring solutions to
the fore. What do we do now? We all
agree that a year is way too long?

They stare blankly at each other, worried, lost.

8 INT. OKUHLE ROYAL COURT / THANDO'S CHAMBER - MORNING

An annoyed Mandisa opens Thando's bedroom window blinds,
jolting him awake by the bright sunlight.

THANDO

(moans)

No man. What are doing? Close that.

MANDISA

First lesson, a King wakes up earlier than everyone else. Why are you even still sleeping here?

THANDO

(sarcastic)

Uhh ... because it's my chamber and I've been sleeping here for years. Could you close the curtains please?

MANDISA

No! You need to start acting like a King, boy. D'you hear me? You need to start filling your father's shoes. We need to see you as commander and chief. You'll move your things to the King's quarters, tonight.

THANDO

Why? I like it here. I'm comfortable here.

MANDISA

(interrupts)

That's lesson two. Being King often means you'll have to make decisions you aren't comfortable with. Tough choices that aren't liked by the people. It's a mark of strength. You need to show Ngcuka who's really the boss, boy. Relocate to the chambers, tonight.

THANDO

I really don't like the King's chambers, mother. This is my space.

MANDISA

Spoken like a commoner's child.

Thando sits up, angered.

THANDO

Mother, I don't know why the hell you're stressing me about this so early in the morning. Aren't we keeping him as ibamba for a year? Isn't that settled?

MANDISA

The fact that this one year scam doesn't bother you is a problem on its own.

(stepping closer to Thando, sitting beside him, almost seductively)

You're the rightful King to be sworn in. We have a snake among us, trying to hold on to power. Your power. Fix it! That's how it works. You don't stay here in these chambers hoping it'll iron itself out. You address the problem, and fix it.

THANDO

Then why the hell did you even vote him in? Surely you suspected he'd be a problem. You've know the man for years.

Mandisa stands to leave.

MANDISA

You know why voted him in, stop acting stupid. We have a problem, Thando. Fix it.

9 EXT. OKUHLE MARKET AREA - MORNING

Mkhonto and Maphikela walk side by side, sickened by the filth all around them. They're annoyed by the dirty people with wild animals in their community.

Mkhonto sees a mischief of rats eating an old woman's bread loaves. He tries to swat them away.

MKHONTO

STOP IT. GET AWAY DAMNIT! Unbelievable.

MAPHIKELA

This is horrific. We need to get these people out of here.

MKHONTO

Immediately.

BEAT.

MAPHIKELA

So what do we do about Nyasha's claims?

MKHONTO

Nothing. I told you ... nothing. Why would we take the word of some woman over the King? It's crazy. If she really believed that Thando is the second born, she should've come sooner and gone with the news to the King,

instead of creeping around telling his council members. Smells fishy.

MAPHIKELA

Firstly, the woman had nothing to gain by lying. Second, she said she did tell the King.

Mkhonto stops dead in his tracks, focused on Maphikela now.

MKHONTO

Are you even listening to yourself?
You're calling our fallen King a liar,
and that I must take the word of
Mandisa's maid servant over his? What's
gotten into you?

MAPHIKELA

You won't even entertain the possibility that she may be right? That Thando might be the second born? Which means if he takes the throne and leads Okuhle, he'll plunge it to destruction, as per the prophecy. Which also means that he killed King Khombindlela, not Musa.

Mkhonto sees a filthy hobo trying to steal an old woman's buckets.

MKHONTO

King Khombindlela said that the woman told her nothing. That's it! We have a statement... we have Musa in custody ... what's with the conspiracy theories

when we have our ..? Sorry, I've had it
with these animals ...

Mkhonto sprints away, running after the filthy thief who'd
just nicked scarfs from defenseless old woman.

10 EXT. OKUHLE MARKET AREA - DAY

Izwelonke flirts with a young man at a secluded corner, by the
furniture stalls. They're behind a storage hut, giggling and
rubbing hands.

YOUNG MAN

You know I like your lips, why you're
acting shocked?

IZWELONKE

How do I know that? You never told me
before.

YOUNG MAN

I didn't? I did ... I think.

IZWELONKE

Liar, you didn't. Well what else do you
like about me?

YOUNG MAN

(giggles)

Besides that you're royalty but you're
humble ... I think you have sexy legs.
Seriously. Maybe someday I'll get to
see them, without your dress on.

IZWELONKE

What, I thought you'd say my hair or my
clothes. You're a naughty little thing

aren't you? I have to think about that
one ...

An upset Zinkanyezi gate crashes their dreamy moment. She
shakes her head, motioning for the boy to get the hell
away.

