

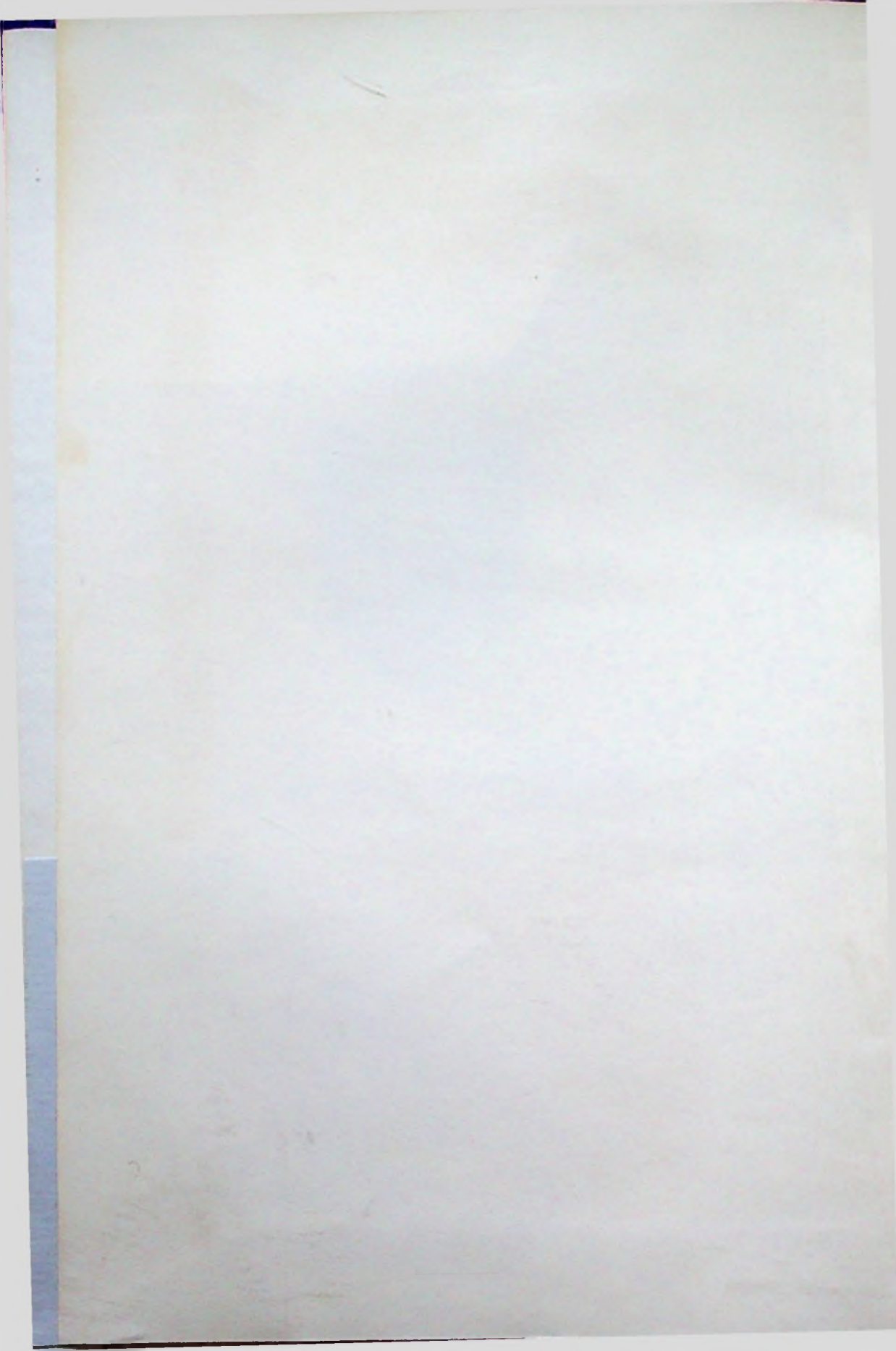
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UNOMSA INTOMBI YAKWAZULU

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REBA PAEFF MIRSKY

Yaguqulewa esiXhoseni ngu-
B. E. MAHLASELA



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1963

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INTSHAYELELO.

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Linditsale ngokuba mnandi kwalo ; kwaye selikhutshelwe nakwezinye iintetho zesiLungu kwangeso sizathu.

Le yenye yeencwadi ezifumene ibhaso eliphambili kwezibhalelwe abantwana phaya eMerika. Ndinethemba lokuba liya kuthandwa nangabethu abantwana mzi kaPhalo, kwangabantu abakhulu ngokunjalo, kuba linemfundiso enkulu ngendlela yokukhuthazwa komntwana phaya kwaZulu eLuthukela, ukuba akhule eqonda, eluncedo kumzali nokuba abenengqondo ephaphileyo kwizinto adibana nazo imihla ngemihla apha ebomini.

Kha nilifunde ngesiXhosa esi sakowethu.

Ndim,

B. E. MAHLASELA

Grahamstown,
Cape Province.
December 1962.

1870

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*“SINGABANTAKWETHU ABANGAMASHUMI
AMATHATHU ANANYE.”*

ISAHLUKO SOKU-1

INTSASA EYABANEZINTO

Kwakusekusile, kodwa ngaphakathi endlwini yenqugwala kwakumnyama. Wayesalele ethe tywa uNomsa kweso sicanjana sokhuko lwakhe lwemizi, emana ezolula, ezonwaya kuloo mzinjana wakhe uze ; wathi emana ezamla njalo waziva sel' esithi, “Yo ! andisozeli ngako ! Kanene kufuneka ndivukile ndiye kukha amanzi emlanjeni, ndiwushiye umandlalo wam omnandi kangaka ndivuke ngeli xesha uMdingi no-Gangatha bona besalele obentlombe ? Hayi kumnandi inene ukuba yinkwenkwe yomZulu, akusebenzi kangangoko into-mbazana yona isetyenziswa ! ”

Thwasu waphakama noko uNomsa walusonga olo khuko lwakhe, engenzi ngxolo, elumkele ukuba angamvusi umsakwabo oway' eselusana kwanomnakwabo oway' esemncinane naye kakhulu. Aba bobabini babelele elukhukweni olukhudlwana ecaleni kukanina uMaMakhanya.

Ekuphumeni kwakhe apho endlwini uNomsa wadlula phaya embizeni eyayinebhatata engumbeko waphezolo, wathabatha igaqa wahamba esitya lona njalo ukuya emlanjeni. Ephethe ingqayi ngesi sandla ngesinye ephethe ibhatata leyo wagaqa ngamadolo wenjenjalo ukuphuma kuloo mnyango mfutshane kangquphantsi. Into yokuba uNomsa abe uphuma endlwini emnyama enjalo yamtsho amehlo abamnyama akudibana nokukhanya kwelanga. Wathi ewurabula nzulu umoya ocwengileyo wakusasa wvakala esithi, “Hayi inene iphole kamnandi le mini.”

Okomzuzwana ukhe wema esinga-singa apha nangapha. Ikhaya eli lalizizindlu ezintandathu ukongeza kule aphuma kuyo, zonke zakhiwe oku kweziduli ezikhulu ezakhela kuzo iinyosi. Ezintlanu zazizezabanye abafazi abahlanu bakayise kaNomsa. Eyesithandathu, eyona inkulu ngaphezu kwazo zonke ezinye, yayiyindlu apho uyise, unkosi uZitu wayehlala khona, zizonke zosixhenxe ezo zindlu zenze isangqa, zijonge

intlambo ebanzi nentle, ezantsi phaya. Kwakungabonakali mntu ushukumayo konke apho ekhayeni elo lakhe njengoko wayemi apho uNomsa. Into yokuba abe ubona abanye odadewabo nabo bephuma besiya kukha amanzi yayiqhelekile ikwamnandi nento yokuba babe bahamba kunye. Kodwa ngaloo mini unina wayezakuhanjelwa nguyise endlwini phaya loo nto ke ithethe ukuba zonke izinto kwakufuneka zilungiswe kwangexesha.

Nanko ke uNomsa ewushiya umzi lowo ekhawuleza esihla ngendledlana esinga emlanjeni omanzi mahle ezantsi entlanjeni. Wathi ekhawulezile njalo waphosa amehlo elundini kwiinduli ezingama efuna ukuqonda ukuba ngaba sekuqhuma na kula mzi owawungowona ukufuphi kowabo? Kwangoko wabona nanko umsi wenze umbhoxo ukunyuka uphuma kwenye yezindlu zomzi lowo. Loo nto yathetha kanye ukuba naphaya ke sekuvukiwe nembiza seyiseziko. Ngaba laa msi uqhumayo uphuma kuloDamasi na kanye bethu wafuna wenjenjalo uNomsa engqondweni. Kwaye kwakukukhulu emakwenziwe apho kowabo loo mini kuba ngengomso wonke umlisela nomthinjana wakuloNomsa wawumenyelwe esijadwini kuloDamasi.

