



Nalibali

It starts with a story...

Family matters

Young children learn to read and write easily when they know that reading and writing are useful and enjoyable activities. For this to happen, they need lots of experiences with stories and books. You can help them by:

Telling stories: Tell stories to stimulate children's imagination and develop their language. Listen to *their* stories too, and show your appreciation! Once children realise that stories are also found in books, they start wanting to read for themselves.

Sharing books: Just 10 minutes a day with a good storybook can make a big

difference. Good readers in class are often the ones who read with family and friends after school.

Be encouraging: Value early reading and writing attempts just like you valued your baby's first words! Young children are only just beginning to read and write and they need lots of support to develop their confidence. Listen to their pretend reading, and pretend to read what they have written. They need to behave like readers and writers to *become* readers and writers.

Write and read: Allow your child to see you go about your daily activities that involve reading and writing. Let them

watch you writing shopping lists and letters and reading timetables, letters and newspapers.

Use your home language: First stories should be in children's home languages. A strong foundation in a child's home language is the basis for all successful learning, because to learn well, we need to understand well. When children know their home language well, they can learn other languages (as well as reading and writing) more easily.

Getting books: Books are expensive to buy, so join a library – and use it! The librarians are there to help you.

For more information on reading to children as well as how to read to children of different ages, go to www.nalibali.org

Ukuze ufumane inkcazelo ebanzi malunga nokufundela abantwana, ndawonye nendlela yokufundela abantwana abaneminyaka yobudala eyahlukeneyo, yiya ku: www.nalibali.org

www.nalibali.org

Imibandela yosapho

Abantwana abancinane bafunda ukufunda nokubhala lula xa besazi ukuba ukufunda nokubhala kuluncedo kwaye kuyonwabisa. Ukuze oku kwenzekwe, badinga amava amaninzi wamabali neencwadi. Ungabanceda ngokwenza ezi zinto zilandelayo:

Babalisele amabali: Balisa amabali ukuze uphembelele iingcinga zabantwana kwaye uphuhlise iilwimi zabo. Wamamele nawabo amabali, kwaye ubonise ukuwathakazelela! Bathi bakuqonda abantwana ukuba amabali akwafumaneka nasezincwadini, baqale bafune ukuzifundela ngokwabo.

Fundani iincwadi nikunye: Imizuzwana nje eli-10 ngemini nifunda incwadi emnandi yamabali kungenza umahluko omkhulu. Abafundi abafunda kamnandi egumbini lokufunda badla ngokuba ngabo bafunda neentsapho nabahlobo emakhaya.

Bakhuthaze: Zixabise iinzame zokuqala zokufunda nokubhala kanye ngalaa ndlela wawuxabise ngayo amagama wokuqala kabhabha wakho! Abantwana abancinane kungona baqalayo ukufunda nokubhala kwaye badinga inkxaso eninzi ukuze bazuze ukuzithemba. Mamela xa

besenza ngathi bayafunda kwaye wenze ngathi ufunda oko bakubhalileyo. Kufuneka baziphathe njengabafundi nababhali ukuze *babe* ngabafundi nababhali.

Bhala kwaye ufunde: Umntwana wakho makakubone usenza imisebenzi yakho yemihla ngemihla ebandakanya ukufunda nokubhala. Mabakubukele ubhala izinto eziyakuthengwa evenkileni neencwadi kwaye ufunda ii-*timetables*, iincwadi kunye namaphephandaba.

Sebenzisa ulwimi lwakho lweenkobe: Amabali wokuqala mawabe ngolwimi lwabantwana lweenkobe. Isiseko esomeleleyo kulwimi lomntwana lweenkobe sisiseko sako konke ukufunda okunempumelelo, kuba ukuze sifunde kakuhle kufuneka siyivisise into esiyifundayo. Xa abantwana belazi kakuhle ulwimi lwabo lweenkobe, bangafunda ezinye iilwimi (ndawonye nokufunda nokubhala) lula.

Fumana iincwadi: Zibiza imali eninzi iincwadi (ziyadura), ngoko ke joyina ithala leencwadi, *ilayibhrari* – kwaye ulisebenzise! Amagosa elayibhrari azakunceda.



Josh

Wina!

Tyhila iphepha lesi-7 ukuze ubone ukuba ungayiwina njani na ilayibhrari encinane exabisa ama-R25 000!

Win!

Turn to page 7 to find out how to win a mini-library worth R25 000!



Dreaming big for our children
Sinamaphupha amakhulu ngabantwana bethu

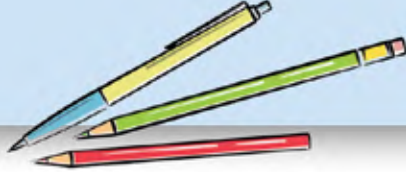


It starts with a story...

Hi Nal'ibali

Thanks so much for the reading and story tips! I've started to read to my children, who are 2 and 4 years old, every night after supper. At bath time I tell them a story too. It's amazing – they can't get enough stories!

Shakeela Adams, Blue Downs



Mhleli weNal'ibali

Ndilithandile kakhulu ibali ngo-Sefudi nangona nje belilusizi. U-anti wam wasweleka ndineminyaka esi-7 kwaye oko ke kwandikhathaza. Ibali lakho lindenze ndakuqonda okunye kokukhathazeka kwam. Ngoku ndiyabhala, endaweni yokuzoba njengoSefudi! Enkosi.

Nozi Nkoli, 13, Pimville

Dear Nal'ibali...
Mhleli weNal'ibali...

Write to
Nal'ibali at PO Box
1654, Saxonwold, 2132 or
letters@nalibali.org

Bhalela kwi: Nal'ibali,
PO Box 1654, Saxonwold,
2132 okanye kwi:
letters@nalibali.org



★ Story stars...

The Vulindlela Reading Club in Langa was started in December 2006. Over the years it has grown in size and is so well-known in Cape Town that many of the club members travel quite a distance to attend. This club planted the seed for what has grown into the Nal'ibali initiative in South Africa! We asked, Xolisa Guzula and Ntombizanele Mahobe, who started the club, a few questions.

Q: How many children are there at the club?

A: There are between 80 and 120 children. Many of the children come from Langa but there are quite a few who live in other parts of Cape Town. Some of the children have been coming since the club started 5½ years ago!

Q: How old are the children?

A: Between the ages of 2 and 16.

Q: How often, when and where do you meet?

A: We meet at St Louis Primary School in Langa for two hours every Saturday morning.

Q: Who helps at the club and what do they do?

A: A group of adults plays games, sings songs, tells and reads stories, and writes with the children. We are all volunteers so we are not paid for the services we provide. Some of the adults who help are parents. Others are community members, teachers and students. It really is a case of a whole village raising its children!

