UJUJUJU

NO

MHLA NGENQABA

NGU

ZORA Z. T. FUTSHANE

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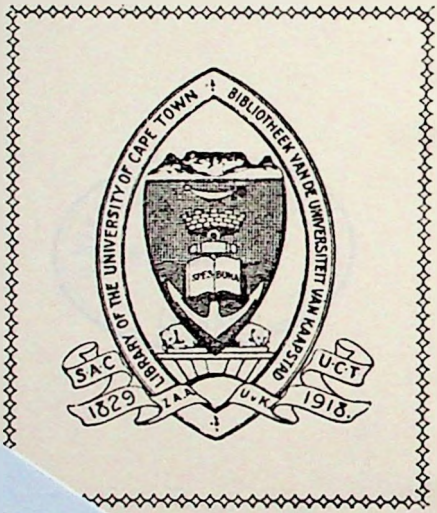

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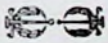


THE LOVEDALE PRESS
1960

ISALATHISO

ISAHLUKO

ISAHLUKO I

UJUJUJU

Bekusebusika, kanye ngexesha lokufa kweyeNtlaba, umzi uhlangene kwaZenzile. Yinyambalala ngasebuhlanti phaya sekungathi bubugqwangu obu. Apha naphaya phakathi kwale ntlaninge yabantu ubungabona ukumenyezela kwebhekile nongxawu botywala.

Malunga ngaphambili kobuhlanti kuthe tshitshilili iqela longxawu abezamazamana nabo amadodana athand' ukusukela ubuqina. Ecaleni kobuhlanti amadoda amakhulu ebehleli nocumse nawo ; eli xa abafana bebeman' ukuphazanyiswa ngophakathi kwezinye. Kwakusitshiwo futhi ukuthiwa, le nto umfana ayilungi yakuthandana neendawo ezinoJongwaliphela—iganyana ababebuteketisa ngalo obu tywala.

Abafazi bona bebezalise ezantsi kobuhlanti phaya. Kambe bona bebengenasigxina kwesi siyunguma, ngaphandle kokumana kubizwa nje lowo nalowo : " Nobani khawuze kurabula apha ! Nonantsi vela urabule !" Arabule ke lowo ubiziweyo ayibuyise ibhekile leyo. Bebengafuni bona nto ngaphandle kwamashiqa ebebethi bazilibazise ngawo ngexesha amadoda abo asaselayo.

Kaloku obu tywala bonke bebuselwa ngasebuhlanti, ngesizathu sokuba indlu kaNosayini umfazi omncinane kaZenzile ibisenye, ke ebengenakho ukuthi utywala bendlu yakhe abusilele kwaNowayiti umfazi omkhulu, ngokukodwa njengoko uNowayiti ebehletywa ngokuba akayedwa.

Lithe lakubon' ukuba selizivelele iintatyana zaseNtshonalanga, kwabonakala ukuba abantu mabaye ngeendawo zabo. Kaloku nabafazi balapha, akukho bani uya kulondoloza

abantwana emakhaya. Benjenjeya abantu ukugoduka, kungabangakho nto itheni, kuba ibe iyintselo nje yokufudumeza umzi ; ingenasizathu, nasici. Yaphela loo mini njengeemini zonke.

Mhlawumbi ningandingqinela xa ndithi aba bantu babonwabe kakhulu. Khawucinge ukuthi kanti kuhleliwe, konwatyiwe, kuyaselwa kuyancokolwa, kuyahlekwa—lonke ilanga lehlobo. Nabanxilileyo abadanga baqondwe ukunxila kwabo kwada kwasendleleni egodukayo.

Lo mzi kaZenzile wawumi phezu kwendulana evelele umlanjana ekuthiwa liGwenxane, kwilali kaLuhlaza, kummandla wakuCentane. Ngakwicala elingaseNtshonalanga ubusithi uphuma nje ube ungena ezindongeni. Ngaphaya kweendonga, malunga ngezantsi, isithuba esinga ziimayile ezintathu kusukwa endlwini ibisisinga esikhulu. Usilandele, siya kukufikisa eludadeni olukhulu kakhulu.

Ngaphambili nangasempumalanga ibilithafana elibuthambeka elifika linqunyulwe zizixhotyana ezingeni, ezithi nazo ziphelele eludadeni apho. Kwicala langasemva ubungeboni nto ngaphandle kwemizi emininzi. Ibibetha kwakufuphi apha indlela enkulu yeenqwelo, eya evenkileni kwaBhili nakwezinye iindawo.

Olu dada lukhulu kunene belusaziwa ngokuba kuseGqubeni. Eli gama le ndawo yalifumana ngokusuka ithi phakathi ehlathini ibe neendawo eziyingqushu. Kucacile ukuba kulapho kuhlanganisana khona zonke izihandiba zehlathi. Noxa abantwana babengazange bavunyelwe ukuba bahambe apha ngenxeni yobunzulu obabuye bubekho kwezinye iindawo ; bekusithi bakufika neziqhamo eziyolisayo—ozingwenye, oziphingo, omigxube, onontongwana, umswi njalonjalo—banyibilike onina, ibethwe ngoyaba into yokuya kwabo egqubeni.

Ezi ziqhamo bekufikwa nazo ngexesha lasentshonalanga. Kothi xa kudityanwayo okokuqala oko kusile lusapho lomzi,

kuthi kudliwa iindaba zezinto ngezinto ezenzekileyo kube kumungunywa, kuhlafunwa, ngabafazi nabantwana. Bomana bebuza oyise emakhwenkweni ukuba ziphelele na iigusha neenkomo. Akhe azibona na iibhokhwe. Bezisaphilile zonke na. Iziqhamo zona bezibakho wonke umnyaka. Ezasebusika xa kuvunwayo zizodwa, oziphingo njalonjalo. Ehlotyeni akho amakhiwane neentinyaza.

ISAHLUKO 2

UMZI KAZENZILE

Abafazi bakaZenzile babebabini. UNowayiti umfazi omkhulu ubenguMaDongwe intombi yaphesheya kweBawa—umlanjana ongena eGcuwa, kwesikaMthintsilana, emaMfengwini. Le ntombi yayingafunwa nguShiqi uyise kaZenzile. Naxa amaMfengu namaXhosa kwakuse kusokhelwana imililo bebengekade babe ngabantu abakhothana neam, kuba amaMfengu ebehletywa ngobuthi. Yaba nje indaba yokuzekwa kwale ntombi yakwaNgevane uMaDongwe.

Kwabakho intlombe yeKilisimesi kumzi othile phezu kweGcuwa, kwilali yamaMfengu. Ubukhulu beentlombe ezilolo hlobo bungathelekelelwa ngowakha wazibona kuphela. Wamema wabhekeqeka umfo omkhulu. Yaqala ngoLwesihlanu ngokuhlwa yaphuma kusasa ngoMvulo.

Phambi kokuba iphume njengesiqhelo, kwabakho iketile. Apha ke kuxhentsa iingcungela zodwa ebaleni phambi kwendlu. Yazibalula apho intombi kaNgevane, ngehombo, nangelizwi layo elicacileyo, eliyole kunene. Yangena njalo entliziyweni kaZenzile.

UZenzile ubeyindoda ethe ngqe. Izilimela zakhe engumfana bezimashumi mabini anomvo. Ubengumdaka ono-

bom, ondlekile. Into esiqhukuva ngathi licongwane lenkabi yenkomo ; efanelwe sisivatho sayo mhla ngesiyunguma. Uyise ukhe wanga angamangala ngokuthi akusesikweni phakathi kwabakowabo ukuba umfana azibonele intombi kanti newayo alaziwa. Kodwa kusuke kwabonakala ukuba unyana wakhe ungenwe kakhulu yile nto. Athethene ngoko amanantsi angoyise noyisekazi. Kwathunyelwa abantu ukuba bayihambise baye kuhlola umzi lowo. Babuya bengayihlanganisi imilomo, bencoma. Yaba iyamila njalo loo ndlu yama-Tshawe namaDongwe.

Kwathi emva kwenyanga wabe uNowayiti seleququzela emzini wakhe.

URaheli wayethandwa kakhulu yindoda yakhe uYakobi. Ngeso sizathu iNkosi yamvala akafumana bantwana. Yaba seso kuNowayiti. Wadleka kakhulu uZenzile emsa emagqireni lo mfazi wakhe. Akadanga wancedeka noko. Kuthe xa kulapho wacinga nzulu. Waqonda ukuba angahle asweleke engashiyanga nyana uya kuba yindla-lifa. Kunjalo nje amaxhego namaxhegokazi athanda kakhulu ukuteketisa.

Kubonakele ukuba makafunelwe omnye umfazi. Yabonwa intombi kaDuna, uMamKwayi owathiywa igama elinguNosayini. Iintombi zamaXhosa asibantu banaluchuku. Noko kunjalo ubukhosikazi bukaNowayiti buhle bamkhulela uNosayini. Wathi efika, wabe efuna iindlela zokujalisa uNowayiti. Uthe akuzuza umntwana wakhe wamazibulo, walifumana icebo lakhe lokungena.

Kungexesha lide kwabe sekuthe ndii ezokuba uNowayiti uyathakatha. UZenzile akuyihletyelwa le nto ayiqalanga izinze ezingcingeni zakhe. Kodwa yintoni na ephumelela njengecebo longendawo ? Uthe omnye ngenye imini kuZenzile :—" Njengokuba uyimfama nje, uya kuqabuka mhlana uMaDongwe wabulala aba bantwana bakaNosayini." Hayi wanga akayiva naleyo. Kodwa ube ngazama ukuyiphelisa kuthi tu engqondweni—unotshe !

ISAHLUKO 3.

ULUTSHA

Kusekungeneni kokwindla. Umbona akakafulwa. Amazimba agwangqa kucacile ukuba akalindwanga ngenyameko abayi kuzuza nto abawalimileyo. Phezu koko, yonke indoda mayibe nesisele samazimba. Andithi kaloku wonke umfo oselayo kufuneka esilile? Nguwuphi umfazi onokwenza utywala obububo ngaphandle kwamazimba!

Amantombazana avuka kwakusasa kuba ujobela ubesel' ezibonakalisile neqela lakhe leentakazana. Intsholo yakhe ka-zwi-zwi! jwi-jwi!! ungayiva wakuthi gontshi emfuleni apha.

Kwakusasa, ilanga lingekaphumi—phofu iintaka zona sezivukile—iindlela zibomvu ngamantombazana aya kuphangela emasimini. Amanye akroqozisa iibhekile ukuze afumane izinto zokusela xa anxaniweyo. Wambi athwele iimbiza aya kuziphekela ngazo, kuba imini yonke azimisele ukuyichitha emasimini apho.

Kwakula, kukho aphethe izikhuni zomlilo. Akutshiwo yini na ukuba kulungile ukuziqhumisela iintaka ngamanye amaxesha? Khona aya kutshaya ngani xa aphumleyo. Kwamanye amaphempe sewungabonayo ukuqhuma komsi, uwuve umkhwazo wokugxotha iintaka kukuqhwaba kwezandla. Hobe!! Ho-o-be!! Bambi bade bazenzele izibongo ezi ntaka. Bacinga ukuba zothomalala yiloo nto, zide zililibale neephango.

Nditsho kuba emva komzuzwana wova enye intokazi seyidanduluka ngo:—

Nomyayi ndophoyana
Esitiyeni ndophoyana
Kwesabantwana ndophoyana
Udl' amazimba ndophoyana.

Okanye :— Nomya-yi ! No-o-mya-a-yi !
Uli-i-se-e-la
Uwadlel' an' smazimba kabawo ?

Kucace mhlophe ukuba kuzo zonke ezi ntaka, eyona iva kakhulu amantyontyelo ngunomyayi lo. Kambe nokukhathaza nguyena unenkathazo kuzo zonke iintaka, nangaphezu kojobela. Yena ukwanengcwangu. Akakuthandi ukukhwazwa. Selesuka athi ngomsindo aphaphe, aye kuthabatha isitha sonomyayi beze bonke bazame ukuyitshabalalisa kuthi tu loo ntsimi. Naso esinye sezizathu ezibanga ukuba amantombazana amphathe ngokuthambileyo unomyayi.

Ziqengqelekile iintsuku zeveki. SekungoMgqibelo. Iintombi ezinxibayo sezimkile emasimini ukuya kulungiselela ingomso. Phofu kusesemini kuba kuxa liqalayo ukuthambeka. Kodwa ilanga selihle litshone ngoku ; ngakumbi ngoMgqibelo. Zingagqitywa zonke iinto ez melwe ukwenziwa —ukusinda, ukuhlamba nokolula impahla, nokungqushela icawa, okanye ukusila izigezenga ekothi kuvutywe ngazo ngokuhlwa.

Ngeli xesha ezinye iintombi nazo ziqudalele ngasemaphempeni. Ziqhagamshela iintsimbi ebezithe xa kuhlohlwayo zasalela azagqitywa. Le yimini eyolileyo—imini yentlombe. Azizi kubonakala apho yini na iintombi zabanumzana ?

Kaloku ngeli xesha, kanye emva kwemfazwe kaMlanjeni nokhumbula ukuba amaXhosa namaMfengu kulo Centane usingisele nganeno ebexube kakhulu. Ngoko ke bekuhanjelwana eziyungumeni ngabadala nabatsha. Kwezi ntlanga zimbini, intsimbi le ibisisona sivatho siphambili. Intombi yesinhanha ibibonakala ngenani longcenge namanqashela. Ontsaka bebephi, izinqumla-ntloko, njalonjalo.

Sonke isinxibo esizukileyo siyathandeka. Ubungemangaliswe wakubona nabashumayeli bemile ecaleni lendlela bebuka isinxibo sala maqaba evela ezintlombeni nasemitshotshweni ngentsasa yecawa. Omnye wobuza—la maqaba engazi nto

nje wona, engenaSabatha ayikhathaleleyo yintoni na ebibanga ukuba ahlale iveki yonke ; aye emitshotshweni nasezintlombeni ngemini yeNkosi ?

Impendulo ithi :—nina nithanda ukuya nini na ezinkonzweni nasemidanisweni ? Aniyi ekupheleni kweveki sini na ?

Indalo yona inye, koMnyama nakoBomvu, oMhlophe noGwangqa. Umahluko ongaba ukho ngosithi sizibekele sizenzele ngokwethu, kungengakuba sadalwa sinjalo. Loo nto ithi hleka maxa wonwabileyo, ikho kuyo yonke into ethi Ntu. Ngokunjalo nakwezililisayo.

Ibinjalo intlalo yaba bantu. Ngalinye babonwabe kuloo nto bayiyo. Bezikho izikolo, zikho nezinala. Nalapha kwaLuhlaza abantwana bebesiya esikolweni. Ewe, ebesel' emaninzi namaKristu. Amantombazana ebehle akhutshwe ngenxa yomsebenzi wasemakhaya ; nangenxa yokuba abo bangamaqaba abantwana bebethi kamsinya balindiselwe ukwendiswa. Yakuthomba mayingabi saphinda ifunde.

ISAHLUKO 4.

UZELWE UNYANA

Kwalile xa intombi kaZenzile yomfazi omncinane iminyaka mihlanu wacelwa uNowayiti ukuba aye kowabo. Wanqwenela ukukhe alinge awasemaMfengwini amagqira. Kungathi kanti oku kuthethwayo kuyinto. Wahamba njalo ke. Walala endleleni ngosuku lokuqala. Kwasa ephathelela, wafika kowabo emini ngoLwesibini.

Akuphelanga mnyaka ebuyile, wamfumana unyana wakhe wamazibulo owathiywa igama elinguDelihlazo. Koko elo alizange lidume, ndaweni yalo kwakhula eso siteketiso abesakubizwa ngaso nguyise, uJujuju maqegw' amdaka ; ixhalanga elimaphik' anentsente.

Ngubani othi umntwana akanangqondo ? Likho yini igqira elinje ngaye eliva kwasesandleni ukuba lo asinguye ubani ? Umntwana ngumdibanisi wemihlambi ebisalana, kwanjengokuba ngenxa yomntwana abebekhothana wobona sebeyinyoka nesele ! Loo nto sobe siyiqonde kamsinyane.

UJujuju waba yimbasa le kuyise. Unyana amfumene selengxamele ukumncama, emva kokubila esoma ! Andithi na amahashe ayexhinkxa exhibitheka imihla nezolo kufunelwa unina kaJujuju amayeza ? Ngani ke ukuba angambizi ngelo gama athi,

Jujuju maqegw' amdaka
Ixhalanga elimaphik' anentsente,
Awu ! ndithe ndisemi esangweni
Thu ! yavel' inkwenkwan' omXhosa,
Umdak' omnyama ngathi akahlambi,
Kanti yint' aph' eyathwasa kudala.
Madoda, yekan' umona.
Bafazi yini n' ikhwel' eli ?
Aniliboni na iqegu likaTshawe ?
NguXam onewatsh' igama lalo—
Ixhalang' elinentsente elidl' emhlambini.
Umtshana weentombi zasemaBheleni.
UJujuju omaqegw' amdaka kayise !

Isiqhelo siyayoyisa ingqondo. Wothi ukuze uyiqonde loo nto uyilinge ngokwakho. Thabatha umcephe wamanzi usele yonke imihla xa uvukayo. Kungekudala wosoloko uvuka unxaniwe.

Mhla waqingqa uJujuju kumhla wahlukana nonina. Wongxola, alwe, acenge, athini. Hayi bo ! Wonke umntu kuloo lali wofika ekhala ngomntwana kaNowayiti. Amantombazana afuna ukumbeleka, atsalana ngaye, amanye alangazelela ukuhamba naye xa aya kukha imifuno emadizeni. Bambi ubungafika bemphethe ngohlobo oluhambisa umzimba. Athi emphosa phezulu abe emganga. Yonke le nto yenziwa ngobubele phofu.

Ebesithi amaxhegwazana, akuba ede afumana ithuba lokuba nawo abe nenxaxheba anxonxothele, eteketisa. Konke oku bekungamdubi nganto lo mfo wasemaTshaweni. Akwanela kukuncuma nazo zonke ezi ndidi ubehlala athi ewaka. Wawunjalo ke umtsalane walo mntwana, ngangokude ongaziyo acinge ukuthi kuphela komntwana okhoyo kuloo lali. Kanti babekho oNontwayithethwa noLindiwe noXhalisile nabanye.

UXhalisile lo noJujuju ngontanga. Kodwa waphoswa esitheni lesithunzi kukufika kweli xhalanga limaphik' anentsente ! Wakhawuleza wacathula, wathi mhla wabaleka waba uyahlukana nekhaya. Ubehamba namakhwenkwe alusayo aye ezigusheni, okanye ematholeni. Uyise wamenzela iintongana zambini. Umbone ke unkabi entswayiza, enqanda iigusha nokuba ngamathole.

Phakathi kwabantwana sikhulu isimo sokuzenza mdala. KuJujuju sathi kratya xa adlala nodade wabo. Nguye obewisa imithetho—ngoku aza mva kwabo. Bekutyelwa ndlwininye ngumzi uphela, kwahlukanwe ngokulala. Isitya esishiywa nguZenzile sesikaJujuju. Isiqhelo siyayoyisa ingqondo ! Wayiqhela le nto kangangokuba wathi mhla wasiqwela uyise isitya, lafa cum kuJujuju. Walala engatyanga. Emva koko waxolela ukuhlala engatyanga ndaweni yokuba angamshiyeli uDelihlazo.

ISAHLUKO 5

UJUJUJU

Ngamadiza—iinkomo ziyabhuqa. Isivuno ibisesikhulu kanye. Ukuba mnandi kwexesha eliza kuchithwa ngamakhwenkwe, amadala namancinane ! Kwaziwa ngowakhe wayinkwenkwe yedwa. Azininzi ngako izinto ezichwayitisa intliziyo eziza kwenziwa, kungekho xhala likaVetifuti noDatlisi abaza kuya emasimini. Ukuqubha nokuthiyis'

izigu kulapha. Ukwenza izileyi zeendiza nosinga lwamaxhegwazana ukudlaliswa komxoxozi kutsaliswe kukwalapha.

Ndingezigqibi zonke izinto ezizezinye ezonwabisayo ngale nyanga. Akutsho ukuthi eli iqela livuya ngaphezu kweli lifundayo? UJujuju walekelwe. Uqave ngokukodwa. Ibhekile yakhe yamasi uyithi qongqololo ayigqibe engayiphumlelanga, namandla akhe akwanjalo.

Ngenye imini ilanga laphuma njengesiqhelo. KuJujuju lafana lodwa. Wayengavunyelwanga na nguyise ukuba ahambe namanye amakhwenkwe ukuya emadizeni. Le ibiyeyona nto wayesoloko ayinqwenela, kuseloko wathi waba nokunakana. Iminyiki yalungiswa, kwandulukwa ukuya emadizeni.

Kuyiwe ezigwini. Bezithiyiselwa emasimini nangasemifuleni. Iintaka ngokubona iinkonzo neminyiki ebotshelelweyo zingacingele nto, ziye. Ngokuxhola okunye kowa isigu, ize leyo ingabisaphuma apho. Uhambile uJujuju nabanye, zilungisiwe izigu, nesakhe, kwagqithwa. Kwelo, inkoliso yamasimi imqengqelezi. Ngoko ke akubi lula kumntu ongekaqheli ukuhamba ngokukhawuleza.

Watyibilika, waqengqeleka, wawa, wagruzuka. Kodwa wazimisela kuko konke ukuba angalili. Waqonda kamhlophe ukuba enjenjalo kuya kufuneka ahlale ekhaya, angakufumani okufunyanwa ngabanye.

Wacothoza ukubuyela kwasezigwini. "Nokokuba andenzanga sileyi oko akunamsebenzi, zona iintaka ezi ndiya kuzibonela xa zibhajiswayo," wazithethela watsho ecambalala phantsi kufuphi nazo. Asingebi sabalisa sithi akuzanga kubekho ntaka zifunyanwayo loo mini! Aza amanye amyala ukumngxolisa oku esithi, "Apho uphinde khona wasigxothela iintaka zethu woba kukutya kwentonga."

Wagoduka embi kunene. Ukumthuthuzela, bamnika isileyi, sinamagaqana amabini omxoxozi ukuze atsalise akufika ekhaya.

" Wa Makhakha ! " latsho ilizwi likaDumani kwakusasa.

" Weyi ! " waphendula omnye. " 'Zuze neentolo zam ntangam, ndisathunywe phesheya phaya mna ! "

Kwakuphunywa ingqina kuya kuzingelwa iimpuku. " Luph' olwam' utolo ? " wabuza uDelihlazo kuyise. Wada walwenza ekugqibeleni uZenzile olo tolo wamnika. Kwehla nzima oko kutya kuJujuju intliziyo seyikusekuzingeleni. Wayesel' eyiva ingoma eziphelweni zamasimi isitsho kamnandi :—

He luweyo, he luweyo !
Imbityazan' idl' amazimba—
Ezitiyeni, ingawalimi.
He luweyo ! He luweyo !

Namhlanje uwufumene umsebenzi, nangona ingenguwo lowo nge ekhethe wona. Iintwana ezincinane owazo umsebenzi yayikukothusa iimpuku. Zaziqhutywa zide ziye kufika apho bezilindelwe khona ngaqavileyo.

Ubungambonayo umhlobo wethu esithi khatshakhatsha, kuloo ngca inde, kucacile okokuba selebudinwa. Asikuko nokuba bezithandwa ezi mpuku ngabazingeli bazo. Bebesakuthi xa babalisayo, " Asiyole isibindi senjova sisimanga ! Ungavimba unyokokhulu esifa ngamehlo." Kaloku iimpuku ezo ziinjova kwabazityayo.

Ehlotyeni xa zinqabileyo bekuzingelwa amaqonya, agcadwe ngeenkcenkce ezinokufumaneka. Ufike abafo abakhulu bexhaphe baza kuthi nqa ngeendlebe.

Zibe ninzi iinjova ezibuleweyo. Zathi ezibhityileyo zakukhov' ukuhlinzwa, zabelwa amakhwenkwana amancinane. Nge eba wayekucekisa ukutya loo singa-nyama uJujuju. Koko uqondile ukuba, ukuba akatyanga akayi kuba njengamanye amakhwenkwe ; watya.

ISAHLUKO 6

IHLOBO

Iimini zobusika sezibuye zashenxa. Hayi ukuba kuhle kwelizwe ! Liyintombazana. Endaweni yeenjova, kozingelwa iincede namagqaza. Iinyenzane ziviwa kakuhle equndeni lakupnakama ilanga. Iingalo neziquluba zabantwana zigqunywe yinjica. Andithethi ngeentyatyambo. Ewe, ihlobo lithwasile.

Emadlelweni kudlalwa uthinti, ungcaka, oweentonga, owengca nolulumbi uhlobo. Owoyisiweyo kula makhwenkwe uyasazi isigwebo sakhe. Wohlalela ukuphethuphethula impahla ingangeni emasimini. Yakuhlutha, iyalala, ukuze abafo abakhulu baye kuqubha kakuhle kwelo chibikazi likhulu lisenkalweni.

Kwelinye icala lalo, eludongeni, kwenziwe umtyibilizi. Uridwa ngodaka oluthatyathwa emanzini ngaphantsi. Lugude kanye. Kuthi ke adwele kakuhle onke kudlalwe emtyibilizini. Wova ngodyulukuphu ! dyuphu, dyuphu ! ukuya kutsho emanzini kudadwe kuntywilwe kube yiloo nto.

Akukho mdlalo ubuthandwa njengalo nguDelihlazo. Uyise wayemyalele ukuba angaqale awulinge hleze ube yingozi kuye. Wahlala akaya kufuphi ngeso sizathu. Ngantsasa ithile uZenzile uvuke enomnqweno wokuya kugawula. Akakh' atsho ukulibona izembe. Phalephale, ngapha nangapha. Intoni ! Akwabakho zembe livelayo.

Kuthe selengxamele ukuncama ukuthi woya ehlathini, gungqu, wangena uJujuju ephethe izembe. " Uvelaphi, nyana wam ? " wabuza watsho uyise. " Ndivela nalo phaya koNomathemba, bebesithi lelakowabo, ndala nalo mna."

" Uyakhula nyana wam. Kwakufuphi uza kuhamba nam xa ndiya kugawula," watsho encoma uyise. La mazwi amhlaba kamnandi ureme, waqonda ukuba ungumntu ono-

kwenza ngokubona kwakhe, wabekeka endleleni esingisa echibini. Ebelazi kakuhle apho lingakhona. Uye wafika. Abanye abaziintanga zakhe bebengeacela kude, begxothwa ngabadala. Wachwechwa yena wathi ngcu emva kweyokugqibela. Tyibilili ! Yekoko ukubheka ezantsi. Imincili awayivayo elo thutyana engekafiki ekupheleni. Dyulukuphu dyuphu ! waya kutsho emanzini.

Laqala kaloku lanquma inqatha. Abantu abaqhele umtyibilizi bathi phambi kokuba bafike ezantsi bavale iimpumlo bangaphefumli ; ukuze amanzi angangeni ngaphakathi, baraxwe. Yena akakwenzanga oko. Ufike ezantsi watshona. Wavuka buphuthuphuthu, engasaboni nangamehlo waya wawa kwasemanzini, waraxwa. Oku kumhleleyo akuqalanga kuthathelwe ngqalelo kwada kwangumzuzu. Lathi kuba ichibi belinzulu apha phantsi komtyibilizi wakhutshwa sesithe pitsi ukuzala isisu. Wagoduka eyiloo ndongondongo icubhukileyo umzimba ubuhlungu.

Maninzi amanye amazwembezwembe anjengala okukhula kwalo mntwana awamenza womelela waqina kwasebuncinaneni bakhe. Wakha walandela uyise ukuya kuzingela ngenye imini. Indlela yabo yayigqitha edotyeni elingca inde. Uhambe umfo omkhulu ebuka amabhabhathane, kanti njalo uyalahlekana noyise. Esazula-zula njalo enyeleni yehlathi ubone tyholwana lithile. Akungena kulo wathana gaga namathole engwe. Akabanga sadenda wathi vu phantsi wadlala nawo, emangalisiwe zezi njana zintle kangakanana.

Kungekudala gaxa ingwekazi ivela kuzingela, ayamnanza yakumbona edlala nabantwana bayo.

Uhleli apho lajika ilanga, wandula wagoduka. Ngolo ratya kwawa inkabi yebhokhwe kwaZenzile, ukuze kwenziwe elinye ihlala lamafutha. "Kwedini, ubuyephi ?" wabuza uyise. "Bendihleli neenjana zam etyholweni," waphendula uDelihlazo. Akukho wayithathela ngqalelo loo nto.

Kusile ngengomso, izibindi zazibadikile bonke ngephezolo.

Ngoko nangentsasa le bezise zizizigede. Uthathe inxalenye wayingxala engxoweni yebhokhwe kayise. Nanko ethuntutha ukusinga etyholweni. "Le nkwenkwe ingxamele ukuba litshivela," watsho uZenzile ethatha umnqayi elandela ngokukhawuleza. Ngokuchwechwa ngobunono, wayibona ingozi eyayiza kuhlela umntwana wakhe. Kanti inyama esengxoweni yebhokhwe uyisela ingwe.

Loo mini wanikwa injana ukuze ayondle, wayalwa ukuba angaze abuye aqhelane nezilo.

ISAHLUKO 7

IINTWANA EZINCINANE

Wakha wathi umntu okwaziyo ukuthetha :—

"Amasuntsu entlabathi
Namathontsi amanzi
Enza iilwandlekazi ezinkulu
Kwanalo ihlabathi liphela."

Akwaba besisokuyikhumbula le nto ! Umnumzana wasemaTshaweni akabonanga bubi ekumphatheleni esandleni unyana wakhe. Xa ubuka into akukhe ubuze komnye ukuthi ndiyalungisa na ngokubuka le. Maxa wambi okuhle kuzala okubi. Uthando luyalizala ikhwele. Ikhwele—ubukhwele.

UNosayini akakuthandanga ukuthi kanti ngokufika kukaDelihlazo abakhe abantwana boba sethunzini. Waba ngazama ukuyichithachitha loo ngcinga, ayakhe itsho ! 'Suka yakhula yaxela umthi wemostade. Wangenwa ngumoya ombi.

Ukucinga kakubi kuzala izenzo ezihambisa umzimba. Uya kuyiqonda loo nto usakukhumbula ukuba okwenziwa zizigebenga kusisiqhamo seengcinga ebezifuthwa imihla

ngemihla. Wakhula uJujuju, noyise nonina kunye nabantakwabo. Bonke aba, kubo kwakungekho uzaziyo iingcinga zomnye. Umntu lulwandle oluzele ngokrebe, omona, namawa aneengozi—impindezelo ezalwa yinzondo ; phofu zikwakho neentlanzi ezivuyisa abalobi.

Kwathi ngaminazana ithile, ekubeni uJujuju ebehleli nodade wabo ilanga lonke lehlobo, wabuya uLindiwe ebika intloko. ULindiwe ibiyintombi kaNosayini eza mva kweyamazibulo. Kwakhiwa umhlonyane wafuthwa, akwathwalelwa mehlo ukugula kwakhe. Kakade uZenzile ubengemntu usoloko ezikhathaza ngabantwana, ingenguye uJujuju. Baye kulala kwaninakhulu njengesiqhelo.

Kuse engabonisi mnyinyiva uLindiwe. Kuye kwabikwa kumanantsi nezinye izizalwane. Befikile babone babona, yangulowo wagqiba kwelokuba makuyiwe phesheya kweQombolo ; apho bekukho usiyazi owaziwa ngobuchule bokuvumisa. Kwasekuseni ngosuku olulandelayo zenjenjeya iinto zosixhenxe ukuya kwelo.

Abantu abazele lo meimbi babonwa besekude. Bathi befika nje kwabe sekusithi wayiwayi abelali ukuza kuziphulaphulela. Kube ngokukodwa apha, kuba umzi kaMayeza, isanuse, ubusemboniselweni. Zonke iindlela bezisahluka kufuphi nawo. Babonwa kwa oko aba bafo balungiselelwa. UMayeza lo ubeludlwabevu lwesanuse. Ubemde engumcheya, emnyama ngokwentsikizi. Entloko ubefake isidlokolo sakhe sephuthi ; emqaleni enxibe umngqi wamakhubalo namazinyo. Ukususela esinqeni kuye enqineni, uyayakazela ziindidi ngeendidi zeemfele zeenyamakazi ezicazululwe zayimitya. Kanti ezihlahleni, nasezingqinibeni ebezithe ntshi ngezizityana zofele lukaxam nengwenya.

Indlu ebe kuvunyiselwa kuyo yaye ilinqugwala elibukhulu buphakathi kweenyawo ezintandathu nezisixhenxe. Ngaphakathi ibigudulwe nje ingahonjiswanga ngamhlaba wahlukileyo. Udonga belujikelezwe ziitasi ngeetasi, neempondo

eziziintlobo ngcentlobo, zizele yimihlabelo. Ezi zazijinga zibethelelwe ngezikhonkwane.

Phezu komnyango nasentla bekuhlonywe imikhonto, kwaza kwahamba kusithiwa hlo izinti zihlohlwe amakhubalo. Wawungethandabuzi wakungena ukuba yindlu yesanuse leyo. Phantsi bekungekho nto ngaphandle kwengca eyandlalelwe abantu abaze kuvumisa, ukuze kungabikho mfuneko yankuko. Nto yimbi ubungayibonayo yiemele nebhekile yamanzi, imbizana encinane, nelitye nembokothwe yokukhanda imichiza.