Okomzuzwana wafumane wema ke uNomsa ecinga, ehla-funa umthamo wokugqibela webhatata, selelibele ngoku ukuba kanene ebengumntu obephume ngobungxamo ekhaya. Ethingaza ezingqondweni njalo wathanda ukuwanamathelisa engceni amehlo apho entlanjeni eyayingqongwe ziinduli ezimfutshane, izaliswe nayimifula yamanzi amaninzi. Kwakusemva kweemvula ezinkulu, ungana luthe qhokro ngezimthubi iintyatyambo, luluhlaza yaka ngaloo magqabi angathi ziintsiba zentaka. Ubobo lona lwaba ngathi luluhlaza nangaphezulu loo mini ngenxa yokuba matsha kwamagqabi alo. Kwe-minye imithi uzungu lwaluthandele luyiminxeba edondosholo luselutsha apha kule, seluqinile kuleya. Iinduli zona ezikude phaya elundini ezazidla ngokuba zibharile, namhlanje zazi-thiwe gqume zonke ziingca neentyatyambo zasendle, kangangokuba wawungeze watsho ukuthi ummo wazo ziyimixethuka yeenkunzi zamatye ngaphantsi.

Ephethe loo ngqayi yamanzi eyithe khu ngengalo yasekhohlo, eyasekunene yona eyiyeke nje, wabonakala uNomsa ngokungathi ngumfanekiso oqingqiweyo womthi womsimbi-

thi ngaloo mzinjana wakhe womeleleyo, nezonwele zimnyama zishinyeneyo zizalise intloko yonke. Ngoku wayeyintombazana wawungamthandabuzela ekubeni yinkwenkwe. Elo-gqudu lempumlo nomlomo osoloko unoncumo, ezo nto zazingahluke kuyaphi kwezabanakwabo, kodwa loo mehlo akhe agwangqa ayenento ayithethayo emahlulayo mpela kubantwana bakayise.

Wathi makakhawuleze ngoku uNomsa ukwenzela ukonga ixesha alichithe ngokuya kuhamba esima, waya kufika kuloo mlambo unamanzi selethe futhu ekhefuzela liphika.

Inene iya kuba yinto elihlazo kuye ukuba abe uyise uya kufika phaya ekhaya engekabuyi yena emlanjeni. Wathi esitsho wabe efika eyifaka yonke loo ngqayi emanzini akaba sakhelelela nokukhelelela. Walwa nengqondo ethi makakhe aziphose naye emanzini wafumane wazixolisa ngelithi noko angafumana ithuba laloo nto emini xa aphinde weza kukha amanzi.

Lo gama uNomsa awubhekisa ngapha nangapha umphanda wakhe kwakungekho sandi simbi sivakalayo, kuthe cwaka nje ngaloo ntsasa, ngaphandle kwesandi samanzi la abethwa edungwa ngumphanda lowo. Engacinganga uNomsa wazibona ephakamisa amehlo etsalwa sisikhalo esasiphuma emthini owawuphezu komlambo apho. Waza phezulu wabona izikhwenene ezibini zithe ngcu esebeni, zitsho ngezoo ntsiba zimabala-bala zibethwa ngumoya, zithe ja neentaka ezo ngathi azinazikhundla. Wamangaliswa ukuba ngaba yintoni na leyo yayizinxubise kangaka! Zabetha amaphiko izikhwenene ezo, kwakhona zakhala zathi khona ngoku zanga ziya qinisa. Kuthe kusenjalo wabona uNomsa ngosiba olude olubomvu nalo lusihla luya kuwa, awathi wagidima walukhawulela wanga angaluganga lungekawi phantsi kuba wayengathandi ukuba lufumane ubumanzi luchitheke, lube dlakadlaka kukufuma ngumbethe. Ayibanga lula le nto kumntu oqakatha ematweni njengaye, lwaza lwaya kuwa ke emafukufukwini engca phantsi komthi engadanga alubambe.

Wathi nje ukuba athi makolule isandla aluchole weva ngesikhalo sezikhwenene loo nto yadibana nomfutho obukhali. Waxhuma wahlehla ngonva kwa oko uNomsa, waza wathi ekwenzeni oko waphants' ukweyela emanzini ngokusuke akhubeke esiphunzini somthi. Uqonde ukuba makasel' ekhwela kwesi siphunzi, wathi ethe cwa kuso, wakhanga-

khangela engeeni esoyika, kodwa efuna ukuqonda ukuba mayibe ibiyintoni na le ibimfuthela ngolwa hlobo. Kanti yimamba, enye yezona nyoka zoyikekayo! Uthe akuyithi mandla wafumanisa ukuba umzimba lo wayo ligqange apha elikhanyayo. Esayijongile njalo wayibona seyiphakamisa intloko iyithi qwa, imixhadi yentamo iyitweza, loo nto yanga ithwele ugungxo.

Ithe imjongile njalo yaphinda yenza umfutho, waqonda naye ukuba ngokwenje njalo ngoku ifuna ukumtsibela ngoko nangoko. Waba nokuwabona loo mazinyo ayo mafutshane agobele ngemva nezo ngqunya zamehlo angaphanyaziyo, abukhali nazele yinkohlakalo.

Loo nto yatsho uNomisa wabanda, wamanzi kukubila kwangakumbi khona akuyibona le nto imana ilenyeza iluphosa apha nangapha olo lwimi lwayo lumbaxa, lude, lubazileyo, wena wakha wazibona iimpondo zephela lisezela amavumba nokubetha komoya. Imamba le yayimjongele ukuba ize imchane xa imtshicela ngobuhlungu bayo, waqonda naye uhlobo eyakukwenza ngalo konke oku. Yayiza kuziphosa phambili umzimba lo wonke, buze butsaze kumabamba omabini ubuhlungu buthi ngqo kuye. Ukuba obo buhlungu bunokuthi bufumane nje inxetyana enyameni kuye uya kuba ufile. Kanti nokuba buthe nje bangena emehlweni buya kumtyhaphaza angaze abuye aphinde abone. Kwathi makaphose ngelitye elalilapho, kodwa uNomisa wabuye wazinqanda, wakhumbula ukuba kanene amaNantsi la akowabo asinto akhe ayibulale inyoka nokuba seyinobuhlungu injani na. Kaloku kwakukho inkolo yokuba iinyoka ezi zihamba zimithi imimoya engendawo enamandla okuziphindezela ngobubi kuye wonke ubani okhe wabulala inyoka. Wathi makabaleke makathini bethu, kodwa wabuya waqonda ukuba eyona nto kukuba eme bhuxe angashukumi konke, ze ayigcine ngeliso inyoka leyo ingabinzi. Yathi ngoku imamba yamana ukuhexisa intloko, inqwala kancinane yanga ibethelwa intlombe, into leyo eyatsho uNomisa wangenwa sisiyezi kukusoloko ejongene nayo. Loo nto yokujongana kwakhe nenyoka kodwa kungade kwenzeke nto, yaba ngathi yiminyaka ubude. Wayiqonda mhlophe yona into yokuba uya kuthi ekhe washukuma nje imamba iziphose yonke. Wathi emi njalo weva ngokubila kusihlisa umbombo kwathi ukuba kufike encotshe-

ni yempumlo kwatsho yababa ukurawuzela oku, kodwa noko kunjalo waqonda uNomsa ukuba akangekhe aphakamise nocikicane lo athi makazonwaye.

Izikhwenene eziya nazo zazithe cwaka ngendlela apha engaqhelekanga zangathi nazo zithi zokhe zisibone iziphumo salo mji. Tu cwaka akwabakho lizwi lasikhalo elivela kuzo ! 'Suke kwathi kunjalo yakho le nto ithi tshebelele ngesiquphe, idlula kufuphi kanye apha ecaleni enyokeni ! Into leyo eyatsho inyoka yaguquka ngokukhawuleza yajonga ngelo cala.

Kanye ngelo xesha watsho owenkawu umtsi ukuhla esiphunzini waya kuthi gxuphu emanzini emsingeni, into leyo eyatsho ngengxolokazi enkulu, namanzi ema iindonga macala, amaqam nawo atsho amgubungela !

Kwaba kukusinda kwakhe oko.

