

2018

ESSAYS/OPINION PIECES

1ST PLACE

Risen Africa

Lindelwa Mjaja

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You are like an innocent child without sin. When you smile nature claps for you with pleasure and tender as you are clothed with only splendour; purely a symbol of joy, love, and unity. Through hatred, you created love, through pain and hunger you taught survival and through diversity you called them to unity.

Not Israel but before my eyes a chosen nation. The oppression was more than enough to mend the broken pieces of a united diversity, for in every bad comes out the unexpected good. Those who were said to be the worst enemies you called to love, binding them with a very strong bond, unbreakable and unshakeable but remarkable. Forming beautiful colours of the rainbow in the nation with a new great foundation of remorse and rehabilitation, from the cloud of dark imitations into the limelight of knowledge. Clearly, a resurrection in disguise for you rose in the most unclear path.

With pride you make me scream to the top of my voice, proclaiming how blessed I am to be your child. Such an incredible exposure of the creative art of God when a child of unity in diversity was reborn. That after a long period of labour pains which were a sign of something new, bold and beautiful that was going to change the rhythm in every city and bound to live from generation to generation. A bright star worthy of shining, the great lighthouse of a new dawn and a mix that produced a better solution. By your love, in commotion and collision, you planted humanity and reliability of one by another.

Africa; a well-known nation for its unity, humanity, love and respect. Beyond that the most beautiful diverse people with their prominent languages as the icing to the cake. The frame description of abundance's fruits, home of joy and prosperity and centre of assurance for the existence of God. With the friendliest people who can go the extra miles to protect those, they love without a slight of pretence, families by and by not blood or name and those who only find peace and pleasure in others happiness. Not too rich and famous in the economy but treasured with so much wealth in the heart and hands.

May you always strive for the better, live for love, cry for peace and happiness and always steal hearts with your humanity and respect. From death, you rose to be the light of the whole universe, for you were loved and chosen by God. Risen Africa.

2ND PLACE

In Praise of Africa

Sanelisiwe Mabaso

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In certain circles, it is always felt that there is something slightly shameful about being African. That there is an obligation to mock every African institution from football to language to the culture of the continent. Moreover, I am tired of people using their intelligence to look down on other people and our continent.

The guiltiest are the pseudo-intellectuals. They enjoy wealth and status and speak with feigned accents but, they lack pride and they suffer from a form of self-hatred. They are quick to praise the intrusive democracies commonly found in western nations. However, they are extremely critical of anything found in the African continent. They express the desire to permanently leave Africa citing corruption, crime and lack of development as good enough reasons to leave for 'better' nations. Yet they fail to realise that there is no perfect nation. They allow themselves to be seduced by the media who portray western nations in an exaggerated positive light compared to the pitiful light the media sheds on Africa.

Their aversion to the common culture of the continent is insulting, degrading and completely unnecessary. My guess is that colonisation made Africans feel like strangers in their land and this has resulted in deep-rooted self-hate. For far too long Africans have been indoctrinated to believe that if it is African then it is less than the other; this has left mental scars that have lasted for generations. The solution, I believe, is growth.

The beauty of a nation lies in the nation's ability to celebrate the positive while working towards curbing the negative. Accusing Africa of a range of sins and permanently leaving the continent results in a 'brain drain' which is a big loss for the development of our capable continent. Growth involves a clash of different ideas and therefore a change of attitude will be agonising and slow, but we should communicate and try to find solutions.

What does it mean to be truly African and proud? I honestly cannot tell you, but the self-hatred and shame that exists among some Africans are deeply unsettling. We should encourage communication and debate, know the confused and approach them with tactics that will convince them to reconsider their viewpoints. There are still Africans who question my position because they believe it is too 'unrealistic'. I do not agree with them, but I try to understand their perspective. There are certain things people won't always agree on, but I think the answer to the question of whether or not intelligent and formally educated Africans should abandon Africa is obvious. We can all agree that European colonisation has left many scars and we have a long way to go before Africa truly recovers. Nevertheless, Africans newly conscious of the crisis brought on by the legacy of apartheid and colonisation should work towards contributing to the birth of a new identity for the African by standing in rebellion against anti-African teachings. Instead, we should champion our African heritage. Only then will the true greatness of Africa be realised.