Akubanga kudala engenile la madoda asemaTshaweni, yavakala intlombe yegqira, kuthi phakathi kwezinqam avakale umfo omkhulu :—

"Vumani ! Vumani ! ! Vumani ! ! "

Impendulo— "Siyavuma ! "

"Nize ngomntwana ! "

"Siyavuma ! "

"Lo mntwana uyazalwa ! "

"Siyavuma ! "

"Betha mfazana ! "

Ibuye ivakale ingoma isitsho kamnandi !

D.C.

.s	s	.s	: s	.fe	m	: r	m	: —	—	: —	m	: r	m	: —	‖
We	na	No	le	ntyi	wo	wa	wo				wo	wa	wo		

Wena Nolentyi, wowawo ! wo wa wo ! !

(ilandelwa kukuqhwaba kwezandla).

"Ngumntwana ! "

"Siyavuma ! "

"Uyabulawa ! "

"Siyavuma ! "

"Into isekhaya ! "

"Siyavuma ! "

"Betha mfazana ! "

"Wena Nolentyi !

Wo wa wo !
Wo wa wo !
Hitsi ! Hitsi ! Hitsi !

(Sixhentsa isanuse, eli xa ingoma isitsho shushu ; sibuye siyimise kwangokwaso sakufudumala).

" Ndithi uyabulawa lo mntwana ! "
" Siyavuma ! "
" Uyabulawa ! "
" Siyavuma, siyavuma ! "
" Int' isekhaya ! "
" Siyavuma, siyavuma ! "
" Ekhaya konina ! "
" Siyavuma ! "
" Onina endlwini ! "
" Siyavuma, siyavuma ! "

Yaba iphelile into ebithethwa. Bakholwa abavumisi bagoduka banele. Kwakusehlotyeni kanye ngenyanga yoMnga. Kula madoda akukho yayithetha nenye, iyileyo yayithetha nezayo iingcinga. Ewe, kwakuqinisekile ukuba loo mntwana ubulewe. Nabo loo nto babeyicingile ngaphambi kokuba kuyiwe kuvunyiswa. Kucacile ukuba nguNowayiti lo unukwe ligqira. Akukho mntu wumbi unesixhiba noNosayini unina kaLindiwe ngaphandle kwakhe.

Zenjenjalo iintliziyo ezininzi ukucamanga kwazo. Ekhaya phaya, uZenzile ulindile, elinde ukubuya kwabantu egqireni. Ubesandul' ukumfutha umntwana ngomhlonyane. Ubambekile, phezu koko, unina uligwele eli ngosana lwakhe olubulawa ngabom, ngumfazi esaziwa. " Bethu, kungenzeka ukuba abe uMaDongwe nguye obange oku ? " utshilo ezithethela ngaphakathi. " Ukuba kunjalo ingaba nam undigqibile." Kodwa intliziyo yalile ukukholwa.

Ahambile amadoda abeye kuvumisa ukusinga ekhaya.

ISAHLUKO 8

UNUKIWE

Athi kuba amadoda la ayenduluke sekusemalanga, phesheya kweQombolo, latshona, kwee ngcwalazi, kwaratyela engafikanga. Ekufikeni kwawo intsapho ibise ilele. Ambizele ngasese uZenzile amxelela inkqubo yegqira.

Ekungazini, nasemsindweni omkhulu uye kwaMaDongwe wathi, " Ukuba ufile lo wam umntwana, yazi nawe ukuba uya kufa." Akuba etshilo wathi gwiqi waphuma. Kuse kusasa ezisola ngokukhukuliseka kwakhe, ngokude angcolise umfazi wakhe. Wazimisela ukuba uya kuya kucela uxolo kuye. Koko isimanga sezimanga ! Akuya kukhangela umkhuhlane kwaNosayini, ufike umntwana ethe thimbilili, eginyisa amathe.

Nantso ke into eyabanga ukuba olo xolo lungabi sacelwa. Ukusingisela komguli ekuchacheni kwamngxala uZenzile ngenkolo yokuba uMaDongwe ulilo igqwira ; unqandwe nje ekumbulaleni umntwana yingxolo yakhe.

Yaba buhlungu yaligazi intliziyo kaZenzile. Oyise noyisekazi babegqibe kwelokuba makagxothwe lo mfazi ; njengokuba ilizwe selaba phantsi komLungu engasenakubulawa. Kodwa yena siqu wayemthanda, nangaphezu koko, wayethanda lo nyana wakhe uJujuju. Ukumgxotha kwakuthetha ukwahlukana nomntwana wakhe. Athini na ke ?

Ngamanye amaxesha esithi sifumane kunzima ukuzifumanela eyona ndlela masihambe ngayo ebomini bethu, sifika sikhokelwe ngamandla esingawaboniyo. Ngaxa limbi, asikhokelela kokulungileyo ; ngelinye kokungendawo.

Ukuphila komntwana kaNosayini, endaweni yokuzisa uxolo, kwaba kokhona kubanga uchuku. Ukususela loo mini elathi igqira lamnuka, uNowayiti akazanga abuye onwabe emzini wakhe. Wada wangenwa ngumoya wokuzi-

sola ; ukuba kakade wayebangwe yini na ukuze eze kwendela emaXhoseni anje. Wahlala ke kodwa.

Wakhula uJujuju emthanda kunene uyise. Ewe, ubemthanda nonina, kanti izinto bezingenakufana. Naxa uNowayiti ebejalile kuZenzile, ngenxa yokuthakatha abemcingela ngako akabanga nakumthiya ngokuthe poqo. Ithe emzuzwini yaphantsa ukude inyibilike intliziyo yakhe. Kunge kubonwa loo nto, wahlabeka yicesina okwesibini uLindiwe. Kwayiwa egqireni.

Namhlanje kuyiwe kwelinye, ingelilo eliya lokuqala. Nalo eli licangcathe kwakulaa mazwi angaphambili, ngokungathi lalikho. Ekubuyeni kwawo amadoda ahambe eyinambithisa le nto yobu buthi balo mfazi. Omnye umfo, uPhuphu, akayanga kufika namanye amadoda ekhaya. Uthe, usaya kukhe ajikele emathambekeni, akhangele iibhokhwe njengoko ilanga selitshonile. Hayi bavuma abalingane bakhe, kuba kwakwezi bhokhwe, bekukho eza kuxhelelwa igqira ebeliyaleze ukuthi lofika ngelandelayo imini.

ISAHLUKO 9

KUYATSHA !

Kusebusuku, inyanga ifile. Ubusuku bumnyama kakhulu kuba lisibekele, akukho mbethe phandle isalathiso eso sokuba ingana ngengomso, kaloku kusehlotyeni.

UNowayiti ulele nabantwana bakhe. UJujuju uminyaka mithandathu. Unqumlezile yena, entla kukanina noTshintshiwe intwanazana eza mva konyana. Wayelele exakanisekile ngobu busuku uJujuju, ngesizathu sokuba engakhanga ade ambone uyise. UZenzile ubekulaa ndlu inomkhuhlane apho ke bekungafuneki bantwana.

Abuqalanga bufike ubuthongo kuMaDongwe. Wayecinga ngesi simanga sokufumane ancanyathiselwe ngobuthi angabaziyo. "Kuhleliwe nje, isithembu esi sinje?" utshilo ethabatha inqawa etshaya. "Kodwa okwenzekileyo kufana nokudaliweyo. Andiyazi enokundihlela, mandilale." Ezi ngcinga zinge ziya mthuthuzela, yoyi walala kwa oko.

Akazanga ukuba ulele kangakanani na waphupha. Uphuphe ngathi unyuka eliweni; ukuze athi enyuka njalo, siqhuzuke isicithana abebambelele kuso. Uthe ukukhala kwakhe ephupheni, ngokothuka, kanti kukuphaphama kwakhe oko. Uvuke kuthe minyi endlwini ngumsi yathi tha ngephanyazo inyaniso—ukutshiselwa nendlu ngenxa yokuba kucingwa ukuba uyathakatha. Uphose umntwana wakhe emhlana. Isimanga upholile akukho kuthi makakhale ahlabe umkhosi. Uthe wee uJujuju ngengalo elele njalo wamqweqwedisa phandle. Akukho xesha lakuchitha sekuvakala utli-tli-tli phezulu uphahla luyawa.

Uthe akuphuma wathi tshoni ngasezindongeni. Wehlisa iindonga ezo wada wakude nomzi. Waqala ke ukuthatha iindlela ezinqumnqumlayo ukuya kumfikisa eGcuwa emlanjeni, lingaphumanga ilanga. Akaqalanga aqabuke uJujuju uthe ngokuya ehamba wavuka. Wavakala ebuza,

"Mama, siyaphi?"

"Ndiza kukuxelela sakuwela iGcuwa mntanam."

"Liphi iGcuwa?"

"Selikufuphi," atsho ukuphendula.

Intokazi ayoyikanga ukuhamba ithuba elingaka ngobusuku obumnyama. Angummangaliso amandla esithi siwabolekwe xa sisekuxakekeni. Ukanti wakuwafuna la mandla kwizinto zemihla ngemihla, ayigolide le. Ibe ngummangaliso ongaphezulu wakucinga ukuba ubeleke into enkulu yomntwana osel' elunyulwe, uthantase omnye ecaleni.

Kwezinye iindawo kwafuneka emfunqule uJujuju, kwezinye embeke emagxeni. Indlovu ayisindwa ngumboko wayo.

Waqhuba ngolo hlobo waliwela iGcuwa, umgama oziimayile ezilishumi linesixhenxe ukusuka apho ebevela khona. Wayehamba ngokombane. Akufika apha ubone ukuba makakhe athi khefu. Bekuse kusile. Wayethe wahamba ngendlela engabonisi mkhondo kuba ebengasafuni kuva nto ngezinto zendawo avela kuyo, zazilizothe eli.

Le nto yabanga ukuba indlela yakhe ibe kude nemizi ; nethemba lokufumana ukutya libe ziinkwenkwezi. Oko kube kubi ngaphezulu, kuba intsika yomzimba sisisu. Akukho ndlela inokuhanjwa lula kungekho nto ikhe yagqitha phantsi kwempumlo. Kuze kuthi nokwenza kubekho abantwana ababini abagqibele ngezolo. Nentwana yamasi esebhekileni ibiya kulingana omncinane yedwa.

Ubeke uTshintshiwe phantsi. Akukhov' ukwenjenjalo, emshiya kuJujuju, uthe bhije-bhije ngaphaya kwetyholo. Lonke eli, ibe ililizwe lezigxa iindada namatyholo ; izinga nezithole. Kungemzuzu ungakanani wabuya eshuqule amaqunube nonontongwana batya nonyana wakhe, yafana yasuka le isemehlweni. Ubone ngoku ukuba makhe angqengqe aphumze umzimba, ahlaziyeke, uthathe ithamo wazibeka phantsi.

Indlela yayinqumla isinga esibanzi kunene, ukuze iye kunyuka iqhina elide lakwaSihota. Yakuqabela phezu kwehlathi elo lakwaNjamkhulu ububa sewufikile emaZizini kwaJama, Sijadu. AmaJama amnyama kunye neenkomo zawo.

Ucinge ukuthi komlungela ukuba angabi saya kowabo. Icebo elililo lelokuba makaye kuzimela kwadade boyise eQweqwe phesheya kweGxakhulu. Apho bekukho ithemba lokuba angalibala konke okumhleleyo. Akathandanga kuyizikisa engqondweni imbangi yokutshiswa kwakhe nendlu. Engafunanga kuyifaka indoda yakhe eqeleni lezo zigebenga bezinakane ukumtshabalalisa. Esenjenje walala.

SAHLUKO 10

UPHUPHU

Makhe sibuyele kwaLuhlaza. UPhuphu ngelaa xesha ahluka kubalingane abeye nabo ekuvumiseni uye wazifumana iibhokhwe kwa oko. Intsimi yakhe ibikwakwelo cala, ubone ukuba makakhe aye kuhlola. Umbona kuzo zonke iindawo ezilinyiweyo ubukhathaze ukuba jikoqumbu.

UPhuphu wayekholisile ukuthiywa kwakhe. Mfuphi, akanasiqu, liraphilili lexhonti. Wayenomkhwa wokuqhwanya-qhwanyaza futhi engathandi ukubajonga abantu. Ngalinye wayengenantloni nje kuphela, wayekwaligwala. Soloko waba ngumntu ohamba nehlokondiba engqina ese kuthethiwe.

Wahlola wagqiba, waya ezibhokhweni. Uthe eziphethula njalo waziva ediniwe. "Sendide ndadinwa ndayiqhiya nje bendiyephi ?" yamkhathaza yatsho ingcingane. "Sithe qho sizuliswa leli gqwirakazi lizimisele ukuhlalisa abantu kakubi. Khona, kwaziwa ngubani ukuba aliyi kundibulala mna ?"

Umntu uyalityala ithambo, avune ingobozi yeepesika. Zonke zizelwe lilo. Injalo ingcamango embi athi umntu ayimilisele engqondweni ukuze ithi kanti iya kuzala izenzo zokukhohlakala, ezingendawo. Zithi ezi zimqinise umntu, ade aphantse ukucinga ukuba ukhaliphile. UPhuphu, uyisekazi kaZenzile, wazifumana seleqhusheka ilongwe lomlilo eluphahleni lwendlu yomolokazana wakhe. Waziva chumzela ngomsindo : "Malitshe eli gqwirakazi." Wahamba waya endlwini yakhe ezincoma ukukhalipha. Ubengasayi kusinda nakanye ongaphakathi. Nokokuba ngethamsanqa uthe waphuma engafanga kuloo mlilo, bekuya kuba cebetshu. Ngoko akakuthi na afunde ukuba ayeke ukuhamba ethakatha abantu bengenzanga nto. Ewe wayesindise uninzi ngesi senzo yena Phuphu. Enale ngcinga, wazithi luqe phantsi engatyanga. Emqaleni akuhlanga necephe. Uvalo lwalu-

sithi ngo-ngo-ngo- ukubetha. Phofu wayengoyiki naxa exhalabile. Abufikanga ubuthongo. Waphuma phandle, wabona isithatha somlilo. Lowo yaye ingumsebenzi wezandla zakhe ; isiqhamo seengcinga zakhe. Wangenwa lunkwantyo, waphaphatheka ukuya kwaZenzile, wahlaba umkhosi. Bathi manga bonke abantu. Kwaphunywa ukuyiwa kuhlangulwa uNowayiti nentsapho yakhe, bafika abantu luwile uphahla phezu komnyango, kungekho kungena.

Bakhwaza, " Nowayiti, usekho na ! usekho na ! " Akwabakho mpendulo. KuPhuphu yedwa kwaba ngathi kukho ilizwi eliphendulayo lisithi, " Ndilapha. Ndiyatsha ngokomnqweno wakho, vuya ichwayite intliziyo yakho." Kwanqandwa amathiphu-thiphu efuna ukuziphosa kwelo langatye lomlilo asindise abo bantu. Ummangaliso ; kukuba kwiiyure ezimbalwa ngaphambili wayezimisele ukubabhubhisa.

Usizi olwaba phezu kwaloo mzi kaZenzile ngaloo mini, alungebi nakuchazwa. Amazwi akanelanga ukuba angenza umlinganiso wento enjalo. Noko, naxa abantu babese behlunguzela iintloko ngoMaDongwe ibe ingemnqweno wabo ukuba atshabalale, ukutshabalala okuhambisa umzimba ngolu hlobo. Kwaye, kuko konke ukumthiya ababe nako uthando lwabo lokuqala kuye belungenakucima kuthi pam. Alitsho na iciko ukuthi,

Zingasitheliswa zona iintaba,
Banahlule bona abantu,
Zenz' umsantsa kwanezigigaba—
Obe ungumhlobo wakhe ekuqaleni
Woba nguye naphakade.

Phakathi kwabo babesebuhlungwini, hayi uZenzile. Intliziyo yakhe yaba ligazi. Wema apho engathethi engathini, yatsha yaphela loo ndlu. Kuthe kwakusa kwayiwa kuxelwa Komkhulu kwaLuhlaza. Unge angavungama umhlekazi ngokuthi, " Niyazi na kodwa ukuba ilizwe eli liphantsi komntu oMhlophe ? " Wathandazwa ngeshumi leenkomo

ukuba udaba olo angalusi entilini, wathotha. Ewe uyenzile yona inkwalambisa yokuxela ingozi yokutshela komntu omnye endlwini. Watsho esithi kungenxa yokungakhathali kwabantu nokuthanda ubuthongo ; ukufumane kulalwe ecaleni leziko, umlilo uvutha. Kwaba kukuphela oko ngokwasemthethweni.

Wakuba utshe kwathi tu waphola umlilo, uZenzile waya eludongeni. Apho wamana evumbulula, ukuba akangethi na ngethamsanqa afumane sijungqu sathambo lakhe nokuba abe mnye wentsapho yakhe etshabaleleyo. Akakhe atsho. Isimanga kweso siqhu sonke akukho wakha wacinga ukuthi kungakho ndlela asinde wasaba ngayo uNowayiti.

Kwagugulwa iintloko kwazilwa kuloo mzi wasemaTshaweni ; akwahanjwa midudo nazindywala zade zaphela iinyanga ezintandathu. Kanti nasemveni koko uZenzile yena akayekanga. Wathi wazila yonke into engumgcobo. Ebedla ngokubonwa imihla ngemihla engqengqe ecaleni lobuhlanti, etshaya inqawa, ecinga ngomfazi wakhe nabantwana. Maxa wambi ebethi achithe isithukuthezi ngokuqingqa iinqawa nemisimelelo yomsimbithi. Zaqengqeleka njalo iinyanga.

ISAHLUKO 11

IMINI YESABATHA

Ngalusuku luthile, ngeCawa emini yakusasa, ngenyanga yeDwara, wayehleli ngolu hlobo emzini wakhe lo umnumzana uZenzile. Iinduli namadlelo athe thantalala ayegqunywe yingubo enye emthubi, chamba esithiwa mfakamfaka apha naphaya, sisiqwenqwe sokukhula kwenjica. Ewe, ihlobo lalilihle elangena ngaloo mnyaka. Wawungevayo ngenzwinini eyenziwa ziinyenzane kwelaa qunde leenkomo ; nentsho-

lo yeentaka ehlathini phaya, ndawonye nokukhenkceza kwamazwi amancinane emingeni ukuba indalo iphela ichwayitile.

Beseziliqela iinyanga ezidlulileyo walahlekwayo uZenzile yintsapho. Bebubukhulu ubuhlungu awabuvayo ngokuthi shwaka komfazi wakhe. Kodwa bekungathathi nto kwisizungu asifumana ngokungabikho kukaJujuju. Kwakuse kuyiwe kwaxelwa ebukhweni bakhe, kwesikaMthintsilana emaMfengwini. Kwalilwa apho, kwazilwa, kwada kwabuya kwabonakala ukuba abantu bayacombuluka. NguZenzile yedwa ongazanga athuthuzeleke. Ngayo yonke le mini wayesele ekhaya, yonke impi isetywaleni kumzi omgama kakhulu. Wayekukuphela komntu oza kuba lapho kude kuhlwe ; kuba abantu bebekholisa ukubuya ngongewalazi, bambi babuye ezinzulwini zobusuku, ngobumnandi nobuninzi bentselo leyo.

Waphazanyiswa ezingcingeni yintsimbi eyatsho umlembelele ngaphaya kwenduli ebisentla komzi lowo. Yabe iyintsimbi yecawa. Unge angathalalisa, hayi wazibona selephakama ; kwaya kwaya nako selejikela, kwaya kwaya wafika endlwini yenkonzo.

* * * *

Ngemini yeSabatha bekubakho inkonzo etyalikeni njengoko amakholwa kule ndawo ebelibathu elilingeneyo. Ibiseyikho nendlu yecawa. Eso isisiqhamo seempembelelo zomfo kaSoga owayesel' eyisekile iMishoni eThuthura kufuphi apho. Kwezi iinkonzo bekuye kushumayele uMfundisi ngokwakhe, kuguquke into eninzi ; baze nabo bebese bethande ukuthi balukuhleke bazive behlaziyekile emiphefumlweni yabo.

KwaLuhlaza iinkonzo beziqhutywa ngabashumayeli. Ngale mini eze ngayo uZenzile ufike icawa seyiphakathi. Uve esemgama ngentsholo emyoli, afika kamnandi entliziyweni loo mazwi athi :—

"Bakutshiswa ngemililo uba nabo wena."

Wangena eziva onwabile, enqwenela ukunga angaqonda

eyona nto ithethwa koko. Umshumayeli ebona umntu ongena emnyango wayiphinda ivesi yokugqibela :—

"Bakuwela imilambo
Uba nabo wena ;
Bakutshiswa ngemililo,
Uba nabo wena."

Emva koku ibe yintshumayelo—intshumayelo angabanga sayiva. Ingqondo yayithabatheke yazaliswa ngumgca othi : "Bakutshiswa ngemililo ....." Wahlala ecamanga ngale nto. Kungenzeka na ukuthi abantwana bakhe nomfazi babe bagcinakele ndaweni bakuba betshiswe ngumlilo ? Ingaba ngumhlola. Iphumile icawa wagoduka. Ukususela loo mhla akazanga aphoswe nkonzo uZenzile ; waya roqo. Phofu oku akakwazisanga nakubani engakhanga azimisele nasekuguqukeni abe ligqobhoka.

Emzuzwini kusuke kwasisiqhelo ukuya kwakhe ezinkonzweni zomhla weSabatha. Ekuhambeni kwexesha wathenga ibhulukhwe nebhatyi ukuze abe nokuya engenazintloni. Ibilisiko loMfundisi ukuba amane ezityelela iiremente ezikwiindawo ngeendawo, ukuze aqonde indlela eziqhuba ngayo.

Ngomnye umhla wahambela kwaLuhlaza. Bekusebusika, ngoko ke abantu bebengakukhuthalele ukuvuka kwanini beze ecaweni. Yiloo nto eyabangela ukuba uMfundisi afike abantu bengekabikho kangaka. Ngeso sizathu waba nethuba elide edlana indlebe nomshumayeli.

"Niqhuba njani ngoku namaremente ?"

"Akukho ziphithiphithi zikhoyo phakathi koburemente."

"Azikho ese zide zaphathelela nakubakhokeli ?"

"Yonke into isahamba njengangaphambili."

"Kukho malungu matsha angenileyo ukususela oko ndandilapha ?"

"Ambalwa."

Uhambise wathi, "Kukho indoda ethe qho ngokuza apha

enkonzweni ; phezu koko kubonakala ngathi ayizimiselanga kuzinikela eNkosini.''

Besathetha njalo, gqi uZenzile ecothoza. Ukhawuleze umshumayeli wamazisa uMfundisi ukuba lo mfo ufikayo yiloo ndoda bebethetha ngayo. Uthe makabizwe. Baza bangena endlwini bathetha khona ngolu hlobo :—

'' Mzalwana, ndivile ukuba ukhe wabonwa futhi ecaweni apha. Ufuna ukuzinikela kusini na ? ''

'' Ndisoloko ndikhathazwa sisithukuthezi. Ndithe makhe ndize kukhangela ukuba andingesichithi na. Ndahlatywa kunene yintsholo yomculo endayivayo ndingekangeni.''

'' Uzuze ntoni ngokuza kwakho ? Unasazela unaso yini emphefumlweni ? ''

'' Oko andingekuchani. Nto ndiyaziyo yile, ndinqwena kakhulu ukukhe ndive kwakhona, ingoma endayiva ngosuku lokuqala ndisiza kule ndlu, yandonwabisa ..... ' Bakutshiswa ngemililo.' Ndaye ndingavuya ngokukodwa ukuba kungakho mntu unokundichazela into ayithethayo loo mazwi

Ingene inkonzo, yavulwa ngengoma yekhulu linamashumi asibhozo '' Unabantu bakho Thixo.'' Yavunywa ngomhobe loo ngoma. Kuthe kwakufikwa kwivesi yesithathu akaba nakuzinceda wangenelela naye uZenzile.... '' Bakutshiswa ngemililo, uba nabo wena.''

Emva kwenkonzo uMfundisi uthande ukudibana naye. Umchazele ukuba abantu abazimisele eNkosini iyabagcina ibancede kuzo zonke iingozi.

Uhambisile emxelela ngamadoda amathathu awathi ngokuchukelwa ngenxa yamawonga, asemhlabeni agwetyelwa ukuba atshiswe. Koko ngokuba ethembele kwiNkosi enkulu eyasidalayo asindiswa kuloo mlilo. '' Kodwa,'' utshilo uZenzile, '' naxa uyithethayo loo nto ayincedi lutho, kuba abantwana bam sebetshe baluthuthu.'' Uthe esitsho uZenzile wabe seleyibalisa loo ngcombolo—indlela abathi belele bavuswa sisikhalo esixela ukuba umfazi wakhe naba-

ntwana bayatsha, evuyela ukuba abe umphefumlo uwuphalazela kumntu oziqondayo zonke ezi ntsizi zakhe.

"Akucingi na," waphendula uMfundisi, "ukuba kungenzeka ngethamsanqa elingaziwayo babe abantwana bakho kunye nomfazi wakho basindile ekutshabalaleni, babe basaba, bisinda. Themba, akukho nto inje ngethemba ; kuba noxa ngamanye amaxesha lithi lisibambise isisila sehobe ithemba liyasithantamisa sonwabile kuse ekupheleni kohambo lwethu kobu bomi."

Ngala mazwi ubulise wahamba uMfundisi esithi, "Ndithemba ukuba wothi qho uze apha etyalikeni, ukhumbule ukuba iNkosi iyabanceda abayo. Zonke izinto zisebenzela okulungileyo kwabo bayithandayo. Nawe ukuba uthembe kuyo yokunceda."

Wahamba ukuya emzini wakhe efana nomntu othulwe umthwalo emagxeni uZenzile onwabile noxa elusizi. Wahamba iinkonzo zonke iicawa. Akamlibalanga uJujuju kodwa wayenethemba eliluzizi lokuba woze ahlale ahlale ambone.

ISAHLUKO 12

UKULAHLEKA NOKUCHOLWA

Yinto eyaziwa nguye wonke ubani ukuba izinja zithanda kakhulu ukulandela abafazi apha kwaXhosa. Yiloo nto eyabangela ukuba abe uNjam—inja entle kunene kaJujuju, usecaleni likaJujuju nonina ngokuya baphumle phesheya kwaloo mlambo mkhulu iGcuwa.

Ngale mini yokusaba kwabo, uNjam abaqalanga bambone bade bee gelekeqe ngaphaya kwamanzi. Beve ngesandi sokuzivuthulula kwakhe ukuba ukho, kwaqala kwamnandi. Akubona unina elele uJujuju, ugqibe kwelokuba naye wokhe

azulazule akhangele ukuba akangefumani nto ityiwayo na, azingelele inja yakhe iimpuku neentaka, neentethe.

Okomzuzu zilityelwe zonke izinto yangumdlalo omnandi kunene, kusukeliswana kuqakathwa loo matye, kuzinyelwana kuloo matyholo. Lakuphakama ilanga, kwaqala kwazingelwa okusiwa phantsi kwempumlo. Kuthe kanti aba bahlobo babini bahambe gqitha bengawazi nomhlaba, sebemlibele naloo mfazi ulele kulaa ndundumana. Abayazanga indlela ema babuye ngayo. Bafathula bafathula becinga ukuba babuyela kwalapho babevela khona, kanti baya bemka ngokumka.

"Kutheni ndilahleka nje, wayethe ubawo umntu akalahleki xa ahamba nenja," wazithethela watsho uJujuju, "Kodwa ndiqinisekile uNjam uya kundikhokelela ekhaya. Kakade besize kwenzani kule ndawo?" Wathuntutha emva koNjam, kuba uNjam usuke wanga uva umkhondo. Akemanga nakancinane, impumlo isemoyeni.

Baqhube ngolu hlobo bada baya kufika emlanjeni basela, bathi vu ukuba baphumle. Lo mlanjana ubungena eGcuwa. Akubanga kudala behleli beva amazwi abantwana abaliqela kwalandela ukukhonkotha kwenja eyathi ikhonkotha nje yabe isiza ngakubo, iindlebe nomsila zimile. Uhle uJujuju warana ukuba kungabakho iingxabano. Kungahlangana izinja ezimbini ezingazaniyo yimfazwe yodwa.

Uchophe wazithi wambu ngengutyana abeyambethe wabiza inja yakhe, walindela okuza kuhla. Bezile aba bantwana amakhwenkwe amabini kunye nentombazana. Enkulu ibinguPhokoma, elandelayo inguGqwangushe. Intombazana yona bekusithiwa nguKholiswa. Bathe ukuba bafike kulo mntwana kwaqala uPhokoma ukuhleka, "Haha! ha! Kukho umntu osambath' ezi zinto kolu khanyo?" Uthe uGqwangushe, "Masimfunze ngoToki lo sikhangele ukuba uya kuthini na."

Utsho ekhwaza, "Tsa-a-a Toki!" Waziphosa wonke

uToki wabe selekho uNjam. Yena wayelingesi, yaza enye inja le ayabi nguwo nomthamo kuba ibiyingqeqe. Waya kwakanye, wathiwa khalakahla njeya esisiswenye uToki. UJujuju naye ngeli xesha uzele lihlombe, uyabonga kufumane kwayiloo nto. Ngethutyana elingangokuphanyaza kweliso wabe uToki selengamanxeba wonke. UGqwangushe uhambe apha ngumsindo wabomvu, selefuna ukuthatha indawo yenja yakhe. Koko uthe uyaya ngenqindi kuJujuju, wanqandwa nguNjam, omthe xhakamfu kanobom. Ngethamsanqa akafikanga enyameni.

Kodwa yona loo hentshana wagoduka iyimithika kukukrazuka. Wahamba ehlininika kukucaphuka. Phambi kokuba ijike intombazana ikhe yeza kule ntwana. Ifike yathi, " Uligwala kakubi ntwanandini. Ubusazi ukuba uGqwangushe uya kukoyisa, yiyo le nto umfunza ngenja. Yeka nje ukuba utata engekho, ebeya kukufumana. Kodwa uya kuyirola le hempe."

Ebengasoyiki ngoku uJujuju, ebesoyisile okomzuzwana, waye eqonda kakuhle ukuba uNjam akayi kuyeka kufekethwe ngaye. Uyiphendule wathi, " Uyintwazana entle ngathi nguLindiwe, kodwa wena usile. Yiyo le nto uhamba ungena ezintweni zamakhwenkwe. Ndiswele uswazi ndikubethe, ndixelise xa umntu abetha amantshontsho esitya ukutya kweekati."

UKholiswa ubesiza emva koGqwangushe, kungekuko nokuba bayavana bobabini naxa ubungafika belilisana lonke ixesha. Ubeyintombazanana entle kunene igwangqakazi elimashiya aqhamileyo, elimisebe mide. Kwakumhlophe ukuba uya kuba nethambo elide. Ubengunina kwaphela, kucacile ukuba engaqeqeshwanga, uya kuzithatha zonke ezo ziphoso zakhe—iingcwangu, uchuku, ukuzitsho, ulunya. Kanti phezu kwazo ezi ubungeze ungathandi.

Bakumka aba bantwana, uJujuju waziva ediniwe, elambile, ebuhlungu ngaphakathi. Ekuphela kwabantwana ababonileyo uxabene nabo. Unokuthemba njani na ukuba kungabakho

nomnye apha, onokumxelela indlela eya kunina, nakowabo. Oku kudinwa kuzise ubuthongo walala. Ulele, wathi uthi balulu amathunzi selemade. Wayelambe ngokungathethekiyo, engazi ama kakwenze. Ucinge ngonina kwesi sithuba wakhwaza, " Mama ! mama ! ! " elibele ukuba kule ndawo akuyo bekungaziimayile ezilishumi elivayo kukude ukusuka apho amshiye khona unina.

Ngelo xesha uve izwi lentombazana lisithi, " Iyaphi, Komityi ! " Emva koko kuthe gqi ntombazanana ekwixabiso elinye noKholiswa. Wawungathi wakuyikhangela ubone ukuba ingayintanga eyalekela uJujuju. Ithe le ntombazana yakumbona yabulisa yabuza, " Ufuna ntoni ? "

" Ndifuna ukutya."

" Hamba siye ekhaya, ndiya kutsho kumama akuphe. ukuze saluse le nkomo sobabini neebhokhwe. Zikhatshelwe ndim kusasa, kuba uThemba waya kuhlala evenkileni kude. Utata soloko wathi ufuna inkweknwe kuba mna ndiyintombazana. Akufuneki ndihambe ematyholweni, ndinqanda iibhokhwe." Yeenjenjalo le ntwanazana uMafungwashe ukuthetha. Yayahlukile geqe kuKholiswa, ibubuhle qha abafana ngako.

UNjam ebekuqhelile ukwalusa amathole noJujuju, ukuze xa kungeniswa impahla ebutlanti awanqande ngapha nangapha. Ibe lichele ngoko ukuguqula le mazi yenkomo. Bafika seyingenisiwe, emangalisiwe umninimzi ukuba yinja ebitheni na le. Wakhululwa kuloo mathandabuzo nguMafungwashe, othe, " Tata, ndichole inkwenkwe, iza kundincedisa ekwaluseni, igama layo nguJujuju."

Uphiwe ukutya, kwakunye nenja yakhe, abahle baqonda abantu basekhaya apha ukuba uyixabisile. Ubuzwe imibuzo emininzi, wayiphendula, esithi, " Ndifuna indlela eya ekhaya."

" Kuphi kowenu ? "

" KukuloLindiwe."

" Ngubani uyihlo ? "

" Nguyise kaDelihlazo."

" Ungumni ? Ngubani isiduko sakho ? "

" NdinguTshawe."