ISAHLUKO SESI-2

INDLU EGUMBI LINYE

Uthe akuba ebuyile emlanjeni uNomsa wabona umnakwabo uThemba, ezibhuqa eluthulini phambi kwendlu le yakowabo. Watsho loo mzinjana wakhe ubhudlu-bhudlwana wangathi sisonka esi samazimba eziqatywe ngeswekile, ngenxa yothuli. “Themba ndikubalisele into?” “Hayi mna ndisanxaniwe” watsho uThemba akubona umphanda wamanzi, “Khawundiphe ndisele kuqala.” Wawusondeza wonke uNomsa umphanda lowo wadondothela ukumseza oku.

Uthe omnye koko kungxama kwakhe watsho amanzi chla ngesilevu nesisu sonke, umnini-kunxanwa ekraxalaza esela engabethelwa luvalo kuloo nto yonke.

Kusenjalo uMvuleni, inja kaNomsa, waphuma endlwini ebalekile, wamana ukumjikeleza uNomsa embungezelela ebonisa imincili ukumbona ebuyile. “Ngaba unxaniwe nawe Mvuleni?” wathi esitsho uNomsa wabe emgalelela amanzi apha ezandleni ukuba axhapha.

Uthe iingqondo zisathatyathwe yile nto uNomsa weva ngelizwi livela ngemva kwakhe “Tyhini, molo wethu, Nomsa!” Kanti nguSiziwe udadewabo wenye indlu kwalapha kokwabo. Kaloku babe ziintombi zomfo omnye kodwa ngonina abahlukeneyo. “Kanene ubuthe uza kundixelela nto ni Nomsa?” Wanqumla wabuza uThemba kuba wahle waqonda ukuba ukhe wabayeka bangena kwezabo odade aba, kuya kuba lithuba ukuze ade abe unokuyiva le nto abeyithenjisiwe. “Intsusa yako konke nantsi,” utshilo uNomsa evelisa olwa siba lwentaka lumabala abomvu naluhlaza. U-Liziwe waluncoma wapheliselela akulubona olu siba lwesikhwenene wabe uThemba yena enze isimbonono efuna ukuva eyona nto kanye inokubaliswa kule nto yonke.

Wachaza ke uNomsa ukugagana kwakhe nemamba, loo nto eyibeka ngamazwi atsho nawe uthabatheke kuba wayethelela nangezimbo. Kwabo babephulaphule wanga akange-

yeki. “Hi! wethu uthetha ukuba ke Nomsa, ubuyele kwalapho ukuya kuthabatha olu siba? Bendingacingi konke mna ukuyenza loo nto. Ngathi inene usinde ngezikaSibi, akwanela ukwenje njalo wada wafumana nosiba oluhle kangaka!” waqokela watsho eluphatha-phatha clubuka njalo uSiziwe olu siba.

“Kanti ndisekwanenye into ubona nje,” waqokela watsho uNomsa wathi esitsho wabe evula ingxowana yakhe yofele lwempunzi awayeyithe xwa apha entanyeni. Le ngxowana yayikuphela kwenxili anayo abeqhusheka kuyo zonke iintwana-ntwana azixabisileyo uNomsa. Wathi ruthu imbokothwana elubhelwana, igaqana lengqakumba egudileyo engangobhontsi lo wakhe. “Yhu, ukuba lihle kwalo! Kha utsho wethu ulifumene phi lona?” wabuza uSiziwe. “Ndilichole nje endleleni ekubuyeni kwam phaya emlanjeni.” “Wabasoloko wehlelwa zizinto ezithabatha ingqondo wena Nomsa! Wathini kodwa ukuze wena ube nje?” watsho uSiziwe kubonakala ukuba ngoku udliwa ngumona. “Bekutheni le nto uvuke kwakusasa kangaka namhlanje?” “Kaloku Siziwe, uTata uza kuba phaya ekhaya namhlanje.” “Kanti ebelele phaya kowethu phezolo, engasahombe, ezithe khunkqu ngebheshu lemisila yeengada.” watsho uSiziwe kubonakala ukuba inene uya zitsho ngoyise lo. NakuNomsa apha uyise wayengawi phantsi kuba uZitu lo wayeyenye yeenkosana eziphambili, elelona phakathi likufutshane enkosini komkhulu phaya. Wayekwatyebile ngezinto kangangokuba wada waba nabafazi abathandathu into eyatsho noNomsa wanethamsanqa lokuba abe nabanakwabo nodade abangamashumi amathathu.

“Khe ndamvela uTata exelela uMama ngephula lokuya kuzingela iindlovu. Waye kule ngqina aza kuyiphuma uza kuhamba nabanakwethu aba sebedadlana,” uhambise wenje njalo uSiziwe. Wawakhupha onke uNomsa loo mehlo akhe makhulu, agwangqa, kubonakala mhlophe ukuba uthabathekile yile nto. “O! andingevuyi ngako kusithiwa mandihambe nam! Ucinga ukuba kodwa kungatshiwo Siziwe?” Wawathi gqa amehlo naye uSiziwe emangalisiwe yile nto. “He! uthini na Nomsa ntombi? Usuke undikhumbuze uMdingi, umnakwethu tyhini le!”



Unkosi uZitu

“Xa ndikuxelela inyaniso uyazi ukuba andiyikhathalele konke mna le misetyenzana yamantombazana,” uphendule watsho kalusizi uNomsa.

“Wena Nomsa!” wabiza ngezwi elibukhali uMaMakhanya esendlwini ngaphakathi. “Ewe Mama!” waphendula ngokukhawuleza omnye, selengena ngomnyango ehamba ngawo omane. Wathi engena lwabe luvalelisile uthungo lwembiza eseziko yephukutsha lombona nebhanana, ibila ngamandla. Yamthabatha ixesha into yokuba abe nento ayibonayo apha endlwini njengokuba wayevela phandle amehlo seleqhele ukukhanya. Le ndlu yayigumbi-nye, ukho lo mqadi mde usuka entla uye kuma ngomnyango, ekuxhonywe kuwo iingobozi, iinkezwa nemicephe kwanezinye izinto ezisetyenziswa emasimini. Kwakukho isigingqi esenze isangqa apha esazulwini phantsi endlwini. Yindawo leyo ekubaselwa kuyo umlilo wokupheka. Babe xhamleke kakhulu uNomsa nonina berida, besinda, bada bagqibela ngokugudula ilongo eli lonke lendlu ngeembokotho zamatye, balitsho labengezela lamtyibilizi. Loo nto uNomsa wayenzela ukuba uyise aze abone ukuba, nene, bazizikhuthali ezikwaziyo ukuphatha indlu. “Yintoni kaloku, ntombaza-

na, ukulibala kangaka namhlanje ? ” wabuza watsho uMaMakhanya. “ Kunini ndikulindele namanzi ? Sewulibele na ngoku ukuba silindele uyihlo ? Yib’ ukhwezela phaya cziko ngoku ndisatyisa uNomabali.”

Wathi esitsho wabe embeka phantsi umntwana ethabatha ingqayi phaya ngaseludongeni. Loo ngqayi yayizele ngamasi awayeselevuthiwe ayingqaka. Ayepholile engqongonya. Uluthabathile uMaMakhanya usana lwakhe walusingatha, lwabe nalo selulinganisa kubonakala ukuba luya-qonda ukuba luza kufumana ulutho, selumana luphutha-phutha ngezo zandlana zityibileyo, lukhamisa oku kwethole lentaka lilindele umfunzelo. Kancinane uMaMakhanya wamseza umntwana la masi. Wanambitha noNomabali kubonakala ukuba ukholiwe yile nto, kodwa kuthe kungephi waguquka wabonakala edimala engasafuni negqabi, akakufuna oku kutya angakuqhelanga, wala ukuginya, wakukhupha konke ngokukhawuleza akagcina nto. Yonke loo ngqaka yehla ngesilevu nantso iqukuqela ihlisa umzimba wonke. Phofu amasi la ekukutya okulungileyo nje ebantwaneni kutheni ! Wasongela kwa oko unina kaNomasa ukuba lo mntwana, uNomabali, woda abe nentwana ayiginyayo kakade oku, watsho elinga kwakhona ukugalela intwana emlonyeni. UNomabali ngoku wamumatha, umlomo wawuvala chuche.

NoNomasa wabonakala emangalisiwe kukuthi kanti olu sana alukayazi into yokuba mnandi kwamasi. Yena nabantakwabo babengafekethi ngamasi, babewathanda, nalawo babemana bewafumana ayengabanele.