3RD PLACE

Africa: The Reservoir of the World

Mpho Ernest Moteane

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Africa is the reservoir of the world. A place where precious things are found. All the minerals such as gold, diamond, coal and oil are found in this beautiful continent. This land is filled with so much riches and rarity. Africa is what I call, 'The place of value'.

If you take a closer look at the Shape of the African continent, you will see that it has the shape of the head. A Head symbolises leadership (which in modern language is understood to be authority), which means that Africa is the head of the world. Most great and influential leaders in history hailed from Africa, which was and still is the destiny of many Africans.

Africans were destined for greatness and leadership as signified by their continent's shape. However, the West came and enslaved and lure them from recognizing their true identity. they enslaved and afflicted them because they feared that if Africans get the freedom to showcase their leadership skills and abilities, the west would be at great risk of being ruled and embittered by them.

However, as the African continent has a head shape, this also means that the problem of Africans is in the mind. Since the mind is in the head, therefore if every African can change his mindset, greatness will be inevitable. Nothing changes until you change the way you think: nothing can stop a man who

has decided to put his mind-power to work. It is not that you're inferior, it is just that in your mind you believe that you're inferior. Change the way you have conditioned your mind and your life will automatically change. One of the greatest ancient and wisest king, Solomon said, "As a man thinketh ... so is he." Whatever you think, that is exactly what you will become. I therefore, believe that God shaped the African continent a head so as to let the Africans know that the greatest key for changing their lives is in changing their minds. If they stop believing that they are inferior, their greatness will show, and if they stop believing that they are cursed, their blessings will manifest. In simpler terms, change what you believe in your mind and your life will automatically change because your life is governed by your thoughts.

Yet again, the fact that Africa is filled with all these precious stones (minerals), also means that we, as Africans are filled with wonderful treasures and precious gifts within us. Africans live in this valuable continent which is a sign that they also are valuable people. An African is filled with so much potential in a way that he can become anything that he aspires to be. God put you in Africa to show you that you are a valuable person with great potentials encapsulated within you.

The West saw the sacred riches within you and they tormented and enslaved you so that you lose sight of who you are. You're an awesome creature but they made you a slave because they were afraid that you will recognize your true identity and become who you were meant to be. Thieves don't break into empty houses, they always come to a house that is filled with riches, treasures and all the glorious things. The fact that they came to Africa is a sign that Africans are valuable and all they wanted was for you to lose sight of your identity. They made you a slave because they knew that once you realised who you were, you would be unstoppable.

In an acrostic manner here is how they define A.F.R.I.C.A(**A**fraid, **F**all, **R**ely, **I**mitate, **C**ursed, **A**fflicted). But according to me, here is the true meaning of A.F.R.I.C.A(**A**bility, **F**ly, **R**eign, **I**nitiate, **C**hosen, **A**rise). They made you **afraid** because they knew you possessed the **ability** to become great. They made you **fall** because they were scared you will **fly** high like an eagle and be above them. They made you **rely** on them but you were born to **reign**. They want you to **imitate** them because they are scared you will **initiate** something great to have your name on. They made you believe you were **curse**d when you were **chosen** even before the foundations of the world. They **afflicted** you but now it is time to **arise** and to release the wonderful treasure that God has placed within you. You are a great man and you're a great woman, don't use their definition of Africa but define your own because if you don't know who you are, they will tell you who you should be.

In the documentary I once watched about lions. I learned that lions are native to Africa and Asia. They were captured and taken to other places so that they can be there too but originally, lions are from Africa. Lions are the kings of their domain. This should teach you something like an African. You are like a lion, Africa is your home. Like a lion, you were born to rule your domain and become the leader. Therefore, be courageous like a lion, don't let them inflict fear on you rather take courage and run after your destiny. No matter how big the prey is, the lion will chase it and persist until it brings it down. Develop this kind of mentality, run after your dream regardless of how big it is and be persistent until you reach it so that you may be fulfilled.