YOUNG MAN

(scampers away)

Sorry Sisi. Bye Izwe.

Izwelonke rolls her eyes, expectantly.

ZINKANYEZI

Have you lost your mind, Izwelonke? Are
you stupid?

IZWELONKE

No I'm not. What are you talking about?

ZINKANYEZI

(looks around, whispers)

We're wrecking our brains trying to
figure out how to help Musa. You're out
her fraternizing with boys, flirting,
acting like a whore. What's your
problem?

IZWELONKE

My problem is all the crap that's
happening, Sisi. Let's not act like
everything's okay. Our dad's gone. Our

brother is in prison, for life, so he's gone too. Our twisted reptilian uncle sits on the throne. Thando is about to take over. We're women, my dear sister. I don't have to explain to you what that means. We have no voice here, in Okuhle. I'm doing what I must.

ZINKANYEZI

Which means what exactly?

IZWELONKE

Which means we'd better find men that can take care of us, or we're in crap.

ZINKANYEZI

You know, for a smart girl, you say some of the stupidest things sometimes. Really senseless.

IZWELONKE

I'm being realistic. Unlike some people.

ZINKANYEZI

Tying yourself these fools, that'll betray you later, is your smart plan?

IZWELONKE

Okay, so what do you suggest, oh wise one that knows everything?

Zinkanyezi pulls her firmly by the arm.

ZINKANYEZI

That you use the thing between your ears, and not the other thing. We're going home.

SECOND AD BREAK

11 INT. OKUHLE ROYAL HOLDING CELL - DAY

Musa stands to his feet, shocked that Ngcuka has come to see him.

The King orders the guards out. He needs privacy with the inmate.

NGCUKA

(smiles wide)

Y'know, I recently read on a scroll, that an inmate is lower than a peasant. I immediately felt bad for you.

MUSA

You again, what an unpleasant surprise.

Ngcuka evaluates Musa's tiny cell.

NGCUKA

I do hope they're treating you okay. You've got blankets and you're eating, right?

MUSA

I am eating, though I'm sure our dishes are little different. What do you want?

NGCUKA

Such hostility nephew. Thought you'd be happy to see Uncle Ngcuka. The King has come to see you, even though you're a cold-blooded murderer.

MUSA

How would you know what I am, when you didn't hear my side of the story? I've been wrongly accused and you know it.

NGCUKA

I feel your pain, son. I know what it's like to be falsely accused and banished. I suffered two decades of this.

MUSA

So you know I'm innocent!

NGCUKA

Respectfully, guilt and innocence are what the King says it is. It's what I say it is.

The words stun Musa. He stares at Ngcuka, shocked.

12 EXT. OFEZELA CAVES/QUEEN NANDI'S BOOTH - AFTERNOON

Bhekile stands at ease in front of his Queen Nandi. She paces up and down, irritated. Scorpions crawl all around them in the wet caves.

NANDI

The scorpion is small, but it's one of the most intelligent and dangerous species. It's often undermined because of its size, yet it's one of the oldest known animals known to man. It doesn't get extinct. It thrives in any environment.

Bhekile nods in respectful agreement. His facial expression shows that he's not sure where all of this is going. He listens.

NANDI (CONTI'D)

I'm sick of those Okuhle dogs looking down on us because we're a small nation. It's time we taught them a lesson, what we're made of. They will feel our sting. General Bhekile, I need you to ready the troops. We're attacking Okuhle, tonight.

BHEKILE

Yes certainly my Queen. Consider it done.

Bhekile marches out.

Queen Nandi remains, pondering. Scorpions crawl all around her cave. She observes them.

13 INT. OKUHLE COURTS/ROYAL LOUNGE - EVENING

Thando is enjoying supper. Khazimula has joined him. They sit opposite each other on a decorated oak wooden table.

KHAZIMULA

You were always the feisty one. I remember when I taught you two how to shoot a sling.

THANDO

(chuckles)

Don't lie, I never learnt the sling from a girl.

KHAZIMULA

Yup, you did. The good old days, when we hadn't a worry in the world.

THANDO

True.

Khazimula sits up, turning serious now.

THANDO

Or oh ... here it comes. Hope I'm not in trouble.

KHAZIMULA

Not at all. I came to chat about Musa.

Thando drops his spoon, fully attentive to Khazimula now.

THANDO

Uh huh?

KHAZIMULA

I've come to ask you to ask uncle
Ngcuka to pardon him. Please.

THANDO

Eish, I don't know Khazi. That's
tricky.