Akukho mntu walaziyo iwabo. Wayengenakho ukuzichaza, waza akaba nakugoduswa. Ibicacile yona into yokuba ngumntwana womXhosa. Isishiqi eso, kuba phesheya kweGcuwa ibingamaXhosa, wakuwela iNciba ebekwathe tshitshilili. Akubangakho ndlela yimbi ngaphandle kokuba uNqabeni—umninimzi amgcine, ukuze ngengomso amse Komkhulu.

UNqabeni wayengenamntwana, ngaphandle konyana. Ubengumfo ongenasiqu, ondevu zitsolo, namehlo aphakathi. Akukho namnye owakha wathanda engathethanga naye. Wakuthetha ubufumana eyindoda eyithiyileyo inkohliso.

Ngobo busuku bokufika kukaJujuju kwakuphicothwa ityala kumzi okufuphi nokaNqabeni. Yayikukukrazuka kwehempe isizeka-bani.

" Gqwangushe itheni ihempe yakho ukuze ibe liyafele elinje ? " " Ityiwe yinja."

Uthe gqada wangenelela uKholiswa, "" Sidibene nedlakadlakana lenkwenkwe, lamfunza ngenja yalo. Asazi apho ibisiya khona, siyibone phaya ngasemlanjeni."

" Hlala ndinixelela ukuba yekani ukuhamba nihlala nala mayakayakana azalwa ngabantu abangenasimilo. Ngoku uza kuyithathaphi ihempe entsha yesikolo ? "

Igqushe yenjenje le ntokazi kwada kwafika owakwayo. Imhlome engekahlali ngale ndaba. Yahlwayelwa loo mini imbewu yobutshaba phakathi koJujuju nomzi wakuloGqwangushe.

ISAHLUKO 13

KWAGUBEVU

"MamTolo yenza msinya ukutya, ndingxamile."

"Ubhekaphi kwakusasa kangaka, yise kaThemba?"

"Ndisasa lo mntwana kuSibonda."

Akufika Komkhulu wachaza abeselekuvile ngoJujuju. Ubulele intetho leyo uSibonda wathi, "Andizi kumthatha umfana, zigcinele. Wothi ngexesha esingekeva mkhondo akuncede kwiintwana-ntwana ezilunge nekhaya. Kungenzeka umfumane eyintonga esekhosi kuwe. Uze umane usiza naye ngeemini zeembizo.

Wavuya uNqabeni. Kakade intliziyo yakhe yayithambile ngakulo mntwana. Yena inzala wayeyivinjiwe. UMafungwashe wayengenguye owakhe, naxa kwakungekho bani uyaziyo nowakha wayithetha loo nto. Unyana wakhe uThemba wayekhulele kulonina ngenxa yokuswela impilo, ukuze abe kufuphi namagqira. UMafungwashe wasel ' eba ngumalusi ngeso sizathu.

Ugqithe evenkileni wathenga ingubo nomchako wokwenza ihempe, ukuze uJujuju ahambe isikolo eli xa bengekamphuthumi abazali bakhe. Ebevelana noJujuju eqonda ngokumhlophe ukuba walahleka, mhlawumbi eye kutheza nonina, okanye kuyiwe kuzingelwa. Wayeyazi intlungu yokwahlukana namawabo, wanqwenela ukunga akangeze afunyanwe kowabo azigcinele afumane unyana.

Kubonakele ukuba aye kudlula kwaXhekethwana isibondana esiphathele uGubevu kuloo lali, ukuze ingxabano ezilula azithi qhwi zingakafiki Komkhulu. Babengabamelwane. bezizihlobo ezikhulu. Babengamaphakathi akwaGubevu, bevana, benikana amacebo. Phezu koko kwakungekho budlelane kubafazi babo.

"Molo mfondini," ubulisile uNqabeni ehlangana noXhekethwana ngasebuhlanti.

"Ewe ! Uvelaphi usithi thu kweli cala nje ? " waphendula omnye.

"Yini inguMgqibelo nje ! Akwazi ukuba ibiyimbizo ? Noko ndidl' iindaba. Kukho umcinjana ebendiye ngawo kwaSibonda." Eguqukela kuDelihlazo uthe, "Kwedini, hamba uye kudlala phaya kwamanye amakhwenkwe." Akuthi khwitshi umntwana uyingene kwa oko ingcombolo yokuya kwakhe Komkhulu esithi :—"Nalapha ndize kwangeso sizathu." Unge angabuza mbuzwana omnye, koko uhle waphawula ukuba akathandi kungena ngxoxweni umhlobo wakhe wayeka. Wayemazi ukuba akoyiki kwinto azimisele kuyo.

Ancokole ngezinye la madoda—ukunqaba kwemali, umbuso, iLizwi, usapho, impucuko, kwada kwabonakala ilixesha lokuba uNqabeni agoduke. Wenzelwe ikofu, kuba bebese besendlwini ngoku, wabulisa wahamba. Wothuka wabindeka akudibana nonyana abesandula ukumfumana, ecaleni lendlu, elila. Kube ngumzamo onzima ukude asive isikhalazo zakhe. Kodwa ekugqibeleni umchubele yonke imbangi yoko. Kanti uthe esaya kwabanye wamnakana uKholiswa, wathi kuba ebengameva etolofiya ukuba bukhali, waxelela umnakwabo uGqwangushe.

"Uyaphi ? " wasel' ebuza.

"Kuthiwa mandize kudlala nam," waphendula uJujuju.

"Ha ! ha ! ha ! ngathi andicingi ukudlala oku nawe ! Ndingaxolela ukudlala namantshontsho eenkuku ndaweni yakho," wahleka watsho uGqwangushe.

Ungenelele njengesiqhelo uKholiswa kwesi sithuba.

"Akuyi kudlala nalaa nja yakho kaloku ? Asifuni kuhlala namcholwa thina."

Amhlaba kunene loo mazwi. Waba ngazama ukumthuthuzela uyise akakhe atsho bada baya kufika ekhaya. Akubanga mizuzu mingaphi efikile wabuya wonwaba. UMafungwashe akambuzanga sizathu sakulila kwakhe. Umncokolele ngeendaba abezive ngonina—zokuba baza kuhamba kunye isikolo.

UJujuju akaligcinanga emfundweni igama lakhe. U-Nqabeni ubone ukuba, wothi ukuze alilibale msinya ilizwe awazalelwa kulo ishenxiswe iminxeba emkhumbuza ngalo. Laba nguDelihlazo Vuthula igama athiywa lona kwiincwadi zokufunda. Wathatyathwa njengomntwana waloo mzi wakwaDongwe.

Asikuko nokuba wayengumntwana ontloko ikrelekrele. Ngexesha ebesekowabo phesheya kweGcuwa ebekholisa ukuba semaphandleni, apho kusoloko kubetha impepho eyolileyo. Kungoko eyathi ingqondo yakhe yahlala ihlaziyekile ilangazelela ukuqiqa nokugcina iimfundiso ezivayo. Kwaza kwathi, umnyaka ungekapheli ekwaGubevu, wabe selefunda nabaqalayo ukusebenzisa iincwadi zesiNgesi. Bebekunye noMafungwashe, belolana, bekhuthazana, kucacile ukuba kungakubi mhla bashiyana.

Bekusithi bakukhov' ukutya, emva kokuba bebuyile esikolweni baye kuphethula impahla, bencediswa nguNjam. Le nja yathi yazenzela igama kuloo mhlaba wokuphambukela. Bezingenakuduka iigusha ngenxa yolondolozo lwayo. Wonwaba uJujuju, kodwa akalilibalanga kuthi cimi ikhaya, abazali nabanakwabo. Ayitsho na imbongi yasemaNgesini ukuthi,

"Noxa ngade sizula-zule
Kumabhotwe, kwiziyolo seyele
Liyinene, liphantsi linjalo—
Akukho ndaw' inje ngekhaya."

UKholiswa naye ubefunda nabantwana bakowabo uPhokoma noGqwengushe. Ngenye intsasa, ukuphuma kwesokuqala, ukhawuleze wee gqada phandle uDelihlazo. Eli ibilithuba lemidlalo. Uthe kanti akawavulisisanga amehlo waya wangqubana noGqwangushe. He ! walinyathela iramncwa emsileni ! Ube kunqanda umkhuluwa—ini na ! kwabonakala ukuba makuvulwe.

Zilile zalila bexhimfana ngamanqindi akwabakho ubuya mva. Bakhelelwe iintswazi—waqala wazibalula umdengeentonga—waroxa oyisiwe uGqwangushe. Kakade ukuthetha oku asikokwenza. Uthe akubona ukuba ugxothiwe umnakwabo wathi uyaya uKholiswa kutitshala akasanyatheli. Wenze ibali elilelakhe elabanga ukuba uJujuju azuze isohlwayo esiqatha.

Olo chuku lwayenza buhlungu intliziyo kaDelihlazo ngokukodwa ngoku lwaselungenwe nangabakhulu abantu. Kwasa ngoLwesithathu. Emalanga ufikile uXhekethwana. Wathetha engatyhilekanga ebhekisa kuNqabeni :—

"Ndilusizi ukuba ndize kuwe ngobuso obubi. Lonke ixesha singabemi apha, besinje ngabazalanayo. Kwasebukhwenkweni bethu akuzange kungene moya phakathi kwethu. Besisoloko sincedana, sicebisana, silulekana, kungekho gxeke.

"Kutshanje uchole idlakadlakana. Ndize kukucebisa lahla lo mntwana. Nguye oya kusahlula. Ngobusuku baphezolo asilalanga yintwana yam, igcuma ziingqaqambo. Iqutyulwe siso sona esi sigebengana. Kumhlophe ukuba nalapho avela khona wasuswa bobu bunje bakhe. Phambi kokuba ungenelwe nangamanye amatyala angenani nam, ndiyakubonisa gxotha lo mntwana."

"Ndikhohliwe nokukuphendula. Undidele ngaphaya komgca," utshilo uNqabeni. "Into ebe sifudula siyiyo ebukhwenkweni, omnye komnye, nesiyiyo namhlanje, ayithethi kuthi yiza kundilawula emzini wam. Andizimiselanga kuzityanda gila, kodwa mandikwazise le nto, uDelihlazo akasayi kuze adinge khaya ndisadla ubomi. Phezu koko le nkwenkwe ayisilulo hlobo lwakuhamba lusenza uchuku. Hamba wena uye kutshayela phambi kwendlu yakho, wandule ukuhamba ukhangela inkunkuma kwimizi yabanye. Ndingaphantse ukuqiniseka nangoku isiphithiphithi siqalwe nguGqwangushe."

Uyekile wakha waphuma ukuya kuphola ; kuba uzive eya

efutheka ngokunye. UXhekethwana ebengalindelanga ukuba izinto zime ngale ndlela, waza wathetha ethibekile.

"Asintando yam ukufumana sixabane ngelize mfondini," wahambisa uXhekethwana. "Kudala sinyathela izinto ezinkulu kunezi. Kodwa bophelela inkamela yakho. Ndisahamba, kumzuzu ndimkile kowethu." Akuba ethe gwiqi ubiziwe uJujuju. Uyalwe ngokuqatha exelelwa ukuba angaze abe nanto yakwenza nabantwana bakuloKholiswa. Ngokwenjenjalo woba udala ingxabano. Uqukumbele uyise ngokuthi, "Nokuba bayakubetha bekuhlanganyela, ungaze uphindise, ubayeke bahlale."

Saba nzima eso sifundo. Kwakulula kakhulu ukwahlukana naloo makhwenkwe. Kodwa wayesiva kakubi ngoKholiswa, owayesithi lonke ixesha embona amkhumbuze udade wabo uLindiwe. UKholiswa ebengazanga athethe ngobubele noJujuju. Phezu kwayo yonke loo nto wathemba yena ukuba koze kuhlale kuhlale kulunge. Ithemba alibulali.

Emva kwesikolo ubebuya edangele. Ngomzuzwana mncinane anawo uGqwangushe ebethi abe nelizwi elibi alithethayo kuye. Xa kunje, ubekhumbula ngosizi ukuba akanakuphendula. Waza wawuthobela umthetho. UMafungwashe waba ngummeli, ngokuthi aphendule apho angenakuphendula uJujuju. Kwasoloko kunqandwa amathiphuthiphu, eza kulwa noKholiswa.

ISAHLUKO 14

ISIKOLO NEZASO

Iyabaleka imizuzu, zenza isantya iiyure,—hayi iminyaka! Sekungathi kuyizolo oko uJujuju samchola ehamba nenja. Ngathi kukwalapha ukubona kwethu umfazi enyuka umlambo ekhwaza umntwana wakhe, engafumani mpendulo. Siyabona encamela ekuthini makabe ujike wagoduka. Kanti sekudlule

isixhenxe seminyaka. UDelihlazo seleliphumelele ibakala lesihlanu.

Wayekhulile ngesiqu nangengqondo ; eyifumene incasa yesikolo nobukrakra baso. Ukunqwenela kakhulu ukuya esinaleni, engenawo amaphiko okumsa uyise. Kulo lonke elaseGcuwa kwakungekho bantu bayithakazelelayo imfundo ephakamileyo. Kuvele nene lithile eliMhlophe kweli thuba lazama ukudala ikhwele phakathi kwabemi belo. Livakalise ukuba liyavuma ukuzihlawula iindleko zokuqeqeshwa kwawona makhwenkwe mabini aqavileyo ngengqondo esinaleni. Nakwiititshala, zibe mbini-ntathu ezilunyamekeleyo olu daba.

Ngosuku olumisiweyo, emva kokuba umhloli egqithile, kufike kwisikolo sakwaGubevu nakwezinye iingxowa zeziqhamo zivela kwaMfundisi. Kwakusenzelwa ukukhuthaza ukuhamba kakuhle kwabantwana esikolweni. Ibilibhongo elibanzi elo, umvi bemkhangele ngamehlo abomvu, ukuba ade afike.

Ngaloo mini bekuxelwa amagama abo bathe baphumelela. Namhlanje kubekho umahluko. Zakuba ziqhutyiwe iingxeko zoviwo, utitshala uvakalise olunye uvavanyo oluza kungenelwa ngamakhwenkwe kuphela, ukuze lawo enze ngokufanelekileyo abe nokuya esinaleni kumnyaka olandelayo. Akukho mini ibiba mnandi ngaphezu kwale. Kwaza kwangenwa kuchwayitiwe ngabo babeza kungena elugqatsweni.

Abuzwe imibuzwana engephi, yaphela into ebithethwa ebekusithiwa mkhozi ngayo. Kwaphuma kwelo qela, uJujuju noGqwangushe, yaba kukuya kwabo esinaleni. Akubanga mnandi kakhulu ukuya kukaDelihlazo emfundweni ephakamileyo. Ukuphela komntu amaziyo bebeyinyoka nesele.

Eyona nto yamvuyisayo yaba kukunxiba izihlangu. Wazithengelwa ezi nekawusi zazo, ndawonye nebhulukhwe nebhatyi yekhode. Ebenayo enye ibhulukhwe nebhatyi abeza kuzinxiba evekini nje. Ezo bhatyi zazisima entla kwamadolo kancinane. Iibhulukhwe izezo akuzinxiba umntu ange aka-

ngewufinyezi umlenze. Kuloo mfanyana unesi sivatho beka umnqwazana entloko, uwufumene umfanekiso kaDelihlazo Vuthula, njengoko simazi ngomnyaka waya esinaleni.

Izihlangu zaloo minyaka asikuko nokuba bezilukhuni. Bekuthi zakuba shushu zifuthe, uze uzive akuhamba umntu ozinxibileyo zisithi krawu, krawu, bajike abanye ukuhhangela ukuba kungena bani na. Ulutsha luyawathanda amehlo, yena wayengathi uthe kratya.

Akakho ongayaziyo imfeketho eyenziwa kwabafikayo esinaleni. Bebethiwa mfaxa kanobom ngasekukudala ekho amakhwenkwe. Bekunyulwa uMgqibelo othile asiwe emlanjeni, apho aphehlelelwa ukuze athiywe igama elitsha abe ziinyhweri. Ibiyintlaninge imithetho abayenzelwayo enje ngokujonga phantsi lonke ixesha, ukungazikheleli ityuwa esityeni ; ukungazikhululi izihlangu ngeeawa.

Bekungena inkonzo yangokuhlwa ngemini yeSabatha. Yothi iyaphuma kube kukade enqwaleka amasinala elangazelela ukulala. Ukuze ukukhulula izihlangu ukuphuma kwenkonzo ibe yinto ende, njengoko bezinyuka nemilenze. Iqhinga laveliswa. Kwaya kwaya akwabakho uya enxibe izihlangu kwinkonzo yangokuhlwa ngaphandle kweenyhweri.

Mhla wafika, wahlangana neento ezinkulu zontathu zamakhwenkwe ngasemfuleni. Ubehamba noyise noMafungwashe udade wabo owayemthwalise impahla.

"Yiyo bafondini ;" wakhwaza watsho omnye. Phofu ubuye wathi yabalala akubona ehamba nendoda endala. Akumka uNqabeni nentombi yakhe babuyele kuJujuju babulisa babuza igama lakhe, wabaxelela.

"Uyabona," ihambisile laa nkewu ibithethe kuqala, "kufuneka usazile. Mna ndinguMakhanda-mahlanu, abahlobo bam aba nguTshayingca noNkawana. Zonke iintwana ezifikayo zithi xa zisiphendula okanye zidlula ngakuthi, zigobe, zibonakalise imbeko." Bamthabathile, bemka naye, bemsa kwigumbi ekulalwa kulo ukuze abeke impahla yakhe aphumle.

Ngomzuzwana ongephi baba sebebuyile besithi, "Uthi uMhlanjwayo yiza kubonisa isisu." UMhlanjwayo ibiliganyana ababebiza ngalo uMnu. Jackson, owayelungisa ukutya kwabo ebagcinile. Uhambile uJujuju naxa ebengayiqondi loo nto. Bakukhov' ukumngenisa kwindlu abelindela kuyo amakhwenkwe xa aza kwamkelwa abhalwe encwadini enkulu yesinala, bahamba.

Akalibazisanga "omaqegu;" wakhulula kwangoko. Ebengazi yena ukuba ukukhulula isisu yincoko yamasinala ethetha ukuhlangana noMnu. Jackson. Akothuka ngako akungena kule ndlu umphathi ukufumana inkwenkwe seyilungiselele ukumbonisa isisu. Wayengowokuqala ukuyenza loo nto. Abanye bebecetyiswa kwakude zizihlobo ngolu lwamkelo. Yena wayengekabi nazo.

Akubuzwa isizathu sokuba emi ngolu hlobo, usixelile uJujuju "Ngubani othe yiza apha?" "NgoMakhanda mahlanu noNkawana." Naxa ebenomsindo lo mnumzana akabanga nakho ukuzibamba kuphele angahleki, akucinga ukuba akukho magama anje ngalawo esikolweni apho. Ude wawazi ekugqibeleni, waza wawayala kakhulu ukuba angafekethi ngamanye.

Loo makhwenkwe mathathu asikuko nokuba ebenenkathazo. Anga evile okweveki, wabuya waphutshuluka umsila wembulu. Ngenye imini kwakusetyenzwa phandle kugecwa ukhula kulungiswa iindlela eziya kwizindlu ngezindlu. Kufike uNkawana wabizela uJujuju noGqwangushe ecaleni. Uthe kubo, "Uthi uMhlanjwayo hambani niye kukha iziqhamo phaya esitiyeni." Ubanike izitya ezikhulu zazibini.

Yekoko ukusinga emithini, bevuyela ukuxatyiswa ngangokude bathunywe umsetyenzana onje ukuba mnandi. Bakumka ubalibele uNkawana, kuba ubelinga ukwenza amaziko entsini ndawana zonke. Kumothusile ngoko ukuva ilizwi letitshala libuza :—

"Ngubani othe laa makhwenkwe makaye phaya esitiyeni?

"Andazi Mfundisi."

Badwabe badwaba suka kwafika enye yeetitshala ihamba ihlola. Libayile bakuva ukuba baphule umthetho ngokungena esitiyeni, yabathethisa kakhulu. Kuthe bakunga bangazilamlela, yabavala umlomo ngokubaxelela ukuba bangaze baphendule xa bangxoliswayo ngumntu ongaphezulu kubo. Bazuziswa isohlwayo ngokwaphula umyalelo, befile yintsini oNkawana ukucinga ukuba kungenxa yabo kwenzekile nje oko.

Kodwa uMnu. Jackson, owayazi kwangoko intsusa wabaxolisa ngamagaqana ambalwa. Ukususela loo mini, uJujuju wazimisela ukuba uya kwenza ngokubona kwakhe. Kwicawa elandelayo laba shushu ngokugqithileyo. Akazinxibanga ezakhe izihlangu, waza wayintlekisa kwabanye, kuba oyike ukuthi ziya kumluma zimncamise. Emva kokuba kutyiwe, ukuphuma kwenkonzo yaba luphehlelelo lwabafikayo. NguJujuju yedwa ongabangakho. Babengasuka bemfuna naphi akakhe abonakale, bamncama. Unanamhla oku akakaziwa apho wayezimele khona.

Kuzo zonke ezi ziganeko, ubomi besinala, baba bobumnandi kuye, wonwaba. Bahle babuya baqhelana noGqwangushe. Bafumana kuluncedo ukuba namathuba bebobabini, bephicotha okubahleleyo imihla ngemihla. Waye uGqwangushe ebebuthuntu ezibalweni ekhuthazwa nguwabo lowo.

ISAHLUKO 15

IHOLIDE

Kwaba mnandi esikolweni. Zafika iiholide kwagodukwa, kwafuneka uJujuju eye kuncedisa uyise. Bavuya bonke ukumbona. Asisathethi ngoNjam. Wayezele ngamabali asesinaleni iintsimbi zakhona, izifundo, iititshala, iinkonzo ! Akubangakho nto ayilibalayo.

Ubuzile naye ngento ezenzekileyo eli xa ebemkile, wabaliselwa ngeenkomo ezafayo nezafikayo, ukwindla, iindwendwe, nokuma kwekhaya jikelele. Wayenqwena ukuva ngoKholiswa uJujuju. Kanti ebesazi nje ukuba akukho mntu uthanda ukuthetha ngaye akabuzanga.

Phezu koko akayekanga ukumeinga—zona ke iingeinga zikhawuleza ngokombane. UKholiswa ubesondeza oLindiwe uyise nonina. UMaDongwe. Ingaba bethu unina uyazalana nalo mfo unobubele wamcholayo ? Ebezithethela atsho kuba ngoku ebezinzile. Ixhego elinguyise lisekho ? Angathini ukuze alibone ? Kodwa woze alibone nokuba kungawuphi na umnyaka ; naxa amelwe kukukhe ahlale asebenzele uNqabeni. Kuba ukumshiya kwangoko kungathetha ulunya.

Injalo intliziyo ukuthatha ibeka. Sonke sidalwe sangabanye—elowo umntu ngeyakhe ifolom. Yiyo le nto sithi xa sisezingeingeni ezinzulu, sibhenele ekuthini ewaka. Ngolunye usuku ngoMgqibelo, uye kuguqula impahla njengesiqhelo uJujuju. Ilanga lalise lithe tshoce. Bekusele iveki enye zivulwe izikolo. Ngoko ke wayesebenze nzima iimini ezi ebiyisa uyise ubuhlanti.

Uthe xa aya ngasemfuleni weva ilizwana libuza, " Kutheni ungabulisi nje ? " Guqugu. " O ! nguKholiswa," waphendula.

" Andikubonanga, molo ! "

" Kanene izikolo zenu sezivulwa ? "

" Ewe siyavula ngoMgqibelo kule veki izayo. Asiyivanga le holide ibimnandi kanye."

" Khon' ungatshongo. ! Kuya kuba kubi kakhulu nakumka. Ndiye ndimkhumbule kakhulu uGqwangushe."

Bahlukana waqokelela iinkomo uJujuju, yagoduka namanzi intombazana. Wamangaliswa uDeli ukubona nokuva uKholiswa ethetha kakuhle njengamanye amantombazana. Kunjalo nje wayenelizwi elimnandi kunene.

Wayengazi ukuba kusoloko wemkayo ubuhlobo phakathi

komzi kaNqabeni nokaXhekethwana babuvuke bema ngeenyawo. Akuba esesikolweni uGqwangushe akubangakho mntu wokuqhubela uKholiswa emsindweni, kuba uPhokoma ubesemsebenzini eGoli. Nangaphaya koko, ubengazingeni neam ezo nkeukwana zabo. Ngoko ke yanyanzeleka le ntwanazana ukuba ihle endulini.

Yayeka nokusoloko ibika ukuxakaniswa kwayo. Baqhelana ngoku noMafungwashe, noxa wawunokubona ukuba kukho umsantsa phakathi kwabo. Ngamanye amaxa uKholiswa ebekhe anqwenele ukuba uGqwangushe ebengakhohlakalanga kangaka. Ezo ngeinga beziba zezomzuzwana, abuye athi shwaca kwakhona. Asimhlola lowo, kuba waziwa nangubani na into abefudula eyiyo.

Kumabali abewabalisa uJujuju, akukho belihambisa umzimba njengebali lakwagqira. Asikuko nokuba ubeyinqwenela idolophu. Kwaye amakhwenkwe ebelondoloziwe ukuze angafumane aphume kamasango esinala. Ebesiya ngesizathu esibonakalayo nasedolophini apho, isithuba esiziimayile eziliqela ukusuka esikolweni. Wacinga icebo ureme. Wacela imvume yokuya kukupha izinyo ezibophe imihlathi ngeqhiya. Ugqira ebemnye esedolophini, waza walinikwa ithuba lokuba aye kumbona.

Wahamba nenye inkwenkwe kuba uGqwangushe wayexakekile loo mini. Kwaye bebesengabahlobo bezinyo kuphela. Bafikile apho bebesiya, batyhutyha-tyhutyha ndawana zonke. engazilibali uJujuju ukukwazi ukukhetha elona qhinga lilungileyo. Kanti akabuzanga !

Emalanga, uMnu. Jackson ubehamba-hamba ekhwele inkabi yakhe efosi, esela impepho. Uhambe kakhulu, kangangokuba ngokubuya unyanzeleke ukuba acande edolophini. Izulu belithembisa ukuba lingalibi ekuyeni kutshona kwelanga, kuba bekufingiza amafu amnyama.

Waya kuGqira ukuya kukhangela ukuba inkwenkwe egama linguDelihlazo Vuthula seyibonene na naye. Ukuze xa ku-

ngenjalo ameele ayikhulule kamsinyane. Wathi nqa ukufumanisa ukuba ayikhange ibekho inkwenkwe eyileyo. Uthe uDr. Hall, " Ukuba unokuyikhawulezisa, ndingabayeka aba okwexeshana ndinyamekele yona."

Kwathunywa izijoli zazula zagqiba umzi, zihamba zibuza, " UDelihlazo Vuthula nikhe nambonaphi na ? " Wafunyanwa kwenye yeevenkile, emungunya iiswitisi, selelibele kwaphela ukuba ebeze kwagqira. Wafika uMnu. Jackson noDr. Hall bemlindele.

" Nkosi izinyo lam linesiqabu, mase ndigoduka ndingalikhuphanga." wafumana wambandaza watsho.

" Kulunge liphume, khona ukuze lingasuleli amanye. Liliphi lona lona ? " Wabuza uGqira, selerole iintsimbi zakhe esondela.

" Ewe, unyanisile, makalishenxise xa likhathazayo. Yinto yalo ukungathi lithi gogololo, lize libuye ngamandla." Wangenelela, engqina uJackson.

Ngeli xesha ebengcangcazela wonke uDeli, ebile ethe xhopho. Inqatha lalise linqumile, ezisola ngokugeza kwakhe. Ngekungenani ukuba wayethe ufa sisisu. Kodwa ukufumane kutsalwe izinyo lizimilele kwakunganyamezeleki. Noko wabuya waqonda ukuba kulunge kwa ukuziqinisa alikhuphe, kunokuba azenze ixoki ngokuxelela umphathi esona sizathu simzise edolophini. Wayesazi ukuba enjenjalo, akasayi kuze athenjwe naphakade.

Yaba ngumhlola kuDr. Hall ukuba izinyo eligulayo lifane namanye ngebala elimhlophe. Walikhupha nzima, liqinile. Kuba waba ngasuka elandula uJujuju esithi imali uyilahlile wayirola uMnu. Jackson. Ugule iveki yonke emva koko egcuma ziintlungu, wayaleka ukuba woze aphinde enze amaqhinga. Wavuya kodwa kukusinda ekuhlazekeni.

Nanamhla oku, uthi uThemba, lowa wayehamba noDeli xa ayibalisayo loo ndaba ingalibalekiyo, ahleke athi cum,

alile iinyembezi. Akabulibali ubugora bukaJujuju ukuhlala ahlale umntu azaphule ibamba ngaphandle kwesizathu.

* * * *

Seyiphelile iminyaka emithathu. UDelihlazo Vuthula ukwibanga lokugqibela ukuze abe yititshala efezekileyo. Unebhongo ngemfundo ayifumeneyo, wayichola ngokwedayimani. Ubeyazi ngokucacileyo into yokuba akayiyo inkulelwane yasemaMfengwini kwaGubevu, kungamsithele ukuba ungunyana womXhosa. Into ebengekayichani kukuba liphi na ikhaya lakhe.

Wazimisela ukubuza kuNqabeni akuba ephumelele, ngabazali bakhe. Angathini bethu uyise, akuva ukuba unyana wakhe seleyititshala ? Yena uya kuhlala emaMfengwini uya kugoduka kusini na ?

ISAHLUKO 16

LIFILE !

Yimivuyo, imincili, imiyeyezelo. Nguxha-xha-xha, lixhaphetshu, ngamahitsihitsi ; kuyasetyenzwa emaMfengwini eBawa kwesikaMhlonyane, kwaNqenqa into yakwaGadluma. Umzi kaMhlonyane ubumelene nokaXhekethwana. Ubengumphakathi onegama. Kanti nangoku wayesila umgidi, ukuze azenzele ngakumbi igama.

Basilwa utywala, kwadidiyelwa, kwacolwa—abafazi neentombi, abatshakazana namakhehlekazi kuhanjwa ngezantya. Kuhle kwabonakala ukuba ocumse baloo lali abasayi kuwulingana loo mgidi ngokwenziwa nguloo mfo. Abafazi baqonde ukuba mabawelele phesheya kweGcuwa, baboleke iifatyi nongxawu kwezo lali zaseTsonyane. Kwakusentwasa-hlobo, ingumnyaka obonwa nasisidenge ukuba uya kuba mhle. Andithi onowambu babewazalisile amadlelo bemise iingcondo

zabo ezibomvu ? Iindudumo zazingavakalanga isephezulu eyeKhala ;

Ide yafika imini yentselo. Iilali zasezihlabelene kwaya kutsho ezingqothweni zomhlaba. Ngoko wawungemangaliswe ukubona kwasekuthini chapha kwelanga, imiqodi ngemiqodi yabantu, belukrozo, ukuza kuwela eGcuwa. Bambi babekhweza amathambeka, kanti kuya kubakho iqela lona eliya kuthi kumacala angasentla abekele komaCegcuwana, Thole, Manqulo, nezinye iindawo. Umgidi wawumkhulu, kuzele amaMfengu namaXhosa. Ibingenguwo mhlola lowo, kuba bekuhanjelwana zezi ndawo.

Ngexesha lale ndywala uJujuju noGqwangushe babesekhaya bethe gxada okwcentsukwana. Amadoda ayegaxele agqibe ; abafazi becobote baphelela. Kuhonjiwe. Izidanga zaziphi ? Izigolombane, amanqashela, imixhaka ! Wenna !

Abafazi bangaphesheya babeshiye beyaleze abantwana kwabanye ngethemba lokuba bojika lingekatshoni. Amadoda ayemke engathethanga nto ngempahla, ecinga ukuba obuya ngasemathambekeni kungekabi mnyama. Igwele elincinane liyayibilisa intlama iphela. Ngubani owayesazi ukuba ukusilwa kotywala kumzi omnye kungenza izigigaba ezikhulu ngangezo zenzeka loo mini.

Abantu bafika bezaliswe yimincili. Kukho abeza bethe fici zizikrokro. Abanye kwakwaba babeziindwendwe babethiwe fithi kukweya nalugxeko. Abantu ziindidi ngeendidi. Kuloo mzi yayiyinyaka-nyaka yezizwe ngezizwe, amaXhosa, amaMfene, amaTshawe aseThuthura, Tsonyana ikakhulu.

AmaZizi, amaNgwane aphesheya kweNgwane, amaBhele akwaMthintsilana namaHlubi. Kwalawulwa kuyo yonke imizana yaloo lali, baye utywala bubuninzi.

Lide ilanga latshona, ingqondo zabantu zingabuyanga, benxile beludaka. Ude wathi owangaphesheya, "Hinani nina ! kuhlwile phandle apha, iintsapho ziyatshisana ngasemva."

Uthe ophendulayo, "Khawenze kuhle, inkosana ayikaphumi endlwini, isathetha nomninimzi." Kube njalo. Inkosi ibingekaneli butywala, yaza yamana icela obunye. Akayithathelanga ngqalelo uMhlonyane loo nto. Ide yabona ukuba yosel' incaza. Akubanga kudala, yathi incoko yajiya, yaqina inqawa, zalila iintonga. Yaqala ngolo hlobo imfazwe yoMhlonyane. Ukuliwa kwayo kwaba nenxaxheba kubomi bukaJujuju.

Yakhula ngobo busuku ingxabano yabanxilileyo, yayimfazwe. Abantu bavuswa lilizwi lentlaba-mkhosi, kwee bhazalala kuloo mimango, amadoda aphuma nezikhali. Kwafa babaninzi ngephanyazo. Ngentsasa elandelayo, kuthunywe abafana ukuya kubikela zonke izizwana zamaMfengu ezikwelo. Kwahamba uJujuju noGqwangushe amakhwenkwe ayeziinkweli ezaziwayo.