Q: What languages do you use?

A: isiXhosa and English

Q: How did you grow the club?

A: The children who came to the club and teachers from their schools spoke to others about the club. The children also brought siblings and friends with them to join.

Q: What do you aim to achieve at the club?

A: We want to create a place where children can explore books and stories, and experiment with writing. (This helps them to develop as readers and writers.) We focus on just enjoying reading and writing with adults who care about children and are passionate about stories, reading and writing.



Want to read more about the Vulindlela Reading Club or nominate someone you know as a story star? Go to www.nalibali.org and check out our story stars section.

★ Limbalasane zamabali

Iqela elifundayo i-Vulindlela Reading Club kwaLanga laqaliswa ngoDisemba 2006. Kule minyaka likhulile ngokwenani lamalungu kwaye liyaziwa kakhulu eKapa kangangokuba uninzi lwamalungu ahamba imigama emide ukuya kwiindibano zeli qela. Eli qela latyala imbewu eyakhulayo yabalinyathelo lephulo leNal'ibali eMzantsi Afrika! Sibuze uXolisa Guzula noNtombizanele Mahobe, abaqala eli qela nabanye, imibuzo embalwa.

Bangaphi abantwana abakwiqela lenu?

Kukho abantwana abaphakathi kwama-80 ne-120. Uninzi lwaba bantwana baphuma kwaLanga kodwa bakho abambalwa abahlala kwezinye iindawo zaseKapa. Abanye babo baqala ukuza ukusukela ukuqalwa kweli qela kwiminyaka emi-5½ edlulileyo!

Baneminyaka emingaphi aba bantwana?

Baphakathi kweminyaka emi-2 ne-16 ubudala.

Nihlanganela phi, nini, kangaphi?

Sihlanganela kwiSikolo samaBanga aPhantsi i-St Louis kwaLanga, iiyure ezimbini qho kusasa ngoMgqibelo.

Ngoobani abancedayo eqeleni kwaye benzani?

Iqela labantu abadala lidlala imidlalo, licule iingoma, libalise kwaye lifunde amabali, futhi libhale kunye nabantwana. Sonke singamavoluntiya, ngoko ke asihlawulwa. Abanye babantu abadala abancedayo ngabazali. Ukanti bambi ngabahlali, ootitshala kunye nabafundi. Le yimeko apho yonke ilali izikhulisela abantwana bayo!

Nisebenzisa eziphi iilwimi?

IsiXhosa nesiNgesi

Nilikhulise njani ili qela?

Abantwana abeza eqeleni kunye nootitshala kwizikolo zabo bancokole nabanye ngeli qela. Nabo abantwana beze noodade babo nabantakwabo kunye nabahlobo ukuze bajoyine.

Nijonge ukufezekisa ntoni eqeleni?

Sifuna ukuseka indawo apho abantwana bangaphonononga iincwadi namabali, kwaye bafunde ukubhala. (Oku kubanceda bakhule njengebafundi nababhali). Sigxininisa kuphela

ekonwabeleni ukufunda nokubhala nabantu abadala abanenkathalo ngabantwana kwaye abawathandayo amabali, ukufunda nokubhala.

Ingaba ufuna ukufunda banzi nge-Vulindlela Reading Club okanye utyumbe umntu omaziyo oyimbalasane zamabali? Yiya kwi: www.nalibali.org ukhangele icandelo lethu leembalasane zamabali.

Create your own mini-book

1. Take out pages 3 to 6 of this supplement.
2. Fold it in half along the black dotted line.
3. Fold it in half again.
4. Cut along the red dotted lines.

Zenzele eyakho incwadana encinane



1. Thabatha amaphepha ama-3 ukuya kwisi-6 kweli hlelo.
2. Wasonge esiphakathini kumgca wamachaphaza amnyama.
3. Phinda uwasonge esiphakathini kwakhona.
4. Sika kwimigca yamachaphaza abomvu.





Get story active!

After you and your children have read *Two* on page 8, try out some of these ideas.

If you have 10 minutes...

-  Look at pages 2 and 3 of the zig-zag book again. Ask your children: How many bananas can you see? How many butterflies? Why does the boy say "Yum"? What do you think he would do if the dog ate his banana?
-  Ask your children to find the red ball in the pictures. In which picture is there no red ball? Where do they think it might be?

If you have 30 minutes...

-  With your children, look at the picture on pages 10 and 11 again and talk about hugs. Why do we hug each other? Who do they like to hug? Who don't they like hugging and why? Now suggest that they draw a picture of someone they like hugging. Help younger children write about their pictures by writing down the words they tell you. Let older children write on their own and encourage them to try to spell words for themselves – even if their spelling is not quite right!
-  Say some number rhymes that you know with your children and let them do the actions. Here is one for you to try:

I can knock with two hands,
Knock, knock, knock!
I can rock with two hands,
Rock, rock, rock.




Go to www.nalibali.org and enter our competition to win a copy of the book, *Knowing you, knowing me*.

Yiya ku: www.nalibali.org ungenele ukhuphiswano lwethu ukuze uwine ikopi yencwadi ethi, *Yazi mna ndazi wena*.

Yenza ibali linike umdla!


Emva kokuba wena nabantwana bakho nifunde ibali elithi, *Izibini!* kwiphepha lesi-8, zama eminye yale mibono.

Ukubangaba unemizuzu eli-10...



-  Phinda ujonge iphepha lesi-2 nelesi-3 encwadi yamajiko-jiko. Buza abantwana bakho: Nibona iibhanana ezingaphi? Mangaphi amabhabhathane? Kutheni inkwenkwe isithi "Mhmmm imnandi"? Ucinga ukuba uza kuthini ukuba ngabainja itye ibhanana yakhe?



Illustrated by Nikki Jones
Imifanekiso ngu-Nikki Jones

-  Cela abantwana bakho bakhangele ibhola ebomvu emifanekisweni. Ngowuphi umfanekiso ongenabhola ebomvu? Bacinga ukuba mingaphi?

Ukubangaba unemizuzu engama-30...

-  Nabantwana bakho, phindani nijonge umfanekiso kwiphepha le-10 nele-11 kwaye niithethe ngokwanga. Kutheni sisangana? Ngubani abathanda ukumanga? Ngubani abangathandiyo ukumanga kwaye kutheni? Ngoku yihi mabazobe umfanekiso womntu abathanda ukumanga. Nceda abantwana abancinane babhale ngemifanekiso yabo ngokubhala phantsi amagama abakuxelela wona. Yeka abantwana abadala bazibhalele kwaye ubakhuthaze bazame ukuzipelela amagama ngokwabo – nkqu nokuba abapeli ngokuchanekileyo!
-  Yitsho izandi zamanani ozaziyo nabantwana bakho uze ubayeke benze iintshukumo. Nantsi enye imidlalo ongayizama:

Ndingankqonkqoza ngezandla ezimbini,
Nkqo, nkqo, nkqo!
Ndingagungqisa ngezandla ezimbini,
Gungqu, gungqu, gungqu.