KHAZIMULA

Please. We can only imagine how
depressed he must be in that cell.
Please Thando. He's the son of a King.
Even if you send him away to live his
life elsewhere. Please, speak to uncle.

Thando thinks for a beat.

THANDO

You know he couldn't come back as a
Prince, right? Even if Uncle Ngcuka
agreed? He'd be a mere commoner.

KHAZIMULA

It's fine. It's better than prison.

THANDO

Sure. I'll see what I can do.

KHAZIMULA

(smiles wide)

Thanks so much, brother. I knew you wouldn't let Musa rot in prison for something he didn't do.

THANDO

Wait ... what?

KHAZIMULA

I'm just saying. We both know he isn't guilty. You wouldn't let him suffer unfairly. And for that I thank you, really.

THANDO

And so who is guilty ... me? Are you accusing me of something?

Khazimula looks away.

KHAZIMULA

I'm not here to point fingers at anyone...

THANDO

Oh, I see what this is. You and your stupid little sisters have come up with some imaginary theory, that I did it. You're probably telling everyone that, huh? Anything to shift blame from the real culprit.

KHAZIMULA

I didn't say you did anything. But if you did, I wouldn't breathe a word of it. You're my half-brother.

THANDO

Listen carefully, sister. Musa murdered our father, in cold blood. He committed treason and he will pay for his sins for the rest of his life, to the full extent of the law. My law! I'll be inaugurated very soon, Khazi, and don't you forget it. Now get out of my face. You make me sick.

Khazimula stands. She gives him a long threatening look before she walks off.

Thando remains, thoughtful.

THIRD AD BREAK

14 EXT. OKUHLE FARM/OKUHLE GATES - DAY

Jika and Phikiwe approach the Okuhle city gates through the Okuhle farms. They are dressed like typical Okuhle masses, with farmers' hats on, disguised. As props, they have rakes, maize and corn in their pockets. Just a few feet away are the Okuhle farm workers, slaving away. Jika is in a panic.

PHIKIWE

(whispers)

You okay? You're sweating.

JIKA

I'm fine Princess. Just never been this far from home. And we're here. Okuhle.

PHIKIWE

There's nothing to be scared of.

JIKA

I'm not scared for me.

PHIKIWE

What d'you mean?

JIKA

I'm scared for you. I couldn't live with myself if anything happened to you, Phikiwe.

PHIKIWE

Nothing's gonna happen. We're gonna blend right in with these Okuhle dogs. Just look tired and disheveled. Follow behind me. Pick things up ... look busy.

JIKA

Wait. Phikiwe.

Phikiwe walks straight into the farms, peeling and shucking sweet corn. A nerve wrecked Jika follows suit. They walk straight through the farms and into the Okuhle main gates, carrying a basket of corn cobs.

Phikiwe glances around with her head low. She's shocked.

PHIKIWE

(shakes his head)

These are Ngcuka's people. Look at these animals.

Both Jika and Phikiwe are sickened by them. Most are drunk, harassing innocent citizens with their wild pets.

15 INT. OKUHLE ROYAL CELL - NIGHT

Maphikela has snuck in the prison cell to visit Musa. He is dressed darkly with a bayonet in his waist. He stands within inches of the inmate, on the other side of the bars.

MAPHIKELA

Don't speak ill of the dead, my boy.

MUSA

(emotional)

No I will. If dad had been a real man, the king everyone thinks he was, he would've killed Thando at birth, like he was supposed to. All of this is his fault. It isn't Thando's fault, because he's meant to be dead. I curse Khombindela's grave.

MAPHIKELA

Okay that's enough.

MUSA

Instead he chose to bind me by blood
with my murderous half-brother. What a
coward. This is for you, Thando.

Musa slaps himself painfully. He slaps himself again, even
harder.

MAPHIKELA

Trust in the Gods, my boy. They'll
vindicate you.

MUSA

The Gods. Really?

A frantic Musa pulls Maphikela's sword out of his waist and
stands back. He starts cutting himself.

Maphikela tries to stop him by calling the guard to open his
cell up.

MUSA (CONTI'D)

You do that I swear by the Gods I'll
kill myself, which means Thando dies.
I'm sure you don't wanna leave Okuhle
in Ngcuka's hands. Goodnight uncle. Go.
Thanks for the visit. Bye.

MAPHIKELA

Don't do anything stupid now ...

MUSA

Sure. Bye.

Maphikela begrudgingly leaves.

16 EXT. OKUHLE ROYAL COURT/THANDO'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Thando yells out in pain while in bed. He looks at his inner thigh and sees he is bleeding and bruised. He's stunned, hurting. He screeches in agony.

His personal guard runs in from outside.