“ Nomasa ! khawubambe ezi ngalwana,” wawakala eyalela esitsho unina. “ O ! mama ! noko andiyithandi le nto uthi mandiyenze ! ” watsho ukuphendula uNomasa kuba yayiba buhlungu kuye into yokuba umsakwabo ekhala. UMaMakhanya ke wayibamba ngempumlo le ntwana inguNomabali, wayivala amathatha la ukuze ingabi nakuphefumla. Yabonakala kaloku iwuvula umlomo ukuba ifumane umoya, wabe unina kwangoko uzuza ithuba lokuyikakaza ngaloo masi. Yaraxwa yawavuthela athi sa kodwa yabakho noko intwana engenayo, yanyanzeleka ukuba iyiginye. Kuloo mbuqe, ikhabalaza le ntwana, yathi noko ingekho incinane ingako, yabonakalisa amandla amakhulu azalwa kukuba isoyika, ingenayo nendlela yokuzihlangulela. Kwakanye yadubuleka

yasitsho isikhalo into leyo cyatsho noNomsa wazibona sele-yengezelisa naye elila. “Hayi, ngxatsho ude ube ugqibile ngoku!” watsho uNomsa.

Wagqiba uNomabali selethe mome, eyinto emhlophe ngamasi, nenxenye yengqaka ide yaya kuphumela ngesikhaka sikanina.

“Mvuleni! nc-nc- nc-nc-nc-!” wabizela uNomsa, yaba nayo sel’ ingenainja ibaleka ilandelwa nguThemba yena engena ekhasa wanga naye selekhulile nakuba wayengekabi mde ngokwanele ukuba angagaqa xa angena ngaloo mnyango mfutshane, kuphela wayelinganisa nje abasebethe dlundlu khon’ ukuze kuthiwe naye selekhulile.

Inja yaqonda kwangoko emayikwenze, yamphanga-phanga uNomabali imkotha umzimba lo wonke yamshiya egudile, emanzi ngamathe. Le ntwana kwabonakala ukuba innandi kuyo le nto yokulencwa umzimba ngolwimi olushushu, yaze yaba nokuthomalala yalibala nokuba ibikhe yaphatheka mbozwana.

“Kha undizele namanzi ke ngoku Nomsa,” watsho unina. Akuba eze nawo, unina wathabatha ithamo elikhulu lawo wawamumatha ithuba ewafudumeza, waza wawakhuphela kuloo mzinjana kaNomabali, wamana ephinda esenje njalo wada waba uhlambeke ngokwaneleyo umntwana, naye ebonakala ukuba uxolile yile nto. Akugqitywa walaliswa elukhukweni lukanina sefake umnwe emlonyeni elala cum.

Iselwa lalise lapha lingekayi kubekwa, waza wawakala uThemba selezicelela naye ngeliphantsi esithi, “Khawundiphe nam kaloku, Nomsa, ndilambile tyini!” “Ina, yintoni yona le! Esi sirovana!” watsho uNomsa emgalela nje ngaloo masi emlonyeni. “Yima khe ndikuhlamba nokukuhlamba!” watsho ezalisa ngamanzi umcephe wokukhelelela wawugalela entloko kuThemba, ehla loo manzi ngomzimba wonke. “Hawu! imvula! Ndanetha, ndanetha!!” watsho unkabi exhuma-xhuma, ekhwaza, ethwele izandla entloko. “Sh! Thula! S’ukufundekela!! uza kuvusa unmtwana!” Wamnqanda unina. Wamosula ngezandla uNomsa kuba wayebathanda bonke abantakwabo abancinane nakuba, babengabantwana babanye onina.

“Hayi ndiseza kufumana into etyiwayo ngoku, Themba, khawuphume, kaloku. Ndiya kuthi ndakuba ndigqibile

ndancedisa noMama apha naphaya endlwini ndiphume sidlale uHlungulu kunye.” Lo yayingomnye wemidlalo ebithandwa kakhulu nguThemba wathi ke ethatyathwe yiloo nto waphuma emi nkqo ngoku selelibele ukuba ahambe ngawo omane ukuze kucingelwe ukuba naye selekhulile.

ISAHLUKO SESI-3

UKUTYELELWA YINKOSI



UNomsa nonina belungiselela ukufika kukayise

UNomsa waqubula isiludu wagalela kuso intwana yokutya okuya kwakubhadla phaya embizeni. Wachuba iinkozwana kwakunye nebhanana waphosa emlonyeni wamunca iminwe kubonakala ukuba wanele kanye. Wathi esitya njalo abe amehlo wona engasukanga kunina oway' ebhequza elungiselela ukufikelwa kwakhe yindoda. Wayezithambisa umzimba lo wonke uMaMakhanya wawutsho wakhangeleka ucocekile ubengezela. Uthe esezingalweni wabe esemilenzeni, wawuthi thinca wonke umzimba ngogadla obelusand' ukuphehlwa. Kambe lwaluphehlwe ngephezolo kumasi cenkomo zobulunga zikaMaMakhanya inkqu.

“Uze uthi wakuba sewutye wagqiba ukhe, Nomsa undichoche iinwele ezi zime kakuhle.” “Sendigqibile, mama.” “Yiza ke, nalu usiba lwencanda nenkcaza.” Inkcaza le yayenziwe ngomthi nguMaMakhanya ngokwakhe. “Ungalibali ukuthi ukuzichaza kwakho uzibethe zime zenze uphahlothi lwesicoco phezulu. Kaloku nawe ngenye imini wakuba wendile uya kuzimisa njengokuba ndisenza kanye nam.”

Waziqala ke ekhosi uNomsa, ukuzichaza ezo nwele zikanina zinde, zishinyeneyo, wazizisa ngaphambili wathi ezi zingapha-

mbili wazibetha zabuya umva zonke zenza umbhoxo odibeneyo omi kanye phezulu apha ekuzeni kuvelela inqentsi. Wamana njalo ke eziphatha ngamafutha esenzela ukuba zoluke zibambane. Kwakhona wamana ezitsala ngengqanda le yosiba lwencanda esenzela ukuba unwele ngalunye lume kakuhle. Loo nto yonke yayifuna inzondelelo ekuzichazeni nasekuzithambiseni ukuze zihlale zimi zinjalo. Uthe ke ckuhambeni kwexesha uMaMakhanya waziphatha-phatha intloko le yonke esithi makazive ukuba ezo nwele zimi njani na. “Enkosi, ntombazana, hayi, uzenze kakuhle inene,” akaba nakuzinceda angatsho.

“Kanene uza kunxiba siphi isikhaka namhlanje, mama?” wavakala ebuza uNomsa. “Esiya sitsha senkomo,” ephendula uMaMakhanya. “Si! inene uya kufaneleka gqitha xa unxibe sona.” Kwaye wayeyazi into yokuba unina makube unyanzelwe yinto ukude anxibe esi sikhaka endaweni yesiya sidweshana sakhe semizi. Kaloku imihla nezolo, wayesoloko uNomsa wambukela unina emana esifaka emanzini eso sikhumba sasikwa sesenkomo yobulunga. Sakuba simanzi saza sathamba naye wayencedisile ekusiphaleni uboya umsebenzi lowo owawuthabathe ithuba elide ungelula okanye. Bakuba bekugqibile oko basingena ngeengqanda basikrwela kwicala elinye sada sathi ukuthamba oku sanga yindlebe yosana. Ngenxenye yesikhumba esi kwenziwa isikhaka kwathi ngentwana eseleyo kwenzelwa uNomsa inxili yomqala yodidi. Kanti ngelinye icandelo unina wenza imbeleko yomntwana amthi khunkqu ngayo xa emi esebenza emasimini. Kanti icandelo eliseleyo waligcinela imini elinokuthi lifuneke ngalo.

Wanxiba ke uMaMakhanya, wagqibela ngezacholo zentsimbi nethumbu, izinto ezo awayezigcine ngokufihlakeleyo phaya phezulu entungo zixhonywe emqadini apho. Lo gama anxibayo unina, uNomsa umi yena mgama, emangaliswe mpela bubuhle bukaMaMakhanya, intokazi eyayisukile egadeni, inoluthi, iinyama ziqinile, yomelele, ewc, intokazi ebisithi yakuhleka ubone ngamazinyo odwa ukukhanya, ulusu lona lusale lube kukhona ngathi lubamnyama ngaphezulu. Inene uyise wayengalikhuphelanga ilize ikhazi leshumi leenkomo ngaloo mfazi ungunina. Kanti wayeseleyazi nento yokuba kwakungekho nomnye kubafazi bakayise owayekhu-

tschelwe ikhazi elingako. “Hayi inene mama, ngathi uzihlala phantsi kwaphela ezinye iinzwakazi,” wavakala esitsho uNomsa ukumncoma unina. Wathi esatsho beva ngezwi phandle lomntu oyindoda ethinta isikhohlela phambi kwendlu. “Yo! nanko sefefikile” watsho uMaMakhanya kubonakala ukuba uthabathekile. Loo nto yatsho negazi eli leza ebusweni.