Win a mini-library worth R25 000!



Our wonderful sponsors have donated books so that we can give away fine mini-libraries. If you live in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal or Gauteng, you stand a chance of winning one of these mini-libraries for your reading club or school.* SMS NALIBALI followed by your name, the name of your reading club or school, address and contact number to 32545. SMSs cost R1. Closing date: 31 July 2012

* Terms and Conditions apply.

Go to www.nalibali.org/supplements for more details.

Wina ilayibrari encinane exabisa ama-R25 000!

Abaxhasi bethu abamangalisayo basiphe iincwadi ukuze siphise ngeelayibrari ezincinane ezintle. Ukuba ngaba uhlala eNtshona Koloni, eMpuma-Koloni, KwaZulu-Natal okanye eRhawutini, unethuba lokuwinela iqela lakho okanye isikolo sakho enye yezi layibrari zincinane.* Thumela i-SMS ethi NALIBALI ulandelise ngegama lakho, igama leqela lakho elifundayo okanye igama lesikolo sakho, idilesi kunye neenombolo zonxulumano kule nombolo 32545. Ii-SMS zibiza i-R1. Umhla wokuvalwa ngowama: 31 Julayi 2012

* Kukhona imimiselo nemiqathango esetyenziswayo.

Yiya ku: www.nalibali.org/supplements ukufumana inkcukacha ezithe vetshe.

CAMBRIDGE

OXFORD

PEARSON

NuMetro

In your next Nal'ibali supplement:

- Things to think about when you start a reading club
- An interview with a reading club volunteer
- Mini-book, *The little hare*
- The story, *The running shoes*

Can't wait until next week for more reading and story tips, tools and inspirational ideas? Visit www.nalibali.org or find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/nalibali or www.facebook.com/nalibalireadingclubs

Find us on Twitter: @nalibali
Sifumane kuTwitter: @nalibali

Kwihelo elilandelayo leNal'ibali:

- Izinto omawuzicinge xa uqalisa iqela lakho elifundayo
- Udliwano-ndlebe nevoluntiya yeqela elifundayo
- Icwadana ethi, *Umvundlana*
- Iballi elithi, *Izihlangu zokubaleka*

Uyingxamele ngeyona ndlela iveki ezayo ukuze ufumane amanye amacebo okufunda nawamabali kunye neembono ezichulumancisayo? Ndwendwela kwi: www.nalibali.org okanye sifumane ku: www.facebook.com/nalibali naku: www.facebook.com/nalibalireadingclubs



Carole Bloch & Richard MacIntosh



Izibini!



Two!

1

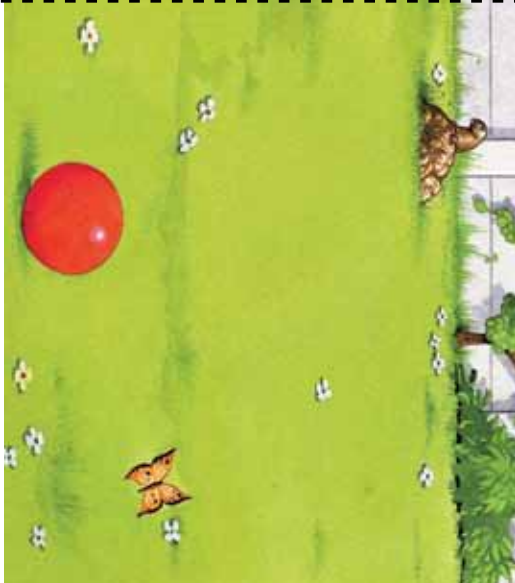


“Yum!”

2

FOLD

“Mhmm imnandi!”

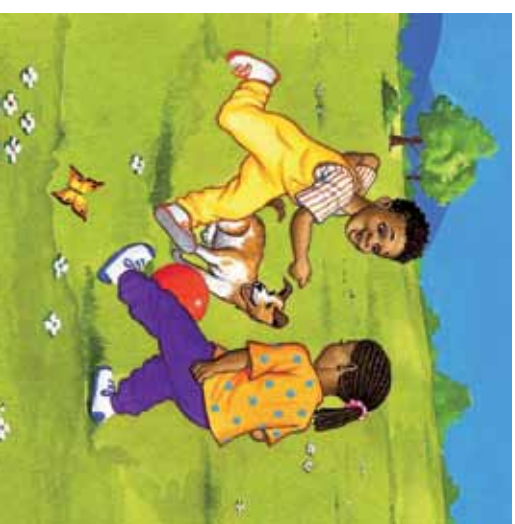


Two little hands to hold

3

FOLD

Izandla ezincinci ezimbini
zokuphatha



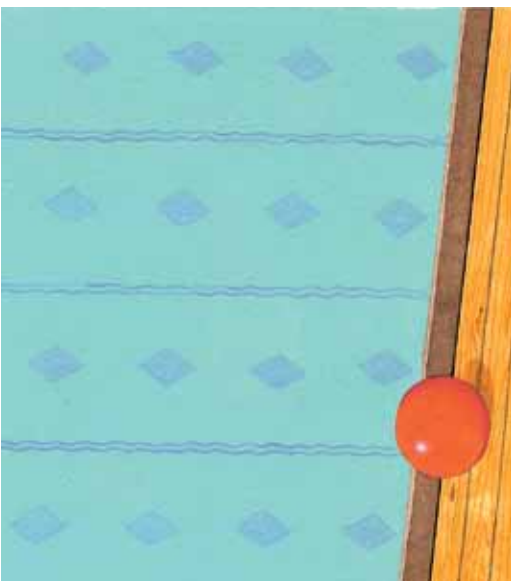
Two little feet to kick...

4

Iinyawu ezincinci ezimbini
zokukhaba...

8

and two loving arms to HUG!



neengalo ezimbini ezinothando
ZOKWANGA!

7

“Hello, baby!”



“Molo, bhabha!”

9

two little ears to hear...



iindlebe ezincinci ezimbini
zokumamela...

5

two little eyes to see...



amehlo amancinci amabini
okubona...



If you enjoyed this sample of *Broken Promises*, then order your own copy now! Books cost just R70, including postage to delivery addresses within South Africa. Books currently only available in English.