Another interesting thing to note about lions is that they hunt together. They walk as pride. They believe in unity because

lions understand that they can bring down any prey as long as they walk and hunt together as the ancient prophet, Amos exclaimed, "Can two walk together except they agree." This is exactly what Africa needs; Unity. If Africans can be united, they can all achieve great things. Unity is a sign of reconciliation, peace and love. As an old saying goes "I can, you can but together we can do exploits." My African dream is that as Africans we develop unison amongst each other and work together in bettering our wonderful continent. Africa is the land of so much potential, the place of the courageous.

POETRY

1ST PLACE**African skies and thunder thighs*****Minenhle Khazi***

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I pray for the day when we realise that we are all beautiful,
That our dark ebony skin,
Is not of punishment of a particular sin,
When we realise that our big bushy hair,
Are the crowns that we wear,
Because we are Queens
We are women that are crafted and merely not made,
African skies and thunder thighs,
Always staying strong during the lows and the highs,
Our bodies are sculptures,
They are perfectly shaped God made no mistake,
Different sizes, shapes and colours,
Yet we were all born from the same mother!

Crafted with a purpose and vision,
God sent us to earth on a mission,
I see the pain in our eyes,
Our history is written on the back of spines,
We are African women,
You can tell by the swing in our hips,
That we will always be African Queens,
Souls that are in sync with the universe.

2ND PLACE**The Ornament of Africa: An African Woman*****Luthando Shembe***

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A living proof of life's cradle
That it all began in Africa when God created a man but that
man was not really a man without the woman I mean the
womb man, the man with a womb
So God out of his wisdom
Extracted the lonely rib of a man to create a woman
And thus the mother of all nations
was introduced to the face of this mightily beautiful land.

An African woman, the ornament of Africa
A genetic processor
The children's protector A man's helper
And for many souls to come an ancestor
Yes, she is an architect of love
with smiles drawn on the dark and lovely faces of her people
as evidence of her art
Such a pure soul like the doves of Louis Trichardt that bring
joy and harmony with their melodious cooing.
A queen by nature
Whose crown influenced the shape of the pyramids of Egypt
A warrior of kindness by heart
Whose body waist and hips inspired the curves of the
bushmen's bow
And when her land was taken away from her with cunningness
and cruelty,
she cried a great cry and her tears were given the name of
one of her conquerors, Queen Victoria!
She can still feel the pain even today

when she sees how most of her children have forsaken her
teachings and cherished the way of the coloniser
Even so, she is still an African woman,
the ornament of Africa

3RD PLACE**That revolution song*****Noluthando Loveness Mtshali***

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That revolution song was sung deep in the depths of the
mines
Where our fathers dug for gold
Which was worth more than their souls
In the heart of the earth their faces darker than coal they sang
that song,
With their sweat keeping the ground soft, lifting the pick
deeper into the earth they went
That song was for my Africa, my beautiful Africa
As she fell to her knees stripped of all her wealth
Her children made to be slaves in their own home
These slaves, her children would never be fed
I sang that song in sorrow,
My beautiful Africa do not weep
Land of my fathers do not grieve forever
That song was sung standing in the graves of fallen heroes
I sang it for Nelson Mandela when he was in prison
I sang it for Solomon Mahlangu, Steve Bantu Biko, Robert
Sobukwe
It comforted the soldiers, each rising sun they would fight for
freedom
And each night sung their song
That revolution song of hope
A LUTA CONTINUA!!!

SHORT STORIES

1ST PLACE

Lizzy Abrahams

Carissa Marnce

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Lizzy Abrahams arrived on Peterson Street at 6 pm on a Sunday evening. She swung her legs out of her yellow 1960's VW bug and onto the rocky ground of Mama Jackie's shebeen. The Eastern Cape's icy dew had already fallen this time of day, Lizzy's heels slowly sunk into the muddy ground. She drew her handbag close to her breast with a deep sigh she lowered her head and whispered, "Help me lieve Jesus."