GUARD

Is everything alright Prince?

THANDO

Stand down, it's fine. I'm good. Wait outside. You'll accompany me to the cells just now. Go.

The guard leaves.

An aching Thando stands and limps towards his wardrobe to dress up.

17 INT. ROYAL CELL - NIGHT

Thando bursts into Musa's cell, he's agonizing in pain.

THANDO

Stop it. Stop that right now. That's an order.

Musa cuts the side of his hip. Thando screams.

MUSA

I don't do well with orders, King.

THANDO

Okay sorry, please. Please stop.

MUSA

Fine. So answer me this, why did you do it, huh?

THANDO

(panting uncomfortably)

Do what?

MUSA

C'mon, it's just you and me, brother. All the cards on the table. We both know you're the second born. You killed our father. Why d'you do it, Thando?

THANDO

How dare you accuse your King of such. I should have you whipped.

MUSA

Y'know, there's an awful lot of you kings these days. You, our uncle, and neither of you are the rightful heirs. You're the rot of the Okuhle nation. A plague that's poisoning us from inside.

THANDO

You watch it inmate. That kind of talk borders on treason, again. I could have you beheaded.

MUSA

(speaks slowly, with emphasis)

You killed our father. You framed me for it. You cheated your way to the throne, hiding behind that sick uncle of yours. But you won't sit there for long, murderer. I am not your father Khombindlela. I will do what he failed to. I will kill you, Thando.

THANDO

From behind this cell? And if you kill me, you die as well, idiot. I've had just about enough of this circus.

Thando begins to walk off.

MUSA

Your day will come. Mark my words. YOU HEAR ME?

FOURTH AD BREAK

18 EXT. OKUHLE COURT - NIGHT

An anxious looking Phikiwe and Jika have made it to the royal court. They walk around with their heads low, surveying the place curiously. Jika looks ready to pee himself.

PHIKIWE
(whispers)

Where do you think the King's chambers are?

As Jika is about to respond when a royal guard spots them.

ROYAL GUARD

Hey, HEY! WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE? COME HERE!

Jika and Phikiwe take off running through the courts.

19 INT. OKUHLE ROYAL COURT - DAY

Phikiwe and Jika run for their lives. They are pursued by a determined royal guard. Phikiwe pulls Jika into a small side

walkway, but it's a dead end. There is nowhere for them to go. Phikiwe turns to face their pursuer. She pulls two axes out from her back.

PHIKIWE
(pants for breath)
Let's engage these Okuhle dogs.

A nervous Jika pulls a dagger out. Phikiwe looks around. There's no escape route. They stand ready for battle. They hear the guard's footsteps nearing.

JIKA
(scared and emotional)
Phikiwe, if I die today, I just want you to know that I lo...

PHIKIWE
(interrupts)
Stop whimpering man, stand your ground. No one's dying today. At least not us.

Just as Phikiwe finishes her sentence, the ground they are standing on opens up and swallows them, then closes up above their heads. Okuhle Royal guards come from around the corner, searching, but inexplicably the intruders gone. They baffled, still searching.

20 INT. OFEZELA TUNNELS - DAY

It's dirty, dark and warm. Phikiwe and Jika are puzzled as they look around, scared. Phikiwe rolls a fist, examining the tunnel with her other hand.

PHIKIWE

What the hell is going on? Where are we?

JIKA

Don't know Princess. Seems like a trap
or a hole leading somewhere ...

PHIKIWE

It's a trap. These Okuhle dogs are
trying to ...

With a torch in hand, Bhekile emerges from inside the tunnels.
He has his finger on his mouth, gesturing for them to keep
quiet.

JIKA

GENERAL!

BHEKILE

Keep it down, yes it's me.

Phikiwe is floored. She whispers.

PHIKIWE

What's happening? Are these ours? Are
these our tunnels?

BHEKILE

Yes.

Phikiwe is speechless, yet impressed as she glances around.

PHIKIWE

So this is what we've been digging all
these years. Towards Okuhle. Wow!

BHEKILE

Exactly. Now you know. Jika, I need you to take the Princess back home.

PHIKWE

But why didn't you tell me, General?

Nandi appears from deep inside the tunnel. She's dressed in battle gear, carrying a scroll with rough drawings resembling a blueprint map. She is shadowed by a handful of Ofezela troops behind her, looking amped.

NANDI

We started digging these before you were born, my dear. Secondly, no one can force the truth out of you if you genuinely don't know. Now go on back home.

PHIKIWE

No, I want to stay and fight.

NANDI

You've done quite enough Phikiwe. Go back home. That's an order.