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Ukubangaba uyithandle le sampuli ye*Broken Promises*, faka i-odolo yekopi yakho ngoku! Iincwadi zibiza nje kuphela ama-R70, kubandakanywa ukuposela kwidilesi eya kuyo apha eMzantsi Afrika. Okwangoku, le ncwadi ifumaneka kuphela ngesiNgesi

Faka i-odolo yakho:

Nge-email: info@cover2cover.co.za

Ngomnxeba: 021 702 1177

Joyina abanxibelelani be-FunDza abafunda nge-mobi ukuze ufunde i*Broken Promises* namanye amabali amaninzi kwiselulafowuni yakho!

IFunDza iyonwabisa, kulula ukuyijoyina kwaye ... ujoyina MAHALA!

Into oyidingayo nje yiselulafowuni!

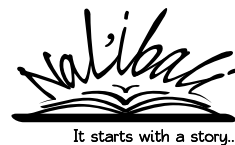
Yiba semnxebeni!

Ndwendwela iziko lokunxibelelana leFunDza (elifikeleleka nge-Internet neeselulafowuni):

www.fundza.co.za/mobi

Okanye nxulumana neziko leFunDza Mxit: Mxit > TradePost > Mxit Reach > mobiBooks > FunDza

Nal'ibali is a national reading-for-enjoyment initiative to get people in South Africa – children and adults – passionate about telling and reading stories. For more information, visit www.nalibali.org.



INal'ibali liphulo lelizwe lokufundela ulonwabo lokwenza abantu eMzantsi Afrika – abantwana nabantu abadala – bakuthakazelele ukubalisa nokufunda amabali. Ukuze ufumane inkcazelo ebanzi, ndwendwela ku www.nalibali.org.

Teen-read
Ibali lolutsha



Ukophulwa kwezithembiso Broken Promises

Ros Haden

"Ntombi, I'm going out."

"Mama, you can't. It's the third time this week and I've got ..." But before Ntombi could finish her sentence her mother was already giving her a list of things to do while she was at Thabiso's Tavern.

"There's some money left for you and Zinzi. Make sure Zinzi does her homework – and don't let her stay up too late! How do I look?" She did a twirl in the middle of the living room. Ntombi looked at the silver top and new jeans her mother was wearing and her heart sank. They were yet another gift from her mother's new boyfriend, Zakes. Every time he went out with her mother he gave her something – but there was never enough money left over to buy something for her or her sister. He never had anything for them except for his unwanted 'words of advice'. Words that made Ntombi want to throw something at him. Cruel, mean, words.

"You girls will never get boyfriends looking like that. Why don't you do something to your hair? You look like village moegoes. No, what you need is to go to the hairdresser, get some braids."

With what money? thought Ntombi, but she knew if she questioned him out loud, he would get angry and her mother would only take his side. She was forever saying, "Now don't upset Zakes," or "He's only teasing; don't be so sensitive," or, even worse: "Maybe you should take his advice. You know he's a very successful businessman." And once when she was really mad, she shouted at Ntombi: "He is my boyfriend and you must respect him. His word is law!" Their mother had become a stranger. Ntombi wanted her old mother back.

Even when it was just the three of them it wasn't the same. Zakes still messed things up between them. "What does he do?" Ntombi asked her mother on one of the few nights that her mother was home these days.

But her mother had looked unsure and started picking at her nail polish. "He's in business..." she said uncertainly.

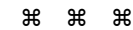
"What kind of business?" Ntombi wasn't going to let her mother off the hook so easily.

"I don't know. He's a car dealer, a sales rep." Her mother sat up on the bed, where they had

been lying. "Anyway why all the questions? Are you the police?" Her mood had changed and she was glaring at Ntombi. "All I care about is that he treats me good, and that he's got a good job. You've seen the way he dresses, and the car he drives."

"Mama, you used to tell me those things didn't matter. You used to tell me it was what was inside that mattered. You told me you married Dad for love..."

"And look where that got me!" her mother interrupted. "I don't see him in this room. Do you?" That was the end of the conversation. Her mother had got up and gone through to watch a soapie on TV.

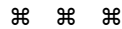


Ntombi didn't trust Zakes one bit. He was a fake through and through. And what was worse, she didn't like the way her mother acted when he was around. Like she was their older sister, competing over guys, rather than their mother who should be looking after them, giving them good advice, and protecting them from men like Zakes.

When her dad left a year ago, just after her fourteenth birthday, her mother was very sad, but at least they still felt like a family. They cuddled up on the couch together and watched Bold, and laughed and cried together. And then, one day, Mama came home from the rich private school where she worked cooking lunches, and told them she was going out that evening. The kitchen staff at the school had persuaded her to join them at Thabiso's Tavern and she thought it might be good for her. Ntombi had helped her choose an outfit: a nice denim skirt, just below the knee, a tight black wraparound top with a white denim jacket. And to top it off, some gold earrings. Mama looked great. She had kissed her mother goodbye and wished her luck. Little did she guess that that night her mother would meet Zakes and their lives would be turned upside down again.

Ntombi knew the first time she saw Zakes, with his gold chains and flash smile that didn't reach his eyes, that he would bring nothing but trouble. Even his car looked like a fake. It had been resprayed and that could mean one of two things: he had been in an accident, or the car was stolen. Things felt wrong when Zakes was in the house. He seemed too big for their small couch, sitting there with his beer, interrupting their conversations with his loud voice. He loved to say things like, "Girls, you are my daughters now. Go fetch another beer for your father."

"Do as he says," their mother would add if they hesitated, as she cuddled closer to her new boyfriend. There was no time for Ntombi or Zinzi when Zakes was around.



"Here." Her mother handed Ntombi a five rand coin from her new gold bag. She smelled of some strong perfume Zakes had bought her. "Buy yourself some sweets at the shop," she said as she rushed out, putting on lipstick as she went.

"Mama, I'm meant to be at singing practice. The competition is next week and..." But her mother was already out of the door and in the seat of Zakes' resprayed BMW with its fluffy dice bouncing from the rearview mirror and couldn't hear her. All she could do was watch as Zakes reversed with a squeal of tyres, and then they were gone.

Chapter 2

Ntombi looked at the five rand coin in her hand. "What does she think I can buy with five rand?" she thought. One small bag of chips at the spaza, and a small packet of sweets, which she'd have to share with Zinzi. It wouldn't buy her what she really needed – just ten minutes of time with her mother, when they could sit down and watch TV together, or talk, like they used to.

Just then Zinzi came in. She had been playing soccer in the street and her knee was grazed and bleeding. "Where's Mama?" she asked Ntombi.

"Guess," said Ntombi. "It's not that hard."

"Zakes?"

"Where else?"

"I thought you had singing practice this evening?" said Zinzi as she slumped on the couch and dabbed at her cut with a tissue.

"Not any more. Mama said I've got to stay home and look after you."