Ayibanga lidatyana nje eli, yaba yimfazwe. Endleleni zimgubungele uDelihlazo iingcinga. Bebengenakuba sabuyela esikolweni kude kube kuphelile ukulwa, okuphakathi kwamaMfengu namaXhosa. Yena ungumXhosa, okhulele wondlelwa emaMfengwini. Ngeso sizathu akalazanga icala anokuthi angene ngakulo xa kufuneka. Ugqibe kwelokuba akasayi kusa sandla nakuliphi na ihlelo.

Baphalise oko bendulukile behamba behlwayela olu daba. Yekoko ukunyuka loo mimango, nokunqumla loo mathafa akwaSamfumfu. Ilizwe lalifile. Bathe ngoratya olukhulu bafika mzini uthile. Bazimisela ukulalisa khona kuba babedinwe beziqhiya, belambile. Abakhonkothwanga nja. Yabamangalisa loo nto, kuba umzi ubumkhulu enkangelekweni.

"Nkqo ! nkqo ! nkqo ! " batsho.

"Ngena ! "

"Molweni," bavuma abangaphakathi besithi, "Kucacile ukuba onyoko balotyolwa ngamathokazi. Sondelani nisike, nasi isibindi." Bathe bakuphosa amehlo babona ukuba

amaqela mathathu. Ngaphaya kweziko kwicala elingemva kocango, kwakuhleli indodana. Banikwa ukhuko, bahlala ngakuyo. Kwelinye icala yayisisangqa sabafazi abathathu namantombazana amabini asel' ethe dlundlu. Kwatyiwa inyama.

Abantwana bona babenqumbene entla kweziko, belumisana ngondonci nomphunga. Nezinja zazilapha zithe buthuthu ngezantsi, zilindele ukujulelwa amathambo neenyama ezingafunwayo. Kutyiwe kwagqitywa, kwandula ukubuzwa imvelaphi nempilo. Ngeli xesha umfazi aphothulayo, abantwana babengqonge iziko, bemana ukusuba iinkobe ngesandla xa bamkhelelayo embizeni. Ubuzile umninimzi :—

" Nivelaphi bantwana bam ? "

" Siphuma eBawa, Sihamba sibika imfazwe ekhoyo kwesikaNqenqa," batsho beyichuba ingcombolo yokufa kwelizwe. Bathe besithi tya yabe selilixesha lokuba kutyiwe. Sisusiwe isibane ngaselityeni, sabekwa kwikhabhathana esecaleni, ukuze kubone wonke osendlwini. Lo mzi ubungowasesikolweni. Sibe sodwa isitya somninikhaya, kwaza phambi kwabahambi kwathiwa ntimfa esetiki sithe yala ngumvubo. Abafazi babenesabo, nabantwana ngokunjalo.

Amantombazana athe hlasi izitya ukuya kuzihlamba, kwakukhov' ukutyiwa. Baza abantu babuyela kwasezindabeni zabo.

" Besisancokola ke bafana bam," wathetha umninimzi, " ningamani na kowenu apha ? "

" NdiliHlubi lakwaRadebe," waphendula uGqwangushe, " Lo ndihamba naye ngowasemaTshaweni."

" O, nifike kwizihlobo zenu. Umfazi wam, unina yintokazi yakwaRadebe. UMaDongwe lo yintombi yakwaMthintsilana. Wayendele emaTshaweni. Kuhle ukuba nithi gaxa sinento esiyityayo. Bekuya kuba kubi ukuthi abantu befike kumzi wakowabo bemke bengasulanga mlomo."

" Wena mfana wasemaTshaweni, liphi elakho ikhaya ?

Wathini ukuze nje ube seBawa, ilelamaMfengu nje elo ? ''

'' Ndikhulele kwaGubevu mna bawo,'' wachaza uDeli, eziva enqena ukuwucokisa loo mlembelele wobomi bakhe. '' Ndalahlekana nabazali bam ndisengumntwana. Inye into endemka nayo, esekhoyo nanamhla, yinja.'' Walingena kwakhona ibali lakhe waya waligqiba sezisithi chiphichiphi iinyembezi.

Ngoku abalisayo, omnye wabafazi obengqengqile uthe khwaphuphu wabiza isibane. Wamthi ntsho uJujuju engathethi. Emva kokuba egqibile kuthe cwaka endlwini. Lalibahlabe bonke eli bali abantu, waza umninimzi wabiza iculo ukuba kuthandazwe. Kwangenelelwa ngomoya nguye wonke umntu, kuculwa elo culo limnandi kunene, linika isiqinisekiso esingapheliyo kwabakholwayo, '' Unabantu bakho Thixo.'' Yaba ngumthandazo ozukileyo.

Kwathi kwakuba kugqityiwe kwabuye kwathi tu. Yayilusuku lokugqibela olu bekunye. UMaDongwe ebehambele ekhaya apha, eya kuvuka agoduke. UNdabeni bekufanelekile ukuba awushiye umzi aye emfazweni. Ithemba licime kade entliziyweni. UMaDongwe wayeqala ukuziva enethemba kwakhona, esoyika nokulikhupha hleze kuthi kanti intliziyo yakhe idlala ngaye, iyamhleka. Baphume bonke ukuya kulala kwizindlu ngezindlu. Uphumile noGqwangushe ukuya kukhangela amahashe, ukuze abuyele kwinqugwala abebeza kulala kulo. Bebeza kuhamba ukuphuma kwekhwezi, ngemini elandelayo, kuba babengazi nokuba abayi kufuneka na ekulweni.

ISAHLUKO 17.

UJUJUJU NONINA

Akuthi gwiqi uGqwangushe uthe uMaDongwe kuDelihlazo, '' Mntwana wam, khawuhlale phantsi ndithethe nawe. Ungubani igama lakho ? ''

" NdinguJiujuju."

" Uyihlo ? "

" Kwakusithiwa ' yise kaDelihlazo ' ebuntwaneni bam."

" Wazi ntoni ngegama likanyoko ? "

" Ubawo nabanye babembiza ngokuba nguNowayiti."

" Akunalo ibala elingumkhango enkabeni ? "

" Ndinalo," waphendula emangalisiwe umfana. Makube lo mfazi umbuzelani ezi zinto zininzi kangaka. Yena wayengaboni nto yahlukileyo kuMaDongwe engamenza abe ngunina, kwaye wayemgqibele elityatha-ngubo uNowayiti. Uthe, " Kukho sizathu na esibange ukuba undibuze imibuzo engaka.

" Ewe, kodwa khawundenzele into ibe nye, ndandiya kukuxelela konke. Ndibonise isandla sakho sekhohlo."

Ke kaloku uJujuju wayengazanga anqunyulwe ngqithi, njengoko ebefanele. Wathi ebusaneni bakhe walunywa yinja efake isandla ngobuntwana xa ityayo, yaza yamtsheqa umnwe ongakucikicane. Wakhula enaloo ngqithi ingengqithi yona, wayekelwa kuloo nto. Awuzange ube sahluma, wahlala useso sishunqu umnwe.

Uthe akukubona oku unina waqiniseka ngokupheleleyo ukuba ngunyana wakhe owayelahlekile. Wavakala elila yimivuyo, esithi, " Nyana wam ! nyana wam ! " Emva kokuzinika kakhulu kule nto yabantwana, wayiqala ekuqaleni wada waya kuyigqiba imbali yokumka kwakhe emaTshaweni phesheya kweGwenxane.

UJujuju wavuya ngokungathethekiyo ukufumana unina. Akathandabuzanga nakancinane ukuba kuyinene oko. Yena uNowayiti lwaluthe riphu uvalo kuye, kwa esachaza impilo uDeli. Kuba unyana wayemfuze uyise ngokuthetha, nangesimbo sokuthi xa athethayo kunyuke ishiyi libe linye. Wayifumana indlela elula yokuya kuyise, namhlanje, eza kuya ephethe imfundo ephakamileyo yesinala.

Bahlala bancokola bada bahlulelana ubusuku. Wonke loo gama uGqwangushe ulele uyarona kwenye indlu.

"Udade wenu akungeze ube samazi," watsho unina, "Uyafunda naye. Kuxa akweyesine ngoku. Wasiwa ngubani esinaleni? Ndixelele konke mntwana wam." Wamchazela kakuhle nangempatho entle kunene ayifumene esandleni sikaNqabeni.

"Ngumntakwethu lowo. Makabe wasikwa yimfesane. Wacela inxuwa eBawa akuba nomfazi. Ikhaya lona likwaMthintsilana ngokuzalwa." Kwathi xa zigqibileyo ukukhala inkuku zokuqala, wathi uNowayiti.

"Ju, hamba uye kulala, mfana wam. Indlela yethu isende. Uza kuthini malunga nemfazwe? Uza kuhlala kwaGubevu ngokuya kulondoloza uyihlo kusini?"

"Ukuba unokundikhapha, ndifuna ukuya kubawo. Umbulelo wam kuyise kaMafungwashe ngongenasiphelo; kanti indawo yam ndicinga ukuba isemaTshaweni. Ronanti!

Ngala mazwi waphuma, waza, kungekudala waba selekobude, elele ubuthongo obungenawo namaphupha. Ukuphuma kwekhwezi waya ecaleni likanina emnika imiyalezo embalwa. "Ndilinde apha, ndide ndibuye. Ndisaya kubulisa kumama nobawo uNqabeni noMafungwashe, phambi kokuba ndiwele iGcuwa. Sala kakuhle!"

Endleleni eya eBawa akubangakho ubhekisa nto komnye phakathi kukaDeli noGqwangushe. Elowo ebezamana neengcinga zakhe. Bathe ukuba bathi ngxithisi ukuhla emahasheni wabe uJujuju selesonda ngoyise. Inkoliso yamadoda yayise ihambile ukuya kuvala amazibuko. Kodwa yena wayehleli ukulinda uJujuju, ukuze amyale, amshiye nemiyalezo ethile, phambi kokuba emke. Enye into, wayefuna ukwazi ukuba ingqondo yakhe iphi na, kukho ukungena kwimpi yamaMfengu, okanye ahambe aye kwelakowabo lokuzalwa.

Bathathene baya kwisidulana esisemva komzi. Xa uthetha umcimbi musa ukungena endlwini. Iindonga zineendlebe, iingcango ziyabona. Kuqale unyana ukuthetha :—

" Ndimbonile umama ! Ndiyalazi ikhaya lam lokuqala apho likhona."

" Uxelelwe ngubani ? " wabuza watsho uNqabeni.

" Ndiyabona ukuba ixesha alikho lokuchaza ngokuphele-leyo. Besilele kwaNdaba eTyinira. Ndifike elapho uNo-wayiti, umkaZenzile ubawo."

" Uthini ? Ungunyana kaZenzile wena ? "

" Ndinguye."

" Imimangaliso ayipheli ! UmkaZenzile omkhulu ngu-dade wethu. Andizange ndazi ukuba ungumntwana wakhe, andafuna nokukwazi, hleze kwakuba njalo undiphuluke. Kwathini ukuze ube lapha ? "

Uthe gqabagqaba ngokufutshane uJujuju, njengoko ebexe-lelwe ngunina. Yaba nesingqala indoda enkulu yaza yabuza : " Uza kuthini ngoku ? "

" Ndiza kugoduka ndiye kubona ubawo engekafi."

" Uya kuhamba njani ilizwe lifile nje ? "

" Apho kukho uthando kukho indlela."

" Unyanisile. Ndibuhlungu ukwahlukana nawe. Ubu-yintonga yam esekhosi. Kodwa ndiyavuya ngenxa yokonwa-ba kwakho. Uze uzigcine endleleni ungahlelwa zingozi. Imihla esinayo ayindawo. Mhlawumbi kungenzeka ukuba singaze sibuye sibonane. Ndlela ntle ! "

Balilelana apho okwexesha, waza uJujuju waya kubulisa kunina noMafungwashe. Intliziyo yayilihlwili, lusizi loku-shiya izihlobo ezinje. Wamkhapha uMafungwashe, bahamba ituba bethe cwaka. Xa kufika ixesha lokwahlukana, akukho nto iphela njengeendaba. Kwasuka akwabakho uthethayo, kwada kwabonakala ukuba makajike umkhaphi ahambe uJujuju ukusinga kunina nakuyise.

" Uze uze kusibona, yakuphela imfazwe."

" Ukuba ndisaphilile," waphendula omnye. Kwakamsi-nyane luthuli lodwa olwabonakalayo njengoko ebeqhuba ukuya kutshonela ngaphaya kwenduli.

Ngeba wayenqwenela ukumka embonile uKholiswa, atyebise iliso lakhe. Kanti akabanga nathuba lakuchitha ekuhlaleni, wemka engayanga kugqitha kwaXhekethwana. Ngethamsanqa, uthe xa awela emlanjeni, yabe inzwakazi leyo isithi vumbululu kwizibuko elingezantsi. Wayethunywe kumzi omgama ngezolo, wasel' elala khona, ebuya kusasa. UJujuju akabanga nathuba lakuthetha naye, ngaphandle kokukhwaza athi :—" Nisale kakuhle. Ndiyagoduka namhlanje. Andisayi kuze ndibuye ndibizwe ngokuthi ndingowakwaGubevu naphakade," watsho eya kuqabela.

Lathi liya kungena kunina elo laloo mini, wabe eseTyinira kwaNdaba uDeli. Ums' obomvu wabafumana besendleleni ngolulandelayo. Indlela yabo yayisinga kwaQithi. Bahamba begoloza, belala, benyebeleza, kuba imfazwe yayithe hlifi. Emva kweentsuku, baliwela iGwenxane, bafika kwaZenzile xa libantu bahle.

Bafika indoda enkulu isekhaya nentsapho. Bekungengakuba ubeligogotya loo mfo, koko ubebanjwe yicesina. " Nkqo ! nkqo ! nkqo ! " watsho uNowayiti.

" Ngaphakathi," lavakala izwi eliphendulayo. Gungqu, bangena. Babuzwe nguNosayini ngelizwana elibandayo :

" Nivelaphi ? Ningabantu baphi aba baxhobe kangaka?" (uJujuju ubephethe izagweba nemikhonto emibini).

" Siphuma phesheya kweGcuwa."

" Ewe.! "

" Sihambele apha kwaQithi."

" Mawube ngumcimbi omkhulu lo unokunikhupha ngexesha elibi ngolu hlobo."

" Ndizise lo mntwana kowabo."

Ithe khwaphuphu apha indoda enkulu yathi, " Liphi iwabo ? Kuya kulunga nihle nihambe kwangoku, kuba asiyazi into enokuhla ngomso. Zimbi ezi mini. Khawume, kutheni ngathi ndiyanazi nje ? "

Uphume phandle kobu buthuba uNosayini, waza wasala

eqhuba uNowayiti: "Sifuna umzi wasemaTshaweni kwaZenzile. Ndizise umntwana endithemba ukuba wahlukana naye esemncinane kakhulu." Kobu buthuba kubuye kwangena uNosayini, waphuma nembiza, eza kubeka iinkobe ekuza kuvutywa ngazo ngokuhlwa. Akuba ephumile waqwalasela kuloo mfazi uthethayo emangalisiwe okomzuzu uZenzile. Emva koko umane ukubabala ngamehlo engathethi.

ISAHLUKO 18

EMVA KWEMINYAKA

Ingaguquka yonke into emntwini, lingajika nebala, lithi belimhlophe, abe mnyama tsu. Athi ebenqine engumcinga, atyebe adilike, amehlo wona ohlala eyiloo nto ayeyiyo. Omnye umntu endimaziyo wakha wagula ixesha elide yilaa fiva ka-1918. Wayefudula ngaphambi kwayo engumfo ompumlo isitywabula. Wathi ephila yabe seyichophe ngohlobo olulodwa. Kunjalo ukuguqu-guquka komntu. Kanti amehlo athi ukuze aguquke, kube kuguquke intliziyo ngaphakathi.

Emzuzwini uvakele esithi uZenzile, "Ungubani igama lakho mfana wam? Ndifuna ukuliva liphuma emlonyeni wakho."

Uthe omnye, "NdinguJujuju."

"Ungunyana kabani?"
"Ubawo nguyise kaDelihlazo."
"Ungumni?"
"NdinguTshawe."

Le mibuzo ubesel' eyibuzela ukuqinisekisa uZenzile, kuba ubeqonda ukuba uDeli ngunyana wakhe owalahlekayo nga-

phandle kwamathandabuzo. Kanjalo nanko uNowayiti ekho ukuze kushenxiswe konke ukungakholwa. Emva kweminyaka engaka bebelondoloziwe, ukuze babuyiselwe kuye kwakhona besempilweni encomekayo. KuNowayiti kwakutshintshe izambatho zodwa.

Uvakele esithi, " Imisebenzi kaSomandla ingummangaliso. Malibongwe igama lakhe ngonaphakade kanaphakade." Ngemincili uhlabele iculo, " Unabantu bakho Thixo." Bangena bonke nabantwana ngokuva ingoma, batsho ngomhobe omnandi. Emveni koko kwathandazwa kubulelwa umanyano, uJujuju ekhumbula luzizi, wabuza ngodade wabo. Uxelelwe ukuba uNontwayithethwa wendiswa uLindiwe wabhubha, uXhalisile yena uye emfazweni.

" Benihlalele ntoni yonke le minyaka ? " wabuza uyise kunyana. " Kuyinene ukuba ithemba alibulali. Ndisekho nje ndigcinwe lilo." Ibe yenye into ngoku kunqandwa amahalihali, uNowayiti ufuna ukubuyela apho ebevela khona, kuba ewufezile owakhe umsebenzi. Kwakumnandi kakhulu kuye ngenxa yokuba unyana wakhe ebuye wavela, kodwa ebengenamnqweno wakuhlala emzini angathenjwanga kuwo. Emva kokuzanywa ithuba elide kunene wada wee gogololo.

UJujuju ubethanda ukungena ekulweni, azenzele igama. Naxa kunjalo, imhleli yona indawo yokuba ngenye imini woza alwe noNqabeni—indoda eyambumba ephalele yamenza umntu. Ebengenawo umnqweno woko. Wahlala wangundilele ngeso sizathu.

Ngenye imini, uJujuju uphume ukuya kuguqula iinkomo ebezikhatshelwa egqubeni ngeli xesha. Ukhe wahambahamba ezulazula kwiziza ekubonakala ukuba zezamadabi. Phantsi kwesicithi esithile ufike kukho indoda iqhushekiwe, kucacile ukuba ingxweleriwe.

Akuyijongisisa ubone ukuba nguGqwangushe. Umbeke emhlana wagoduka naye. Ufike wamhlamba amanxeba, wazicheba iinduma zakhe, wamonga iintsuku eziliqela. Ngo-

kuhamba kwexesha waya esomelela ngokomelela wada wabuya waphila wathi qete.

* * * *

Namhlanje ilizwe lixolile, imfazwe ayithathanga zinyanga zingaphi. Kakade ibingemfazwe itheni, ibiyingxabano nje ekubonakala ukuba mayifezwe ngeentonga. Abaninzi babuyele kwaseezindaweni zabo. Kwabakho abafileyo kwanabasindileyo. Abanye balele ezindle, ngenxa yezindlu zabo. Inxenye iphilile ukuze ikhonze ilizwe layo.

UDelihlazo noyise baphakathi kwabahleliyo, noGqwangushe waphila. Lonke ixesha ubehlala noJujuju, sebevana ngoku oko wathi wamnyamekela elutywantsi oluselusizini esezintlungwini, esifa nayindlala. Asikuko nokuba ebeba neentloni akukhumbula isimo sakhe sangaphanmbili. Bebedla ngokuthi bahlale babalisele unina noyise ngeemini zabo zasesinaleni.

Zabaleka iimini, kwafuneka ebuye wagoduka uGqwangushe. Intliziyo yakhe yayise ikowabo ekhumbula bonke ngokukodwa uKholiswa. Akufika ekhaya akalibalanga ukubalisa ngobubele nobuntu bukaDeli. Bavuya bonke ngaphandle kukaKholiswa, owathi endaweni yokonwaba wathi khunubembe.

Uthe akuba yedwa walinga kakhulu kule nto yabantwana, waziva ekhaphukhaphu. Wandula ke ukuya kwaNqabeni ukuze avise uMafungwashe nonina iindaba ezifike nomnakwabo. Yayiyinto entsha le kuloo ntwanazana izitsho kunene. Kucacile ukuba umntu uzalwa kutsha imihla ngemihla kude kufike kwixabiso lokwaluphala.

Ngaphandle kwamathandabuzo, uGqwangushe noJujuju babengenakuba sabuyela ngaloo mnyaka, kuba babehleli kakhulu ekhaya. Babekhumbula kakhulu iititshala zabo kunye namanye amakhwenkwe. Ubungamva uGqwangushe esitsho ngomlozi ingoma ebebethanda kakhulu ukuyivuma esinaleni xa babodwa :

Ngezo mini zilusizi,
Ngezenkcithakal' enkulu,
Xeshikwen' obawo bethu
Babedliwa ngamaramnewa.
Babechithwa nguy' uTshaka,
Impakath' idl' udiza,
Abafazi babethwele abantwana ngeengobozi.
Yoo ! Hay' iMfecane ! Yoo ! Hay' iMfecane.
Yabachitha-chitha, yabachitha-chitha !

ISAHLUKO 19

KUXHELW' EXHUKWANE

Kwakuba kuphelile ukuwasazela kokuba abantu besaqala ukufumana neendawo zabo, uZenzile umeme isidlo esikhulu kunene emzini wakhe. Wonke othandayo wayevulelekile ukuba eze, aziyolise ndawonye nentsapho yakhe.

Umgcobo lowo waba ngenyanga yoMnga. Iimvula bezininzi kakhulu ngaloo mnyaka. Kuqondakala ukuba umnyaka uya kuba mhle. Ithafa lalimabala-bala, ivumba ezindle lileliphuphisayo. Abantu babese bechwayite ngokungathi bebengakhange baye mfazweni.

UZenzile wamalela kwaphela uNowayiti. Wathi akangethi amehlo akhe selavulwa abe kuxa enza izinto zobumnyama. Ngokukodwa kuba wayesel' ethe wohlwaywa ngenxa yobudenge bakhe. Wahlala ke uMaDongwe yada yafika loo mini yesidlo.

Kuthe lisithi chapha, yabe seyingamawele-wele, iziziyunguma ; kugoqoza iimbiza kuyiloo nto, baye abantu bengumtya omnye macalana onke ukuza kwaZenzile. Lathi lisukela imini emaqanda yabe inkundla ingqoqo ngamadoda. Ukuya

ngasezindlwini phaya kwakuthe tshitshilili abafazi namantombazana.

Amakhwenkwe wona ebethe qengqelele entla komzi njeya, kudlalwa ungcaka wezandla noweentonga. Kuphathwa kuncokolwa ngeenkabi ezikwaziyo ukukhonya, kubuye kuphikiswane ngeenkunzi zeenkomo ezikhaliphileyo. Nawo ebengasilelanga kuloo mcimbi.

Abanye abafazi babese bethe nca kuNowayiti, bembuza izinto ngezinto. Abo babese bekhe bamthi tshe lo mfana (kuba uninzi belungekamboni) babenethemba elimfumamfuma lokwendisela iintombi zabo kuloo mzi. Babemthanda kakhulu uZenzile. Ebethobile, enobuntu, elincoko nehomba ; kwaye umvundla ubuzek' indlela.

Kulo mgidi akubangakho tywala. Umnini-mzi nenkosikazi bebengamakholwa. Unyana lowo besisenziwa ngenxa yakhe esi sidlo ubekufuphi ekubeni abe yititshala efezekileyo aphume ukuya kukhonza isizwe esiNtsundu. Kwalile kusadumzela kuhlekwa, eli xa iimbiza ngasebuhlanti ziphuphuma, umsi usisiphotshongela wavakala umthunywa, " Iindlebe ! "

Akutsho ibe ngulowo wafuna indawo yokuhlala ; kwee cwaka. Uhambisile umfana oyiphetheyo wathi : " Namhlanje ekhaya apha nibiziwe mawethu. Nibizwe ngumninimzi ngomcimbi awuphetheyo emphefumlweni wakhe. Ndiphakamela ukulungisa iindlebe zenu, ukuze intetho yakhe ifike senilungile."

Uphakamile uZenzile wenjenje :—" Makhosi, manene, mzi wakowethu, nani bantwana bam, amazwi amaninzi andinawo. Andinibizelanga tyala, ndinimemele ukuba nivuyisane nam, nigcobe, nitye nonwabe. Unyana wam endandisithi ufile, ubuye wavuka ekunye nonina. Intsapho eyayindilahlekile ibuye yafunyanwa, isadla ubomi.

" Akukho bani apha olwaziyo usizi endibe ndikulo le minyaka ingakanana. Akukho mntu unokuwubalisa umvandedwa ondihleliyo lonke eli xesha, isazela sam sindidla, kuba

ndingazanga ndibuthibe ububi endandibubona busiza. Ndicela uxolo kulo mfazi, phambi kwenu nonke.''

Uthe ehlala kwabe kuphakama iqela lamadoda lisithi, '' Uphi yena loo mfana ? Makaphakame asichazele indaba yokusinda kwakhe nokukhula kwakhe kude kube ngoku.''

Usukile uJujuju esithi akayi kuba nakho ukuyiphicotha yonke loo ngcombolo yokuphuncula kwakhe ekufeni. Uthe ke wachaza konke ukwazi kwakhe nendaba yokufumana kwakhe elo thamsanqa lokuwelwa ngumqa oyimfundo esandleni. Utsho ebaxelela ukuba umntu onolwazi oluzeleyo lokusinda kwabo ngunina. Waya wee tya.

Lo Nongqawuse wobomi bukaNowayiti nonyana wakhe yaba ngundaba-mlonyeni kubo bonke—abatsha nabadala. Kungekuko ngaloo mini yodwa, kodwa kuzo zonke iilali zelo. Yayiyinto engaqhele kuhla leyo. Iindaba zase zikhawuleze zaya kufika kulonina kaJujuju—kuba azilali ndleleni, kwaza kwamnandi kunene.

Konwatywa kakhulu, kwada kwangathi ngumgcobo wokuqala owakha wakho kulo lonke elakwaCentane. Enyanisweni yaba ngumgidi wokuqala ongenasizathu, ngaphandle kokuba kuvunywa nje kuphela. Into eninzi yabantu yayis ngasamazi nalo Nowayiti. Bathi abo babemazi ebusaneni bakhe uJujuju baziva bebaluleke ngokukodwa. Lagoduka nezo elaloo mini ilanga. Bagoduka zithe mpu izisu, bedikiwe yinyama.

Kwasa sekungathi akukhange kubekho nto, ngaphandle kokuba abo banyolukileyo abazange bathande kuhamba kwaloo mini. Balala kwalapho ukuze kuse beqongqotha omongo, bekhanda amahleza. Yaphela naleyo nezayo, kuba iyakhawuleza ibhobhile yokuhamba kwamaxesha. NgeCawa wahamba noyise nonina uDeli ukuya enkonzweni. Kwaxhelwa eXhukwane kureme. Wabulisa into eninzi yabantu ukuphuma kwenkonzo.

Wonwaba kakhulu. Kuyinene ukuba ububi bandulela

ubumnandi, njengoko ubusuku bulandelwa kukukhanya. UNosayini waziva engenakho ukunyamezela. Ngenye imini wacholachola impahlana yakhe, wazimela wemka. UPhuphu wayefuduke kwakudala waya kwelakwa Ngqika. Wayeqonda mhlophe ukuba akanakuze onwabe kwaGcaleka apho, ngenxa yesazela sakhe.

ISAHLUKO 20

UKUZALISWA KWENDEBE..

Kude kwazola emzuzwini. Kwakuba nje intliziyo ka-Jujuju ilangazelele ukuba akhe athi gxada kwaGubevu abone izihlobo zakhe. Ebebakhumbula bonke ebacinga. Kanti ebesithi akufika kuKholiswa kube ngakumbi. Kwacaca kanye engqondweni ngoku ukuba umthanda ngothando olungazenzisiyo.

Le ntombazana yayingazange ibonakalise nezinyo eli ngakuye, kodwa ke umzingisi akanashwa. Uthe ngaminazana ithile kuyise, "Bawo ndifuna ukuya kwaGubevu."

"Yinto ni apho mntwana wam?"

"Ndiya kubona abantu. Ndandibathembisile ukuba ndofika emva kwemfazwe."

Ukususela oko laxolayo uKholiswa ebengazange abonwe echwayitile ngangoko wayefudula enjalo, ngeemini ezingaphambili. Naye ebengekuxeleli isizathu wakumbuza, kuba ebengasazi. Ebethanda ukuthi yonke imihla emalanga, aye kwisiduli esikhulu esisentla komzi, aze apho athunge imithungwana yakhe.

Ibe sisimanga noko ukuba ayenze le nto ngale mini, endaweni yokuba ancedise unina endlwini. Kwakukho iindwendwe namhlanje—uRorwana isiqishimba sakwaJama-Sijadu, ama-Jama amnyama kunye neenkomo zawo. Wayelikhalipha

elaziwayo. Besekulithutyana ebonakalisa ukuyifuna kwakhe intombi le yasekhaya apha, ngangokude abaninzi bamangaliswe ukubona ingade ilunge indaba yolobolo nomtshato.

Uyise kaKholiswa wayegqibe kwelokuba ukuba akavumi ukwendela kuRorwana ngoku uKholiswa wosiwa nangamandla. Bekuxa lijikayo ngeyoMdumba. Esahleli ngasesidulini apho kufike kuye uGqwangushe evela ezindaweni zakhe. Bathe besahleli apha umzuzwana beqhawula mbini-ntathu, kwathi thu umntu enkalweni ekhwele. Kanti lo mntu uya kuthi ngqo eze kubo. Lwaba njani uvuyo lwabo bobabini bakufumanisa ukuba

NguJujuju maqegw' amdaka,
Ixhalang' elimaphik' anentsente.
Ubafazi bale lali bayayithand' imithwane.
Kuba bayifula ngerengqa entsimini kaMbulawa.

Wasuka wakhohlwa uKholiswa nelona makaqale ngalo. Umnakwabo kunye nalo mfana kwakungangeni moya phakathi kwabo ngoku, bethetha bebuzana izinto ezininzi. Yaziva intombazana ingafuneki nganto kuloo ndibano, yase isithi nyebelele ukugoduka yodwa.

UGqwangushe uthathe umhlobo wakhe ukumsa kuyise nonina nomkhuluwa. Bahlala bonke bembuka, kwada kwabonakala ukuba uJujuju makagqithe aye kwaNqabeni. Ukhatshwe ngumhlobo wakhe. Ngeli xesha uKholiswa wayekhatshwe ngumhlobo wakhe. Bathe abafana bakuthi tyi ukushiya umzi wafika kubo ebaleka. Bamangaliswa ukumbona ebuya kamsinyane kangakanana. Phofu abambuzanga nto. Kwahanjwa ngabo bobathathu kwayiwa kufikwa kwaNqabeni.

Bathe ukuba babe sebaleni wavela uMafungwashe ephethe amanzi ngesitya. Wawalahla kude akubabona waya kubo eligqabi. Kuncokolwe ithuba elide kwada kwalungcwalazi.

"Sikhapheni sigoduke, singade sithintelwe zizinto endleleni," watsho uKholiswa. Bahamba ngababini endleleni,

ngokungqinelana kweendaba zabo. Phambili yayingu-Gqwangushe noMafungwashe, inguKholi noDeli ngasemva. Asikuko nokuba kwakuxhelw' eXhukwane kuloo mfana. Walubeka uthando lwakhe phambi kwale ntombazana, yaza yona yalwamkela ngovuyo. Yazala yaphuphuma indebe yovuyo lukaJujuju. Walala engathi unamaphiko.

Ngentsasa elandelayo usiwe engcwabeni likaNqabeni. Wayengasekho emke nomkhuhlane. Yaba lusizi olo kunyana wakhe uJu. Uhleli isiqingatha semini wandula ukuya kwa-Xhekethwana kwakhona, ukuze apho akhe abone inzwakazi enkulu uKholi, baze baxoxe baqhine apho baqhina khona. Wayezimisele ukuya kulala kulonina azichithe khona iintsuku ezisaleleyo zeveki.

Akabanga sahlala mizuzu ingakanani apho. Ekwahlukaneni uthe untang' akhe, "Kufuncka sigqibe ngosuku lokuya esinaleni, ndaye ndifuna sihambe kunye." "Kulungile," waphendula omnye, "ndiya kukwazisa."

Mhla wafika ekhaya uqokelele oyise wathi, "Bobawo, ndifuna umfazi." Ubuzwe ngentombi, wayixela. Ithe ke yathakazelelwa ngumzi indaba leyo, kwayiwa kucelwa, kwavunywa. Wayevuya kakhulu uXhekethwana ukuba intombi yakhe ayendisele kulo mfana untliziyo imhlophe kangaka, ungayicingiyo into yokuphindisa ububi ngobunye. Ukuba wayenenye intombi ngewayeyinikele kuRorwana. Naye wayengathandayo ukuba abe ngumkhwenyana wakhe. Kodwa umntu akacandwa.

Yakuba ilunga le ndaba yobulawu bukaJu, ubone ukuba makaye kugqiba imfundo yakhe. Ubhale iincwadi zambini. Enye ibisiya kuKholiswa enye kuGqwangushe. Asinakho ukuyifunda eyokuqala. Eyesibini yayibhalwe ngolu hlobo:

Luhlaza,
Centane,
Iya kuGqwangushe Xhekethwana, EyoMdumba, 18.-
c/o Jack,
Gubevu,
Bawa.