Kwathi siba ngethunzi kwamnyama apha endlwini kwaba sekungena ngomnyango umdondosholo womfo kade, uhamba ngawo amane. “Sakubona” watsho ebulisa uZitu enoncumo. Inkosi yakwaZulu le kwaphela into efanelwe kanye libheshu layo elihonjiswe ngemisila yeembodla, kwanaloo ntsimbi iluhlaza yomqala! “Ewe sakubona. Usaphila,” batsho uNomsa nonina bephendula. Ngenxa yokuba uNomsa wayebumoyika uyise lo wayephendula esithele ngaphaya kukanina. “Nomsa, mzele nokhuko uyihlo khawu-



UNkosi uZitu ehleli phantsi kwaMaMakhanya

leza.” Kwangoko wabe selesiza noluya kanye lwemizi lutsha unina ebesand’ ukulwenzela uyise, wafika waluthi daka phantsi. Wabe sel’ esithi vu naye uZitu. Waqala ke waphutha-phutha apha esinqeni efuna isigodlo sakhe necuba. Waza ke wasifakela isigodlo eso ngecuba, wathabatha ilahle eziko wayilumeka inqawa, kancinane waqala ukuqhumisa ngokuzola.

Ngeli xesha ke unina kaNomisa wayebhequza, intokazi ibeka oni noni eyayibalungiselele indoda ukuba ize itye. Yeza nesithebe sonke sifunjwe ngenkuku, amathanga, amadumbe, izikhwebu zombona ophekiweyo, nebhanana eyojiweyo. Waza ke uMaMakhanya walandelisa ngengqayi yotywala. Wagqibela ngokumbekela icuba abelivundise ngokwakhe.

Kuqala wanga uyise kaNomisa ungumntu noko onomnquma, kodwa uthungo loku kutya kungaka lwamoyisa wabonakala eyibeka phantsi inqawa yakhe yophondo engena esitya, waza wanga ukutya oku kwakhe uya qala ukubona into ekuthiwa kukutya. Wayexhafuza oku kwesilo, aze athi kunjalo ubone ekhotha imilebe, umve emana ukubhodla kwalapha. Ngoku atyayo, uNomisa nonina bahleli bona bathe cwaka abenzi nelimdaka kuphela nje bamana ukuthi akutshayela, babe besithabatha isithebe baye kusizalisa ngokunye ukutya ngaphezulu. Watya lo mnumzana wakwaZulu, watya woyiswa ngamathambo neengqweqwe zodwa. Akalibala uNomisa ukubona umntu esitya kangako! Wamana ukuzinika ithuba ke ngoku, uhlale uhlale umve kwakhona ebhodla, gqekre kakhulu. Atsho uNomisa nonina bakrwaqulane bebonakala ukuba nabo banele. Babemva ngeendlebe bebbona nanga-mehlo ukuba, nene, uZitu ukuthandile ukutya kwabo.

Wada wabonakala ke umnene, ephothula izandla, ezisula, ebonisa ukuba ugqibile ngoku. Waza ke wathi krwaqu ku-Nomisa, wathi krwaqu kunina, wancuma akathetha. Kodwa loo nto yodwa yabenza banela ukuba inkxamleko yabo ngaye ibe nokuvuzwa.

Wahlala ke lo mfo elukhukweni apho kubonakala ukuba kuhleli inyathi yonke! Loo milenze izintsinga zodwa wawungeyithandabuzi ukuba ibingagqiba izwe lonke ngemini ilikhenketha. UNomisa naye wayeselevile ukuba wayehamba ngolo hlobo xa ephume ingqina uyise. Ngaba bethu woda abe nento ayithethayo ngeli phulo lokuya kuzingela iindlovu? Zaphala iingqondo zikaNomisa zenje njalo akuba ebemjongile emthe ntsho uyise. Wafumane ke walinda njalo esethembeni noko. Gqabhu lo mnumzana engacebisanga wathi, "Hayi ngathi noko ndingazifumana iinkomo ezintlanu ngale ntombi, watsho esalatha usana olo lwalulele. "Yho! ufumane watsho! Ndiqinisekile zinga ngaphezulu le kunoko. Waye

yena uNomsa lo oselendinceda ngoku andisathethi ngaye, angalotyolwa nangesixhenxe sonke.”

UZitu wamjonga lo Nomsa kubonakala ukuba unga angambekela umlinganiselo waza wathi ke emthe xhamfu ngengalo “ Le ntombi ngathi yomelele. Seyingangomnakwayo omkhulu. Ndiva kusithiwa ayinanto yenziwa yinkwenkwe ingenakungayenzi. Ukuba ibiyinkwenkwe bendiya kuhamba nayo xa ndiphuma ingqina yokuya kuzingela iindlovu ukufa kwenyanga le.” “ Ukufa kwenyanga ? Ngaba ndiva kakuhle ”? Zemka zenjenjalo iingqondo zikaNomsa kubonakala ukuba uthabathekile kwaphela. Waqala kwangoko ukubala iintsuku ukuya ekufeni kwenyanga. “ Lishumi leentsuku ” watsho ezithethela. “ Loo nto ithetha ukuba wobuya eze apha ekhaya ubawo. Ndingathini bethu ukuze ndimenze agqibe kwinto yokuba ahambe nam ! Ndingenza ntoni ukumbonisa ukuba ndikhaliphe ngaphezu kwamanye amantombazana ngaphaya koko ndomelele, ndaye ngaphezulu ndingoyiki ”?

Wathi engathi usephupheni wee gwiqi waphuma phandle. “ Uyaphi ngoku Nomsa ? ” wabuza unina. “ Hayi, mama, bendisiya kudlala uHlungulu noThemba Bendithembise ndatsho kuye, ” waphendula watsho, ebudumzela, ethethela phakathi.

ISAHLUKO SESI-4

UNOMSA NABANAKWABO

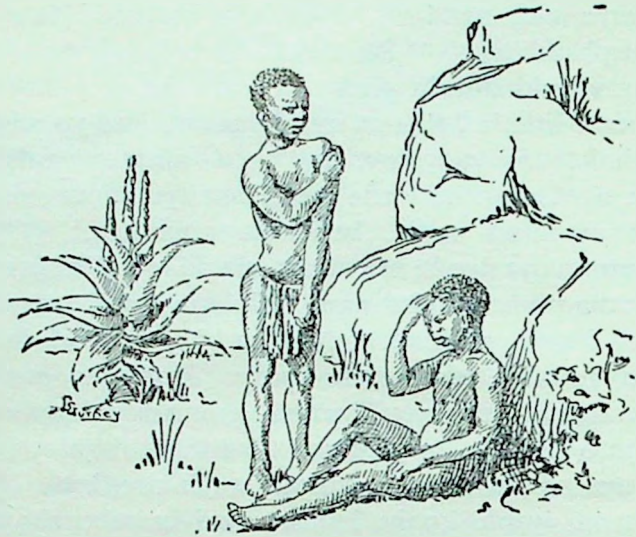
Uthe uNomsa esaphume nje ngentloko kuphela emnyango wabe uThemba selemtsibela ekhwela ngxabalala apha entanyeni kuye ekhwaza! “Benditshilo kakade lelam ithole eliphume phambili!” “Suka yihla Themba, unani kakade?” UNomsa wamkhalimela phofu ekwayihleka le nto. “Ngubani othe ndilithole? Khona uyive ngabani into yokukhwelwa kwamathole. Anivunyelwe, loo nto akuyazi kakade!” “Ndiva ngoGangatha wada wathi okanye kumnandi gqitha phaya ezimpahleni endle, bekhwela amathole.” “Ukuba kukho umntu oyaziyo lo nto ubona nje ndim! Kangangokuba ndikhe ndinqwene ukuba nam ndiphume ndibe sendle ezimpahleni kunye nabanakwethu aba!” “Ho! ho! nam ndakuba mdala, ndikuxelele, ndiya kuphuma neempahla ndiye kwalusa,” watsho uThemba, kwacaca mhlophe ukuba kutsho into ezidlayo eseyizibona ubunto ngobunto. “Ewe wethu uya vuya wena wazalwa wayinkwenkwe. Akukho nto imnandi iyephi konke kwizinto eziyimisebenzi yamantombazana.” “Masidlale uHlungulu kaloku,” wacenga watsho uThemba. “Kulungile, yiza. Hlala phantsi ke, iinyawo ezi uzijongise apha ngakum.”