Jika gently pulls Phikiwe by the hand as they start to walk off. She sulks.

NANDI (CONTI'd)

(to Bhekile)

General, are we ready?

BHEKILE

Affirmative, my Queen. Let's go.

21 INT. OFEZELA TUNNELS/OKUHLE ROYAL COURTS - DAY

Led by General Bhekile, the Ofezela crawl under and come out of their tunnels, into the Okuhle royal courts. The warriors move around the Queen, neutralizing any threat they come across. They manoeuvre on forward, tip toeing with stealth. Nandi throws silent darts at two Okuhle guards, killing them instantly. They move cunningly and with skill, staying out of sight, hiding between pillars and in shadows. They camouflage seamlessly within the Okuhle gardens and halls.

22 INT. OKUHLE ROYAL COURTS/MANDISA'S CHAMBERS - DAY

A distraught and sweaty Thando enters his mother's chambers, ordering the servants to leave them. He limps as he jumps on his mother's bed.

MANDISA

(irritated)

And then?

THANDO

Look at my leg. That idiot Musa managed to get a dagger and start stabbing himself.

Mandisa observes his wound.

MANDISA

Where the hell did he find a knife?

THANDO

I don't know, but that's not even the bad news. Mvelenhle's whores are causing trouble. They know. Khazimula approached me, saying she knows for a fact that Musa didn't kill our father,

and she'll keep my secret, and I'm the second born. All sorts of accusations. The nerve of that old bitch. They've gotta go, mother.

MANDISA

Damnit Thando, do I have to sort out everything around here? Mommy please help, mommy please sort it out, mommy I'm scared. I've got my own shit to deal with.

THANDO

Sure, whatever, can you help me please?

MANDISA

I can. Rewind a bit first. We need to start with Musa. That's more pressing.

THANDO

Don't worry about him. I went to go see him. We've straightened it out ... well sort of. We spoke, but he's just like his whore sisters, in every way. I need them to all disappear, somehow. I don't know how, but ...

Thando observes his mother's stunning outfit - a regal silky gown.

MANDISA

I may have a plan for the sisters. All of them.

THANDO

And where're you going, all dressed up?

MANDISA

Oh nowhere special. I'm just gonna give Ngcuka the one thing he wants, so I can secure the throne for you, as you seem so intent on letting it slip away. See how mommy is always rescuing her little boy?

Mandisa takes a vile of poison and hides it between her breasts.

MANDISA (CONTI'D)

Before you ask, it's death dew. Just a drop of it is enough. Then it's goodnight, forever.

Mandisa uses a shiny plate as a mirror, examining her outfit.

THANDO

What are you planning to do with it, mother?

MANDISA

Nothing. How do I look? Attractive?

Thando marvels at his mom, fearfully.

23 INT. NGCUKA'S CHAMBERS

Nandi quietly enters Ngcuka's chambers. Ngcuka is facing the opposite direction, pouring himself a glass of red wine.

A smug Ngcuka hears the footsteps, but doesn't look back.

NGCUKA

So you decided to give in, darling. I knew you'd come to your senses ...

Ngcuka stops mid-sentence and drops his glass when he sees his visitor. He's shocked beyond belief.

NANDI

My honourable King. Your highness. I trust you're pleased to see me.

NGCUKA

Ahh ... yes ... yes of course my Queen. I've been meaning to contact you. I was about to send a messenger to you tomorrow, to convey that I'd like us to continue our dealings.

Ngcuka observes Nandi's men behind her.

NANDI

But you did send a messenger. He told me the opposite of what you're saying now.

NGCUKA

My dear Queen, your royal highness, you must've been given the wrong information. I was making plans to give you Musa, the Prince, who's currently in custody for treason. Having him is as good as having Thando. Khombindlela tied them in by a blood bond...

Before Ngcuka can say anything else Nandi blows a poisonous dart in his neck. Ngcuka falters and then sits on his bed as his legs give out from beneath him.

Nandi circles around him, observing his final breaths.

NANDI

You shouldn't have turned your back on me, King. Now go and join your brother. Your nephews will soon follow behind you. Travel well.

Nandi pulls a spear off her back and drives it through his heart. She slots the weapon back in its casing and motions her men to lead as they all exit.

24 INT. OKUHLE ROYAL COURTS/NGCUKA'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Mandisa steps inside Ngcuka's chambers, looking around.

MANDISA

(giggles)

Hello... mighty ibamba, half-king, you have a visitor ...

Mandisa freezes. Her jaw drops to the floor. She's gobsmacked as she sees Ngcuka's dead body on the bed. She covers her mouth to keep from screaming.

THE END