"I can look after myself."

"You're twelve," said Ntombi, fetching the Dettol from the bathroom and dabbing it on Zinzi's cut.

"Ouch!" Zinzi complained. "Stop it. You're hurting me."

"Don't act like a baby. You don't want it to get worse, do you? Do you want to go to hospital with an infected cut?"

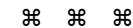
"Why are you in such a bad mood?"

"Wouldn't you be if you were missing a chance to go to the national finals of South Africa's Teen Voice Competition?"

"I thought the judges were only coming next week?"

"They are. But every practice is really important. Mr Masondo says that we have to work hard and make Harmony High proud. Otherwise he won't let us compete."

Ntombi had been chosen, along with ten others at Harmony High, to perform for a panel of talent scouts that was travelling around the country auditioning high school students for the Teen Voice singing competition. If she was chosen out of the ten students from her school then she would go on to the national finals in Jozi. The prize was R10 000 and a recording contract. Ntombi had promised herself that she would work as hard as she could, attend every practice, and go to the nationals. Sometimes she even let herself dream of winning the competition. It would change her life – she would work really hard and produce an album. She'd buy a proper house for her family, and make sure her sister finished school. With the money she could go to university and study to become...



Just then there was the sound of girls laughing outside in the street.

"It's the giraffes," Zinzi said from the couch where she was watching Days on TV. She called Ntombi's three girlfriends the giraffes because they were taller than other girls. In turn, they called Ntombi "shortie", although she was average height. Ntombi opened the door and hugged her friends Busi, Asanda and Lettie. At least she could rely on them for support. Asanda and Lettie had also been chosen to compete in the singing competition and Ntombi could see that they were on their way to the practice. Busi was going along to watch in the

hope of attracting the attention of Unathi, who was also competing. At the last practice she sat in the front row seats in the hall, blowing kisses to Unathi and holding up a big piece of paper with "I love Unathi" painted in lipstick. Unathi had just smiled and waved. Ntombi had told Busi that Unathi had a girlfriend back in Jozi, where he was from, but Busi wouldn't listen. She didn't want to hear.

"Come on, lazy girl," Asanda laughed. "We'll be late." The practice was in the school hall, a taxi-ride away.

"I can't go," Ntombi told them.

"You must be joking!" Lettie said. "What's wrong with you? I thought this was your dream?"

"Mama went out and I have to look after Zinzi."

"You know what this means. Mr Masondo is not going to be pleased."

"I know." Ntombi was close to tears and her friends could see it. Mr Masondo was their singing coach and he was strict. Two missed rehearsals and you were out of the competition.

Asanda gave her a big hug. "Listen, we'll bring you the lyrics back and help you practise. Cheer up. I'll tell Mr Masondo that you got food poisoning." Asanda was the queen of excuses, and with her charm the teachers always believed her.

"Thanks chommies. You're the best." Ntombi tried to smile bravely, but she felt terrible.

"By the way, there's a party on Saturday at Thabiso's Tavern. We're going," Busi said. "Why don't you come? It should be fun. Unathi's going to be there with his cousin from Jozi."

"How many times do I have to tell you Unathi has a girlfriend?" Ntombi despaired of Busi. She really lost her head over boys and forgot who she was – the intelligent and charismatic girl who had a great future if she could just stay focused.

"He's never mentioned her," said Busi. "And anyway evidently his cousin is even better looking, and I've always wanted to go to Jozi. They say the men are hot up there."

"You're going to burn yourself one day," joked Ntombi. "Just be careful."

"Yes, Mama," the girls laughed.

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Ntombi watched as her friends ran down the road to catch the taxi. They were laughing and chatting. She went back inside and shut the door. The girls were right to call her 'Mama' – that's what she was at the moment, and she was only fifteen. It was like her mother and her had swapped roles. The other girls used to complain about their strict mothers and tell Ntombi she was lucky. But Ntombi had noticed they didn't say that anymore, not since Zakes had arrived on the scene. And Ntombi did not want to be a mother. Not for a long time. Not until she had finished studying and definitely not with someone she didn't love and respect!

"I'm hungry," complained Zinzi, who was watching *The Bold and the Beautiful*.

Ntombi wanted to just walk away from the house. But she knew she couldn't.

She put the last bit of mielie meal into the pot. Sometimes she loved porridge for supper. But she was getting tired of it now. Before Zakes, her mother had always made sure that there was enough food in the house for them. It was a struggle on her salary, but she would always cook them a good meal in the evening and they would sit together and chat about the day. She had been sad a lot, but then they also had good times together. They went shopping in town on Saturday at the end of the month when her mother would give them each pocket money to spend. Now she didn't have time for them any more. Ntombi had been telling her how the fridge needed to be fixed (it kept going on and off) and that the drain at the back of the house was blocked again. That's when she really missed her dad. He would have fixed it by now. And where was Zakes when something went wrong in their house – out selling cars?

She served the pap onto plates. "Careful, it's hot," she warned.

"Not this again," complained Zinzi.

"Don't tell me, tell Mama," said Ntombi. "If she's ever here to tell." As they ate, on *Bold*, a soapie star reclined on a lounging chair beside a pool somewhere in America – somewhere hot and lush with lots of money. A butler handed her an ice cold cocktail... she didn't have a care in the world. Her nanny was looking after her kids, and Ntombi knew that her fridge would be brimming with food. Just then there was a sizzling sound and a bang from the back of the TV. The smell of burned plastic filled the room.

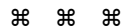
"No!" screamed Zinzi. "Not the TV! My life has ended." And she buried her face under a cushion.

"Don't be such a drama queen!" yelled Ntombi. She went into the bedroom to get away from her sister, before she exploded like the TV. She lay on the bed she shared with Zinzi and started paging through a magazine. But she wasn't reading the words. She kept thinking of Asanda and Lettie standing on the stage of the school hall, learning the words of that new song, and them all laughing and having fun as they got one step closer to the finals, while she was stuck in this dump with a younger sister who was driving her crazy and not helping one bit around the house.

She looked down at the glamorous pop stars in the mag. Who did she think she was, trying to compete with girls like this? Maybe she was dreaming after all. Maybe Zakes was right. Maybe she didn't have what it took to be a Teen Voice star. "Why bother entering the competition," he had said. "These days you have to have the whole package: the looks, the sex appeal and the voice. You'll only be setting yourself up to be taken down."

Her dad would never have said those hurtful words. He had told her that he was so proud of her when she had got into the choir at Harmony High. And when he had his employer's car for a few days he had taken her to practices himself. Once when she wanted to go and get her ears pierced he had said, "Why spoil something so beautiful already?"

Now she didn't even know where he was, or who he was with. Maybe he had a whole other family somewhere, another daughter, whom he loved now, more than her?