Hlungulu, hlungulu, goduka,
Amas' omntwan' wakh' adliwe,
Adliwe likhwababa.
Khwababa, khwababa goduka,
Ubuy' ukuthwasa kwenyanga.

Wagitheka yintsini uThemba oko uNomsa wathi evuma wabe etsala ubuso cwisa ngezimbo nangezandla. Wathi engafikanga nasesiphelweni wabe uThemba selemcela ukuba aphindele kwasekuqaleni kwakhona. Uthe kweli xesha lesithathu wabe seleziphosa ngemilenze le phezu kukaNomsa ukuba amsingathe iinyawo ezi, emcela ngoku ukuba amculele u“Tha-yi-tha-yi-bo!”

Wathi ke emthe chu ngobhontsi wonyawo lwasekhohlo wabe ebubula ngengonyana ephantsi emnandi ethi, “Cikicane lo” waqhuba njalo ke emana ukuluthi chu ngeminwe

uzwane ngalunye. Wonke lo gama kuculwayo kwada kwaya kuphela uthe nqeke amazinyo uThemba le nto yonke kubonakala ukuba innandi kuye. Akufika kwelokugqibela uzwane uNomsa umfo omkhulu wavakala ehleka kakhulu ekhwaza, “Khawuphinde kwakhona toro Nomsa.”



uNomsa enoThemba

Kude kwafika ixesha lokuba bayeke ngoku ukudlala. U-Nomsa ngoku wafikelwa yinto yokuba aye kusila njengoko wayeza kupheka umqa owawuza kutyiwa kwaloo mini. Ukusila oku kwakudla ngokwenziwa ngunina yena mntu wayeseleqinile enamandla, kodwa ke namhlanje unina wayexakekile ngenxa yondwendwe olunguyise waza uNomsa wabona ukuba ancedise abenguye osilayo.

Kwa oko waqubula imbokotho eyayisecaleni kwelitye lokusila, wagalela iinkozo zombona phezu kwelitye kanye kule ndawo iqandulwayo waza wawugaya ngembokotho le, emana cwufefa ngamanzi njalo watsho ngomgubo phofu ongacolekanga kuya phi. Uthe akuba ewugube wawenje nje wawugalela engobozini, ze unina awufumane sewulungile xa aza kupheka umqa mhlawumbi izigezenga. Oseleyo wawuza kwenzela uyise utywala.

Waqhuba njalo uNomsa eguba loo mbona wada wadinwa, wabila wexhopho waza wazisula ubuso ngomva wesandla.

Waqala kaloku wafuna engqondweni ukuba kakade unina lo uthini na ukugaya umbona ithuba elide kangaka engadinwa. Uthe esabeka iphika weva ngomntu ethetha esithi, “Yini Nomsa!” Waphakamisa amehlo kanti nguSiziwe engena ethe ngqi entloko ingobozi yonke izele qhu yimifuno eyada yavela ngeentloko phezulu. “Ndiya bona, ntokazi, udinwe uyiloo nto kukugejisana neendlovu obuzizingela.” Watsho elandelisa emqhula.

“Uvela kuhlakula emasimini, ndiya bona ntombi,” watsho uNomsa engafuni kuyilandela le abeqhulwa ngayo. “Ewe unyanisile kwaye sekufuneka ngoku ndidlulele emlanjeni ndiye kukha amanzi, kanti kukwakho nesaa sijadu sikulo-Damasi. Andiboni ukuba andiyi kushiywa lixesha. Andikasili nechitywa eli lam. Kuxa uphi wena?” “Hayi ndibona ukuba ma sesihamba kunye ukuya emlanjeni. Mhlawumbi siya kuthi ekuhambeni apha side sifumane elona futha liya kuba lilo.”

Wabaleka ke uNomsa waya kugqibela loo mbona ubusasele ekusilweni, nanko uSiziwe yena esiya kungena kowabo ethwele loo ngobozi yayizele ziimbonyi namahlamvu ebhatata. Waba wabuya uSiziwe ebonakala ngathi wonwabile. Waphuma ngoku selephethe ingqayi eze, ikwakho nale nto ayityayo. UNomsa waqubula eyakhe ingqayi naye phaya ngaseludongeni waphuma ukuya kuhlangabezana nodade wabo owathi yena waba selemqhekezela intwana wampha kwelo ceba lentyabontyi wayelitya. Bekunye njalo nabo bebhokisa emlanjeni, omnye eyithe khu eyakhe ingqayi phantsi kwengalo yasekhohlo omnye eyithe khu eyakhe ngasekunene. “Wafika ubawo, ntombi,” watsho uNomsa, “kanye njengokuba wawutshilo salibona nelaa beshu lakhe litsha lemisila yeembodla.” “Ngaba ukhe wanento ayithethayo ngokuya kuzingela kwakhe iindlovu?” wabuza uSiziwe, “Ewe, wethu, ubekhe wathetha, wada wathi ukuba bendiyinkwenkwe ebengahambayo nam. Wowu! khe ndizibone sendiyiyo! Ndiqinisekile uya kuhamba noMdingi. Kodwa noko ndose ndifumane ndizixolisa ngokuphuma neenkomo lo gama angekhoyo kuba uGangatha uselula noko akangephumi yedwa ayekwalusa.” Yamthabatha uNomsa le ngcinga yokuba angakhe aye kwalusa, loo nto yatsho wabona ukuba angaxola nokuba akabanga saphuma naloo ngqina yokuya kuzingela iindlovu.

“Kodwa Nomsa yintoni le nto wasoloko wanqwenela ukuba ube ubuyinkwenkwe unganeli kukuba yintombazana? Akwazi ukuba amantombazana la anexabiso elidlula amakhwenkwe. Akukho ntombazana kwaZulu ingathatyathwa ibe ngumfazi emzini ingalotyolwanga ngeenkomo ezithi mho! Inene sinexabiso. Akuyiqondi loo nto?” Ingqondo ka-Nomsa ithe kanti ayisekho kule nto ithethwa nguSiziwe. Iliso lakhe lalisithi lingapha libe lingapha lifuna ukuba alingeboni matye na anokulungela ukusila ichitywa. Bathe ke bengekafiki emlanjeni bakhe bazibeka phantsi komnga iingqayi zabo baphuma apha endleleni bahamba bekhangelana ukuba abangeboni matye amibala na athambileyo nanokusilwa.

“Ndachola ngelimhlophe! Nali nelinye!” watsho u-Nomsa ebhekisa kudadewabo. “Ukuba sinokufumana abe mabini ngoku kwaba kwanele oku kweli limhlophe ifutha.” Kuthe ke bakuba bewaqokelele, zanela zonke iintlobo abazifunayo, waza wathi uSiziwe, “Masiwabeke ndawonye apha siwashaye zesibuye ngawo xa sesivela emlanjeni.”

“Tyhini, amanzi ngathi awuthile kulaa nto ebeyiyo kusasa.” waphosa izwi watsho uNomsa. Malibe ilanga eli ligongqongqo kwaphela ukude lifince amanzi angaka ngemini enye. Kodwa ke nokuba kunjalo la asaseleyo ngathi kum asanele. “Khwelela!” wathi esitsho wabe eziphosa phakathi wantywila gqume kwasala kuvele kuphela iinkwali zeenyawo zodwa ngaphezulu zikhanya. Watsho ukuhleka noSiziwe selelandela eziphosa naye. Yaba yiloo nto ke, ezintwanazana zigxampuza zibetha iqam, ziphathe nokutsalana apha phantsi kwamanzi ziphathe nokukhwaza, zonwabile iyintswahla, kangangokuba iintaka ezazikufuphi zaphapha zemka kukothuka neenkawu zamana ukulunguza zizifihlile zimangalisiwe yile nto yala mantombazana.

Bade ke emzuzwini baphuma, bazizalisa iingqayi zabo ngamanzi, baza bakha namahlamvu bagquma ngawo ngaphezulu, ukugqibela yangulowo wazenzela inkatha ngemikhanzi wabeka entloko, wayithi ngcu eyingcekelele ke ingqayi izele ngamanzi. Waphakama omnye ngomlenze wokuqala walandelisa ngomnye, waza walandela nomnye naye engcekelele kwangokunjalo akwabikho nethontsi eli eliwayo lamanzi kuloo nto.

