UMagozwe

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(imageless edition)

Kwidolophukazi exakekileyo yaseNairobi, kude le nekhaya elinenkathalo, kwakuhlala iqela lamakhwenkwe angenakhaya. Babejongana nosuku ngalunye ngendlela oluze ngayo. Ngantsasa ithile la makhwenkwe ayesonga iingutyana zawo zokulala emva kokulala kwipavumente ebandayo. Babebasa umlilo ngenkukuma ukugxotha ingqele. Phakathi kwala makhwenkwe kwakukho inkwenkwe egama linguMagozwe. Wayengoyena umncinane kubo bonke.

Abazali bakaMagozwe basweleka eneminyaka emihlanu kuphela. Waya kuhlala nomalume wakhe. Le ndoda yayingayikhathalelanga le nkwenkwana. Wayengamniki nditsho nokutya okwaneleyo. Wayemsebenzisa okwekhoboka.

Umalume kaMagozwe wayembetha xa ekhalaza okanye ebuza imibuzo. Xa uMagozwe ebuza ukuba angaya na esikolweni, umalume wakhe wayembetha athi, “Usisidenge esingenakufunda nto.” Emva kweminyaka emithathu yalempatho uMagozwe wabaleka wamshiya umalume wakhe. Waya kuhlala esitalatweni.

Babunzima ubomi basesitalatweni kwaye la makhwenkwe etsala nzima imihla ngemihla ukufumana ukutya. Maxa wambi babebanjwa, maxa wambi bebethwa. Xa begula kwakungekho mntu wokubanceda. Babexhomekeke kwimalana ababeyifumana ngokungqiba, bethengisa neeplastiki nenkukuma ephinda isetyenziswe kwakhona. Ubomi babubanzima kakhulu ngenxa yemilo namanye amaqela awayefuna ukulawula iingingqi ezithile kulodolophukazi.

Ngenye imini uMagozwe wathi ekhangela emigqomeni wafumana incwadi endala yamabali. Wayivuthulula wayifaka kwingxowana yakhe. Wayeyikhupha mihla le abukele imifanekiso ekuloo ncwadi. Wayengakwazi ukufunda amagama.

Le mifanekiso yayibalisa ngenkwenkwana eyakhula yaba ngumqhubi weenqwelo-moya. UMagozwe wayephupha ngokuba ngumqhubi weenqwelo-moya. Maxa wambi wayezibona eyile nkwenkwana ikweli bali.

Kwakubanda uMagozwe emi ecaleni kwendlela engqiba. Kweza indoda kuye. “Molo, ndinguThomas. Ndisebenza kufutshane apha, kwindawo onokufumana kuyo into etyiwayo,” yatsho indoda. Yakhomba kumzi otyheli onophahla olubhlowu. “Ndiyathemba ukuba uyakuya phaya uyokufumana ukutya?” yabuza. UMagozwe wajonga kule ndoda, wajonga kulo mzi. “Mhlawumbi,” watsho waze wahamba.

Kwiinyanga ezilandelayo la makhwenkwe angenamakhaya aqhelana nokubona uThomas. Wayekuthanda ukuthetha nabantu, ingakumbi abantu abahlala esitalatweni. UThomas wayephulaphula amabali angobomi babantu. Wayeqinisekile kwaye enomonde kwaye engakhe abekrwada okanye angabina ntlonipho. Amanye amakhwenkwe aqalisa ukuya kulendlu ityheli nabhlowu ukuya kufumana isidlo sasemini.

UMagozwe wayehleli kwipavumente ebuka incwadi yakhe yemifanekiso kwaze kwafika uThomas wahlala ecaleni kwakhe. “Ingaba lingantoni eli bali?” wabuza uThomas. “Lithetha ngenkwenkwana eyaba ngumqhubi weenqwelo-moya,” waphendula uMagozwe. “Ngubani igama lalenkwenkwana?” wabuza uThomas. “Andilazi, andikwazi ukufunda,” watsho uMagozwe ethethela phantsi.

Ukudibana kwabo, uMagozwe waxelela uThomas ngebali lakhe. Wamxelela ngomalume wakhe nesizathu sokuba abaleke. UThomas wayengathethi kakhulu, kwaye wayengamxeleli uMagozwe kuba enze ntoni na, kodwa wayephulaphula ngononophelo. Maxa wambi babencokola ngeli lixa besitya kwindlu enophahla olubhlowu.

Kufutshane nomhla wokuzalwa kaMagozwe egqiba iminyaka elishumi, uThomas wamnika incwadi yamabali entsha. Yayithetha ngenkwenkwana eyakhulela ezilalini eyakhula yaba ngumdlali webhola odumileyo. UThomas wamfundela le ncwadi uMagozwe amaxa amaninzi waza wathi ngenye imini, “Ndicinga ukuba kufuneka uye esikolweni ukwazi ukufunda. Ucinga ntoni wena?” UThomas wathi kukho indawo ayaziyo apho abantwana bavunyelwa ukuba bahlale baye nasesikolweni.

UMagozwe wacinga ngalendawo intsha nangokuya esikolweni. Mhlawumbi umalume wakhe wayelungile xa esithi usisidenge esinganakho ukufunda nto? Angathini xa benokumbetha kulendawo intsha. Wayesoyika. “Mhlawumbi kungcono ahlale esitalatweni,” wacinga ngolo hlobo.

Waxelela uThomas ngoloyiko lwakhe. Ekuhambeni kwexesha le ndoda yamthembisa ukuba ubomi bunokuba ngcono kulendawo intsha.

Ngoko ke uMagozwe wafumana igumbi lokuhlala kumzi onophahla oluluhlaza namanye amakhwenkwe amabini. Babelishumi bebonke abantwana ababehlala kweli khaya. Kwakukho noMama uCissy nomyeni wakhe, izinja ezintathu, ikati kunye nebhokhwe endala.

UMagozwe waqala isikolo kwaye kwakunzima. Wayesemva ngomsebenzi omninzi kakhulu. Maxa wambi wayefuna ukunikezela. Kodwa wayecinga ngomqhubi weenqwelo-ntaka kunye nomdlali webhola awayefunda ngabo kwiincwadi zakhe zamabali. Wayenganikezeli efana nabo.

UMagozwe wayehleli eyadini kwindlu enophahla oluluhlaza efunda incwadi yamabali yasesikolweni. UThomas weza kuhlala ecaleni kwakhe. “Lingantoni eli bali?” wabuza uThomas. “Limalunga nenkwenkwana eyaba nguTitshala,” waphendula uMagozwe. “Ngubani igama lalenkwenkwana?” wabuza uThomas. “Igama layo nguMagozwe,” waphendula enoncumo uMagozwe.

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