Ntanga yam,

Ubawo undivumele ukuba ndiye esinaleni ukuya kugqibela imfundo yam. Asikuko nokuba ndiyavuya oko siza kuhamba sobabini. Siya kufika sishiyiwe ngabanye, kodwa akukho nto.

Ndiya kunduluka apha ngomhla wokuqala kweyoKwindla, ndilale apho kwaGubevu, ukuze sivuke sihambe kwakusasa ngowesibini umhla.

Ngathi kum yincoko ukuba ndim lo, uza kutshata nodade wenu. Ndinethemba ukuba nawe woya kumcela kamsinyane uFungiwe. Kumnandi ekhaya, siyahlakula. Ukwindla sekungene. Usamkhumbula uMhlanjwayo esinaleni ? Intliziyo yam ayisekho apha. Sendingxamele ukuphuma ndize kukhonza ilizwe lam ndiyititshala.

Bulisa kubo bonke kakhulu,

Eyakho intanga ngenene,
JUJUJU DELIHLAZO ZENZILE.

P.S.

Kanene igama lam kuza kufuneka ndiliguqule ngoku, ndingabizwa ngoVuthula ? ''

ISIPHELO

MHLA NGENQABA

ISALATHISO

ISAHLUKO I

OKUYINCASA KWANDULELA OKUKRAKRA

" Sibalukhulu ; " watsho umfo wakwaShweme ebulisa kuNkathazo njengoko babehlangana ngendlela.

" Ewe, molo Shweme. Nivuka njani ngaphezulu apha ? "

" Hayi, siyavuka mfondini, asikaboniswa ntw' imbi bethu. Naphaya kwaGoqolo apho bekukhe akwaphilwa hayi nenkosikazi leyo ibingaphilanga seyibe yaphakama."

" Mh ; Kuhle oko. Ibiyintoni kakade ? "

" Noko ngumntu osoloko wakhathazwa sisisu. Batsho ke bethu. Niphila njani na ke nina ? "

" Siyaphila Shweme kuba namasimi ethu asiphile intwana".

" Hayi asiphile Sibakhulu. Asiyikukhala nonyaka nje. Kuvune neentw' apha oMvikweni—iinto ezisoloko zaphila yinkinkqa minyaka le."

Ancokola enjenje la madoda ada aya kufika ekwahlukaneni kweendlela zawo. Kwakusekuphumeni kobusika kweye-Khala. Ngakwicala lezilimo amadoda ayemi kakuhle, iindladla phandle zide zabamba ukungathi ziza kuba zizibaya zamatakane ububanzi. NoMakhosi into yakwaGoqolo wayephakathi kweqela elivunileyo, phofu ingeyiyo nto anga-yiqhelanga ukuvuna kuba ebelima esandleni kwezo ntili ziphezu kweGcuwa.

La madoda ebemi kwesikaMenziwa ezantsi. Nanko oka-Makhosi umzi uthe zinzilili enkalweni evelele umlambo i-Thongwane eGcuwa. Ukuphuma kokaMakhosi sewusithi nkqwili ugudla ithambeka eliphezu komlambo lowo. uhle uye kuwuwela sewujonge kuloo ntilikazi ixhakwe yiNgwane ngase-zantsi neGcuwa ngaseMpumalanga. Wothi uyiwela ke

iNgwane ethe ntywili kwihlathikazi elikhulu laseNgwane ube sewunyuka ummango onkone ojonge kwaschlathini kwaNjamkhulu.

Eli hlathi ke lona lihlathi lamahlathi elineenkenkelele zamawa. Linebali elaziwayo zizikhulu zombuso wakwaXhosa. Lambathise loo mixawuka nenkontyo nemixethuka, ilengalenga phezu kweNciba kwakwisithili saseGcuwa.

INciba le, ingena kuyo iGcuwa—umlambo. INgwane ngumlanjana ongena kwaseGcuwa. Phesheya kweNciba lelezinga nezigxa ekuthe phakathi kwazo kwahamba kusithi qweqwelele iifama zamaBhulu kude kuye kutsho eQumra.

Kwaguywa loo mnyaka kwada kwangena eyeThupha ingungcelele amakhwenkwe ukusiwa esuthwini. Wathengiswa umbona ezivenkileni noxa zazisembalwa oko ; iyileyo yakwaSamfumfu emacangceni, kwaManqulo, iyeyakwaKhwelemthini kwaMthintsilana, ibe yeyakwaThandimali phesheya kweNciba eLudalasi.

Kwalile xa eyeThupha isisonka yagaleleka imvula enkulu, eyatsho kwabaliswa izihelegu emva kweentsuku ezintathu. Omnye umfazi, umolokazana kaMvikweni, kweviwa ebusuku esihlabile esofelweyo. Wayiwayi abantu ukuza kuva ukuba ingaba yini na, bafumanisa ukuba usana abelufukamile alukho. Kanti uthe esaphumile ukuya kuthatha iinkuni egoqweni wangena umsinga wamanzi waluthi wee usana elukhukweni apho be lulaliswe khona waphuma nalo.

Kwafunwa unyhale intsasa yonke, kwada kwathi kungeni emini enkulu lwafunyanwa luthe xhwa emibhongiseni egedukeni elisezantsi komzi selwapholayo. Yaba ngumhlola lowo bebuzana abantu ukuba isimanga esinje sakha sakho na endalweni.

Kwabaliswa, kwafumaneka ukuba asizange sibekho. Nto yakha yenzeka komnye umzi kwesikaNtsimango kukulahleka komntwana. Ukhutshwa endlwini ukuba aye kuphola phandle kuba ebelele, xa kutyiwayo ngokuhlwa. Suke athi

ukuba abe phandle atsho nkente kube kanye ukukhala, bayathi ukuphuma phandle abantu, umntwana sel' ekude, umka nento engaziwayo. Basukela bancama abantu babuya balala elo javu-javu lobuthongo obungebuthongo, kodwa kwasa umntwana elele emgubasini. Zininzi izigigaba ezilolo hlobo ezenzekayo ngalo mvula nasemva kwayo. Omnye umfo nomfazi wakhe nomntwana bafuduka buphuthuphuthu ngokusuke kudilike indlu abebelele kuyo ebusuku njalo, baya kucela indawo komnye umzi.

Loo mvula yaphelela ebharweni. Akukho wakha wayicoselela nganto. Nowayenje njalo wazifumana esisisulu sentsini ukude asungule ukulima ngembolisa-madiza—igama eyabizwa ngalo. Obuzayo othi, "Bafondini nenza ntoni na kaloku, 'imbolisa-madiza' asiyile mvula ina ngeyeKhala yini? Ithini le ina kweyeThupha?" Akazange asiwe so lowo. Yathwasa eyoMsintsi kungabangakho yimbi imvula.

Yavela eyeDwara, yasisonka, yaliceba, yafa, kwalandela eyeNkanga kungabonwanga nethontsi lemvula. Kwesi sithuba kuvele amaqhawe athi'e, amanye athi kakade ibingathini na imvula ukuna isizwe singazange silungeleliswe ukususela emva kwemfazwe kaNgcayechibi. Nangoku kuvunwe nje ngomnyaka ongaphambili bekusakhangelwa ukuba baza kuthini na.

Zibe ninzi iintetho, abantu bangxamela ukugxekana neendlebe zathanda ukubetha-bethana, abanye bathetha oku, abanye bacebisa okuya, bambi bexela izizathu ezibange le mbalela. Yaqina yona imbalela laye ligqatsa ngokugqatsa ilanga. Yaya yee loloxo ukufa eyeNkanga kungekho nomda emasimini, ilanga lenze into enye ukubalela, ingakhange yenze nomkhumezelo imvula. Laqala lanquma inqatha kwizithethi, athi namanxila aroxa.

Kwalile xa iphakathi eyoMnga kungawanga nethontsi, umhlaba ulilitye ukuba lukhuni, ilanga lisisilongo-longo, inkosi yesusa amadodana ukumema imbizo. Kusile ngomhla

lowo mkhulu kwazala kwazala komkhulu, kwafana kwayinto nje. Kwakuwe inkomo, ikho kanobom nento eselwayo—amarewu eendidi zombini. lindaba ke zona, ngokukodwa phakathi kwesizwe esintsundu azilali ndleleni ngokoyika umbethe, ngoko ke loo nto yayise ithe saa kulo lonke elo laseThongwane ukuba inkosi isihlinzekile isizwe sayo.

ISAHLUKO II

IMBIZO

Kuthe xa zibhongayo iimazi zenkomo emini emaqanda wavakala umhlekazi ngomlomo wenduna yakhe esithi inkundla mayikhe ibeke indlebe. Uphakamile emva koko wathi:

" Bantwana bakabawo bakokwethu ndinibizele ukuvakalisa into ebisel' ikhe yavakala bunkente-nkente ngomfazi waPhesheya kweGcuwa kwaCentane. Noko loo nto asiyithathelanga ngqalelo oko kuba besonwabile. Namhlanje ukonwaba kwethu ngathi kungxamele ukusangana. Nditsho yona le ndyikitya ibonwa nayimveku yambathise lonke ilizwe. Ke ndinibizile namhlanje ukuze sicebisane ngale mbubho ukuba ingathiwani na, nokuniyala ningafekekethi ngokutya. Ngathi xa ndijongilelyo inkulu into ezayo." watsho wahlala phantsi umhle.

Kuphakame uVelaphi emva koku. Umfo lo ubeligosa lebandla lamaWesile wabhekisa enkundleni wathi, " Noko ngekusiyiwa kucelwa imvula eNkosini. Kunje nje nje siyohlwaywa ngenxa yezono zethu ezininzi ezifike zadala ulundi phakathi kwethu nendlebe kaSomandla. Ndingathi le nto yakha yenzeka kudala kumaYiputa, athi akuzenza lukhuni iintliziyo zawo iNkosi yathumela izibetho."

" Kahle Velaphi ! " Kungenelele uMbangendlu, " kahle ngemvuselelo, asiyiyo ndawo yayo le. Uthetha ngento enga-

thi isemva ngoku. Ingathi kum, manene akwaGcwanini, oku kukhankanywa nguVelaphi asikukona sikufunayo apha enkundleni. Aba bantu—ukuba anikabaqondi ngabo kanye aba basiqhotsa ngelanga. Fuda kungekho zimbalela komawokhulu, kungekho magqobhoka. He ! Ke ! Lilizwi linye ke zinkosi nditshonele. Kanti nje mfondini Velaphi niyazi ukuthi umthandazo uza nemvula benihlaleleni eli xesha lonke ningathandazi ? Ndiyatshonela.''

Uthe ukuba ahlale uMbangendlu adumzela amadoda esithi, "Liyavakala, Madoda ! '' Akubangakho ndoda iba samxhasa uVelaphi emva koku, onke abe ngakuMbangendlu, ukuba kufunwe qhinga limbi kungenziwa ngalo. Kusuke uDilizimpi xa kulapho wathi :—

"Sisengamakhwenkwe, siqubha aph' eGcuwa besihlala sibaliselwa ukuba mhla kunyembelekileyo kunzima kumaxesha amandulo, imvula inqabile, kwakuye kuzingelwe intsikizi ifakwe esizibeni. Yothi ke zakuba ziphelile iintsuku ezingummiselo ine imvula. Ukuba inkundla ibiya kuhamba nam besiya kukhe sitsale kwelo qhinga. Kubi.'' Utsho wahlala phantsi.

Kuxoxwe kwaxoxwa ngale nto kwada kwabonakala ukuba kutyekelwa kwelo lentsikizi xa ide yaphela eyoMnga inganenga, yaye ke le nyanga ijongiweyo seyiqhekekile. Ichithakele intlanganiso kwangenwa ezidlweni. Kaloku imbiza zazise zivuthwe kade, kulindeleke nje ukungena kwemfazwe yezinyo nenyama yenkabi yenkomo, kwandule ukuthotywa ngamanzi alubhelu, nerewu.

Yayimhlophe kukutyeba inyama, kwathi kwakamsinyane yaba seyiphele tu ingcingane yendlala ezayo kuzanywana nobumnandi bekhoyo imini. Amadoda ayendidi-mbini, ibathu elilingeneyo ilelamakholwa angathathiyo etywaleni.

Lalise lithambekile ilanga ukuvakala kokundila kokuqala kwezulu ' Ndi-i-i-i ' latsholo ezantsi izulu. Uthe ophakamise intloko eza kubuza akuphosa iliso ngaseNtshonalanga wa-

bona ilifu elimnyama linyuka ngokukhawuleza. Esesibini isithonga sitsho kufuphi, kwatsho—tshawu umbane. Ilanga lasithela ngephanyazo, akwabakho uxelelwayo kuloo nyambalala ukuba kuza kududuma. Abantu ababelapho babebadala bonke, beqhele ukubona izinto. Kodwa elalo mini izulu labaxaka. Babevuya ke kodwa kuba into abebekade beyilindile—imvula—iza kufika ekugqibeleni.

Kwakhawuleziswa kwasiwa utywala nenyama ezindlwini, abantu bangena kwezinye. Lavakala elinye iqhajana lisithi, "Noyikani na magwalandini, sisemzini wenkosi nje? Inqwelo ezi zakuloMosisi ziza kusizela nemvula." Lathiwa mpaka emlonyeni ngomnye umfo kanye xa kutsho menye umbane wokuqala ulandelwa sisithonga sawo. Hayi ke aladuduma loo mini lachola izibi. Latsho akwabakho ushukumayo. Ukuqwela, kwathi gqi isiphotshongela somoyakazi owabetha kwahla kwamnyama mbe luthuli phandle. Kwaqala koma amathe kuye wonke ubani.

Izindlu zakomkhulu zolishumi zaziphantse ukuba nabantu, zithi ezingenabo zizale kukutya. Akukho mntu waziyo ukuba kuthe kuphi kwabe kuphi na. Saba sinye isithonga esathi umbane usitsho nje sabe sesigaleleka, safika, abantu baziindwane bonke ebuhlanti. Zonke iimpahla kwezo zindlu bathi besithi phaka zabe zithe ngcu emasimini ngaphesheya, iziindonga zodwa ekhaya komkhulu.

Obo butywala babuchithachithwe ebaleni, ndawonye naloo nyama. Kwaduduma latshona kungawanga nechaphaza lemvula. Abantu bona basinda bonke ngaphandle kokothuka ababenako okwabanga iimvalo zaphakama. Yaba ngundaba-mlonyeni iveki into yezulu elidlala nakomkhulu, apho bekucingwa ukuba lingahlonipha. Ezi ndaba zinqunyulwe kukufika komthunywa wenkosi ehamba emema imbizo yozingelo lwentsikizi oloqala komkhulu.

ISAHLUKO III

IBULEWE INTSIKIZI

Ilanga lalisandul' ukuzivelela iintatyana ezikwelaseMpumalanga—ilanga elinezothe lehlobo lomnyaka wembalela. Izothe lalide lathi kratya ngale mini kuba kwakuse kungekho nambethe. EyoMnga yayifile, umnyaka uphelile. Zazine iinyanga eziphelileyo kungenwe kweyesihlanu ingazange yalanywe imvula. Ilizwe lalileluzizi ngumfa-nkungu ongaphele ndawo obetha umntu abe nesithukuthezi ngokumjonga nje kodwa. Ingca yayiphele tu sekungamabala kwezinye iindawo kuthi kwezinye ibe yimpatshampatsha ehlabayo.

Imincili yayiphele pam ebantwini, ibhongo lingekho, kulawula ixhala lodwa. Indlala, ngokufuphi, yayingenile kuba kwakungekho nomda emasimini. Nabo babelime phezu kwamanzi eNciba, wawutshe khothe umbona wabo kungekho themba lakuba ungaba savuka nokuba umlambo ufumane wathi ngethamsanqa wazala ziimvula zangasentla.

Iinkomo zazibhitye zizintambo ngenxa yokunqaba kwengca namanzi, emachibini iludaka lodwa. Abanenyameko babezalusela emahlathini apho zazisengafumanekayo iinto ezilulhlaza. Ahambile ke amadoda lawo ngale ntsasa ichaziweyo aya ayibamba intsikizi leyo emva kwemigudu emininzi, sel' ebile engamanqugwala. Kuba intsikizi le nangona ikhangeleka ngathi imathile nje kunqabile ukuba ifumane ibulawe ngenxa yethelezi nesithunzi sayo. Kodwa ke amadoda loo mini ayibamba ayibulala kuba kwakukubi, ilizwe libhukuqekile.

Kukhe kwakho impikiswano engencinane malunga nesona siziba sifanelekileyo kulo mcimbi. Abanye bathi makuyiwe kwezaseNciba, inxenye ime kwelokuba zilungile ezi zasekhaya. Kude kwagqitywa ekubeni ifakwe kwesakwaDumangashe malunga ekungeneni kweThongwane eGcuwa. Okunene intywiliselwe, andula ukubuya amadoda lawo, edinwe eziimfe-

jelele, kodwa kuthe gingqi, ehluthi ithemba yakubola intsikizi.

Endleleni adibene noMakhosi evela phesheya kweNqabara ngehambelo. Kubuzwene impilo, baxela abaseThongwane ukuba kusahleliwe nasemakhaya. Kwakubhekiswa kulo mfo wakwaGoqolo uyixele yambi into ayibone phesheya kwe-Ngxakaxha, apho ingxowa yombona evenkileni seyiyiponti eneshumi elinesihlanu. Uthe, inkomo sezabalekiswa zasiwa emasisweni kwiindawo ezingamasandle. "Hayi mna," uhambisile, "ndibuye ndincamile xa kunje kuzo zonke iindawo. Kwaye kucacile ukuba le nto isaya apho iyayo."

Bagqithile abazingeli baya bafika komkhulu benza ingxelo yomsebenzi wabo omhle. Yaphela loo mini zibethwe zafikelela nakwimveku ezayo.

* * * *

"Nozitobi!" lamemeza ilizwi likaMamTolo xa lithi futhu ngenye imini kwakwezo ntsuku.

"We!" wasabela umntwana.

"Yithi kunyoko makahambe siye emlanjeni."

Wangena endlwini umntwana, kwathi kungemzuzu ungakanani waphuma uMamQocwa—umfazi obebizwa, ephethe iemele nebhekile, wanqumla emva kwezindlu ukuya kungena endleleni ebihamba ummelwanekazi lowo. Babesiya emlanjeni kuba umthombo ababefudula besikha kuwo ubuse utshe qoko.

"Yo, ubonanje andisavuyi ngako oko ndikufumene ungekayi emanzini. Eli qhina lises' apha lidal' umkhinkqi ndikuxelele, kuba thina silamb' oku kwenene." watsho uMamTolo, akukhov' ukubulisa.

"Ungatshongo mntwa' kamfi. Uyazi mna ndisuke ndinyuke ndinyuke ndiphelelwe ngamandla. Andizange ndiwabone amanzi akhiwa kude kangaka. Kufana nokungathi siyawathenga. Kanti niyalamba na nani? Uthi ke xa kunjalo kuni kungabekaphi kuthi bonontongana-zilahlekile?"

"Hehe! mus' ukundihlekisa." Uphendule kwakhona

uMamTolo. "Ukhe weva ukuba ingxowa yombona inyukile? Kuthiwa ngoku yiponti eneshumi elinendaliso. Uthi kuza kuphilwa njani na mntwan' asemaQocweni?"

"Hayi," utshilo uMamQocwa sesiya kuphila kukunkinkqa emathafeni."

"Emathafeni!" ukhuzile omnye. "Le nto iligqibe lonke. Umnakwabo Nozinto, umyeni wakwam, ebeye eQutsa phesheya kweTsomo kule veki iphelileyo. Ubuye eyibabaza indlala kwelo. Kwaye umyeni kaMaGaba uvela kwaGatyana akalilibali ilanga lakhona. Inene mna anditha-ndi kuyicinga imbandezelo ezayo. Ukuba ke ngoku kusale le yale ntsikizi, ithemba esisalibambileyo!"

"A, suka MamQocwa! uthi leyo yona yoba yiyo? Khawutsho, ngumhlola wani lo ubusenzeka komkhulu laa mhla wembizo?"

Ahambe encokola esenjenje amakhosikazi lawo awakha amanzi, abuya nawo kakuhle. Olu yayilusuku lwesihlanu ibulewe intsikizi yafakwa emanzini. Kwakugqitywe ekubeni iintsuku zoba sixhenxe ibulewe kulindelwe okuza kuhla. KwakungoMgqibelo ukuphunywa kwengqina. Ziqengqelekile intsuku kwabuya kwanguMgqibelo, yabetha iCawe, lwagalela lwegqitha oloMvulo, zabaleka iintsuku, yanguMgqibelo kwakhona kungenzekanga lutho.

Kuthe kwakuba nje amadoda athanda ukunyhilana. Amanye athi kakade kukho obani nobani nje ebesazi ukuba akukulunga nto. Ezinye iinkewu zathetha phandle zathi bezitshilo zona ukuba intsikizi mayintywiliselwe eNciba. Yaba yilo mbonde-mbonde kanam-nawe wento, kwada kwabonakala ukuba makuphindelelwe ukubulawa enye, kuye onke amadoda ukuze kwaneliswe bonke abanezikrokro. Kwenziwe oko, ayana kodwa yona imvula.

Indaba yotyelo ayikholisi. Amazwi afana namagqabi omthi, ongeze uxele ngobuninzi bawo ukuba singakanani na isiqhamo. Ngoko ke ububi balowo mnyaka abunakuthele-

kelelwa kuba buchaziwe. Yayimbi into ! Izithethi zaphela tu, amagagu ambalwa, oCebisa bathi nya. Kubonakele kutyekelwa kwelikaVelaphi kucelwa imvula. Yacelwa, kwakabini, kwakathathu—yacelwa amaxesha ngamaxesha. Tu imvula. Kuvakele kwesi sithuba isimemezo sokuba ngoMgqibelo yimbizo Komkhulu.

"Asazi ke ngoku ukuba sibizelwa yiphi na." Itshilo enye indoda kwenye, akuba exelelene ngembizo leyo.

"Hayi, akwazeki mfondini. Mhlawumbi kuza kwenziwa amanye amalinge. Kudala ndihamba, fuda ndisithi ndiyazi kunjalo nje, kanti ndiyagaqa. Le imbalela isahamba yodwa emabalini." Ahlukana amadoda.

ISAHLUKO IV

INDLALA YOMPHUNZISA

Ifile eyoMqungu. Ayikabonwa imvula okoko yagqityelwa kweyeThupha kodluleyo. Ikilisimesi nenyibidyala ezazifuda ziba yimigidi yeentsuku ngane zibe ngamajavu-javu angahoywe mntu. Lenze isithonga sasinye ukuba yingqatsini ilanga. Liphuma litshisa kade liye kutshona kungekho mahluko.

Ngezinye iimini kambe likhe lihlome kakubi kuthiwe yawa, suke lidudume ligqithe lingenzanga namaqabaza. Zizodwa iintsuku ekukhe kuthi gqi ulophukazi olunamandla ngaseNtla lutsho kungabikho nomthunzi. Loo singa-mithunzi ke yeyezindlu kuba imithi ivuthulukile oma amagqabi ngenxa yembalela. Asisathethi ke ngengca, kuba ukubona isicithi sengca kukwalama ngala maxesha, ungenakuze uyibone ethafeni. Ilizwe lalisizungu.

Impahla yonke—iinkomo, iigusha, namahashe, ubungafika izula ngokusithukuthezi ifuna into etyiwayo namanzi. Onke

amachibi nemilanjana kwakutshe qoko, kungekho nesichenene samanzi. Yayiyinto eqhelekileyo ukugqitha iinkomo zirole iilwimi ngaphandle, zilandelana nomntu ezimbonayo ngokungathi ziyammangalela ngesithwakumbe esiphezu kwehlabathi. Zaye zingasabuthisi nje, zigileka okweempukane. Aiukho usiba lombali olunokuzoba ngokwaneleyo umfanekiso wolo lusizi lwalulapho.

Ingxowa yombona kwezo venkilana zimbalwa yayiziiponti ezimbini ezineshumi baye abanini-zo bevakalisile ukuba nabo ubanqabele kuba uza nzima ngeenqwelo, laye libalele ndawana zonke neenkomo zisifa yindlala ngoko ke ingxowa isaza kunyuka ngexabiso. Enyanisweni bona kanye abanini-venkile babelamba kucacile ukuba nabo abanaceebo.

Yayiza kuvelaphi imali engaka yokuthenga ingxowa yombona ? Kwacaca mhlophe ukuba kunyembelekile. Usapho wawungafika luthe khobololo okanye lucambalele ngasezindleleni, imihlali iphelile liphango. Intsholo yentaka yayingeviwa bani, nokunxakama kweemazi zeenkomo ngokunjalo, kuba kwakungasasengwa nto itheni. Iinkomo zazisezwa emilanjeni emikhulu ngamadoda, azikhwezise ezintlanjeni ukuzifunela imithana ezingayityayo. Kwakuzolile ukuzola okubi kokufa kwelizwe.

Zazimi ngolu hlobo izinto ukumenywa kwembizo ngumhlekazi uMenziwa inkosi yaseThongwane. Kweza nesiqhwala sexhego kuloo ntlanganiso, amadoda emabi, inqawe zisemlonyeni, phofu zingaqhumi ngangokude uthi wakuqwalasela uphawule ukuba amanye ayazihlafuna ingcaphe ezi noxa wona engaqondi. Kule ndibano kwabalisa iingwevu zamadoda. Zabalisa ngelanga likaQilo elalilambathise lonke, zabalisa ngomnyaka kaRuxeshe. Zabalisa ngomthi—umphunzisa—owaqondwa sekumva ngoNongqawuse, wabe kodwa waziwa ngembalela kaQilo, wabanceda kakhulu abantu.

Umphunzisa lo ngumthi owaziwa kakhulu nangoku kwezi mini zikhoyo, kuba akukho hlathi ungefunyanwe kulo. U-

nesikhondo esendeleyo kakhulu esiligaqa elingangethanga ubukhulu. Ukuba uvuthiwe kakuhle asibi mnandi nje kancinane. Yeka ! yinto eyole ngathi yinyhobha-nyhobha, phantse kanye ibe njengentsenge. Kwakuba kuchithakelwe iyileyo indoda yaqonda ixhanti layo, kwalalwa kwimizana ngemizana ikhe yasontshwa le ndaba kunye nosapho.

Ngeemini ezilandelayo neecawe neenyanga, ibingumbono oqhelekileyo ukuhlangana nendoda nosapho kusiyiwa ehlathini kuphethwe izingxa ukuya kumba into enokusiwa phantsi kwempumlo, kusale abantwana abancinane ekhaya. Be zininzi iindlela zokulungiswa kwayo ukuba ityiwe. Abanye bebeyipheka ukuze bayigubele oku komqa, xa zikhoyo inkozwana zombona, kuba kambe bekuphika neecawe ezi inyuke ingxowa yombona ngexabiso. Uninzi beluyikhuma nje oku kwetapile, namanzi ayo ephungwa endaweni yeti nekofu.

Kanti zizonke ezi ndlela bezingahluthisi, zisishiya isisu size, kuba into enencasa gqitha inesicefane entliziyweni. Balamba ke abantu, kwavela amahlazo abengalindelwe kwabaninzi. Obenentwana anayo esiseleni ibidinjazwa ngobusuku ngabafo abafe liphango, bengenaluvalo lwakuthi uya kuthini na lowo. Bekusithi nokuba bayambona baphose intw' abayiphetheyo kuye, azikhethele ngokwakhe ukuzibeleka iinyawo asinde, nokuba afe.

Kwenye ilali unovenkile uvalile ngokwesiqhelo ngoMgqibelo wemka. Uthe uyabuya ngeCawa emva kwemini wafika ebizwa lukrozo lweenkozo oluphuma endlwini agcina kuyo amatanki ombona. Yekoko umkhondo ukuya kungena kumfula osezantsi kwevenkile, waphumela apho seyingumtshithi wesileyi. Kanti kudityenwe liqela lamadoda, isicaka esilindileyo sanikwa ithole lenkomo ukuvalwa umlomo, saqhaqhwa isitola sombona, lwatya usapho oluwe yindlala.

Iintsika zomzimba sisisu, engenakuze umntu abe nakho ukwenza nayiphi na into ngokwasengqondweni nasesimeni sakhe isisu size.

UMakhosi wayeyindoda eyaziwa jikelele eThongwane kude kuye komaNgquthu, Zangwa, Mpenduza njalo-njalo. Ubengumfo ongathandi kwenza nto imbi, ewulawula ngengqondo umzi wakhe. Inkosikazi yakhe uMaGaba ubelithamba lomfazi, umXhosakazi wenene, into ethi nokuthetha oku kwembala inge akukho nto iyisukelayo. Abantwana babo bebesixhenxe—amakhwenkwe emathathu iintombi zine. Indlala le ifika selisondele ixesha lokuba uMaGaba afumane omnye umntwana. Kwakungazeki indlela asinde ngayo lo mhlobokazi ndawonye nabaninzi abanje ngaye ukuba abe akakabuthisi. Ewe kwakunzinma. Kanti elona xa lalinzima laliseza. Kuza kuthiwani ?

ISAHLUKO V

KUMHLA NGENQABA !

" Madoda," ebhekisa lo mfo uthethayo kwabahlanu abekunye nabo ecaleni lobuhlanti enjikalanga ngenye imini xa kukubi kulila ibhungane, " le nto le le yinkinge. Kumhla ngenkohla ke nonyakanje. Ndifung' uZondiwe. Andiqhele kutsho. Ukuba sifele nje emanyaleni sihleli singazami qhinga ! Masibe necebo esilibhungayo. Usapho lwam luyatshabalala ekhay' apha."

Kuphendule uMbayimbayi wathi, " Le nto uyithethayo Goqolo yinto ebesisoloko siyinambitha ngengeinga kuba lo mphunzisa sifumane safufumala phezu kwawo asikuko kutya. Yinto oya kuze uve ngenye imini kusithiwa obani bafele emphunziseni. Indaba ke yile : Kuza kuthiwani ? Ingxowa yombona ziiponti ezintathu. Iinkomo zethu ziphelile, nalo mbona ngoku uyaphela, onovenkile kuphela bayankinkisha ukuthengisa kwabo. Kumhla ngenqaba ke namhla. Ndiyaphinda ndiyabuza, ' kuza kuthiwani na ? ' "

"Ndiza kulo ndawo kanye," utshilo umfo obethethe kuqala. "Niyawazi ukuba lo mbona siwuthenga ngeeponti ezintathu isiqhunyana sengxowa, uza ngeenqwelo eziphuma ezibukweni eNciba, zihamba ziphungula kwezi venkilana ukuqalela kweyaseMacangceni kunyuke kude kuye kuqabela eGcuwa nakomaNgqamakhwe njalo-njalo." Uthe esatsho ayana ngamehlo amadoda, othukile kuba umfo evelise eli cebo yayinguMakhosi indoda eyicekisayo into embi, emdelileyo noyenzayo. Makube ngenene kunyembelekile xa inokuba nguye kanye ophuma entethweni ecacileyo nakwimveku ukuba isiphetho sayo bubusela.

"Bendisithi ke manene," bavuswe lilizwi lakhe lisahambisa "makuzanywe indlela kuyiwe kuphangwa enye yezo nqwelo, singafi yindlala sijongile. Indoda ibonakala mhla kunzima buqondakala apho ubudoda bayo."

Intetho ayibanga saba nde emva koku kuba kakade ubude bentetho benziwa njalo sisisu esihluthiyo. Eli cebo ligqitywe laqolonqwa kwalapho, kwabekwa nosuku lokunduluka, kwahlukanwa. Kwakusekwindla ngokwexesha lomnyaka, nakuba ukwindla khona kungazange kungene. Inyanga yayifile, kusibekele, kububanda, mhla zanduluka izipani zozithandathu eThongwane, kubotshwe kwezona zileyi zikhulu kwezalo lali kuba la ngamadoda abefudula evuna iminyaka le. Nangoku bekungekade kuthi tu ngakuwo, kuloko umntu oqhele ukuhlutha, nasesityeni ukholwa kukukushiya kukho enzele izinja, angaqweli nje ngathi sisilambi.

Zinqandwe xa kuthi ngewala iinkabi, kwaye kwisipani ngasinye kukho inkankathela zamakhwenkwe amadala—iinto zona ezingasenanyama seyiyimisipha yodwa, ziphethe aqinileyo amagwangqa namabhunguza ngamabini. Loo nto iyonke yenza ishumi linesithandathu. Kuhanjwe ubusuku bonke. Zaphinda iinkuku beseRwantsana, behla baya kungena e-Tholeni emlanjeni bazikhulula iinkabi eziqhele ukubotshwa zasezinamathela kwa oko zigudla umlambo zichola-chola

ezingakufumanayo. Lonke ke elo kude kuye kuthi xhaxhe eNciba lenzakele kunene. Yimimango, imiwewe, imiwonyo, izigxa, izinga, izithole, izihlahla zentsinde, amawa, apho indlela ijika-jikeleza ngangokude ophambi kwakho ungamboni ekwisithuba samanyathelo alikhulu ukusuka kuwe.

Bathe bakukhov' ukuzikhulula inkabi abaf' abakhulu benyuka ukuya kuba kufuphi nendlela bathi bakufika kumgama abangathi kuwo beve kakuhle okuthethwa endleleni bangqengqa balala kwizithuba ezilingeneyo, amaqela ngamaqela, ukwenzela ukudukisa umkhondo xa bathe ngelishwa babhaqwa. Liphumile ilanga, lathi futhu, yaqina imini abaf' abakhulu bengazikhathazi ngakuvuka. Kwalile xa lijikayo savakala isiwephu sombhexeshi : ' tswi-i-ph ! ' wabe esitsho ' ye-e-e-kh ! ' yavakala nenqwelo ' Golo-ko-qo ! goqo ! ' yaya yedlula leyo. Emva koku ke kuthe ngcembe zimana zigqitha bengazise so, kwada kwabuye kwahlwa, kwaratyela, baqala nabo ngoku babuyela ndaweninye.