Bathe bakufika phaya kulaa ndawo bebewashiye kuyo amatye echitywa bawathi cho, cho, ngamanye lula ngeenzwane ezi badlulisela ezandleni bemi. Ekhaya yangulowo waya kuwothulela endlwini kowabo amanzi lawo. Baza ke baphuma bahlala phandle ngasezindlwini bawakhupha amatye bawabeka aziimfumba phambi kwabo. Bathabathe amatye alukhuni ke basila ngawo la athambileyo abomvu, namnyama namhlophe, ibala ngalinye bamana belibeka phezu kwama-gqabi awahlakeneyo. Intwana ekwakuthiwa nguMpondo, umnakwaboSiziwe, ebudala buziintsukwana ezingephi apha kuThemba yayilapha phakathi kodade bayo aba, imana ukuwachola la matye ngoku bawasilayo. Wabhekisa izwi kuyo uNomsa wathi, "Thabatha wena kangangoko ufunayo, nonotshe! sipoyoywana!" watsho selemphosela emnika amanye awo.

Ayecumka lula la matye loo nto yatsho uNomsa wawasila angungubo. Bathe besasebenza njalo bethe cwaka uNomsa noSiziwe, beva ngoMpondo esithi "Wena Nomsa uThemba uthi uneentsomi ezimnandi. Uyayazi kanene leya kaHlanganyana?" "Ewe tyhini, ndiyayazi. UMdingi wandibalisela into eninzi yeentsomi ezingeso siShunqwana sakwa-Milingo. Andazi ukuba ubufuna ndikwenzele yiphi na? "Yenza nje wena nayiphi na," wambongoza watsho uMpondo

UNomsa engayiyekanga le nto ayenzayo wahambisa wenjenje.

"Kwathi ngantsomi, kudala, uHlanganyana ngenye imini wathabatha ingxowa enkulu waya nayo ehlathini. Apho phakathi kuyo wayefake izim awayelwe nalo waza waloyisa. Uthe ekuhambeni apha kwakhe wathi apho adibene khona nenyoka, nokuba ngunomeva nokuba ngunomadudwane, zonke ezi zinto zilumayo, wazithabatha waziphosa apha kule ngxowa yakhe inezim waza wabophelela nkqi wavala. Lavakala izim likhala, 'Yo! Yo! kuya yuma-yuma ndivuyeye ndiphume.'" Akakhe avule uHlanganyana. Zaza zalitya, zaliyuca lada lafa. Kwaba kukuphela kwalo oko." "Ngaba unezinye ozaziyo?" wabuza uMpondo ngobungxamo wanga uqhutywa yinto ngemva. "Ewe kodwa okwangoku mandingenzi yimbi hleze ndiphum' iimpondo."

Wayegqibile ngoku uNomsa ukuwasila amatye akhe, wenza iimfumba zomgubo ezintathu, ebomvu, emnyama nemhlophe.

“ Ngathi sigqibile. Liya kuwanela wonke umzimba eli futha silenzileyo.” “ Tyhini bona ! nabo abanakwethu sebebuya nempahla emadlelweni. Awu ! kutheni Mdingi, Gangatha?”

Amakhwenkwe akowabo namhlanje ayeruqeka ngemva ukungenisa ebuhlanti iinkomo zezindlu zakwamawawo kwanamathole azo. Obu buhlanti babuyindawo eyayibiyelwe ngamahlahla nezinti phambi kophindo olu lwezindlu. Amanzi ayesihlela apha kolu thango kuba lwalungezantsi kwezindlu ethambekeni lenduli le apho umzi wawumi khona. Kwaphaya ebuhlanti yayizizisele zombona namazimba apho kwakugcinwa kugalelwe khona ukutya kwezindlu ngezindlu kwakuba kubhuliwe.

UNomsa wayeyabaliselwe ngunina amfundise ukuba konke ukufuma phaya ebuhlanti kuthi kuhlele apha eziseleni kuze kwenze isangcozi, into leyo enqanda nengqokoqhwane ingakutyi ukutya.

Kwaba mnandi phofu kuNomsa ukubukela iimazi zendlu yakowabo nazo zikrozile ziya kungena. Kodwa waphawula kwa ngoko ukuba enye yazo, eyona yayithandwa kakhulu, uNyawuza ngegama, yayingabuyanga nezinye. Ngaba iphi ? Wabaleka uNomsa ukuya ebuhlanti, nanko eya kungena kanye kunye nabanakwabo. Wabonwa nguMdingi kwangoko wamkhalimela wathi, “ Khawubuye umva Nomsa ! Uyazi ukuba akuvumelekile ukuba amantombazana abe engena ebuhlanti kusengwa.” “ Ewe ndiyayazi loo nto. Kodwa khawutsho ngaba zibuye zonke na ezakuthi iinkomo ? Kutheni ndingamboni nje uNyawuza ? ”

Wafumane uGangatha wema enxokothisile ecaleni lika-Mdingi. Wamana ukubeba ukubajonga oku, umkhuluwa wakhe lo nodadewabo. Kwabonakala ukuba uMdingi yena konke limyile kwaye eyona nto wayesoyika engenakuzinceda.

Waqonda kwangoko uNomsa ukuba inkulu into ehlileyo.

ISAHLUKO SESI-5

INKOMO ELAHLEKILEYO

Wafumane wema uMdingi bhuxe kuqala akathetha. Kodwa emva kwethuba wavulela walivuma ityala wenjenje :

“Sibe sidlala ithuba saza ke sathi masikhe siphumle, kwee qatha ezingqondweni ngoko kanye ingonyana ethe yahlala aya phuma. Ndithi ke xa ndifikelwe yiloo nto ndisuke ndilibale yonke enye into. Kube njalo kanye nanamhlanje. Zithe zakubuya iingqondo ndakucinga ngeenkomo zabe sezingasabonakali. Ndathi mandikhawuleze kwangoko ndiye kuziphethula kodwa andibanga nakumfumana uNyawuza andazi ukuba uye kutshona phi na. Ndithe kuGangatha makasale yena aluse ezinye ezi nanko mna ndisiya kufuna. Ndibhuqe ndabhuqa ndifuna, ndihamba ndibetha nekhwelo hayi bo andifumananga mkhondo sada saba sibuyile kuthe nya.”

“Ikwa lityala lam nam eli,” wanyanzelisa watsho uGangatha naye ezisola. “Ndisuke mna ndazibona sendilele. Inene imbi le nto isihleleyo. Ndikhumbula mhla uTahle wayelahle ithole, wohlwaywa qatha akafekethiswa.”

UNomsa wabasizela kakhulu wabavela abanakwabo kule meko, ngakumbi lo unguMdingi. Noko uGangatha yena banganela nje kukumngxolisa. Ukugcinakala kweenkomo ezi lowo yayingumsebenzi kaMdingi othe mba kuye emagxeni. Ukuba le nkomo inguNyawuza ayinakuvela isohlwayo siya kuba phezu kwakhe ngokuswela kwakhe inkathalelo. Le nto yaba mbi ngaphezulu kuba uNomsa wayesel’ ayiphawula into yokuba ingqumbo kayise yayiba nkulu ngokukodwa apha kuMdingi, ngaphezu kokuba iba njalo kwabanye abantwana aba. UZitu yena wayomelele ekhaliphile eligora nomzingeli odumileyo nowaziwayo. Kodwa kwakukaninzi enganeliswa noko nguMdingi lo. Ibisaziwa into yokuba eyona nto yakhe uMdingi yena yingoma nokusoloko esenza amabali.

Uthe khona akuphawula ukumatsheka kukaMdingi uNomsa wabethwa lusizi ngaphezulu. Waqala wafuna engqondweni eyona nto inokwenziwa xa kunje. Waza wathi, “Ukuba siya kulinda kude kube ngomso loo nto ingenza

ukuba simfumane uNyawuza sel' aqwengwa ngamaramnco. Ize ibe ligxeke nesisolo ke esiya kuhlala sihleli eso kuwe Mdingi." "Yinyaniso yodwa leyo," wafumane wavuma uMdingi limyile. "Hayi andiboni nto yimbi, makuziwe nayo le nkomo. Kwaye kuza kuhamba mna kanye khona ngoku ukuya kuyifuna," watsho uNomsa elandelisa ngeliqinileyo. "Hayi, Nomsa, akuboni na kodwa ukuba kuya hlwa ngoku unokuhlelwa nayintoni na eyingozi. Ungaqwengwa nangamaramnco asendle, kutheni ngathi akuqondi nje?" "Hayi mandiyе kumfuna uNyawuza ndize naye," watsho ngoku uNomsa womelela. "Ndiya kukukhapha ke," wafumane walandelisa uMdingi. "Hayi 'sukuhamba, sala wena usenga. Kwaye uze ungaxeli. Uyazi ukuba ubawo uphaya ekhaya endlwini, ngoku ndithethayo. Ukuba ukhe weva nje ngale nto ihlileyo uya kucaphuka gqitha. 'Sukukhathala wena. Sendiwugqibile owam umsebenzi. Akukho mntu ke uya kubona ukuba andikho." "Hayi akuvumi konke ukuba ndikuyeke uhambe wedwa Nomsa," waphendula uMdingi kubonakala nje ukuba uyala mpela "UNyawuza wazi ikhwelo lam ndedwa." "Khawenze ndibone, uthini." Walibetha uMdingi ikhwelo, walinganisa uNomsa, waphinda, wabuye waphinda elinganisa wada waba nokulibetha kanye ngoku kukaMdingi naye. Kwakhona uMdingi waba noku-cacelwa yinto yokuba uNomsa unento anokuyenza kanye ngoku kwakhe, loo nyaniso yamkhathaza emphefumleni. Wagqiba ngelithi ngekwakulungile ukuba yayinguye oyinkwenkwe.