As she lay there she thought of the three promises she had made to herself on New Year's eve three months ago. First: to enter the singing competition and go all the way to the final. Second: not to go out with a guy unless he was kind and respected her – not like the guy Busi had dated in the holiday, who had seemed the real deal – too good to be true – because he was too good to be true. He was good looking and clever, but he had left her with a broken heart and a broken arm after he had pushed her and she had tripped and fallen hard. If Ntombi and Asanda hadn't run when they heard her cries from behind the sports shed at school, things might have been a lot worse. But when they appeared Ebenezer had left her and run – a coward at heart.

The third promise was to find her dad and bring him home. There was no way that she was going to let Zakes move in with them and pretend to be their father.

"Ntombi, ndiyazikhupha."

"Mama, awunako. Kokwesithathu kule vekhi, futhi ndine..." Kodwa uthe engekagqibi uNtombi ukuthetha wabe unina sele embalela izinto emakazenze xa yena esesimokolweni sikaThabiso.

"Ndinshiyele imali wena noZinzi. Uqinisekise ukuba uZinzi uyawenza umsebenzi wesikolo – kwaye angahlali kude kube sebusuku kakhulu! Ndikhangeleka njani?" Uzibhija-bhijile embindini wegumbi lokuhlala. UNtombi uthe ntsho umntla onxitywe ngumama wakhe osilivere ngebala kunye nejini entsha awayeyinxibile, watsho wehla umxhelo wakhe. Zazikwazezinye zeziphos ezisuka kwisinqanda-mathe esitsha sikamama wakhe, uZakes. Wayesithi qho xa ephume nomama wakhe amnike into – kodwa zange kukhe kubekho imali eyaneleyo esalayo ukuze yena nodade wabo bazithengele into. Zange akhe abanike nto bona ngaphandle nje 'kwamazwi engcebiso' ababengawadingi phofu. Amazwi lawo awayesenza uNtombi afune ukumgibisela ngento. Amazwi akhohlakeleyo, angento.

"Mantombazana-ndini aninakuze nifumane abafana ngale ndlela nikhangeleka ngayo. Niziyekeleni zibenje iinwele? Nikhangeleka ngathi niziimoegoe. Hayi khona, kufanele niye esaluni, niyokuphatha iinwele."

"Ngemali esiyithatha phi?" Wacinga njalo uNtombi, kodwa wayesazi ukuba xa wayengambuza esiva uZakes, wayeya kucaphuka kwaye unina abe ngecala lakhe. Wayesoloko esithi, "Niyabona, ningakulinge nicaphukise uZakes," okanye "Uyaqhula nje torho, yekani ukuba nochuku," okanye aberhabaxa ngakumbi, "Mhlawumbi ngenilithabatha icebo lakhe. Niyazi ungunosomabhezini onempumelelo." Ngenye imini awayephambene eligeza ngayo, washawuta uNtombi wathi: "Usisinqanda-mathe sam, mhlonipheni, nimmamele." Umama wabo wayesele engumntu ongaqhelekanga. UNtombi wayefuna umama amaziyo abuyele esiqhelweni.

Nkqu naxa ingabo bobathathu kuphela, bekungafani. UZakes ubebaduba-duba. "Wenza ntoni uZakes?" UNtombi wabuza umama wakhe kobunye ubusuku kwezo zihlandlo zimbalwa wayekhona ngazo ekhaya.

Kodwa umama wakhe wakhangeleka engaqinisekanga, wasuka wathabatha ipolishi yakhe yeenzipho. "Uneshishini..." watsho engaqinisekanga.

“Ishishini elinjani?” UNtombi waqonda ukuba sokuze amyeke umama wakhe aphuncuke lula.

“Andazi. Ushishina ngeemoto, ungumthengisi.” Umama wakhe waphakama ebhedini ababengqengqe kuyo, wachopha. “Phofu ke yimibuzo yantoni le ingaka? Ulipolisa?” Saguquka isimo sakhe wajamela uNtombi. “Into nje endiyihoyileyo mna kukuba undiphethe kakuhle, kwaye futhi usebenza umsebenzi omhle. Niyambona indlela anxiba ngayo, nemoto ayiqhubayo.”

“Mama, ubudla ngokuthi kum ezo zinto azinamsebenzi. Ubudla ngokuthi yinto engaphakathi undoqo. Wandixelela ukuba wamtshata uTata kuba wawumthanda...”

“Jonga ke indibeke phi loo nto!” wamqhawula unina esathetha. “Andimboni aph’endlini. Uyambona wena?” Yaphela njalo ke incoko. Unina waphakama waya kujonga ibali lesowuphi, *isoapie* kumabona-kude.

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UNtombi wayengamthembanga tu uZakes. Kuye wayengeyiyo le nto athi uyiyo konke konke. Eyona nto awayengayithandi mpela yayiyindlela awayeziphatha ngayo unina xa kukho uZakes. Wayebangathi ngudade wabo omdala okhuphisana nabo ngamakhwenkwe, endaweni yokuba ngumama wabo ofanele abakhusele, abanike iingcebiso ezintle, kwaye abakhusele kumadoda afana nooZakes.

Ukumka kukatata wakhe kulo nyaka uphelileyo, kufutshane nje emva kokubhiyozela iminyaka yakhe yokuzalwa elishumi elinesine, umama wakhe wakhathazeka kakhulu, kodwa ke okungenani babeziva beselusapho. Babezisonga kunye esofeni babukele uBold, bahleke kwaye balile kunye. Kwaze kwathi ngenye imini, uMama efika ekhaya evela kwisikolo sabucala sezityebi, apho wayesebenza khona epheka izidlo zasemini, wathi uyazikhupha ngolo rhatya. Isitafu sasekhithshini sasimbongozile ukuba abajoyine esimokolweni sikaThabiso, waze wacinga ukuba oko kungabaluncedo kuye. UNtombi wamkethisa impahla yokunxiba: isiketi esihle sedangari, esimela ezantsi kwamadolo. Wagqibela ngokumnika amacici egolide. UMama wakhe wayemhle ngeyona ndlela. Wathi ndlela-ntle kumama wakhe, watsho emncamisa futhi emnqwenelela okuhle. Wayengazange ayazi into yokuba ngobo busuku umama wakhe wayeza kudibana noZakes, buze ke ubomi babo bubengumbhodamo kwakhona.