Bahleli umzuzwana kungekho uthethayo wavakala uGolokoqo oxela ukuba kukho enye ezayo.

" Ndicinga ukuba yeyokugqibela leyo kwezi." Wathetha uMakhosi. " Yeyethu ke leyo. Funani noNkwenkwana yiyani ezinkabini nina zibe sezidyokhweni." Isondele inqwelo yafika, yedlula njengezinye yathi yakuba ithe qelele yemisa, zakhululwa iinkabi ngumbhexeshi ekunye nenkwenkwe engumkhokeli.

Mde kakhulu ummango ophuma eNciba ukusinga eQumra umbi. Mde ncam ummango ukuphuma eNciba ukuya evenkileni eMacangceni kuManqulo phezulu, uneentsunguzi ezoyikekayo nakubahambi neenqwelo nasemini emaqanda ilanga lihlabe umhlaba. Le ndawo akhulule kuyo lo mfo, naxa isezingxondoreni kuphela kwendawo ethe gabalala, uthe iinkabi wakha wazinyusela ngasentla. Kukho nechibi elimanzi aphuma ngaphantsi elalingazange litshe ; ngangokude

abantu bakoyike ukuma imizi kuloo ndawo, besithi yindawo enani na le ichibi lingatshiyo.

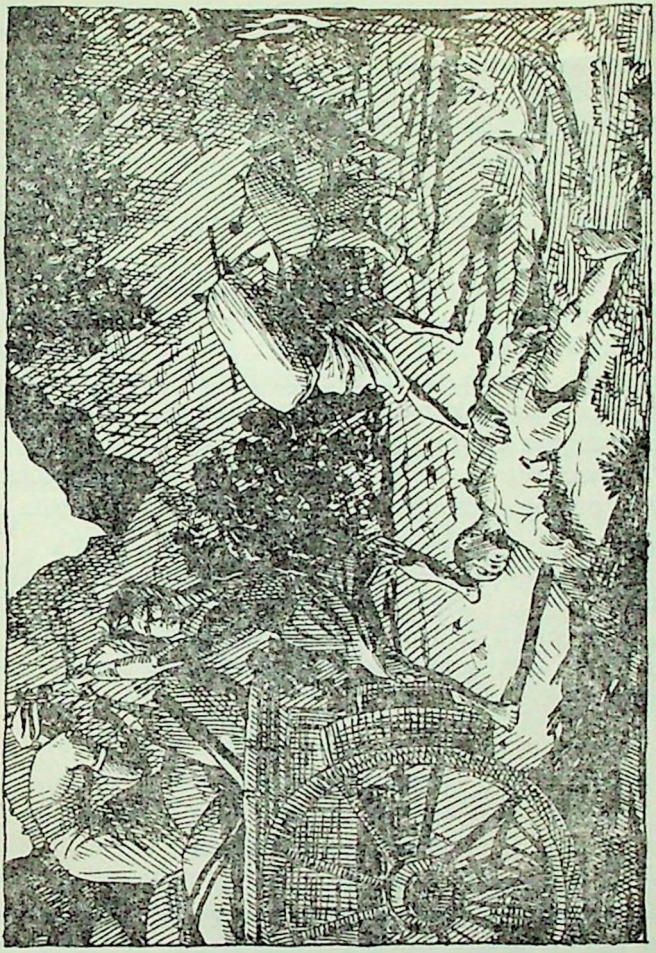
Uthe umbhexeshi akukhov' ukuzikhulula wayaleza inkwenkwe ukuba ipheke, eli xa asaya kwalusa iinkabi. Isale ibasa ilungisa imbiza ukuze yenze isidlo sangokuhlwa ngokomyolelo womqhubi. Asizange siphekwe eso sidlo loo mini. Kuloo mathunzi ayizange ibone bantu bayiranqileyo inqwelo. Ayibonanga zigebenga ziphakamise mabhunguza emva kwayo. Yeva nje ngento eyatsho ntlale enqatheni lendlebe yaya yalibala, ingabanga sazilandula nangesikhalo. Ukuba weva ntoni na umbhexeshi ukuze abuye, nokuba kwathini na emva koko, loo ndaba yeyenye imini, okwangoku masilandele amasela.

Zathiwa hlasi hlasi ezo ngxowana ngabantu abenziwe iziralarume liphango—iingxowa ezima-30 zasiwa ezileyini. Kwathi ngephanyazo zabe iinkabi sezinyuka lo mimango, zikhweza lawo mathambeka, umkhondo ulahlekile mpela kwingxolo yodyakalashe nezikhova nengqangqolo ezibufumana ubusuku bulithuba lokumemelela.

Zithe zingekakhali iinkuku zokuqala zabe sezingenile emendweni, zawugquka mpela umkhondo inkabi zamasela. Kwasa sezisezintlanti ngokungathi akukhange kubekho nto isikhwasilima ikhe yakho. Loo mkhondo awuzange ube nakulandwa unanamhla. Akudlulanga ntsuku ngaphi wamfumana umntwana uMaGaba. Kumagama amaninzi awayeeetyiswa ngawo uyise—oNdlala, Nyakombi, Ngxoweni njalo-njalo, wathiywa ngokuba nguMhlangenqaba.

"Ukwazile ke ukuthiya lo mntu uthe umntwana wakhe nguMhlangenqaba." Wathetha omnye kuncokolwa ngenye imini. "Wakha wayibona into enje ngale? Khona abantu aba bengafi nje bagcinwe yini? Hayi kumhla ngenqaba."

KwaXhosa, kumzi ontsundu wonke osaziphethe ubuntu obuntsundu, kukho isiko lokuba xa abantu baza kuba nosana mabonwabe bachwayite, bazile zonke izinto nokutya okunga-



tshongo khona. Bakholelwa abantu ukuthi usana ludla ngokukhula ngesimilo ngokwalo meko bekuyiyo phambi kokuba lubekho naxa lusefukwini.

Kwatyiwa kwaMakhosi, abahlelelelka nto, lwakhula usana ngendlela yosana lwendyebo. Kwalile kweyeSilimela sagaleleka isitwayi, satsho kwayimbuqe. Zafa inkomo zanga ziyadutyulwa. Ibisuke inkomo ikhuthuke uboya obu ngathi inombo, kanti yakuhlinzwa kofikwa iyucuke nolusu, ngaphakathi. Lajala ilizwe abantu bazinikela ekufeni kuba besithi emva kwale ntshabalalo ingaka yempahla kolandela imbubho yabantu.

Zafa iinkomo. Ukuba zazityiwa ngesisithi kwaphekwa enye ngomhluzi wenye. Koko ukutya inyama yazo kwakungahluke kuyaphi ekutyeni izihlangu ezidala ziphekiwe zada zathamba. Wonke ubani uyayazi imbali yesitwayi salowo mnyaka. Asisayi kubalisa ngaso kakhulu. Safika ke u-Mhlangenqaba egqiba inyanga yesithathu ezelwe.

"Niyambona na bethu lo mntwana ukuba mhle nokuqokozeka nokuqava kwakhe ngathi akazalwanga ngexesha elibi kangaka?" Bebesitsho futhi-futhi abambonayo. "O, ubusithi ke wena umntwana wazi ntoni ngaloo nto?" Aphendule omnye. "Hayi nje ke khona unyanisile. Sidubeka nje thina akazi nokuba kuphi. Azimenzi nto zonke ezi zimanga." Abuye avakale owokuqala. Mhlawumbi sonke sithetha oko.

ISAHLUKO VI

UMHLANGENQABA

Ihlobo laloo mnyaka langena kwangoko. Bathe besadangele abantu ngenxa yendlala nokufa kwempahla yabo, yagaleleka imvula. Yana lathwasa ngephanyazo ihlobo, kwaphuma ingca ngesikhawu, apho ibingamabala. Zakhawuleza

neentyatyambo zathi faka-faka emathafeni, zavakala iintaka ebezise ziyiyekile intsholo yazo emyoli. Bathi ukubavuthela onompiyo abantwana banga babhatalisa nesomnyaka odluleyo isikweliti. Kwalinywa ngabantu, zathi qho iimvula, kwahla kwangena ukwindla, kwavunwa indyebokazi ngexa lokuvunwa.

Wakhula unyana kaMakhosi elibhalwe ngaye eli bali. Kwathi ekuhambeni kweminyaka zabuya zakho iinkomo kwaluswa, naye walusa njengamanye amakhwenkwe, wahamba nesikolo. Ubebathathe bobabini—uyise nonina ngokufana, athi engamaziyo uyise ancome ukulandela kwakhe ikhazi ; aze athi owazi uyise angamlibali umntwana osondele kangako ngokufana naye. Ukuthamba kwakhe enkangelekweni ebengunina nqwa. Amehlo ukuba bukhali xa ajongileyo engumcephe ucandiwe noyise. Ukungabi nanto ininzi yakuthetha ubebathathe bobabini. Imfazwe yamaBhulu imfumene xa angenayo ebukhwenkweni, sel' enokuya kwalusa iinkomo yedwa.

Into eyaxakayo kulo mntwana kukuthanda kwakhe ukungena ezinkathazweni. Ukukrwentshula umbona emasimini abantu ibingumdlalo kuye, aze lo mbona ahambe esipha ngawo. Iibhokhwe zelali, neenkomo bezisengwa kusasa ngenxa kaMhlangenqaba noSitwayi umhlobo wakhe. Bebezikreza kuthi nya. Uthe akuba mdala wanga uthi nyi inkathazo. Wasuke wabonakalisa ukuthi ukuze onwabe abe usenkathazweni bada abantu bamana ukubuzana : " Nithi lo mntwana ufuze bani na ngesi simo sinje ? " Athi ophendulayo " Hayi angaba ufuze kulonina, akukho mntu unje apha kowabo."

Ngenye imini bakha bathintela umfana owayeqhuba iinkabi zibotshiwe zithwele iingxowa zombona. Lo mfana waychamba nenkwenkwana eyathi kwa oko yakubon' ukuba kubi yacela kwabanentsente yaya kuzifihla ukuze ibone okuhlayo. Zithe xa ziyayo ezibukweni wabe uMhlangenkaba noSitwayi

besiza ngaphesheya. Uthe umf' omkhulu "Stwayi ntang' am, siza konwaba namhlanje. Masizonwabise kulo mfana." Batsho besithi ezinkabini, "Haneyi ha!" wabe uSitwayi ebamb' intambo.

UMhlangenqaba: "Ngubani othe ezi nkabi zibophe ngolu hlobo? Akuyazi ukuba la nkabi ibomvu ibotshwa phambili, le inala ibotshwe emva, le ilunga nayo ibe yifolosi?" USitwayi: "Kunjalo nje ezi ngxowa ezi, siyazifuna, zithule!"

Uthe umfana esafumane wathi nkamalala wathi uMhlangenqaba, "Akuvanga ukuba ndithi zikhulule ezi nkabi?"

Uzikhulule zonke ezo nkabi umfana, azithatha amakhwenkwe azibopha ngolwawo uhlobo, athi akuba enjenjalo amthabatha umfana amqweqwedisa ukumsa emlanjeni afika apho amhlamba umzimba emkhuhla nangamatye. Athi akugqiba wathi umfo kaMakhosi, "Uyabona ke sikuncedile. Ubumdaka kakubi umzimba wakho. Yiyo le nto ungakwazi nokubopha iinkabi ngendlela eyiyo." Emva koku amshiya apho intliziyo yakhe iligazi, ejwaqeka nangumsindo, kuba engabanga nakubenza nto.

Abakhuluwe bakhe bebenga bangamdla ngamazinyo ngokwenza izinto ezihlaza igama lakowabo. Uyise ebemyala ukumbetha oku lonke ixesha athe wenza ezi zigigaba, kodwa loo nto ibimduba nje kancinane. Kukunina yedwa abethi eve ezidanele, aphendule akubuzwa isizathu esimenza abe nje. "Hayi mama Gaba, bendidlala ndingaqondi ukuba iya kuba mbi kangaka le nto isiphumo sayo. Kodwa ngenxa yokuba umhlobo wakhe uSitwayi ebengenakumnqanda ntweni imbi kuphela emqhuba, kwahlala kungekho kujika esimeni sikaMhlangenqaba.

Ngaminazana ithile uSitwayi wafika kwamanye amakhwenkwe wavakalisa ukukhanuka kwakhe inyama, ebalisa ngenkabi yehagu engasathethiyo ubukhulu obu, ayibone komnye umzi. Kwagqitywa ngamakhwenkwe ukuba iye kubiwa. Inyanga yayimhlophe loo mini, kungekho namoya. USitwayi,

unyana wesela elidume kunene wabanika amacebo baza abeviwa nazizinja. Yahlatyelwa kwalapho endlwaneni yathwalwa seyifile ukusiwa ehlathini ingakhange ikhale nokukhala.

Yosiwa ehlathini kwamnandi kwanje, kanti yena umninihagu ulalisile emkhondweni. Abhaqwa amakhwenkwe lawo abanjwa, agwetywa iinyanga ezintlanu entolongweni. Wayiqala loo mini ke uMhlangenqaba intolongo. Kwaba kubi kwancamisa kuye akuqonda ukuba uza kuhlala entolongweni, ecinga ngamadoda ababewoyika besengabantwana, besoyikiswa ngawo nasemakhaya. La yayingamadoda awayekhe achitha ixesha entolongweni.

Ukuphuma kwakhe entolongweni wafika wafumanisa ukuba unina imenzakalisile into yokubanjwa kwakhe. Waba buhlungu, wazimisela ukuzikhwebula kwintlalo yobundlavini. Uthe esenze ezi zithembiso wasiwa esuthwini. Asikuko nokuba lalilikhulu elo suthu labo—isixhenxe sonke sabakhwetha. Xa benjalo ke bayazigqiba iinkuku neegusha zabantu ngokuziba, kuba umkhwetha akanatyala. Bade baphuma ke ngamini ithile bahlanganisana kuloSosuthu ukuba bayalwe.

Ngeli xesha ke umfo kaMakhosi ubungemdluli ungamthathelanga ngqalelo. Untsundu bukhanya ngebala, unesithomo esimlingeneyo, engemde okwezim. Intloko ligaqana elibunzi libanzi. Wakumkhangela wa'vungathi kuqala lithamba lento engeze iyenze into elukhuni negadalala. Iliso lalithe zole, phofu libukhali, kanti wakujongisisa ubone ukuba elo liso linoncunyana olungadibene nencoko eyenziwayo, ngokungathi luthi, " Ndiyayazi into oyicingayo ngam, phofu uyaphazama kuyo yonke loo nto."

Ekupheleni komnyaka abaphuma ngawo esuthwini, wahliwa sisisu unina wagula. Ngalo lonke ixesha agulayo ubengamvumi nantwana ukuba athi sululu uMhlangenqaba ukumka. Zombini ezo veki wayegula ubehlala, emyala unyana wakhe, edla ngokuthi, " Mhlangenqaba mntwan' am, ndithembise

ukuba uya kuzama ukuziphatha ngendlela enokundikholisa, kuba andinakonwaba nalapho ndiya khona xa uya kuziphatha okomntwana ongaqeqeshwanga.''

Wasweleka emva kweeveki ezimbini. Ukusweleka kukanina kwamenzakalisa kakhulu uMhlangenqaba, kodwa naliphi na inxeba liyaphola ekuhambeni kwexesha. Neli labuya lathotha, kodwa awuzange uphume engqondweni kaMhlangenqaba umfanekiso waloo nzwakazi ingunina. Nokuba ulele ebembona futhi-futhi emathongweni, naxa ehleli abe ngathi uyamva emgxolisa esithi, '' Kodwa Nqaba mntwan' am ngamahlazo ani la uwenzayo ? ''

Zakuphela iinyanga zezila uMhlangenqaba nabanye banakane ukuya emsebenzini. Kanye kwiintsuku ezimbalwa phambi kokuba bakhwele kubekho umtshato kwaNdinisa kwesikaGubevu, yaye intombi iyeyaseThongwane apho. Zenjenjeya iintw' ezinkulu ziluduli, zaya kufika kulosoka ngoLwesithathu ukukhapha umntwenyana kwakuba kutshatiwe kwayalwa eThongwane kulontombi.

Kwelo ke, inyathela igqibe intombi okokuqala ingene endlwini ukuya kuphunga—kambe oko kuphunga lisheyi kuba ayifaki nento emlonyeni. Zothi intombi bakukhov' ukubeth' isitampu abakhaphi, zidlalise isonka. Akuba ephindile waphuma umtshakazi ngeyesibini ilokhwe kuyiwe emva komzi zikhuphisane apho ke iintshilikazi ngokudlala. Emva koko iba ngumdlalo weentonga wabafana, zisikane iinkenkewula zenduma apho iintw' ezinkulu zingaxabananga nganto kusithiwa ngumdlalo.

Ibe seso ngoLwesine apho kwaGubevu. Yayilapho into kaMaxamba uSitwayi, umlingane kaMhlangenqaba ozithanda kunene iintonga ngathi kukutya. Zakhiwa ke kusithiwa kuyadlalwa, kwathi kungekudala kwavuka umnyele ebafaneni basuka bavukelana balwa. Uwe kwangoko umfana kaSebeni kwaGubevu, kanti uya kuthi phaka ngemini elandelayo sekuncanyiwe. Kwayiwa emapoliseni yaqetshulwa intw'

eninzi yabafana ukusiwa ejele, apho bathiwa nka iinyanga zontandathu umfana emnye kungekho ntlawulo. Wayelapho kwelo qela unyana kaMakhosi uMhlangenqaba naxa wayengazange ade alwe ngenxa yokusoloko ephanjwa ngumfanekiso kanina. Kodwa ke loo nto ayizange imthethelele nto, wangena naye njengabanye.

ISAHLUKO VII

QHIWULANI ! !

Uphuma eNciba ukhweze kwezo drayi zeThole noNdabakazi uye kuqabela, ukhweze iCegcuwana njalo ude uye kuliwela ube sewungena edolophini eGcuwa. Ukuba ujika kwesokuqala isitalato ubhekise ngaseNgqamakhwe, nantso sel' ithe tampu intolongo yakhona—iqakaqezi elibomvu lendlu enesithunzi, indlu ongenakuze ude uqonde ukuba ziphi na iifestile zayo kwezi festile zasemLungwini zimbiza umntu ekude. Babekulo ntolongo ke oMhlangenqaba.

Nangaloo maxesha ke amabanjwa abeselwa ukuba ayekusebenza ngabo bawafunayo. Bebethi ke babhatale kwabasemagunyeni imali ethile ebiziweyo, aye kusebenza ke umsebenzi wemini.

ICegcuwana ngumlambo omhle kunene ofanele ukuba ngumlambo omkhulu ngangeNciba ezi nomaTsitsa aba, neminye. Amanzi alo akafumane abonwe lilanga, kuthe shinyi imithi yeentlobo-ntlobo ezinxwemeni zawo. Iingcongolo ezintilini zalo mlambo zibude bubodwa, zihamba zisitshitshitshilili imigama engayimayile ngexesha. Asisenakubalisa ngeziziba ezilapho ubunzulu nokoyikeka. Asimlambo umntu angafumane afekethele kuwo iCegcuwana.

Kanti ke bangade babe abantu bebewoyika lo mlambo, abanye besithi uyabiza. Kutsho kubaliswe ngesipani esine-

nqwelo sakwaVuthula esabizwa kweso siziba sisezantsi kwelo zibuko liwelela eMgomanzi, satshona eso sipani unanamhla. Phezu koko bebengazilimi ngako ezo ntili zawo. Zingasachumi, wenna !

Kwezo ntili ke kanye ibilapho ifama kaDyan, isihandiba selo esasithweswe indwe nguRulumente. Yayiyinto efanelekileyo ke ngoko ukuba uDyan acele ukuba amabanjwa aye kuhlakula entsimini yakhe. Wayengaqali kwenje njalo wakhululelwa le mini njengezinye. Kwakusekusasa ngemini yehlobo ngenyanga yoMqungu, kuzole nkewe kuvuza umbethe, iyimini ecacileyo, mhla aya kuhlakula entsimini kaDyan amabanjwa. Okuphambili ukwindla kwakungene, zichwayite zonke intliziyo ngaphandle mhlawumbi kwezo zaloo madodana ayephuma ekrozile ehamba ngamabini evate isivatho esifanayo. Ayexhagwe ngamapolisa macala, exwaye wona imipu yawo njengesiqhelo.

Xa kuza kuhla into engaqhelekanga nokuba imbi, kufana nje kubekho ukungaziqapheli izinto ngaphandle kwesizathu. Mhlawumbi kukuba amabanjwa ayekuthanda ukuphuma aye kuhlakula kwaDyan, aze ke ngoko achwayite apho. Asazi. Kodwa akazange aqale aqonde amapolisa ukuba kukho umbanjwa ongekhoyo. Zalila kwa oko iimpempe, akuba eqondile, zatsho " Fo-o ! Fo-o ! ! Mpi-i ! mpi-i-i ! " Wayiwayi azalisa ngesithuba esingangokuphanyaza kweliso. Afika lawo ayesemsebenzini ebile enkeenkeeza kukoyika ukuthi ehleli nje kanti akakhangelanga nto. Umkhondo wawutshone emlanjeni ngaphandle kwamathandabuzo. Kwakhwazwa ke,—' Qhiwulani ! ngaphesheya ! Ii-i-wu ! '

Kwafunwa ulwabhici lwento, bathi besihla abanye babe abanye benyuka. Kwaye kufaneleke ukuba umkhondo ucace kuba kwenile jikelele konke ngasemlanjeni. Kuthe kwenye indawo ithe geqe nje ngasemanzini kwafunyanwa ihempe yasentolongweni, ayabikho ibhulukhwe.

Into ecacileyo yona yaba yeyokuba umntu lowo akanakho

ukuphuma emlanjeni eli xa ilanga liwuhlabile umhlaba, ngoko ke makucokiswe kwangasemlanjeni apho. Kwafunwa ke. Intoni ! Akakhe atsho ukuvela umntu. Lathambeka, latshona, kwaratyela kwamnyama, behlile abantu nomlambo, bambi bawunyuswa, kungekho ubuya nangxelo. Zaye iinyoka ababeziphepha apho zingenganganto.

Kwasa udaba olo seluvakele kulo lonke elo laseGcuwa nakwaCentane naseNgqamakhwe kuba kaloku azilali ndleleni. Ngaphaya koko uRulumente wayesel' elusasazile olu udaba enze isaziso sokuba nabani na onokwazisa ngomkhondo webanjwa elithile elisithomo nesiqu esiphakathi elimayela neminyaka ema-23 nama-25, wovuzwa. Linxibe ibhulukhwe yobubanjwa lintsundu ngebala. Amehlo acwengile, azolile, libizwa ngokuba nguMhlangenqaba, liqhawule ezintanjeni.

Uphi ke yena kuphathwa kuhliwa nje kuphathwa kunyukwa ? Nanko uMhlangenqaba phantsi kwentsimi kaDyan, ubile ulichebetyu. Ubengekayiphi ukuva kwakhe iimpempe zamapolisa, waqonda ukuba iqhinga lakhe likrotywe yikati, kodwa ke xa kusekho umphefumlo indoda iyajambalaza. Uthe ke ngoko esaxakiwe njalo, qatha icebo. Nasi isisele somphunzisa ema kube sasidaleke ngexesha lendlala ebehlala exelelwa ngayo, kwalapho ekungeneni entsimini kaDyan. Khatha wangena apho omdala. Inyoka akazoyiki nganto, ubuhlungu bazo babefudula bebutya bengamakhwenkwe. Ihempe yona wayeyisonge yaligaqana wayijula kude ngezantsi.

Eli qhinga asikuko nokuba beleyekile, ingenakuba mgudu into yokufunyanwa kolugxa lwendoda engangaye emngxunyeni. Kodwa ubomi buyabambelela nasemsontweni werali. Wafana wathi elokuzithembisa, " Noko abanakuthi kukho mntu unokuzimela kwalapha." Kanti usemxholweni wenyaniso, akukho mntu wakha waya nokuya kweso sisele. Bonke basinga phambili, waba uyabaphosa ke njalo. Kuthe kwakuba mnyama waphuma umf' omkhulu ekuzimeleni. Nanko enyuka enqumla elubala nje, esiya kuqabela engabha-

qwanga mntu. Nezulu lalilibi ngoko kuhlwa, lisibekele kakubi kanye kuba iimeko asikuko nokuba zidla ngokuvelana namasela nezigebenga nabo bonke abaphuli bemithetho.

Uthe akuqabela wehla ngelinye icala lenduli waya kutsho eMpenduza emlanjeni. Nanko ewela ehamba njalo, wada wafika eCeru. Ukhawuleze wathi gontshi emlanjeni wehla nawo ukude aye kulungelelana nelakowabo eThongwane, wandula ukusinga eMahlathini kuba ebesazi ngokumhlophe ukuba awaKomkhulu oba sekhondweni lakhe, ngoko ke ekhaya akasayi kuba nakusinda. Apha ehlathini bekulula ukuzimela kuba bekusazele izisele ezadaleka ngendlala. Into yona ebinzima kukufumaneka kwento esiwa phantsi kwempumlo.

Waqala kaloku wabubona ubudenge abenzileyo bokubaleka entolongweni. Kuncedani ukubaleka umthetho eya kuhlal' ahlale abuye abanjwe nje agwetywe ngaphezulu kokuba ebegwetyiwe ? Inye kuphela indlela angasinda ngayo kukumka mpela kwelo lakowabo asinge kwelinye. Angathini khona ukuhamba iimayile ezintathu engakhange athi xuku nto emlonyeni. Wayelambe eyimfejelele kuba wayegqibele kusasa ngezolo ukutya esesentolongweni.

Bekusile ngoku, litshisela ilanga, nehlathi lizalisiwe ziintsholo ngeentsholo zeentlobo-ntlobo zeentaka. Umbethe wawuyokozela naye emanzi eyiloo nto. Phofu ubumanzi obu wayengabuveli njengephango, waza ke ngoko waqala ukucinga indlela angathi ngayo afumane ukutya phambi kokuba litshone. Yona into yokuba makalinde umnyama phambi kokuba ahambe yayiqaqambe engqondweni njengekhwezi. Ucinge wacinga lathi kuba ithamsanqa lihamba nokhaliphileyo nokuba ukhalipheleni na, qatha icebo ingadanga iqine imini.

Indlebe zesela zibukhali okwethuku lona ungaze uthi kanti uyayazi into eza kuhla ungayibonanga ngamehlo wayiva nangendlebe. UMahlangenqaba wayeve amazwi kude waqiniseka ukuba ngamantombazana eze kutheza. Wazimisela

ukusebenzisa bonke ubugcisa anabo ukufumana konke akufunayo. Walinda.

ISAHLUKO VIII

UNOBANTU

Intombi kaMbayimbayi enkulu yayendele eMaZizini kuGobinamba unyana kaSisusa. Umi endulini evelele loo nkalo ijonge kuNjamkhulu umzi kaSisusa. Ngabantu abanxibayo. Basebatsha, kodwa bathembisa ukuba boba yinto ekukhuleni kwabo. Umfo kaSisusa akadingi nkomo,—izipani zakhe zibini, kwaye uyasenga—, nahashe, wona ayile esihlanwini. Umbona kukowawo emzini wakhe. Ezinye izinto asingezibaluli, ezinje ngamabhona epesika namakhiwane ezitiyeni nasemasimini.

Abantwana basekhay' apha babesebahlanu. Amazibulo nguNobantu. UNobantu ngeli xesha sihlangana naye uminyaka ilishumi linane ezelwe. Yintwanazana esisiqishimbana ekubonakala ukuba akayi kuba nathambo lide. Ebusweni umhlophe—ubuhlophe obugazi liyondeleleneyo. Mhle uyathandeka kakhulu, umile kakuhle. Ukuthanda, ukuthanda ukudlala uNobantu ngangokude nembiza aziphekileyo afumane umdlalo ekuziphekeni. Wayengumntwana owonwabileyo onentsini esulelayo. Kaloku ngenye imini wabhaqwa ngunina ehleli ecaleni lembiza yeenkobe, xa ibilayo, egigitheka yintsini.

" Yintoni ? uhlekani Nobantu ? " wabuza unina.

" Andihleki ezi nkobe ! uyazibona kodwa zisuke zangathi zenza laa nto siyifundiswa esikolweni nje, ithi *left, right.*" Yaphendula intokazi. Wabona naye ukuba xa kulapho makasuke ahleke unina.

Enye into awayenayo ngokukodwa lo mntwana kukungoyiki. Abanye abantwana besoyika nje ukuphuma bengakhatshwanga kwakuba mnyama, wayengazi nokuba kuphi. Nokuthunywa endaweni ekude wayengakwazele nto konke. Ngenye imini uNobantu nabanye abantwana babehleli phandle abantu besendlwini. Suke bathi besahleli bedlalisa abone uxam ephuma ebuhlanti ephethe ubulongwe. Yammangalisa le nto ibunyoka phofu ingeyiyo. Yathi intokazi yakuba ibaxelele abanye ukuba nasi isimanga sesilo yema yasibuka ibulandela ngemva mganyana. Isenzeka nje leyo yokulandela iramnewa abanye abantwana kudala babalekayo ukuya kuxela ebantwini abadala. Wathi engxoliswa exelelwa ukuba uxam uyabhexesha ngomsila atsho umntu axuzuke kwabe kumnyama mbe kuNobantu.

Ngaphandle kwale nto wayengenguye Nobantu nje kuphela wayekwa nguNozinto. Abantu neegusha, nazo zonke ezinye izidalwa wayezithanda. Ubungafika esingethe ikati edlala namatakane egusha nawebhokhwe kuyiloo nto. Ubenjalo ke uNobantu.

Ngale ntsasa ke sithetha ngayo bavuke kwanini ukuya kutheza kwelo hlathi laseNgwane nabanye. Eli hlathi linxulumene nomlambo oyiNgwane ongumda phakathi kweyasemaZizini ilali neyaseThongwane. Ngoko ke kuyathezwa ngokufanayo kulo apha zezi ndawo zombini. Behle bebalekile kulo mmango mde kunene uqabela kuloNobantu, baya bangena ehlathini balahlekana kwa oko omnye nomnye.

Akubanga kudala uNobantu ebheke kwelakhe icala wathana gaga nento engeyiba ixwebile yesigebenga ukuba ibinganeedwanga ngumbethe, enwele kucacileyo ukuba kumzuzu zahlukene nenkeaza. Yayinganxibanga nto ingambethe nto kumzimba wangasentla, iraphilili ebusweni ziindevu namehlo ebomvu. Wayeqiniseka uNobantu ukuba sisigelekeqe esi koko akakhange acinge ngakukhala. Ukuba yayingomnye ngewadanduluka wabaleka wada wazenzakalisa mhlawumbi kuloo mihodi mininzi yayilapho.

"Molo!" watsho uNobantu.

"Molo mntwan' am!" saphendula isigebenga.

"Sondel' apha ndibuze." wasondela umntwana.

"Uphi umam' akho ntombi?"

"Usekhaya. Bendimke eza kuya kuvasa impahla emlanjeni."

"Niya kufika nini nina ekhaya?"

"Tyhini kwangoku. Kulapha nje phezu kwalo mmango ungaphesheya."

"Uphi uyihlo yena?"

"Andimazi, ubemke ngehashe izolo, wathi uya kubuya namhlanje."

"Lelakhe elo hashe?"

"Ewe, tyhu, engaka nje amahashe ekhaya!"

"Phulaphul' apha ke mntwan' am. Uz' undibulisele kunyoko uthi ubulisile umnakwabo uMhlangenqaba. Uyeva ke mntwan' odade? Ndiyavuya ukudibana nawe sewukhule kangaka. Ungubani kanene igama?"

"NdinguNobantu."

"Ngubani kanene uyihlo-mkhulu?"

"Ungathini kaloku ukungamazi kanti ungumalume?"

"Ndifuna ukuqonda ukuba uyamazi na. Ndize kubona ukuba sewukhulile."

"NguSisusa."

"Ndiyabona ke mtshana. Khawubaleke ukhelele umalume iipesika phaya emasimini. Ukhawuleze."

Ubaleke waya uNobantu ngaphandle kokuthandabuza. Intsimi yakowabo ngethamsanqa yayilapho, asazi phofu ukuba ngewayetheni na xa yayingekho kwelo cala. Wabuya weza nazo ke umntwana ezishuqule ngetyalana kanina awayenze ngayo inkatha. Wazibeka phambi kwalo ninalume wesheyi.

"He ke! uncedile ke mntwan' odade. Hamba uye kutheza ngoku ungashiywa ngabanye. Ungalibali ukubulisa

kumama. Mhla ndabuya ndeza ngapha ndoza ndikuphathele into entle.'' Wanga angabuza uNobantu ukuba kutheni na uninalume lowo emi kakubi nje. Kodwa namhlanje woyika, wahamba.

Akuba emkile umntwana wawa ezipesikeni uMhlangenqaba wadubula sabomvu ngephanyazo isisu. Kakade indlala ligwala igxothwa nangumthamo omnye. Emva koku ucinge icebo aya kwenza ngalo ukuze angabhaqwa, njengoko ebengenakuhamba lingatshonanga.