The shebeen was packed at this hour. Smoke came billowing out of the building like a chimney, while the methodicalness of drunken men caused them to collapse on the grass outside. Clutching onto their empty bottles they reminisce on mischief that Friday and Saturday night generated. The washout brick-faced building was surrounded by darkness except for the overhanging light that shone over the plastic Castle Lager sign. Lizzy placed her hand reluctantly on the entrance door to push it open, fearing that one of the members of the *Griqua* congregational church might see her, especially nosy Sister Lousia, who always seemed to be meddling in her business. She was no stranger to this worn-out chestnut door, many Sunday evenings she would come to Mama Jackie's Shebeen in search of her husband Hendrik. After a full week of hard labour, he used the seventh day of the week to forget about his duties before starting the cycle again on Monday. Hendrik was well past the age of retirement, but he believed that death would come faster to those who agreed to rest for the remainder of their lives. Lizzy navigated her way prestigiously past drunken men to Hendrik's favourite table. She found him

resting the pillow of his body on the table and pitied him as one pities a muzzled faced pug. “*Arme ding,*” she sighed.

“Hendrik come, we are going home!” he could barely sit up straight let alone get up. Hendrik mumbled a command as she placed his brawny arm on her fragile shoulders. Once she had finally got him to stand up, Lizzy was suddenly enthralled by a story being told by a rugged-looking man on the next table. “*Beware of the mountains for they call you home.*” The man spoke of adventures from different parts of the country and the thrill they brought. She stood bewitched for at least 20 minutes before she regained her wits and continued with the task of getting Hendrik into the car.

It was 8pm when Lizzy got Hendrik into the house. He managed to stumble across the stoep to their bedroom; she left him face down on his pillow and closed the door. In her mind, she was still being haunted by the stories of the rugged man from the shebeen. Lizzy had no idea why these stories interested her; in her mind she was well past the age of adventure and had commitments to her husband, her church and her community. Nevertheless, she longed to hear more of his stories about the Drakensburg caves or the free-roaming penguins of boulders beach. With no hesitation, she rushed to the kitchen to get some biltong and bread and put it into a lunch box. She jumped into her yellow bug and rode to Mama Jackie’s shebeen for a second time. Her delicate knees clutched together as she swung her legs out onto the ground. This time the air was colder, she knew her legs would make her pay for all this excitement later on. She slammed the door and walked up the rocky pathway as fast as she could. The building was still as she left it, full of smoke with drunken men parading outside. Lizzy walked strategically to the table she found the rugged man on and just as she hoped he was there. Feeling a bit uncertain she handed him the lunch box, he looked up at her. “*eet*” she pleaded.

He ripped the lid off and began devouring the biltong and bread in front of her. Lizzy smiled nervously and sat down on the chair across from him. “Tell me one of your stories *asseblief*.” The man chuckled and wiped his mouth with his sleeve and began one of many tales that would be shared between them.

Over the course of a few months, the ritual between Lizzy and the rugged man continued.

Each Sunday evening at precisely 6 pm she would arrive at Mama Jackie’s shebeen, navigate her way to the table right at the back and place a lunchbox with biltong and bread in front of him as a sort of payment for his stories. On one particular evening, the two were interrupted by the voice of Pastor Jan and Sister Louisa from the *Griqua* congregational church.

“I told you Pastor she comes here every Sunday, and she calls herself a Christian, Sies!” sneered Sister Louisa.

“What am I seeing!” exclaimed Pastor Jan. “*Haai!* Lizzy what is a good standing woman like you doing in the devil’s playground?” questioned the Pastor.

The enchantment from Lizzy’s face turned to sudden embarrassment. She folded her hands neatly in her lap and faced the ground like a child receiving a scolding from their parents. “You are a hypocrite my sister, pretending to be an upstanding woman in our community while you keep the company of thieves and criminals. This is a great sin, and you need to repent immediately, or the lord will turn his back on you!” yelled Pastor Jan as if he was preaching to his congregation. “You must leave immediately with me, and we will prepare the reconciliation oils,” commanded the Pastor.

Lizzy clutched onto her handbag and was getting up to leave with the Pastor when she had a sudden epiphany. Her entire life had been about pleasing someone else, when she was little, it was being obedient to her father, when she got married it was being an obedient wife and now Pastor Jan was telling her to repent of the one activity that had given her the most excitement in years.

“Hurry up Lizzy we must get to the church before the maintenance man locks up.” “No.” mumbled Lizzy under her breath.

“What was that?” questioned the pastor.

“*Aikona*, I think she said she likes being a sinner!” barked Sister Lousia.

