

MILLICENT'S A MOM

Muvhango's newest mother, Millicent Makhado, talks babies, breasts, Beyoncé and being beautiful

BY CAMILLA RANKIN

Millicent Makhado – *Muvhango's* Agnes – loves being a mother to five-month-old Realeboga, but she knows it is not easy balancing work, motherhood and family. She shares it all with us.

Realeboga's birthday

Everyone thought that my baby would be here for Christmas, but she just didn't come. Eventually my doctor scheduled me for an induction. By this stage she was already two weeks late. I really wanted to have a natural birth even though I was really scared; at my baby shower the ladies had told me terrible stories about how painful birth is and it was. I was given the drip at 6am. I can't explain how painful labour was: I was screaming so much. I did not have any pain relief but thankfully I did have my brother's wife, Shumani, with me the whole time. At 5pm that evening, I was only 3cm dilated and the doctor recommended an emergency C-section. Realeboga (which means "thank you") was placed on my chest, skin-to-skin. She was beautiful and so tiny.

A mother's love

After the C-section I could not walk for a week – it was so painful. I was in hospital for three days but the nurses there were great. They taught me how to breastfeed – which was also incredibly painful at first – and how to walk again. Then, as per my culture, I went home to my mother's house. When I was pregnant I said I would only stay a couple of weeks with my mother as I thought I would get bored, but I stayed for four months! It was amazing. A mother really teaches you everything: how to care for the baby and how to care for yourself. My mother is so in love with Rea and

everyone says Rea looks just like her. Now I understand who my mom is in my life, now I understand that kind of love.

Back on set

I went back to work when Rea was six weeks old. I admit that I was very excited; I had really missed everyone at *Muvhango* and had been on maternity leave since August. It was also easier as I knew that Rea was being looked after really well by Shumani – my sister-in-law from Limpopo. At first they both came with me to the SABC so that I could breastfeed. I did manage to breastfeed for three months, but because we introduced formula when I went back to work, Rea started to like the bottle better. Now she is on formula all the time. I was quite sad as I had wanted to feed her for a year.

It is difficult to be a working mom. There are some days when I only see my baby in the evening. She only goes to sleep at about 9pm – we have no routines yet – so I get to spend some time with her then. It is also hard to get up and go to work when we are not getting much sleep. She is in a cot in my room at night – at first I said she would only sleep with me until three months, then at three months I said six months, so we will see, maybe when she is a year, or a year and a half. For now, it is much easier to have her right next to me when she wakes and wants a bottle.

And Agnes?

Right in the beginning of my pregnancy, Agnes started an affair with Dumi, so everyone thought that she would also fall

“Becoming a mother has made me love my own mother even more”

lose it. It is not a reality to look at celebs that are so thin straight after having a baby, like Beyoncé. I mean, she can buy her husband a plane, so who am I? I will lose the weight, when I lose it!

Growing and thriving

Realeboga is doing really well, she is sitting now and laughs a lot. Being a working mom I do miss seeing the first things, like the first time she sat by herself. Shumani told me when I got home, but instead of being sad I thought, "That is good, it means she's growing well." Motherhood really does come naturally: there is a mother's instinct.

Words of wisdom

Think twice – no, four times – before having a baby. Make sure that you really want a child before you have one. That is my advice to any young couple. Think about your life, your career, know what you want first. It is really expensive having a baby and you no longer come first in life. It is baby first, baby second and then you come third or even fourth. I am earning money and I really feel the expense but I shop at Pep, Ackermans and Checkers so that I can budget for schools and crèche later. The other advice I have is: don't let yourself go. Just because you have a baby does not mean you have to look old. So many women neglect themselves after having a baby. Take a shower – you don't need fancy products – and put on some make-up, even if it is just lip gloss. And wear heels – you will feel and look beautiful! ●

pregnant... but she didn't, she just took off with him to KZN. When we stopped filming in August for the year, I was about five or six months pregnant and had been carrying bags and holding files in front of my tummy to hide it. When we started filming again Rea had been born, so Agnes came back from KZN with Dumi for his book and then she told him she is not going back again with him. So that is how she stayed in Johannesburg. Agnes was a bit bigger of course, as Rea was only six weeks old by then, and many *Muvhango* fans made comments on Facebook about how much weight Agnes was carrying.

Weighty matters

It has been very important for me to get Agnes's body back and I have been working really hard at it – I'm nearly there. I put on 12kg with my pregnancy (from 48kg to 61kg) but now I am back to 50kg. I joined the SABC gym and they have given me a personal trainer. I changed my diet when I was pregnant and ate a lot more veggies, pasta and fish, but now I am back to eating my favourite food: pap. As my doctor says, it took nine months to pick up the weight, so I will take nine months to



Like mother, like daughter Cute as a button, Realeboga seems set to grow up to be as beautiful as her TV star mom