Kodwa phezu kwayo yonke into eyenzekayo makhe afumane intwana yobuthongo. Uhambele enzulwini yehlathi apho afumene isigcaki esimnandi, kwathi kungekudala wabe sel' ekobude. Ulele ithuba elide apha wothuka sekuthe nzwanga kubonakala ukuba abantwana abo bebeze kutheza kudala bahambayo.

* * * *

Kwakungongcwalazi ukuphuma kwakhe ehlathini. Uhle wayifumana indlela enyusa lo mmango mde kunene. Ingca yayinde kanobom kuba kwakusekupheleni kweyoMqungu ukungena kokwindla sekusondele. Uthe xa kumana kudlula amaqela ngamaqela eentaka ukuya kulala uMhlangenqaba weva ekhumbula iimini zobukhwenkwe bakhe, esabetha amagqaza nezakhwatsha. Ubethe kakuhle ukunyuka elo qhina engaxhalanga kangakanani kuba phezu kokuba inde ingca, le ndawo ibibusitholera. Bekunzima ke ngoko ukufumane abonakale umntu xa afuna kungabi njalo.

Lifike ixesha lokukhulekwa kwamahashe sel' ehleli endaweni enqabileyo phofu esemboniselweni, ngaphezulu kwenduli leyo ubumi kuyo umzi kaGobinamba. Ngoku umnumzana lo wayesel' ephawule nenye into eyenza intliziyo yakhe yathi ukuchwayita yanga ngamaranisi ebona imvula emva kwembalela. Kwakuthe dwe eluthangweni lwalowo mzi wayewalusile impahla ezihlanjiweyo, kuqondakala ukuba ziza kulaliswa phandle. Inyanga yayiselwa, ilicetyana elincinane kakhulu.

Xa utsha zintambo kukungxamela into, imizuzu le iba ngathi ayihambi. Kodwa ke zide zakhala ezokuqala iinkuku, ukuxela ukuba ubusuku bahlulelene. Yonke into ibikhanya kakuhle kumnumzana lo kuba ubumnyama bebude baqhelana namehlo akhe. Uqale ngokuya eluthangweni—Yeka ke! wayibona into abeyizonda—ibhulukhhwe nebhatyi. Zazimanzi xo kuba ubusuku babunombethe zaza zalalwa lizolo. Ibe yinto engenamsebenzi leyo. Akukho buxelegu bunje ngokubaleka isono nomthetho. Wazithatha wathi ezihempeni wazikhethela zambini.

Uye emahasheni emva koku. Apha ukholiswe yinkabi efosi. Watsho phezulu, yaluchitha udaka intsundu kaMakhosi—uMabengu, uGoqolo.

'UNqawe ayiphuzwa iphuzwa ngamaqakamba
Isilo sakuloNcede neThongwane
Madoda mani na la anje iikani' ezi?
Kunini n' exelelwa ngokuy' ePesika
Aph' imigxam idubul' iqunube
Umanty' enkulu yeyakuLuvukuwu.'

Yekoko ukukhweza loo nkalo yakuNjamkhulu, eyixathulise njalo inkab' ehashe, eyikhwele ngaphandle kwesali.

Umsebenzi wakhe wawube nempumelelo encumisayo. Akazange akhonkothwe nanja. Uhambe njalo wada waya kuyiwela iNciba, wehla waya kuthi chithithi ngaphesheya kweleNyathi xa ziphindayo iinkuku. Wayengakhange aliphe thuba lakuhamba nje ihashe. Ukutyatyulwa lilo wayengakukhathalele kanye, esazi ukuba ukubila oku kwalo ukukhothuluzile ngesandla nokuba sisiziba wabuthambisa kulo ndawo ityabukileyo liyeza elikhulu. Uthe kulo matyholo aphesheya kweNciba wakha wehla ukuze afake ibhulukhwe zakhe.

Ayizange ithi-tha nakancinane into yokuba ezo mpahla kanye wayezinxibile ziya kufunwa ukuphuma kwelanga loo mini. Nokuba wayeyicingile loo nto kwakungasekho kubuya ngamva ngoku. Okwenzekileyo kwenzekile. Nto yayise-

ngqondweni yakhe ngoku yintwanazana ethandeka kunene, efundekelwe lilizwi layo elithe, 'NdinguNobantu,' wada wazithethela ngokuphumelelisa wathi, 'Lo mntwana ndoze ndimenzel' intw' enkulu.'

ISAHLUKO IX

UNOZIMANGA

Elo lapheshcya kweNciba leleefama, ikakhulu ezamaBhulu. Umntu ozimelayo, ekufuneka kwezinye indawo athwethwe, akangelungi ehasheni. Walibetha ke ihashe le jaju liwajikile amabombo ukubhekisa ngasekhaya, wandila ngeenyawo ngoku umf' omkhulu. Lonke elo liselelezinga, apho namagxamesi ehamba ethuku-thukuza ukuvela ngathi aneentloni ukuma ebugxwayibeni obunje. Esathubeleza njalo, wabona esithi gaxa emzaneni womXhosa. Naxa ebengekazimiseli kufika mzini akabanga sabaleka.

Unkqonkqoze wangena wafika kuphungwa ikofu yakusasa, wabulisa. Ibhulukhwe besezomile noko, kwasala uburasha bobuntu bentolongo bodwa. Kaloku entolongweni iindevu akukho xesha lakuzicheba, neenwele ngokunjalo. Ubuzwe imvelaphi waxela ukuba uhamba efuna umsebenzi, ke ujikwa liphango. Wagalelelwa naye waphunga, kwathi emveni koko wakhelelwa umbeko womngqusho ubanda unjalo embizeni. Wawutya loo mngqusho ngokungathi utya umqa, bayana ngamehlo abantu. Elowo wayecinga ukuthi engqondweni yakhe, "Azi ngumntu otheni na lo utya kangaka ?"

Akabanga saphozisa maseko emva koku. Ucele amanzi wasela wahamba, eziva ehlaziyekile. Wayekugqibele nini ukufumana ukutya isusi sithi mpu ? Uthe sululu nje watshonela wafumana indawo emnandi phantsi koCawuza, wangqe-

ngqa khona ukuze azinzise ukutya esiswini. Engqengqile njalo wafika lo mfanekiso abesel' ewuqhele kakhulu ngoku—kanina. Wathi nje phazi phambi kwakhe wanga uya mva esithi, "Kodwa Nqaba mntwan' am ngamahlazo ani la uwenzayo ?" wee shwaka emehlweni.

"Ndikhe ndaphumelela kule nto ndiyicingayo inene ndiya kuzamela ukuze ndingabuye ndenze ihlazo. Naxa bafondini noko inyama yam imbi." Wazithethela watsho, ephakama ukuhamba efuna umsebenzi. Kweyokuqala ifama akawufumananga, kweyesibini kube kwaseso. Evenkileni kwaSimanga kwalapho eTyityaba, uwufumene umsebenzi—umsebenzi omhle ngangokude athi manga ukuba ubukade uhleliphi na wodwa abanye bengawuzuzi. Uqale kwaloo mini ukusebenza naxa belise lithambekile. Bebekho nabanye abafana ndawonye namakhwenkwe alusa iinkomo, yathi iphela iveki wabe eqhele ngokungathi wazalelwa apho.

Umsebenzi ubungomnandi kunene, kungekho sigxina santo. Ngezinye iimini bebeye bayichithe imini begalela umbona ezitankini. Ngezinye bebesiya kulayisha eQumra. Maxa wambi bebehlala ekhaya kusetyenzwe emyezweni naphakathi komzi kude kuphathelele evenkileni phakathi. Le nto ibisenzeka futhi-futhi bakuba baninzi abantu, baneedise abafana ababini ekuthengiseni izinto ezinje ngeswekile yetiki, umlilo wepeni njalo-njalo. Omnye waba yaba nguMhlangenqaba, kuba ngangokuhlakanipha nokuba krele-krele kwengqondo yakhe yathi iphela inyanga wabe sel' ethenjwe ngokwaneleyo.

Wayesebenza evenkileni ngolu hlobo ngenye imini uMhlangenqaba, ukuqala kwakhe ukumbona uNozimanga. Wangena ngomnyango wevenkile njengabantu bonke, kodwa okwakhe ukungena kwaba kodwa, ngokungathi ubeze apha enomnyango wakhe othe geqe. Wathi ukuba athi gungqu wee riphu umbilini kuMhlangenqaba ngendlela engaqhelekanga, wathengela engasaqondi nto icacileyo, esuke wanedumbe.

UNozimanga wayethe ncothu engenasiqu, entsundu ngebala, intloko ithe qwe, enomtsalane ngohlobo oluthile olunesithunzi. Wayenala mehlo kuthiwa ayabamba, ongathi ubuzimisele ukungayenzi into, akunyanzelele ekuyenzeni engathethanga, ngokusuke akuphe amehlo. Wathi ke akuba engene kulo venkile wanga umbambe ngezandla uMhlangenqaba ukumsondeza kuye, wanga uzingenise ngamandla ezingcingeni zakhe. Kwakhawuleza kwathi tha umfanekiso kanina wasuka wanga umfulathele. Esacinga ngale nto nako kufika omnye, wentwanazana esisiqishimbana, ngathi uyayiva isithi, "Ungayilibali ke into yam entle, mhla wabuya."

Kodwa naziphi na iingcinga unakho umntu ukuzigxotha okwexesha ngokuthanda kwakhe. Bathe ukuba baphume ngoko wabuza kwabanye uMhlangenqaba ukuba yinzwakazi yaphi na leyo ibingene evenkileni.

"NguNozimanga kaNtoyaphi lowa. Umzi wakowabo nankuya phesheya kwevenkile. Kutheni wambuza?" Uhleke watsho omnye umfana.

"Hayi indiphandlile ngalinye bafondini. Andinakungaziphosi nokuba sekumnyama entla. Ngathi kum ndingenela nje kukuhamba ecaleni layo nokuba andidanga ndizityande gila."

"Ndikholwa ngotshoyo mna." Iphendule yatsho intwana ekwakusithiwa nguKopolo. UNozimanga azipheli iintsuku ezintathu engezanga apha evenkileni. Uza kufika kwakamsinyane, ube sewuphos' into oyiphetheyo ke mfo wakuthi. Thina noko sizeyile, sisuke simana singqetha, sibethela kude."

Laqulunqwa ke icebo elo lagqitywa, akwabuye kuthethwe ngaloo nto, yafana nelityelweyo. KukuMhlangenqaba yedwa apho yayingaphumi engqondweni, kodwa kukho into eyayimxakile. Wayeba ngacinga ngale ntombazana kuthi tshe phambi kwakhe umfanekiso kanina umfulathele. Le nto yayizinge, icace ngangokude ngenye imini abuze kwabanye.

"Hi bafondini, niyayibona le nkosikazi imi phambi kwam ?"

"Iphi ?" wabuza omnye. "Suka mfondini, uthi akuphuphi ? Baninzi abantu abaphupha nokuba bayahamba." Batsho bamwa bonke ukumhleka. Waqonda naye ukuba uphindile wathetha ngale nto uya kuba lilifa lentsini, akaba sayiphatha yayindaba yakwamkhozi.

Ikhawuleze yafika imini ebebeyilindele yokuza kukaNozimanga evenkileni. Wakhatshwa ke nguMhlangenqaba sel' ewahlohle wawaqolonqa wagqiba amazwi. Walihloma ke izwi elo, lamkelwa ngokuthakazelela okonwabisayo emxhelweni womfana lowo. Latshona elalo mini engathi unamaphiko ngenxa yemincili. Nomfanekiso kanina waba ngafika usithi, "Kodwa Nqaba mntwan' am, ngamahlazo ani la uwenzayo ?" awuzange usebenze nto ekumbuyiseni emafini.

Ngosuku olulandelayo wafumana incwadi evela kuNozimanga immema ukuba akhe afike apho kowabo emalanga akuphuma emsebenzini. Wawungathini wakumbona ngeli xesha uMhlangenqaba ? Kwakungekho nento enokucingisa umntu ukuba wayekhe walibanjwa mfam-mfam, elapha nje uphuncule entolongweni. Naye wayesel' ayilibala loo nto, athi naxa ayicingayo ibe yinto nje angayidibanisayo nesiqu sakhe. Inyanga zaziphelile ziliqelana elimnandi wasebenzayo eTyityaba.

Isimemo eso wasamkela ngovuyo waya kwaNtoyaphi. Wafikela ebubeleni obukhulu, wathi naxa ebekhe wanyewuza kuqala wahle wacombuluka wabona ukuba kusekhaya. Kungekudala kwaba kancinane ubone ngaye esiya kuthi joo kwaNtoyaphi, zide zimqhule ngelinye ixesha iintanga zakhe zisithi, "Kutheni na nto kaMabengu, uthuth' ubisi na phesheya komfula phaya ?"

Akukho hlebo ke phakathi kwabathandanayo. Elowo uyaziphokoza kangangoko anakho. Naso ke isizathu esabangela ukuba uNozimanga azi ukuba uMhlangenqaba elapha nje waqhawula ezintanjeni zomthetho. Akazange naxa ayibali-

selwayo le nto othuke kodwa wasuke wathi, "Needa undixelele ezinye." Wambalisela ke omnye wada waya kufika kuNobantu, waqala wee khinkxi, kuba akuba lapho kwasuka kwathi qatha ikhaya wanga angakhe athule tu. Yaba ngumhlola kuye ukuba lo mntwana asoloko wamkhumbuza ngekhaya mihla le, ngaphezu koko amcingise ukuba ulisela kanene, nebanjwa. Wacothoza ke noko wamxelela uNozimanga oko anokumxelela.

Kwahlaleka ke njalo zahamba iintsuku, iiveki kungekho nto yenzekayo, wasebenza uMhlangenqaba ngokuthembekileyo, eyigcina imali yakhe anokuyigcina. Kambe ke wayengafuni nakuthenga nkomo eTyityaba kuba ezalapho zazingahambelani nezangaphesheya kweNciba kowabo. Kodwa kwathi kolo luxolo lwemeko kwathi gquphu into eyatsho kwanga kukuzisa kwelifu leendudumo kwisibhakabhaka esicwengileyo. Yatsho kwathi okwalandelayo kwanga kukuzalisa komlambo ukukhawuleza kwako. Enkangelekweni yayiyinto engenamsebenzi, incwadi yentombazana ibhalela isithandwa sayo Yayisenje nje :—

Mabengu,

Uxolo ngokusoloko ndakuxina ngezimemo. Nam andincedi. Kodwa ke ngathi ukuba uthe wasamkela esi andisokuze ndibuye ndifane ndikukhathaze.

Ndinqwenela ukuba ufike apha emalanga nje. Kukho into emyoli endikugcinele yona. Ndicinga ukuba uya kuyithanda. Ukuba uya kuphumelela needa impendulo uyinikele kwalo mntwana. Andizi kuba mde. Soncokola sakudibana Kakade ezephepha ziyabanda. Ndiyabulisa.

Owakho eneneni,

NOZIMANGA.

Le ncwadi yayingeshushu njengeencwadi awayeqhele ukuzifumana uMhlangenqaba zivela kuNozimanga. Ayabi nani ke phofu loo nto kuba eza kumbona kwaloo mini, ecinga nokuba uxakekile kakhulu elungiselela yena, umntwan' abantu.

ISAHLUKO X

BONISANI !

Phambi kokuba silande ezo zinto zenzeka ngokukhawuleza kuya kufuneka sikhe sibuyele phesheya kweNciba emaZizini kumzi kaGobinamba endulini phezu kweNgwane. Ngalaa mini oNobantu babeye ehlathini wabuya uNobantu iziphika ziphezulu kukuxhinela ithuba lokude abalise ngoninalume. Wadana akufumana ukuba unina akakhumbuli mntu unjalo konke. Waba ngabuzwa igama lakhe akalikhumbula. Wabethwa entloko ke ngale ndlela umntwana, walala sewuqhoshile umbombo.

Kusile ngengomso uGobinamba uvuke waya ebuhlanti njengesiqhelo, waya kukhulula amahashe. Waba njani ukudana ukufumana inkabi yakhe uBles ingekho. Intsontelo elalikhulekwe ngayo ihashe elo yayingekho, koko isikhonkwane sisele endaweni yaso. Kwa oko kuthe qatha incoko yakhe nomfazi wakhe ngobusuku bephezolo xa bebehlalutya ingxelo kaNobantu yomntu ambone ehlathini. Warana kwangoko ukuba ihashe lakhe libiwe. Ungene endlwini wayaleza unina kaNobantu ukuba amenzele intwana yokutya, alungise ibhulukhwe nenye impahla, uya emapoliseni ukuya kuxela okuhlileyo. Eyile elucingweni unina kaNobantu ukuya kukhangela impahla yowakwakhe ufike ibhulukhwe nebhatyi yayo nehempe zingekho. Waqala ukoyika ngakumbi ukuthi, bebehanjelwe ngamasela ngobo busuku, ngawo emke naloo mpahla.

"Nobantu!" umemezile, "uthi ngubani na lo mntu ubudibene naye ehlathini?"

"Andimazi mama."

"Ubevelaphi, esiyaphi?"

"Andimazi mama. Kodwa uthe uya emsebenzini." Waphendula edidekile umntwana.

"Obu buntu bakho buza kusizela nezimanga. Akwaba kanye wawunguNozindlu." Watsho umfazi esiya kuxelela indoda yakhe ngesi sishiqi.

Walibetha lasisingqane umntu ihashe ukuya kutsho edolophini. Kwakhutshwa iintshotsholozi zona zontaminani ukulanda umkhondo. KwaRulumente ke akukho nto ilityalwayo nokuba ibise yenzeka kudala kangakanani. Asisathethi ke ngeyenzeke ngezolo eli. Ukulahleka kweli hashe lalo mfo kwasuka kwangqamana nokubaleka kwebanjwa elithile, ngendlela ekrokrisayo. Le ngcingane yabalasela ngokokude kubekho ukurana kokuthi kungenzeka ukuba ukulahleka kwehashe elo kunento yokwenza nesela.

Nantso ke imbangeli yokufunwa komfo kaMabona owayethe ngeentsuku zobupolisa bakhe wamenzela imisebenzi ephathekayo uRulumente. Wathunywa njengontaminani ukuba alande ihashe likaGobinamba Sisusa. Iinyanga ezimbini kwakuse kukudala ziphelile, kuphela eyesithathu ngoku lalahlekayo ihashe. Ithemba lokulifumana laliluzizi kumninilo. Kodwa akazange athandabuze nakancinane uMabona ukuba uya kuza nalo.

Enale njongo ke wafuna imibhalo, iintsimbi neeqhiya zayo, iibhulukhwe zobugxagxa, ezobumenene, wakhe wathi shwaka okwethuba. Ngumfo lo owayelincoko ngendalo ephiwe iindaba zalo naluphi na udidi ebomini. Obomvu, onxibayo, ikholwa nomhedeni, umfazi, indoda, abantwana namaxhego yayilichele kuye ukufumanela nawuphi na kwaba into amakayithethe. Ubesithi akuva ngomzi onotywala abe sel' egxogxeka impahla yakhe elungele oko, onde ngaloo mzi, onwabe apho ngokukhululekileyo. Wothi ke xa asecaweni phakathi kwamadoda amakhulu evuma ngomxhelo wonke ejonge phezulu umnene, ebucimela, kungabikho nentsobi phakathi kwakhe nomfo wasendlwini yotywala. Nomshumayeli ubengethandabuzi ukumnika umthandazo enkonzweni.

Umkhondo awulandayo wayengawubuzi mntwini. Ube-

ncokola, athi apho encokweni afumane isuntsu apha nesuntswana phaya, adibanise kube kuko asebenze eqalele kuloo ndawo. Ipolisa elithunywe nguRulumente asikuko nokuba lithiyiwe jikelele luluntu olu. Nomntwana ombala uyazi ukuba lakuthi ipolisa, "Uphi uZibani-bani?" makathi akamazi loo mntu. Nokuba licela amanzi la kanonkala malivinjwe, bangalenzeli mbeko kuba lutshaba, koko mababaleke baye kuzifihla. Akuzange kube njalo kuMabona. Wayengafakanga sinxibo sapolisa, engenambonakalo nakuhamba kwalo, engenalo nahashe alikhwelayo.

Zathukululeka intliziyo zabantu akwabikho khwiniba nelincinane entethweni yabo naye. Yathi ithwasa eyesine inyanga wabe ephesheya kweNciba eLudalasi ngokomnumzana nawuphi na olahlekelwe yinkabi yehashe. Wayebabulisa bonke ngokuthi, "Bonisani ngenkabi yehashe elifosi enenqina elimhlophe ekunene."

Balandule abalanduleyo, becebisa phofu kuba umntu olahlekelwe yimfuyo inovelwano ngaye inkoliso yabantu. Yekoko ke ukukhweza iNciba wathi kungeentsuku zatywala waya kuyifumana inkabi yehashe leyo yonwabile isitya phezu kwamanzi. Ibe licekwa ukuyibamba, yaba yinto nje yeentsuku ukuya kufika kwaNtoyaphi eTyityoba. Enye into le yonke ibe lichele. Intombi kaNtoyaphi ifike yaluncedo olulodwa ukubabhabhisela uMhlangenqaba obesel' eqhele ngokukodwa ekhay' apha. Ebengasafihli nanto ngoku kuba naxa kungekho nto yayikhe yada yathethwa phandle bekusaziwa,—ngokucinga kwakhe—, ukuba uya kuyitshata le nzwakazi yalo mzi. Babenobubele ke bonke abantu balapha, nonina noyise bentombi kanye, kucacile ukuba baziphethe ubulungu kuba kwaXhosa asinto angakhe atye nokutya kowayo umfana onento ayicingayo ngentombi yomzi lowo.

Incwadi eyabhalwa nguNozimanga wayibhala ngentsasa elandela ukufika kukaMabona kowabo. Yabalekiswa ngomntwana ukusiwa evenkileni. Umnene wayifunda wayigqi-

ba esatsho ngolugoso oko ebeyivule ebobotheke kade. Loo mini wahamba ngesantya njalo, phofu esuke wanobudyududyudu obungaqhelekanga nedumbe. Maxa wambi ukucinga ngale ncwadi bekumenza luthi mere uvalo.

Kutheni ukuba uNozimanga athi emva kwale mini akasayi kubuye amkhathaze ngakumbalela ? Iyintoni yona leyo amgcinele yona imyoli ? Izigancko ezizayo, ngendalo, zinesimanga sokukhokelisa amathunzi azo ngaphambili. Yiyo loo nto umntu engenakuze angabi nalo ufifi lwento embi eza kwenzeka. Loo nto ingummangaliso.

Lafika ixesha lokukhululeka kuMhlangenqaba, wahamba waqhina wafaka izihlangu ezisuliweyo kwaleli, wanduluka ukusinga kwaNtoyaphi ehamba nomhlobo wakhe uKopolo. Bamkelwa ngobubele baziswa nakubaw' omkhulu wakwaCentane—uMabona ke lowo—besaziswa nguNozimanga. "Needa wethu, Nqaba," uqhube watsho uNozimanga, "ukhe umbalisele ezaa ndaba uhlala usihlekisa ngazo. Akumazi kakade wena ?"

"Hayi andimazi." uphendule omnye.

Ezo ndaba ke inkoliso zezobubanjwa bakhe. Izinto ezenziwa entolongweni. Ukubaleka kwakhe, njalo-njalo. UKopolo ukhe wamthi nyaxa umlingane wakhe lo ukuba angabalisi, koko uMhlangenqaba wayengazange akwazi ukuyala into acelwa nguNozimanga ukuba ayenze, akaphulaphula ke. Kwakamsinyane waba sel' ebalisa ngokukhululeka okukhulu. Kwathi khona kwakungena ilungu, ahanjiswa namanzi alo, wanga umqala uthanjisiwe, wavulela umfo wakwaGoqolo kwaMabengu.

Akazange abe samqonda kakuhle naxa aphumayo uMabona ukuba unoncumo olulusizi ebusweni, engabanga saphawula nokuba ungene wathini na. Uve nje xa sel' esithi, "Mhlangenqaba Makhosi, ndiyakubamba ngokuphuncula ezintanjeni zomthetho, ubaleke isigwebo." Weva ngokungathi usephupheni elibi kusithi tshixi iintsimbi ezihlahleni, wathi

ebheka-bheka kwabe sekungasekho nomnye endlwini. Waba ke uyabanjwa uMhlangenqaba loo mini eziswe kuloo mnatha yintombi ayithandayo, ebihleli isisipili kuye naxa aleleyo—uNozimanga.

UKopolo okukokwakhe wathi akubona ukuba izinto zimi ngolo hlobo weva ezinyaweni. Abambonayo ngaloo mhla abayibalisi. Mpunzi yakwabani enemitsi engako, etsiba izihlahla zeminga nemithole ingahlatywa ! Engazange aphumle wada waba usebuhlanti kowabo. Waqhutywa ke u-Mhlangenqaba, kwegqithwa evenkileni, yayalulwa impahla yakhe. Okwala bhulukhwe nala bhatyi wayezibile azizange zifunyanwe naxa zazifunwa. Zazisezaguga zatshiswa mgumfo lowo. Kwayiwa kulalwa eNciba kwasa kuphathelelwa endleleni esinga eGcuwa apho ityala laliza kuthethwa khona.

Umbanjwa wethu ngoku wayesel' efumane woma amathe, inkuku isikwe umlomo. Kanti ethomalele nje ecinga ukuba usindile zonke ezi nyanga kukhona aye kuzithathela inkuntyula yetyala eli. Wavakala ezisola ngokusuke athi finini kwalapho eTyityaba xa ebesel' ephuncule, kwabe sekusemva. Abafana awayebanjwe nabo kwakukudala baphumayo entolongweni. Yena kwakukukhona aza kungena ngenxa yobudenge aba nabo awayecinga ukuba bubulumko. Wathi esamana ecamanga ngolo hlobo kwafikwa eGcuwa, waya wavalelwa entangeni.

ISAHLUKO XI

" .....NDINCEDE..... ! "

Yimini engentle ekhumezelayo, imvula ekubonakala ukuba iza kuba ngumvimbi. Ngeliba seliphakamile ilanga ukuba belibonakala. Kanti izele loo ndlu kuthethelwa kuyo amatyala imi ngeembambo. Amahashe phandle asingawo nawo ukuba maninzi. Wawungetsho nokutsho ukuthi imini leyo iyabanda

kanti kwakunjalo. Phezu koko naxa azinxibileyo iidyasi amadoda amaninzi ayengaziqiniselanga mizimbeni. Imini enemvula engumkhumezelo idla ngokozelisa, kanti kuloo ndlu akukho unabuthongo. Amatyala aza kuthethwa nganomdla ebantwini. Phakathi kwawo lelikaMhlangenqaba Makhosi.

" Bafondini ! umthathi uyawuzala umlotha." Yavakala enye indoda xa aya kungena. " Ngubani obengacinga ukuba unyana kaMakhosi angalisela ? "

" Wenzani na mfondini ? Yindoda leyo." Wadumzela waphendula uwabo. Wathi esaza kuhambisa bothuswa lilizwi lepolisa lisithi, " In-z-w-i-i ! " Kwathi cwaka.

Ungenisiwe umfo kaMakhosi, labe selimfungisa ipolisa ngaloo mazwi aziwayo luluntu jikelele, emise isibhozo : " Ndiyafunga ukuthetha inyaniso.... Ndincede Thixo ! " Lithe ligqiba wabe sel' efudumeza umfan' oyiphetheyo esithi : " Mhlangenqaba Makhosi, wena umangalelwe ngumthetho ngokuphuncula ezintanjeni zomthetho ngomhla wama-26 kweyoMqungu nokubaleka ushiya isigwebo sale nkundla ungasenzanga.

" Kwakhona, wena Mhlangenqaba Makhosi, ubile okanye wathabatha ngaphandle kwemvume yomninilo, okanye yentsapho yakhe, okanye yezihlobo, inkabi yehashe efosi ephakamileyo, nezinye iimpahla zikaGobinamba Sisusa othile, okhaya liphesheya kweNgwane kwilali kaMhlabeni, ngomhla okanye mayela nomhla wama-29 kweyoMqungu. Ingaba unento ongayithethayo ukuzithethelela ? Unetyala nokuba akunalo ? "

Impendulo yombanjwa yenza ukuba amadoda agungqe ezihlalweni, athinte futhi. Phakathi kwabaphulaphuli omnye umfo—ingwevu entsha, wabonakala enikina intloko ejonge phantsi. Lo mfo yayinguMakhosi. Wayeqala ukumbona unyana wakhe oko wathi wabanjwa. Wenzani ngoku lo mfana ephendula olu hlobo nje, ufuna ukumtshonisa ? Uthe

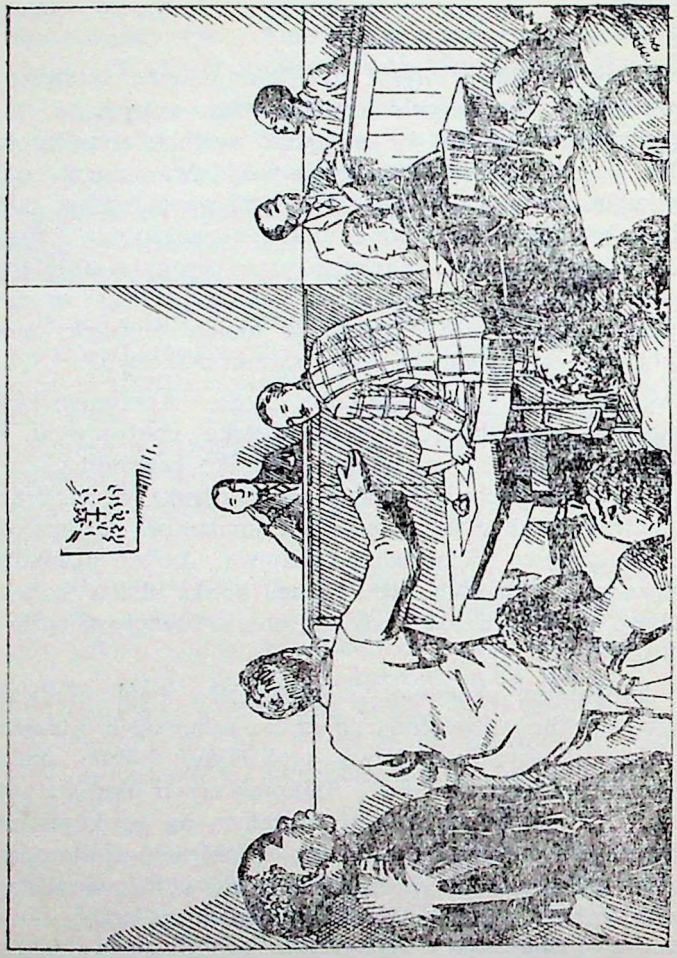
esenjenje ukucinga wothuswa lilizwi lomthetho libuza: "Hi? uthi ni?"

"Ndithi andithethi." Laphinda ilizwi lomfana okwesibini.

Lemiswa njalo ke ityala likaMhlangenqaba wangena egqwetheni. Waya kuMakhwekhwethe wegqwetha lase-Ngqamakhwe uyise—, wasinda noko onethamsanqa kunene. Mhla laphinda ukuthethwa ityala wagalelwa amanzi kwada kwakabini umbanjwa. Abaninzi bathi wayekhulelwe bubunzima betyala lakhe, ebona ukuba akanakusinda. Bambi bathi unesifo sokuwa. Inyaniso yona yeyokuba uMhlangenqaba wayesothuswa ngumbono kanina. Ebesel' ecacelwe mhlophe ngoku uMhlangenqaba ukuba angavela unina kukho into eza kuhla, ibe yembi xa amfulatheleyo.

Akazange abe natyala ngokuba ihashe. Akufumanekanga bungqina bubambekayo. Nelokubaleka ebubanjweni alibanga tyala lingakanani ngenxa yobuciko begqwetha, nobuchule balo ekujikeni into ebibubungqina isuke ibe yintlekisa, ukubaleka kwakhe lathi asilotyala lombanjwa lelamapolisa amsebenzi wawo ikukulinda amabanjwa. Le nto liyicikozele kangangokuba basuka bathi manga bonke ukuba kungaba kutheni na angabi loo mapolisa ebesentolongweni ngelo xa kuthethwayo.

"Umbanjwa akanatyala. Wenzakalise bani ukubonisa imigudu yakhe yokwaphula umthetho aqhawule ezintanjeni? Mhlekazi, khawucinge kuwe ngokwakho. Wena unikwe icham elinje ubuya kuthini? Iinkomo ziyazi ukuba ziyavalelwa. Xa isusiwe imivalo zingagxekwa na ngokuphuma? Ndiyaphinda, mhlekazi nenkundla, ndithi yicingeni le ndawo kakuhle kungekho khwele nakuthenga buso. Ngubani ongazimela elubala, ethafeni, bekho abantu abamlindileyo? Umbanjwa akanatyala." Ngeentetho ezinje nezinye labenza bakrukrutheka ababukeli igqwetha, eli xa yena umtshutshisi namapolisa bejwaqeka kukwenziwa ilifa lentsini olo hlobo.



Wathiwa mfaxa nje ke uMhlangenqaba ukugwetywa, wabuyelakwa sentangeni.

Ngoko kuhlwa akazange abe nabuthongo. Wathwabaza ubusuku obu ecinga ngonina, emangalisiwe eyona nto wayezama ukuyithetha kuye. Ngokokuqala ebomini bakhe wenza isithembiso sokuba mhla waza waphuma entolongweni uya kwenza izinto ebezinokumkholisa unina xa ebesekho. Kuloo ntolongo yaseGcuwa kwakamsinyane akubangakho banjwa laziwa ngesimilo njengonyana kaMakhosi. Ekuhambeni kwexesha nokufika kukanina akuzisanga xhala koko bekusithi kwakuba mzuzu engasafiki azive emkhumbula.

