



RETURNING HOME

Thembela Madliki

CHARACTERS:

THANDO: A young girl

MAMA: Thando's mother. Her name is Lusanda.

TA'MKHULU: Lusanda's father and Thando's grandfather

MA'KHULU: Lusanda's mother and Thando's grandmother

SCENE 1

It is early morning. Thando is in bed, covered by warm blankets and duvets; her mother sits at the edge of the bed watching her sleep.

MAMA: *(softly)* Thando, wake up.

Thando turns over to sleep on her other side.

THANDO: I'm tired, mama.

MAMA: I know my girl, but you're going to be late for school.

THANDO: I don't want to go.

MAMA: *(pulls the covers off)* Vuka, Thando, take a bath and get ready for school.

THANDO: *(sitting up on the bed with tears in her eyes)* You said we weren't going to move anymore but now we're here.

MAMA: We're going to be living with uMa'khulu noTa'mkhulu wakho. We won't be here for long.

THANDO: Promise?

MAMA: Yes ntombi yam.

THANDO: Did you tell Ta'mkhulu and Ma'khulu why we left Joburg?

MAMA: *(lowering her voice)* Sshhh Thando, they can't know right now.

THANDO: *(speaking softly)* What did you tell them about my dad?

MAMA: I told them he is working overseas.

THANDO: I don't want to lie to Ma'khulu and Ta'mkhulu.

MAMA: You must do it to protect them.

Ma'khulu walks into the room and hears Thando and her mother talking in low voices.

MA'KHULU: Protect ntoni ngoku?

MAMA: Nothing, Ma. We were just talking about Thando's first day at school.

THANDO: Molo Ma'khulu.

MA'KHULU: Are you excited for your new school, Thando?

THANDO: Haai, Ma'khulu.

MA'KHULU: Ah, don't worry you are going to make lots of friends there.

MAMA: That's what I told her.

Thando walks out of the room to go shower and get ready for school. Mama and Ma'khulu are left talking to each other.

MA'KHULU: I'm so happy that you are here.

MAMA: We missed you a lot.

MA'KHULU: Your father is so happy to see you. He is planning a celebration.

MAMA: Oh no.

MA'KHULU: We haven't seen you in a long time.

MAMA: Haai, mama it's just been two years.

MA'KHULU: That's a long time. Thando is even getting taller than you.

MAMA: *(laughs)* She gets her height from her dad.

MA'KHULU: Ubuya nini lowo?

MAMA: I told you. He is coming back next year.

MA'KHULU: That's a long time. I must call him to tell him you are safe with me.

MAMA: *(quickly)* No! Do not do that.

MA'KHULU: What's wrong?

MAMA: Nothing.

MA'KHULU: You look so scared. What's wrong with you?

MAMA: I am fine, Ma. I don't want him to worry about us. He must focus on his work.

Thando walks into the room with a towel wrapped around her body. She begins to dress while Ma'khulu and her mother talk.

MA'KHULU: That uniform looks good on you.

THANDO: But it's so ugly. In Joburg I went to a school where we could wear whatever we wanted. I wore jeans to school, Ma'khulu, but now I have to wear this boring skirt. Mxim.

MAMA: Don't be disrespectful wena. Your grandmother gave you a compliment. Say 'thank you' and go pack your bag.

MA'KHULU: You know back in my day, I went to a school with people who didn't even have jeans. Wena are lucky my girl. You are part of a generation that can wear a full school uniform and go get a FULL education.

THANDO: Ai but Ma'khulu, I'd rather not get a full education if it means I have to wear this ugly thing. *(She throws the school blazer onto the floor).*

Thando finishes getting dressed in her school uniform. Mama picks up her blazer and hands it to her. She puts it on, picks up her bag and heads towards the door. As she is about to walk out, Ta'mkhulu walks in with a packed lunch in his hands.

TA'MKHULU: You forgot your lunch.

Thando takes it from him, hurriedly.

THANDO: Yoh, thank you, Tam'khulu.

TA'MKHULU: You're in a hurry. I think that I should walk you to school so you don't get lost.

THANDO: I'll be fine Tam'khulu. uMama showed me the way izolo.

TA'MKHULU: Haai wethu, let me walk you.

MA'KHULU: Yes, let him walk you, he needs the exercise.

MAMA: He also needs to make sure she gets to school. I think she might try to skip school.

THANDO: *(with a naughty smile)* I would never do that.

MAMA: *(to Ma'khulu)* You see! She's getting too old now. *(to Ta'mkhulu)* Please make sure she gets to the gate, Tata. I would walk her myself but I have to go to the secretary job interview and it's in the opposite direction to her school.

MA'KHULU: *(to Mama, while looking at the time)* Yoh! You must get going or you're going to be late.

MAMA: You're right. Bye everyone, wish me luck.

Mama leaves and Ma'khulu follows her out.

THANDO: Goodbye, ma.

Ta'mkhulu and Thando are left alone in the room.

THANDO: You mustn't embarrass me, Tam'khulu.

TA'MKHULU: Me? Never. I am a cool cat. Look at me I'm still fresh *(showing off dance moves)*

THANDO: Yhu! Haai Ta'mkhulu, that's embarrassing.

They laugh, Thando continues to laugh but Ta'mkhulu turns to her with a more serious expression on his face.

TA'MKHULU: Thando, what is wrong with your mother?

THANDO: Nothing, uMama is fine.

TA'MKHULU: My child, please don't lie to me. Tell me what's wrong with your mother.

THANDO: I promised not to speak about it.

TA'MKHULU: Is she in trouble?

THANDO: *(looks at the time)* Ta'mkhulu, I have to run now or else I'll definitely be late for my first day at school.

TA'MKHULU: Tell me why you and your mother are back and then we can go.

THANDO: She wanted to see you. We never get a chance to see you and uMa'khulu.

TA'MKHULU: I am glad you are here but I feel like there is something that you are keeping from me.

THANDO: There's nothing, Ta'mkhulu.

TA'MKHULU: Your grandmother and I know there's something wrong.

THANDO: There's nothing wrong, Ta'mkhulu. There is no secret.

TA'MKHULU: I know there's a secret. I am afraid that it is too big for you and your mother to carry on your own.

THANDO: We are fine, we are really fine.

Thando walks out of the room. Ta'mkhulu follows her out.

TA'MKHULU: *(shouting after her)* Hee wena mntanadin! *[You naughty child!]* We will chat about this when you get home and I will find out the truth.

FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT!

Read the rest of this chattalogue on fundza.mobi!

On a computer? Go to live.fundza.mobi and search "Returning home"

On a cellphone? Read #DATAFREE on Moya Messenger!

1. Download Moya Messenger from Google Play
2. Go: Discover > Education > FunDza
3. Search in FunDza: "Returning home"