UNtombi waqonda nje eqala ukumbona uZakes, owayenxibe amatsheyini egolide noncumo olunganyanisekanga olwalungafikeleli emehlweni akhe, ukuba kwakungekho nto ayizisileyo ngaphandle kwenkathazo. Nkqu nemoto yakhe yayikhangeleka ingeyiyo eyokwenyani. Yayipeyintwe ngokutsha kwaye oko kwakungathetha enye kwezi zinto zimbini: wayefumene ingozi okanye imoto yayibiwe. Izinto zazikhangeleka zingahambi kakuhle xa uZakes ekhona. Wayekhangeleka emkhulu ngokugqithileyo kwisofa yabo encinane, awayehleli kuyo nebhiya yakhe, ephazamisa incoko yabo ngelizwi eliphezulu. Wayekuthanda ukuthetha izinto ezifana nezi, “Mantombazana, nizintombi zam ngoku. Phathelani utata wenu enye ibhiya.”

“Yenzani njengoko esitsho,” wayedla ngokweleka atsho unina xa bethandabuza, abe ngelo xesha ezinyhala kwisinqanda-mathe sakhe esitsha. Wayengabinalo ixesha likaNtombi okanye uZinzi xa ekhona uZakes.

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“Ina.” Umama wakhe wanika uNtombi ingqekembe yeerandi ezintlanu awayeyikhupha ebhegini yakhe entsha yegolide. Wayenuka isiqholo esitsarhayo awayesithengelwe nguZakes. “Zithengeleni iilekese evenkileni,” watsho ekhawuleza ephuma, eqaba iruji into yokuthambisa umlomo.

“Mama, kufanel’uba ndiseprekthizini yomculo. Ukhuphiswano lukule veki izayo kwaye...” Kodwa unina wayesele ephumile sele ethe ngcu esitulweni seBMW epeyintwe ngokutsha kaZakes engamva ngelixa ekhwaza. Into awayenokuyenza kukubukela uZakes ngelixa ebuyisa imoto umva, etshitshizisa amatayari ayo, baphel’emehlweni.

Isahluko sesi- 2

UNtombi wajonga le ngqekembe yeerandi ezintlanu eyayisesandleni sakhe. “Ucinga ukuba ndingathenga ntoni ngerandi ezintlanu?” wacinga njalo. Wayengathenga ipakethana yeechips espaza, kunye nepakethana yeelekese, ekwakuya kufuneka ohlulelane ngayo noZinzi. Yayingasokuze imthengele eyona-yona nto wayeyidinga – imizuzwana nje elishumi nomama wakhe, bahlale kunye babukele umabona-kude okanye bancokole, njengoko babeqhele ukwenza.

Kwathi kusenjalo kwangena uZinzi. Ubekade edlala ibhola ekhatywayo esitratweni, waze

wagruzuka edolweni wopha. “Uphi uMama?” wabuza uNtombi.

“Khawuqashele,” watsho uNtombi. “Akunzimanga.”

“KwaZakes?”

“Ikhona enye indawo??”

“Bendicinga ukuba uneprekthizi yomculo ngolu rhatya?” watsho uZinzi esithi fohlo esofeni esula inxeba lakhe ngethishiyu.

“Andisayi. Umama uthe mandihlale ekhaya ndikujonge.”

“Ndiyakwazi ukuzinakekela.”

“Uneminyaka elishumi elinesibini,” watsho uNtombi, esiya kuthabatha iDettol egumbini lokuhlambela, eqaba inxeba likaZinzi.

“Shu-u!” ukhalazile uZinzi. “Pheza. Kubuhlungu.”

“Musa ukuba ngubhabha otefayo. Awungethandi ukuliyeka likhule, anditsho? Ingaba ufuna ukuya esibhedlele ngenxeba elosulelekileyo?”

“Kutheni unochuku kangaka?”

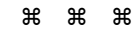
“Ungathini xa uphoswa lithuba lokuya kumagqibela kankqoyi, emaphethweni okhuphiswano lelizwe leSouth Africa’s Teen Voice Competition?”

“Bendicinga ukuba iijaji ziza kule veki izayo?”

“Kunjalo. Kodwa iprekthizi nganye ibalulekile. Umnumzana Masondo uthi kufuneka sisebenze nzima senze iHarmony High ibe nebhongo. Kungenjalo, soze asivumele singenele ukhuphiswano.”

UNtombi ukhethiwe, nabanye abalishumi eHarmony High, ukuba aye kubonisa italente yakhe kwigqiza elikhangelwa iitalente, elijikeleza elizweni livavanya amazwi wabafundi bamabanga aphakamileyo, libalungiselela ukhuphiswano lomculo weTeen Voice. Xa ekhethiwe kubafundi abalishumi abaphuma esikolweni sakhe wayeza kuya emaphethweni okhuphiswano lelizwe eJozi. Ibhaso yayingama-R10 000 kunye nekhontrakthi yokurekhoda. UNtombi wazithembisa ukuba uya kusebenza nzima kangangoko anako, aye kuzo

zonke iiprekthizi, kwaye aye kukhuphiswano olukhulu lelizwe. Ngamanye amaxesha ubephambukela nakwiphupha lokuphumelela ukhuphiswano. Olu khuphisano belungatshintsha ubomi bakhe – angasebenza nzima ngenene aze akhuphe i-albham. Angathengela usapho lwakhe indlu efanelekileyo, kwaye aqinisekise ukuba udade wabo uyagqiba esikolweni. Ngaloo mali angaya eyunivesiti aze afundele ukuba...



Kwangelo xesha kuvakele ingxolo yamantombazana ahlekayo phandle esitratweni.

“Ziindlulamthi,” watsho uZinzi esesofeni ebukele uDays kumabona-kude. Wayebiza abahlobo abathathu bakaNtombi ngokuba ziindlulamthi kuba babebade kunamanye amantombazana. Bona ke, babembiza uNtombi ngokuba “ngushoti”, nangona wayemde ngokuqhelekileyo. Wavula umnyango uNtombi wanga abahlobo bakhe, uBusi, u-Asanda noLettie. Okungenani wayengaxhomekeka kubo ngenkxaso. U-Asanda noLettie nabo babekhethelwe ukuya kukhuphiswano lomculo kwaye uNtombi wayebona ukuba basendleleni eya eprekthizini. UBusi wayehamba nabo esiya kubukela, ngethemba lokutsala umdla ka-Unathi, naye owayengenele ukhuphiswano. Kwiprekthizi yokugqibela wayehleli kwizitulo zangaphambili, emphuza emoyeni u-Unathi kwaye ephephezelisa iphekepheke lephepha elithi, “Ndiyamthanda u-Unathi” elaliqatywe ngeruji. U-Unathi wayevela nje ancume awangazelise izandla. UNtombi wayemxelele ukuba u-Unathi unentombazana athandana nayo eJozi apho wayevela khona, kodwa uBusi wayengeva nantwana.

“Andihambi,” watsho kubo uNtombi.