Lizzy raised her head and fixed her eyes on the two of them. “I may be a sinner, but I am going to be a sinner that makes their own choices” declared Lizzy. “Thanks for your concern, Pastor Jan but I would rather have adventures than a reputation.” She turned to the rugged man “And as for you my friend I thank you for all your stories, but I think it’s time I start living my own.” With that remark Lizzy Abrahams stormed out of the shebeen.

When the following Sunday evening came Lizzy Abrahams swung her legs out of her yellow 1960’s VW bug but this time, not onto Mama Jackie’s shebeen’s rocky ground instead of lush green grass beside a lake in the Drakensburg.

Glossary of terms used:

Liewe Jesus – Dear God

Griqua – A Subgroup of multiracial coloured people who have an early history in the Cape colony

Arme ding – Poor thing

Stoep- A veranda in front of the house

Eet- Eat

Asseblief- Please

Sies- A remark of disgust

Haai- A word to strongly protest something

Aikona- An emphatic word to say no

2ND PLACE**The mighty Khabazela's repentance*****Siphesihle Mthethwa***

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“It’s been ages since I waited for my umqombothi! All this woman know is to drag her lazy feet. It seems like I wasted my lobola here. Where the hell is she? MaDlamini!” The roar of Mkhize chased even his dog away. Bhekani and Lindiwe made sure not to be in their father’s sight. Pity for MaDlamini who had no choice but to respond to the call for it was not to be ignored. If it was by any chance, last night’s history may repeat itself in this early cold and drizzling morning.

“So... so... sokha... sokhaya...” stuttered MaDlamini in a shaking voice as she suddenly got cold feet. She knew her husband never had to repeat himself when he called. “So... so... usunamalimi MaDlamini? Where is my IsiZulu?” Mocked Mkhize. MaDlamini came into the room with traditional beer. She knelt before her husband and gave him to drink. He took the beer and without even saying thank you, he took the beer with a big smile on his face as he held it. His smile only lasted for less than ten seconds then he turned to her in a mean and disgusted look.

“MaDlamini! is this my traditional beer or your mother’s spit?” “I’m afraid baba that’s the last of it and I intend to prepare some later today”. He shook his head in disbelief “This is an insult. I am a Zulu man, and my tummy cannot be filled by this drop you just gave me. It seems as if you are forgetting your place MaDlamini. Uyivila MaDlamini!” Mkhize said as he took the first sip of the beer. MaDlamini asked for her husband’s permission to go and help wherever she could

at the Langa's homestead not so far from their home.

“That’s the only thing you know MaDlamini! Imizi yabantu. I do not have my traditional beer and yet you want to go and feed other men. Are there not enough women to help at the Langa’s? can’t they do a thing without you? what are you? Their foreman?” yelled Khabazela. MaDlamini wiped tears and humbly apologised to her husband and reminded him how Mrs Langa helped them during their daughter’s umhlonyane the previous year. After hearing his wife’s plea, he reluctantly permitted her to go.

Soon after she left, someone sang clan praises at the Khabazela’s gate. “Sikhulekile ekhaya koMkhize, Khabazela, Ngunezi...” said a man at the gate. “You sing praises in the wee hours of the morning at my house, is your business at your own home too much for you?” rudely replied Khabazela as he invites the man in. “Oh, it’s you Mbovu, how are you? what’s wrong? is your wife dancing in your head?” Ngubane knowing how rude Khabazela is turned a blind eye to that and asked for a drink. Khabazela mocked his wife’s beer and told Ngubane that he was on his way to attend a ritual ceremony at the Langa’s

The two men left Mkhize’s home and headed to Langa’s home. The atmosphere at the Langa’s homestead was joyful. There was noise everywhere, at times you needed to shout when you spoke with someone. Mr Langa was performing a welcoming ceremony for his son Xolani who was working at the mines. Mrs Langa was also in high spirits about the ceremony because that meant that should she and her husband pass on, there are two men to look after their home and children.

The Langa traditional ceremony had been a success, and everyone feasted very well. MaDlamini was already at home

when her husband came back. She was busy brewing the traditional beer for her husband. She had hoped that on the following day she would wake up early and cook it. Khabazela entered the house and went straight to his chair and chatted with his wife. They revised the day and spoke about how profound was Khabazela's talent for leading traditional songs. They would sing some and Khabazela would dance with his feet as he sat on the chair.