Kungeveki zingaphi esentolongweni okwesibini uMhlangenqaba, kugaleleke kwelaseKoloni napheshcya kweNciba, isihandiba somnumzana welaPhesheya owayeyinto ngobunto embusweni wamaNgesi. Ngangokubaluleka kwalo mfo kwabonakala ukuba utyelelo lwakhe malulungiselelwe kanobom, kubekho izinto ezenziwayo eluya kukhunjulwa ngazo kwiminyaka elandelayo. Kwisebe lemicimbi yabaNtsundu kwakhululwa amabanjwa amaninzi awayenezigwebo ezilula, athi awayeneziqatha anyenyiselwa.

UMhlangenqaba ngomnye wabo bafumana ukukhululwa. Wathi yena kuba kwesakhe isigwebo kwakusele iinyangana zintathu yathi loo nto ndawonye nokuziphatha kwakhe okuhle yamenzela ithamsanqa lokuba akhululwe mpela. Waba njani ukuvuya ! Kwasuka kwanga kuza kuthiwa kwenziwe imposiso kuba ekuvukeni kwakhe loo mini wayethene nqwakanqwa nomfanekiso kanina umile dzu umjongile ngobubele obunenceba, wanga uyambuza uthi : ' Uzimisele ukwenzani na ngobomi bakho ? ' Suke wathi egqiba ukufumana isidlo sakusasa—loo singa-sidlo kambe—wabe evakaliselwa ezi ndaba.

Kwaba kukugoduka kwakhe ke oko. Kwakuse kuphele umnyaka onesiqhumakazi wagqityelwayo kowabo. Wanduluka yedwa ukuphuma edolophini, wafika ezibukweni e-

Cegcuwana wakhulula wahlamba esusa uthuli lwentolongo. Ubuye wanduluka waya wafika ezibukweni eCeru xa lisukela imini emaqanda. Ugqibe ekubeni makakhe angqengqe asuse le iphezulu, akhe eve ukulala ngaphandle kwexhala.

Engqengqile njalo kweso sigcaki simnandi wayiyeka ingqondo yazihambela kwanothanda. Yakha yabuya umva yatsiba imimango nentili yaseThityaba. Yathi xha kwinzwakazi kaNtoyaphi, uNozimanga. Ayivumanga kude inamathele kuloo ntokazi yakhetha yona ukuthengisa ngesithandwa sayo ngenxa yodumo. Wayengatsho ukuthi wona uNozimanga ngokwenjenjalo. Kodwa into yonke imacala mabini. Yenza omnye umtsi ingqondo ukuya hlathini lithile, yema apho ntwanazaneni ithandekayo ithetha ngezwana elimnandana elinobubele isithi, " NdinguNobantu."

ISAHLUKO XII

TYHINI NGUMALUME !

Kukho inkolo ethi: " Ungathetha, okanye, ungacinga ngoTsautsau, sel' esuka evela uTsautsau."

Walala uMhlangenqaba iingcinga zakhe zizaliswe nguNobantu. Akazange abe saqonda nokuba usephupheni na nokuba bekutheni akuphaphama kukho intwanazana—kuye ke kambe yayiziintwanazana—ezimbini, zimi ecaleni lakhe. Weva, ngathi livela kude, ilizwi elithi : " Tyhini ngumalume ! Waqokela wabuza uNobantu kuba yayinguye omnye wala mantombazana :

" Uvelaphi malume namhlanje ? Uze nayo ke into yam entle ? "

" Hayi, mtshana, andizanga nayo. Bendingazi ukuba ndohlangana nawe apha." Wambandaza watsho umfana ekho-

hlwe nokuba makothuke nokuba avuye kukubonana nalo mntwana ungazange ade aphume kwiinkumbulo zakhe, embona namhla sel' engaka. Waqokela wabuza : " Niyaphi kakade ? "

" Sithunywe ngumakhulu phaya eMpenduza. Kaloku ndifike phaya kulomama izolo. Ubuyephi kakade ubungekho nje ? "

" Hayi mtshana," wafane wabopha amabande wenje njalo uNqaba ebona cace ukuba iqhinga lakhe namhla likrotywe yikati, lingxamele ukudandalaza, " Loo nto sobe siyiphicothe mva wakubuya, khanihambe ngoku."

Babulise bahamba oNobantu, wasala exhabasha ebekeka ngombindi wendlela egodukayo. Wafika kowabo ngolwamagqaza. Bothuka bonke ekhaya kodwa bavuya ukumbona efika ephilile. Walala lo mini sel' egugule, kwasa ngengomso engathi umntu ebelele evenkileni, kuyiwe kufunwa iyeza. Kaloku phakathi kwabaNtsundu umntu angaya entolongweni mhla waphuma kufuneka ekhutshisiwe kuphume izothe lentolongo. Yaphela lo mini ingavakalanga kuye ngenxa yokuphathwa gadalala liyeza.

Ngosuku olulandelayo inge yimbizo kwaMakhosi—amadoda odwa. Kanti indoda leyo ifuna ukukhe iyalelwe umntwana lowo wayo. Kungentsuku zatywala waba sel' ehamba-hamba phakathi kwelali neentanga zakhe uMhlangenqaba into kaMakhosi ngokungathi intolongo akazange ayingene. Phofu ke yindlu yamadoda leyo, kuba amadoda la ngamadoda ngokuva ubunzima nobuhlungu, nobulolo buwapheke avuthwe. Entolongweni ke kukowazo ezi zinto —' kwabhung' alaziwa endlwini yamadoda, kwandab' azincokolwa zingancokolwa ngesingqala.'

Wayekho nomhlobo wakhe omkhulu abebese benethuba bahlukanayo, uSitwayi : ' USixholovane

' USixholovane samatye ngumqhokro wempuku !
Mntwa' kaMaxamba akuvani nokhuni.

Lekuza ngephini ndive ndinofuba,
Kub' aphelel' amaqegw' am, sisitwayi nonyaka.
USximba sixolothi la mathumb' onke ngawakho na ? '

Labuya lakhandwa lalitsha kuMhlangenqaba, wonwaba, yathi iphela icawe yesibini ekho kwabe kuyole kwayola, elityelwe uNozimanga, nobubhantinti, nemini zaseTyityaba sezifana nomfa-nkungu oluzizi kwiintaba zasemalandalahla. NgeCawa yesibini baya ecaweni nogxa wakhe. Kulo cawe ke bekusithi yakuphuma eyokuqala inkonzo kusalwe lulutsha oluyikwayala kuvunywa, bade baphume baphele abantu abakhulu. Kuba yiloo nto nasekuphumeni kweyamva.

Akaqalanga wambona ukuba ukho uNobantu apha. Kuthe ekuphumeni kwecawe ukuba kugodukwe, kweso siyalu-yalu sokubulisana weva ilizwi lisithi : " Tyhini nank' umalume ! " walazi kwa oko.

" Molo Nobantu ! " " Molo malume ! kanti uhlalaphi na ? " Wathi ebulisa wabe ehloma lo mbuzo uNobantu.

" Khawume ndikhe ndibulise abantu ndigqibe kuqala. Ndiza kukuchazela." Yekoko ke ukwenjenjeya uNqaba noSitwayi, behamba noNobantu ukusinga kwaMbayimbayi kulonina kaNobantu. Kwanyanzeleka namhlanje ukuba uthikoloshe aphume ezingcongolweni kuba le nto yayiza kude idale ukungaqondani mhlawumbi.

Wayivela ngobunono ke umf' omkhulu indaba leyo yokuxokisa kwakhe lo ntwanazana esithi ungunina-lume, wayichaza yonke indawo eyayibange oko waya wayiphumela.

" Nditsho le nto soloko ndangxoliswa xa ndithetha ngawe ekhaya, kusithiwa ndiyabhuda ! " Wahleka uNobantu. " Kodwa ke ndiv' intw' embi ungenguye malume nje."

" Ngani ? " " Kuba ngoku liphelile ithemba lam lentw' entle." Yaphendula intombazana. Bahamba njalo kunye kwada kwayiwa kufikwa kwaMbayimbayi sekukho nabanye abafana bomninawe kaMbayimbayi. Babulisa nje kumninikhaya nomnikazi-mzi abafana bajika bagoduka.

Emva kwaloo mini baba soloko bebonana—uNobantu noninalume wamzuzu wada uNobantu wamqhela kakhulu, wayilibala nalaa nto wayekhe waphants' ukumoyika akuva ukuba wayesentolongweni amaxesha ada aba mabini. Zithe ziphela iiveki ezine awayeza kuzihlala apho kulonina kwabe sekuphantse ukungangeni moya phakathi kwabo.

Ngeli xesha bekuhlakulwa, kusalinywa nokulinywa phofu. Ibiyinto yemihla nezolo ukuthi ngexesha zikhululweyo iinkabi nabahlakuli bephantsi kwemithi ngemini enkulu, bendululwa ezindimeni yingqatsini yesizothe-zothe selanga, ubone uNqaba noSitwayi benqumla emasimini ukuya kubutha kwezakwaMbayimbayi iinkabi. Ihle ibe ngabo nabafana ababini bakwaMbayimbayi apho, noNobantu noThandeka,—amagqibelo akulonina kaNobantu, kuhlekwa, kuqhulwana, kugejiswana, selingathi elo langa lisisilongo-longo lentili aliviwa. Yothi ke intombazana ezise ukutya kweenkabi zakwaMakhosi ixelelwe ngamakhwenkwe apho bangakhona abafana, ikekelele kwelo cala, kutyelwe apho.

Zaqengqeleka iintsuku kwagqitywa tu ukulinywa noNobantu wabuyela kowabo emaZizini. Kwakuse kumnandi eThongwane enga akangebuyi, kodwa ke wavuya ukugoduka kuba nalapho wayebakhumbula. Wafika iindaba eziphethe nangeendlebe ngangebuninzi—kanti le yokuba ubehlala ebutha neqili lomfo osel' ephuma entolongweni yaba yeyakwamkhozi.

ISAHLUKO XIII

INGABA LISHWA LOMHLUZI WAMANQINA

Emva kokuba kugqityiwe ukulinywa, nokuhlakulwa sekucuthiwe uMhlangenqaba unakane ukuba aye emsebenzini. Okunene bandulukile kusasa ngemini elandela leyo wayeyi-

thethe ngayo loo nto kuyise, besinga evenkileni kwaSamfumfu, beqhuba izubulekazi elincokazi ukuya kumisa ngalo bafumane imali yokuba akhwele.

Kudlule iintsukwana ezingephi ifunyenwe imali leyo kwasa ngenye imini luthe shwaka ufafa lwakwaMjoli, kanti lusingise eKapa. Uye wakhwela esitishini eQumra. Kaloku wonke loo gama ukusuka eThongwane ukuya eQumra bebewuqhelile ukuwuhamba ngeenyawo abahambi-msebenzini ilichele loo nto kubo. Kodwa ke phezu koko bebengazi nto ngobume nobomi bomhlaba lowo welo. Bebesazana kuphela nendlela leyo, umntu engakuphuphi nokukuphupha ukufuman' aphambuke endleleni nangokucela amanzi, ngokoyika iziwephu zamafama kwelo. Bezingadendi ukungena enyameni kulowo ufumaneke edakasa kuloo mihlaba.

Ugaleleke eKapa ekupheleni kweveki. Ukhe wazula-zula emaBhulwini eVostile wada wawufumana emva kwexesha umsebenzi apho kwakusenziwa ibhotolo kuthengiswa nobisi. Wafika wafakwa kuloo msebenzi nezinye iintwana ezintathu. Bebelala gumbini linye bobane nezi ntwana ziziphethe burumshara. Loo nto yambanga ixhala, kuba ebezimisele ukuba asebenze ngengqondo angafekethi. Naso nesizathu esasimenze ayishiye ngemva intang' akhe uSitwayi.

Asingebi sabalisa ukuba mhla wagaleleka kulo mzikazi wobisi wathana gaga nalo mbono wenzwakazi engunina. Kwatsho kwabanda ezibilinini waqonda ukuba akayi kuma kakuhle ukuba akalumkanga. "Hayi noko, ingaba lilishwa lomhluzi wamanqina kukhe kwenzeka into engatshongo khona." Wazithethela watsho, engazi ukuba kuza kuthi kwakamsinyane kufuneke eme njengendoda.

Apha kwakuvukwa xa kumpondo zankomo, kulungiswe ubisi oluza kujikeleziswa kwimizana ngemizana ngenqwelo yamahashe. Aba bafana ke babebolekisana ngale nto ingulowo enosuku lwakhe lokuthutha ubisi. Ngaphandle kwale nto ke bekukho neminye imisetyenzana enje ngokujija ibho-

tolo, ukuhlamba amathunga njalo-njalo. Babenesibane sokupheka iti nokuzigcadela iintwana-ntwana ezimnandana aba bafana, besamkeliswa ipalafini yaso elowo eyakhe ngeveki yakhe, ukuze phambi kokuba ahambe ukuphuma kwekhwezi esisa ubisi kwiminyango ngeminyango aqale aphunge ukuqabula ubuthongo, nokuthintela ingozi yomoya wasekuseni.

Ukufika kwakhe ezi nkewu zisebenza apha ziqale zaziqhelanisa noNqaba. Zimthathe zaya naye kumdlalo othile wangokuhlwa, apho wathi ephuma wabe efungile ukuba akasayi kuze abuye alubeke olwakhe unyawo khona. Phofu ke wayefumane waziduba ngezifungo kuba zithe zakuphawula ukuba akazi nto konke ngesiBhulu azamhoya kakhulu. Khona uthe akuthi qho ngokwala xa ziboleka imali naxa zisithi makuyiwe kuselwa ngaphandle ngokuhlwa zamkhangela kakubi.

Emva koko uMhlangenqaba wamana efika eyakhe ipalafini isetyenzisiwe, oyike nokubuza hleze loo nto idale udushe. Kuye kwaya kwamana kuduka iintwana-ntwana abezishiye etyesini yakhe. Maxa wambi ubede arawuzelelwe sisandla ange angasisa kwenye yezi ntwana, abuye akhumbule ukuba yindlela elula yokuya entolongweni leyo.

Ngenye imini wazidina waya kucela enkosini yakhe ukuba anikwe igumbi elilelakhe yedwa. Akubuzwa isizathu uthe izinto zakhe ziyaphela. Kwakuthiwa ukrokrela abamelwane bakhe na wasuka wayinkuku isikwe umlomo, kuba ebengaqinisekanga. Suka saduka isicelo sakhe. Ngeli xesha ke kwakuse kukho umningi-mingi olumana luvakala, lokuba abahlobo abo bakhe yimiralakatyu yamatutu, naxa bengazange bakhe babanjwe. Babe baninzi ngaphandle ababetyebe beyimithetseba yibhotolo abayifumana simahla, phofu ingaziwa apho ivele ngakhona.

Wacinga wacinga uMhlangenqaba wagqiba kwelokuba afune umsebenzi ndaweni yimbi. Wabona ukuba wothi kanti inyama yakhe imbi, asuke ngenye imini adyobheke azungulwe kukuhlala entolongweni. Ulele ecamanga ngo-

kuba wovuka acele imvume yokuphuma, wavuka kusasa ukuba anxibe aye kuthetha nenkosi yakhe. Suke athi esathi balulu ange ubone inzwakazi enkulu yakwaNgqosini—unina —isithi phazi emehlweni. Wazi kwa oko ukuba kukho into eza kuhla, wazilungiselela. Akabanga sathetha nto ngokuphuma kwakhe.

Abasithandayo, nakuba besandulele ukuya kwelemimoya, bahlala bekho phakathi kwethu. Kokukhona banamandla okusikhokelela ekwenzeni okulungileyo, xa babephile ubomi obusulungekileyo enyameni, kuba umoya awunakuthintelwa kumoya.

Ngobusuku baloo mini, asahlala ahlale ayibalise nangoku uNqaba, kwathi kwesikabhadakazi, ezinzulwini kwankqonkqozwa emnyango, babelele za bobane. Kwanga kunkqonkqozwa ephupheni. Kwabuya kwankqonkqozwa ngamandla ngoku, kwacaca ukuba lawo ankqonkqozayo ngawaKomkhulu. Waphakama esiya kuvula uMhlangenqaba enkwantya, wathiwa lwale ngempama ngomnye wabalingane bakhe esithi : " Lala ! lo mnyundi ! " Wabuyela emandlalweni etshotshobala ngumsindo, phofu wathula, kuba wayeqonda ukuba yenye imini namhlanje le ; zimbi.

Akuncedanga nto ukulala kwakhe. Lwaqhaqhwa ucango zangena iinja zomthetho—into zone. " Amapasi ! " watsho ophambili.

" Asirafi ! asingawo maXhosa thina ! " Yavakala isitsho eyokuqala inkewu. " Singabebala thina." Yatsho enye. Wayeduduzela wonke ngoku uNqaba, sel' engathi likhasi lingcangcazeliswa ngumoya. Wayefuna into engafunekiyo etyesini yakhe, kuba xa sewungenwe lidyudyu namehlo asuke ange akaboni. Wada wazibona iincwadi zakhe zerafu, nepasi wazigqithisa kulowo usemandleni.

Kwakuxa umfo lowo aguqukela kwezo nkewu zintathu athi:

" Khanibize la manani ngesiBhulu ukuze ndiqonde kakuhle ukuba ningabebala—888." Yaba yinkinge. Lwathi

ulwimi kuba aluzalelwanga lwaqeqeshelwa kule nto, suke awashwabanisa. Bazama into engazamekiyo besithi, ' aranta aranta, aranta,' babe nobugagu sebuphele pam, besengwa ze. Babotshwa ke, zavunjululwa neempahla zabo, kwafunyanwa into eninzi ebiweyo. Kwathi xa baphumayo emnyango wathi uSmithi omnye wabo : " Wena mXhosa uyasinyunda ! Bhasopha ! " Kwemkiwa nabo, wasala uMhlangenqaba esithi " Inene okwam kokomhluzi wamanqina. Bendisongela nje kuxa ndibenze ni ? "

Emva koku waxatyiswa kakhulu kulo mzi wobisi. Usizi ke, oko kuxatyiswa kwakhe akumncedanga nento kuba akumonwabisanga ukuhlala apho emva kwezisongo zeenkewu ezo abehlala nazo. Uthe esacinga ngokukhwela aye kwenye indawo wafikelwa yincwadi evela kugxa wakhe uSitwayi. Ngangemivuyo awaba nayo akuqinisekisa ukuba ivela kuye akayifundanga kwangoko. Uyiyekele ukude abe uphumile emsebenzini okwaloo mini, wayifunda ke.

Wayifunda emana encuma, aphathe kuhleka aphathe kukhuza, wada wafika kwindawo eyamenza wabambelela esilevini, wahlala ethe cwaka umzuzu, ethe nzo phambili engaqhwanyazi nokuqhwanyaza. Ukusuka apho wathi, " Bafondini ! ! " wabuya wathi cwaka. USitwayi wayembalisela iindaba zasekhaya, imitshato, iinkomo, njalo-njalo.

" ....Kunjalo nje," yaqhuba yatsho incwadi, " ndibone ukuba mandifilishe ngoku. Intombi endiyibonileyo yintombi kaGobinamba. Uyayikhumbula laa ntwanazana yayiphaya kwaMbayimbayi. Yileyo ke. Bendingasalali nguye laa mntwana mfondini, ingathi ndiza kusuke ndive kusithiwa umke nomfana othile. Ke kufuneka uhle kamsinyane kuba ndifuna ndiye kwenda phambi kokuba ndikhwele ukuya kwandisa ikhazi. Uyazi ke ntang' am ukuba andinakwenda namfana wumbi ingenguwe..... "

Ezinye izinto ezazithethwa encwadini akazange abe sazithathela ngqalelo uNqaba. Ukuthi kanti ehleli nje esithi

ngaphakathi, naxa engazange axelele mntu, uze kusebenzela intombi kaGobinamba uza kuthi esithi sululu nje ibe seyithathwa ngomnye umfana—nokwenza ibe ngoyena mhlobo wakhe. Makasel' egoduka ke kube kanye xa kanti uze kusebenzela ilize. "Ndandingumntu owayeshwatyulelwe yini na mna bafondini ?" Wazibuza watsho, ebuhlungu kanye emphefumlweni.

Ngosuku olulandelayo weva ukuba kukho abafana abakhwelayo basemaZizini. Wakhumbula isithembiso awayesenzile kudala, wazimisela okokuba sona okukokwaso asigcine, nokuba kwenzeka ntoni na. Wathenga amacici amahle kunene nezisiba sokusula ubuso sesilika entle kunene wabanika ukuba baphathele uNobantu Sisusa, intombi kaGobinamba. Wabhala nencwadana eya kumtshana lowo wakhe wamzuzu, emxelela ukuba sel' eza kubuya, kuba ukhumbula ikhaya naye, waphetha ngombuliso omkhulu.

Yafika icawe elandelayo sel' esezindlebeni zikaNobantu, isiziba eso sijijelwe esihlahleni. Wabuzwa ebuziwe ke nangamanye amantombazana apho zivela khona waxela ukuba uzifumene kubafana abafikayo. NgoMvulo olandela loo cawe kwayiwa kutyiwa uswazi evenkileni njengesiqhelo xa kufikwa kuvelwa emsebenzini. Zathengwa zaninzi ke iiswitisi ezo kuba abafana abo bafikayo babeliqela.

Ukusuka apha uNobantu udlulele kulonina. Walala khona kuba wayethunywe evenkileni kwaSamfumfu, eza kuvukela khona ngosuku olulandelayo.

ISAHLUKO XIV

NGUWO ! NGUWO ! ! NGUWO ! ! !

UNobantu wavuka kusathi nwii ukusa weva endleleni kuba yayimgama kakhulu ivenkile yasemaCangceni kwaSamfumfu. Ngelishwa ufike kanye xa kuvalelwa isidlo sasemini, waba ke

uya nyanzeleka ukuba aye kuhlala emthunzini emithumaneni eyayikhule yamide emva kwevenkile apho.

Esangqengqile nabanye uve ngelizwi lisithi, " Ubekwa yini apha umntu wasemaZizini ? " Ngokuthi guqugu uthene mandla noMhlangenqaba. Hayi ke abazange balive elo xesha lokuvala elidla ngokuba lide kunene kubantu abalindileyo. Kwabuzwana impilo macala, uNobantu wabulela isipho awayesithunyelelwe. Wabalisa nangezilimo nezivuno, imitshato, ingoma njalo-njalo. Kwakuba kuvuliwe uthenge wagqiba obeze kuthenga nowaseKapa wafumana iintwana-ntwana amakazifumane. Kaloku umntu ovela emLungwini ulindeleke ukuba eze neswekile nenyhobhanyhobha.

Lwaba luhambo olumnandi olo kubo bobabini, ukugoduka noxa kwakuba kubi kuMhlangenqaba akucinga ukuba ngenxa yokuzekelela kwakhe ukwenza uphulukene impela noNobantu. Makathini bethu makabuze kuye ngale nto nokuba athule. Yaye imdla ngokumdla le nto ngangokude iindaba zingxamele ukuphela tu.

Wayibona le nto uNobantu wathi nqa, koko wacinga ukuba kukudinwa nokusindwa yimpahla. Bafike ekwahlukaneni kwendlela kwabonakala ukuba elowo makathabathe eyakhe.

" Kule veki izayo ndokhe ndifike apho emaZizini. Uze uncede undihlinzeke ngentwana yamarewu." Utshilo uNqaba xa ajikayo esenza incoko nje.

" Wo, uya kuba yini kodwa zizinja zasemaZizini eziluma kangaka ? " Ubuzile omnye. " Ukho nje wethu wobe ungandinqandeli yini."

Wahleka uNobantu bahlukana, wahamba umfana ecothoza kancinane. Okukhona waya eyicinga le ndlela ayithanda ngayo le ntombazana, kwaba kokukhona aye eqonda ukuba akanakuyifumana. Kuqala, ifilishwe ngumhlobo wakhe omkhulu. Angathini ke ukukhupha iinkomo zikaSitwayi,

khona ebengade athi kanti unakho ukumshiyisela uSitwayi—into leyo angeqiniseki ngayo—ebafaneni bonke ?

Nangaphaya koko angaze abekho uNongqawuse wokuba uGobinamba avume ukwendisela intombi yakhe—amazibulo nasezintombini eseleni eleba ihashe lakhe ; kwinto ekukade ihlala entolongweni, ayenze umkhwenyana ? Nakanye ! Hayi makancame. Athini ukuncama ? Suke esazibuza njalo, xa kanye lithi gqwi ukutshona ilanga, wafika ekhaya.

Yaba luvuyo olukhulu ukufika kwakhe. Yawa inkabi yegusha engasakhuliyo kwangoko kuhlwa. Kwathi ntshwe elusatsheni lubona inyama, neeswitisi njalo-njalo. Kwayola kwayola. Kumane kuqhawulwa iindatyana kwezasemLungwini nezasemaXhoseni lo gama kuphekwe izibindi. Zide zophulwa zatyiwa, kwathi kugqitywa zabe zingena izitya zomphothulo kuvutywa kutyiwa. Abakhuluwe bakaMhlangenqaba bebese benabafazi benezindlu zabo ke ngoko. Odade wabo ababini bebese benda, kusele ababini. Aba bebemalekela uMhlangenqaba. Kuthe kwakuba lixesha lokuba kuyiwe kulalwa waya kwizindlu zabakhuluwe bakhe umf' omkhulu okwemizuzu embalwa wabuyela entangeni yabo nodade wabo.

Bancokola apho badlelana ubusuku kuthethwa ngezinto ngezinto zabantu abatsha, kubaliswa ngeentokazi ezithile ezenze okuthile, nabafana abakhweleyo. " Kutheni ningade nithethe nje ngale yokufilisha kwentang' am uStwayi ? " Wabuza emva kwexesha. Aqhuzuka ukuhleka amantombazana.

" O, loo nto ! Suka wethu bhut' Nqaba. Asinto yakuncokolwa leyo. Kunjalo nje nina bafana niyazihleba ngamanye amaxa." Waphendula uNozinto. " Umhlobo wakho waphoseka wethu icala linye. Khawufumane ucinge umntu ukuthumela abantu ukuba baye kumcelela kanti akakhange athethe nentombi."

" Nenzani na ? Kwathini ke ? " Watshothoza uMhlangenqaba engathi uyaphupha.

"Bafika kaloku abantu abo bacela intombi leyo," wahambisa uNozinto. "Kodwa kwakubuzwa entombini yamkhanyela yanga ayizange imbone nasemdudweni. Nabakowayo ke ababanga sadenda, baxela phandle ukuba xa intombi ingafuni kuva nto ngaye nabo kunjalo, kuba kakade bebengekamboni nabuntombi."

"Yeyaphi yona loo ntombi ?" wazibuzisa umfana.

"Akuyazi na ? Nantsi intombazana yayilapha xa kuhlakulwayo. UNobantu akusamazi ngoku ?"

"Hayi ndiyamazi. Iindaba ezi ke zona phofu bendingazazi." Wathetha watsho ureme ezama ukuzifihla indlela avuya ngayo.

"Kutheni na bhuti ngathi akukhathali nje intang' akho yaliwe ?" wabuza uNonceba. "Ndiyakhathala. Hayi masilale ngoku kusebusuku."

Kwalalwa, sekunga akusi emfaneni. Wayechwayite ngokungathethekiyo. Wanga angabubetha ubusuku abone sebudlule. Kude ke kwasa kambe. Akubanga mizuzu mingaphi kugqityiwe ukufunyanwa into etyiwayo kusasa, walusaraza udaka ukusinga emaZizini.

Akahambanga thuba lingakanani, zahlangana into ebezikade zizondada. UNobantu wayelele kwakulonina, wavuka waphathelela egoduka. Bahle badibana noninalume wakudala, kwatyiwa amathole eendaba indlela le kwada kwabonakala ukuba makajike umfana. "Nobantu," utshilo eyibamba ngesandla intombazana, "kudala ndanqwenela ukudibana nawe ndiseseKapa. Soloko usisipili kum ukususela oko ndathi ndakubona. Kudala ndiyicinga le nto andiyirwalasanga. Andiboni ntombi yimbi indifaneleyo ngaphandle kwakho. Ndiyakuthanda ngentliziyo yam iphela. Ndicela ukuba uye kundiphembela ngasekhaya."

Impendulo yentombazana, nokwalandelayo emva kwayo, nexesha elachithwa kulo ndlela wozandisela ngazo ezo nto umfundi wale ncwadana. Makwanelise ukuthi ngeveki ela-

ndelayo wagaleleka umnqayana kwaSisusa ngokucela intombi enkulu kaGobinamba. Kwavunywa, kwalotyolwa kwakhawulezwa kwafuneka kuyiwe kukhethwa umsesane.

Kwandulukwa okunene ziintombi zakuloNobantu kwaya kwahlanganwa kwaMqambeli nabafana neentombi zakuloMhlangenqaba, kanye kuloo mkhiwane uphezu kwezibuko. Kwaba yincoko enkulu kuloo ndlela kwaya kwagalelekwa edolophini eGcuwa. Kwazulwa ke yada yafunyanwa loo nto ibifunwa. Kwathengwa zityali, ziqhiya zonina zilokhwe zabalanyakazi, zambuleli zomntwenyana, ziiswitisi zamantombazana. Konwatywa. Kwaphelela, kuthawuzwa ngezihlangu apho phakathi kwevenkile, phofu zaziza kubuye zikhululwe zingxalwe ezikawusini kwakuphunyelwa ngaphandle njengoko kwakwenziwe phambi kokuba kungenwe.

Besahamba njalo esitalatweni babona kusiza ngakubo inenekazi lomntu ontsundu. Lalingahombanga ligibisele. Lasuka lathi lakusondela kubo bazithelekisa nalo abo babengamantombazana baziva bengabafake amadlavu, nezihlangu zabo zafana nezabasebenza emgodini. Wathi esalifanisa uMhlangenqaba kwanga kuthi phinzi umfanekiso kanina phakathi kwabo. Kwatsho kwasa. Nozimanga ! wabe sel' efikile ebuza impilo eyimvuze-mvuze bububele.

Wayekhe athi uMhlangenqaba xa acinga ngoNozimanga ukususela okuya wemkayo eTyityaba athi nqa ukuba angathini na ehlangana naye embona elelo nenekazi wayelilo. Nguwuphi na kubo noNobantu angamkhetha ukuba amenze uNdofa Naye wakhe. Zasuka ngoku ezo mini zathi tha ngokungathi ngumtshiso, wacinga ngokuzimisela kwakhe kwangaphambili kweli nenekazi. Suke loo mayoko-yoko liwanxibileyo anga ngamayaka-yaka, ubuhle bayo bangumkhenkce.

Wathi ke ngoku encokola nje wabe intliziyo yakhe ingemva kuNobantu. Bona babese bemshiyile ngoku behambele phambili. " Uphi ngoku Mabengu ? " Yabuza intombazana.

" Ekhaya eThongwane." Waphendula umfana. " Akusacingi ngokubuyela eTyityaba ? "

"Hayi." Bahlukana kungakhange kubekho kuhlaziywa kobuhlobo obabuphazanyiswe kukubuyela kukaMhlangenqaba entolongweni.

Umtshato waba ngeyoMsintsi. Watsho etshilo umfazi ngaloo ntsasa yoLwesibini esithi : Ki ! ki ! ki ! ki ! ki ! kii-i !! Ha-la-la ! Nguwo ! nguwo ! nguwo ngumtsha-a-to ! ! Zavuma apho iintombi zakwaMiya kwaGcwanini, zashiya amanga emzini, zisitsho ngo" Ngqungqumbane ihashe lamaTshawe." Azasina iintokazi amaJama, zikaNomana, zomfaz' obelenye, zatsho kwamdak' ingxowa. Kwada kwanga akusoze kubuye kutshatwe kwelo. Baxakwa abagxibhi ukuba mabathi kukhutshwe liphi na icala. Yathi ke kodwa loo mini njengazo zonke ezinye izinto ezimnandi yaphela nayo. Kwandulukwa kwakusa ngoLwesithathu ukuyiwa kulomyeni kwabuya kwamnandi nalapho. Kwaqwela ngobusuku bangoLwesine engomeni xa zimana ukuza nayo iintokazi zabafo neento zoNantsi zisithi :

Ndakutshata ngoLwesibini,
NgoLwesine ndisemzin' am,
NgoLwesihlanu bayandishiya,
NgoMgqibelo sendiququzela.

Washiywa umntwenyana ngoLwesihlanu sekunga kwimpi yomtshato akungebi sagodukwa.

* * * *

Lakha lathi iciko lasemaNgesini, "Abanye bazalwa bezinganga bambi ubunganga babufumana ngokubusebenzela, kanti abanye banunuswa ngabo." Yinyaniso ephelelelyo leyo. Ngubani owayesazi ukuba laa njubaqa yenkwenkwe uMhlangenqaba uya kukhula abe yile nto waba yiyo ekuhambeni kwexesha ? Kumanene adumileyo esithili saseGcuwa uphambili. Nango umzi wakhe uthe qingqi kuloo nkalo kaMasala. Lingayintoni 'iSo lomzi' lesithili ngaphandle kweempembelelo zakhe.

UNobandla—igama likaNobantu lomzi wakhe,—uyabaliselwa maxa athile xa umyeni wakhe achwayitileyo ngemini zaseTyityaba nangoNozimanga. Ahleke uNobantu kuba 'yonke into esiphelo sihle, intle.' Unyana wabo wamazibulo nguGaba—isikhumbuzo sikanina kaMhlangenqaba, owathi sel' ekwelemishologu wasisibane esiqaqambileyo sokukhokelela unyana wakhe ezindleleni ezilungileyo.