“Makube uyaqhula!” watsho uLettie. “Yintoni erongo ngawe? Bendicinga ukuba liphupha lakho eli?”

“Umama usaphumile, ngoko ke kufanele ndijonge uZinzi.”

“Uyayazi into eza kwenzeka. Umnumzana Masondo sokuze onwabe.”

“Ndiyazi.” UNtombi wayezibambe ngeenkophe iinyembezi kwaye abahlobo bakhe babembona. Umnumzana Masondo wayengumqeqeshi wabo kwaye wayengawabalala. Waphoswa nje ziiprekthizi ezimbini, uphumile wena kukhuphiswano.

U-Asanda wamanga kakhulu. “Mamela, siza kukuphathela amazwi eengoma kwaye sikuncede uprekthize. Yonwaba. Ndiza kuthi kumnumzana Masondo uphethwe sisisu.”

U-Asanda wayeyincutshe ekukuceleni uxolo, kwaye kuba wayethandeka, oofitshala babesoloko bemkholelwa.

“Ndiyabulela zitshomi zam. Ningabahlobo bokwenene.” UNtombi wazama ukuncuma ngokomelela, kodwa wayebuhlungu.

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UNtombi wababukela abahlobo bakhe besihla ngendlela besiya kukhwela iteksi. Babehamba behleka bencokola. Ubuyele endlwini wavala ucango. Amantombazana ayefanele ukumbiza ‘Mama’ – wayenguye ngokwenene okwangoku, nangona wayeneminyaka nje elishumi elinesihlanu ubudala. Kwakungathi yena nomama wakhe babetshintshe indima yobumama nobuntwana. Amanye ala mantombazana ayedla ngokukhalaza ngoomama bawo abangqwalalala, batsho besithi yena uNtombi unethamsanqa. Kodwa uNtombi waqaphela ukuba ayengasatsho ngoku, oko kwafika uZakes. Kwaye uNtombi wayengafuni ukuba ngumama. Wayengekacingi nokucinga ngaloo nto. Wayengafuni ukuba nomntwana engekagqibi ukufunda yaye futhi nomntu angamthandiyo nongamhloniphiyo.

Waphakela ipapa ezipleyitini. “Ulumke, iyatshisa,” walumkisa ngelitshoyo.

“Andifuni oko kutya kwakhona,” wakhala watsho uZinzi.

“Ungatsho kum, yitsho kuMama,” watsho uNtombi. “Ukuba uya kube ekhona azokuphendula.” Bathe besitya njalo, babona umdlali ophambili kuBold, owayengqendevise situlweni sokuphumla ecaleni kwepuli yamanzi kwindawo ethile eMerika – kwindawo etshisayo kwaye ephuphuma yimali. Isicaka samnika umxube weziselo ezahlukeneyo obanda ceke okomkhenkce... wayenganakanga nto ehlabathini. Kwakukho umntu owayemngcinele abantwana, kwaye uNtombi wayesazi ukuba ifriji yakhe yayiphuphuma kukutya. Kwangelo xesha kwabakho isandi sokuhlwahlwaza kwento etshayo kunye nokugungquza emva komabona-kude. Ivumba lokutsha kweplastiki lazalisa indlu.

“Hayini!” ukhale watsho uZinzi. “Hayi umabona-kude! Buphelile ubomi bam.” Watsho ezifihla ubuso phantsi komqamelelo.

“Ungazibaxi izinto wena!” ukhwaze watsho uNtombi. Waya kungena kwigumbi lokulala ukuze amke kudade wabo, engekahushumbi njengomabona-kude. Wangqengqa ebhedini abalala kuyo noZinzi, waphethulula etyhila amaphepha emagazini. Kodwa engafundi

kwanto. Wathi gqolo ukucinga ngo-Asanda noLettie bemi eqongeni leholo yesikolo, befunda amazwi welaa culo litsha, kwaye bonke behleka bonwabile njengoko besiya besondela emaphethelweni okhuphiswano, ngelixa yena ebopheleleke kobu bugxwayiba nodade wabo omncinci omphambanisayo, kwaye kungekho nenye into anceda ngayo apha endlwini.

Uqwalasele iimvumi ezaziwayo ezigqamileyo kule magazini. Wayecinga ukuba ungubani na yena, ukuzama ukukhuphisana namantombazana afana nala? Mhlawumbi eneneni wayephupha nje. Mhlawumbi ebenyanisile uZakes. Mhlawumbi akanako oko kufunekayo ukuze abeyiTeen Voice star. “Uzihluphelani ngokungenela olu khuphiswano,” watsho. “Kule mihla kufuneka ubenayo yonke into: inkangeleko, umtsalane ngokwesini kunye nelizwi lokucula. Ukuba awunazo ezi zinto, uzibeka nje esichengeni sokuwiselwa phantsi.”

Utata wakhe wayengekhe athethe amazwi abuhlungu kanjalo. Watsho kuye ukuba unebhongo ngaye akuba engene kwikwayara yaseHarmony High. Kwaye xa ehamba ngemoto yomqashi wakhe iintsukwana, ubemsa ngokwakhe eziprekthizini. Mhla wayefuna ukuya kugqobhoza iindlebe, wathi, “Uyimoshelani into esele intle kangaka?”

Ngoku ubengasazi nokuba uphi, okanye uhlala nabani. Mhlawumbi wayenenye intsapho, enye intombi yakhe, awayeyithanda ngoku, ngaphezu kwakhe?

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Uthe esalele njalo apho, wacinga ngezithembiso ezintathu awazenzela zona yena ngokwakhe ngobusuku obandulela iNyibidyalala kwiinyanga ezintathu ezidlulileyo. Okokuqala: angenele ukhuphiswano lomculo ayokufikelela emaphethelweni okhuphiswano.. Okwesibini: angahambisani nenkwenkwe ngaphandle kokuba inenyaneni kwaye iyamhlonipha – hayi efana nale yayithandana noBusi ngeeholide, eyayikhangeleka inyanisekile – kodwa ingenjalo. Yayinenkangeleko kwaye ikrelekrele, kodwa yamshiya enentliziyo eyaphukileyo uBusi kunye nengalo eyaphukileyo emva kokuba imtyhalile waze wakhubeka waya kuwa kabuhlungu. Ukuba uNtombi no-Asanda babengazange babaleke baye kuye bakumva ekhala emva kweshedi yemidlalo esikolweni, ngekwenzeka umonakalo omkhulu ngakumbi. Bathi bakuthi gqi, u-Ebenezer wamyeka wabaleka – igwala eliphakuphaku.

Isithembiso sesithathu yayikukukhangela utata wakhe ambuyisele ekhaya. Wayengasoze avumele uZakes aze kuhlala nabo, azenze utata wabo.