Everything was merry until Khabazela said he was thirsty. MaDlamini shivered as she knew she had nothing to quench her lion's thirst and she knew that the lion will devour her alive. She spoke softly, "Baba, I gave you the last beer in the morning. As you see me up and down in the house I am brewing another one my husband as I have pro...". She could not even finish her sentence. Khabazela roared like a trapped lion wanting to be set free. He shouted at his wife demanding the traditional beer. Pity for MaDlamini she could not give her and for that, she was beaten like a criminal who had been beaten by a mob.

Meanwhile at the Langa's. The brothers, Xolani and Sphe were chatting about how Xolani's ceremony had been. "Ay bafo, the ancestors are happy that you are home, look at the rain outside?" said Sphe. "Impela brother, indeed I am happy to be home as well. I have long been searching for myself," replied Xolani. The brothers went on about the success of the ceremony and about the girls they took fancy of. Things turned awkward when Sphe mentioned Lindiwe Mkhize.

His brother warned him about her human version of a lion father who was feared even by chickens. He even reminded Sphe of how MaDlamini was bruised in her neck. Sphe, being a social worker got sick worried about the violence that took place at the Mkhize home and he had a perfect plan to speak to Mkhize about his behaviour.

The following morning, MaDlamini was preparing to go to church and making breakfast for her husband. She had been beaten badly the previous night and she limped. She called her daughter Lindiwe and sent her to the shop to buy bread since they had none. Her son Bhékani walked in and greeted her calmly and asked how were her pains. Bhékani,” but mom I do not like the way dad treats you. sometimes I feel like knocking his head with my knobkerrie.” “No my son, he is still your father and he is my husband. He will change, you will be surprised” said MaDlamini. Bhékani was not convinced but he could not argue with his mom. He asked for her permission to go with his friend to take the cattle to the dip.

On his way out he bumped into his father Khabazela, who nearly knocked him down with his fighting stick and instructed him to inject the sick goat. MaDlamini warmly greeted her husband, “Khabazela wami”. Khabazela replied rudely “You must be delighted for coming to earth with Khabazela”. “Haw baba, how can you harshly respond to my greeting?”. Khabazela paid no attention to her question and instead asked for his daughter: “Where is that useless lazy daughter of yours? I have not seen her.” “Hawu baba, you can’t say that she is your daughter too. I sent her to buy bread so that I may make breakfast for you. I have also prepared clothes for you so that we may go to church” said MaDlamini.

Khabazela laughed mockingly and said, “MaDlamini, how many times must I tell you that the church is for women and men are supposed to go and drink. You are swearing me in the yards of Ngunezi, you have some nerve woman!” Khabazela left her standing like that. He stopped not very far from her and pretended to beat her “Ngizoku... phinda!” MaDlamini nearly fainted but was glad she was not beaten. Soon after her husband had left, she cancelled making breakfast and left for church.

Meanwhile, Mr Langa was in high spirit in the morning after his son's ceremony. He called both his sons to make preparations for the men who were to arrive for a traditional beer and some leftover meat from the ceremony. The sons obeyed and the men arrived. Xolani brought traditional beer. Soon after he left, Sphe came with a bottle of an expensive whisky. The men triumphed at the arrival of Sphe and asked him questions about his well-being and what he does for a living. He explained calmly that he was a social worker and is based in Durban. They also asked what does a social worker do. He thought to himself, this was the chance to pass the message to Khabazela and he started speaking:

“My job as a social worker is to work closely with homes that are affected by violence. This is picked up from a child's behaviour at school and we are trained to probe a child into speaking the truth. We cannot run away from the fact that in some homes there are lions who roar loud and are ready to devour anything on their way. The kids may run away and hide but the poor woman becomes the devil's prey. If need be, we involve the police and we take the lion and lock it in the zoo with other lions so that there may be peace at home. It is better to be respected than to be feared. Work on earning your respect as a man and not to be feared because that may affect the children psychologically. What example are you setting to your sons?”

He was so pleased with himself at the thought that he got through to Khabazela, who seemed not to paying attention to him but the traditional beer in his hands. However, He picked up the mentioning of lions and asked for clarity. He got furious and chased Sphe away when he discovered that by lions he was referring to men who beat up their wives like him. The men drank and had meat. Unusually Khabazela left a bit early

for his home. He was not too drunk either, he was just tipsy. On the way home, he started revising what Sphe had said earlier. He thought: “Ewu! What a monster I have become. Am I respected or feared?”

The Mkhizes must be turning in their graves for the man I have become. Is what I am what I want my son to be? I do not recall ever supporting him as he grows. What about my daughter? If I am like this will she ever want to marry and have a husband? will I ever receive her lobola? My dear wife, I remember the day we got married, I said to her till death do us part, it seems like and I am the one killing her. Maybe she is dead already, all that’s left is for her to have eternal rest. She must be a walking corpse...” He even thought out loud and got shocked as he arrived home. A moment later, his wife joined him from church, she walked with her daughter who ran away in the sight of her father.

MaDlamini reluctantly moved closer to him. She feared that she may be beaten once again since the traditional beer was not yet ready and it was unusual for her husband to be home early.

Khabazela made her feel at ease, “Fear not my wife, we are not fighting today, come and sit with me here. Lindiwe!” He called his daughter, who came quickly with his chair. “Sit next to your mother my daughter. Where is your brother? I want to speak with you as a family”. By a coincidence, Bhekani walked in and sat where his father pointed. Khabazela started addressing his family. “I have had an eye-opener, or I had deep thoughts. It does not matter which one is which, what matters is that from now going forth, things will change. I know that things are not well here in my house, and I am the root cause. I am very sorry for that, MaDlamini, I have failed you as a husband, Lindiwe, I have failed you as a father. Bhekani, I have

failed you as a father and a mentor. From now moving forward, I shall support you every step of the way. Take only the good on earth and leave out the bad. By so doing, you will grow up and be a man I never was.”

MaDlamini cried, thinking about what she has gone through at her home but she happy that those days were over. Khabazela is becoming the man she married, the man who loved him. Lindiwe left to prepare supper. Bhekani thanked his father and asked for permission to rehearse with his group which he led in traditional dance. Khabazela gladly permitted him and asked him to go call his group so that he too may see what they were doing and how they were doing.

He started boasting about his son, “You see our son MaDlamini? He is a leader” he said. “He took from you myeni wami. He couldn't have a better father”. she replied. They looked at each other and smiled to themselves. Khabazela was deeply remorseful inside for the abusive man he had been. MaDlamini was crying inside but she had hope that her husband has changed.

3RD PLACE

For My Dear Daughter

Benedicta Makhaye

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I believe that a mother and daughter should share everything emotionally and otherwise. So today I decided to write to you because some things are better written than said aloud. When it is written in ink it is permanent never to be erased, it is incriminating because I could never go back on my word and also you can always go back to read it again and again.

Things are hard without you here; little things remind me of you. The pretty baby clothing in the shops, the pregnant lady walking past, even the annoying baby in the taxi I wish was you. I fail to explain the feelings I have as I carry on with my day-to-day stuff but what I want to tell you is, you are always and will be always in my heart and thoughts. I feel an empty space and no matter how hard I try it is not filled. The love I have for you is the love I will not have for any other person. Most times I cry in remembering what could have been.

Our relationship is different because I thought by this time I would have you in my arms. By this time, you and I would be the best of friends, I would call you even after the biggest of storms. By this time, I would know that you need me, I would know that I have to hurry what I am doing because at home there is a little creature dying for my attention. Our relationship is different from the one that I have with your older sister because you were stillborn. I cannot hold you in my arms, I cannot make you calm, nor can I make you my best friend. I am not even sure if you need me. But I love you no less than how much I love your sister. You are my second child

and if someone asks me how many children I have I say two without even thinking.

As much as I know the medical term of why you died '*ABRUPTIO PLACENTA*' I still fail to understand why it happened to us as only 1% of pregnancies end this way. Do all women in the same situation ask this question or is it only me? Am I selfish for asking because I can have another baby when some cannot even conceive and yearn for the 33 weeks that I had with you? Some even say it's better that you have a stillbirth than losing a grown child, but how do they know if they have never experienced the pain of having a stillbirth? I speak for all women when I say losing a child is difficult and the pain is always there no matter at which stage of their life they pass.

One day I hope I will have other children but always know that in my heart your place will never be taken.