"Ungakhe ulinge uyiphathe le nto yale nkomo ilahlekileyo." Wacebisa watsho uNomsa. "Khumbula, ngomso sesaa sijadu sikuloDamasi, ukuba yaziwe le nto sinokungavunyelwa ukuba siye." Akuba ebayalile wenjenje waphuma apho ebuhlanti ebalekile, loo ngxowana yakhe isemqaleni seyihamba emoyeni. Bamjonga abanakwabo esiya kuphuma baziva ngoku benexhala ngaye ukongeza kweli babenalo ngenkomo leyo ilahlekileyo.

"Noko ngendingamvumelanga ukuba ahambe," wafumane wadumzela watsho uMdingi ebhekisa kuGangatha ngoku baya ebuhlanti ukuya kusenga.

Nanko yena uNomsa entuntutha ngendlela leyo iinkomo zaziseziyenzile ekuhambeni kwazo ziphuma zisiya emadle-

lweni imihla ngemihla. Akalibazisanga konke, iliso lakhe ngokukhawuleza laba nokuyingenisa yonke into emayibe yayilibazise abanakwabo apho endle yonke loo mini. Waza wabona umlilo owawusenovundu, kubonakala ukuba bekukho iintaka ababezibambisile zaza zojiwa apho. Kungenjalo yayingamadumbe ababewafumene entsimini leya yakowabo. Waqiniseka uNomsa ukuba bekumnandi kukwesikaMtebese apho kwezi ntwana loo mini. Wabona nangamagqabi omthi webhanana ukuba wona ebesetyenziswa emqengqelezini wodonga olunodongwe. Kwacaca ukuba onkabi bebetyibiliza ngawo apho. Mababe badlale ithuba elide kuloo mtyibilizi kuba kaloku ilula into yokufumana elinye igqabi lebhanana lakuba lixuzuke laphela elokuqala. Phantsi komthi phaya nantso imbumba eyenziwe ngamagqabi neentsasa yaza yabotshwa ngobulembu. Waba nokuyiqonda kwa oko uNomsa into yayo. Ibiqengqwa ethambekeni ze ithi ngoku ihlayo bayitole abanakwabo beyilalele ngeli cala nangeliya.

Yiyo le nto inkwenkwe yomZulu ikhula ibe ngumzingeli ochanayo ngomkhonto nangotolo. NoThemba ngoku ase-mncinane wayeselenaso naye esakhe isaphetha notolo adlalisa ngalo ange usengqina kwaphela. Kodwa yena ubesuka alusebenzise apha ezinkukwini nasezinjeni into leyo cbibacaphukisa gqitha abafazi bakayise. Kwakhona wabona iintonga zimiswe ngesikhondo somthi. Kwakukaninzi ewabona amakhwenkwe phaya ekhaya edlala ngeentonga ngokuhlwa. Inkwenkwe nganye ibiphuma ijongane nenye izame ukuyibetha enyameni ngoku enye yona ihlanganisayo izikhusela ngentonga eyibambe phakathi esiqwini, ubuchule ibe kukukhawuleza kwentonga ebethayo kwanokuzihlanganisela wena ugwibe ingakufiki enyameni. Kufuneka umntu ekwazile ukuhlanganisa kungenjalo umzimba woba yimivumbo wonke kuloo mdlalo.

Waba ngagxaleka apha nangapha edlelweni uNomsa akaze ayibone inkomo. Phofu yinto awayeyilindele leyo. Waqala ngoku wamana ukubetha ikhwelo kakhulu cyikhwaza nange-gama le mazi, Vi-i-i-ty ! Nyawuza - - - ! Nyawu- - - za ! Impendulo yaba kukusuke eve kwa izwi lakhe lihlokoma emaweni kude. Wagqiba ngoku kwelokuba angene phakathi ehlathini. Akukho ndawo yimbi enokuba iye kutshona kuyo xa ingabonakali apho. Watsho ethabatha umnqayi

onodini olubaziweyo nanko esiya kutshona kwamnyama amahlathi. Waphinda-phinda ebiza ngekhwelo likaMdingi. Wahamba ethubeleza nasemithini njalo emana czivulela indlela ngentonga le akufika apho uzungu notshwathi lubambeneyo khona. Uthe esahamba njalo weva ngamaphiko ento ephaphayo, igqitha apha phezu kwentloko, into leyo eyamothusa wafuna ukufa. "Mpxm! Akukho nanto ikhoyo! Ngahle ibilihlwane," waziqinisa watsho ngaphakathi enentloni yinto yokuba ade othuke kangaka yinto engekho.

Wathi akuba eye wangena ngokungena phakathi ehlathini waziva ephelelwa ngoku sisibindi. Wanga nge ebebumile ukuba uMdingi amkhaphe. "Ngaba kodwa uphi uNyawuza! Ngaba selatywa waphela yingonyama mhlawumbi lihlosi"! Kwathi kuphi-phi-phi wazifumana ephakathi kwelinyama ihlathi. Kodwa amehlo ngoku aye selebuqhelile ubumnyama kangangokuba waba nokuyibona kakuhle indlela yakhe. Wathi ebetha ikhwelo wabe ekhwaza, athi kunjalo ahambe ebetha izikhondo ezi zemithi esenzela ukothusa izilwanyana ezinokuba zimlalele. Kwakukho intetho awayesoloko eyiva ngabantu besithi umkhombe awuvani nengxolo konke ubaleka kwangoko ukhe wothuswa ngengxolo. Loo nto yamenza wafumane wathemba ukuba nezinye izilo ziya kothuka nazo zibaleke.

Okunye ukhe wabona mehlwana akhanyayo enkoloza phaya ematyholweni. Yinto leyo eyatsho wanamanwele kwahamba umzimba, ukubetha kovalo kwatsho nekhwelo eli alibethayo lavakala lingangcazela limana liqhawuka. Waqala nomqala ngoku woma kotho nelizwi latshona loxe.

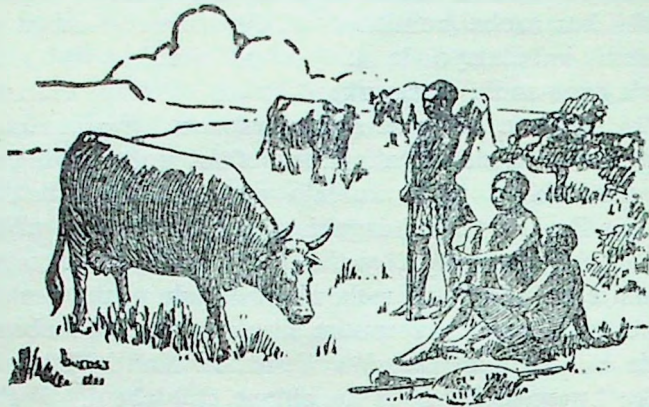
Uthe kanye ngelo xesha weva ngesikhalo esimana ukuvakala kalusizi sisithi mho-o-o ngelizwi eliphantsi ngasekunene kwakhe. Kwangoko waphuma ematyholweni wabheka kweli cala incwina ivela ngakulo. Kwakhona yaphinda le ncwina iphantsi. Waza uNomsa ngoku wafika kwindawo eyayinomngxobhozo yaba kulapho wamfumana khona uNyawuza erintyelwe ngumnxeba emlenzeni ngoku ke ezama ukuzikhulula kuwo. Waziphosa uNomsa phezu kwenkomo leyo cvuya nomthwalo wexhala ungathi uthe xibilili. Waza eyiwole ngentamo imazi yakowabo wayibiza ngegama wathi "Nyawuza, sithandwa, ngaba wenzakele kusini na?" Wathoba waqwalasela, ekhangela ukuba angawukhulula njanina loo

mlenze. Wayesele ezithandele wazithandela ngoku uNyawuza wazitsho ngomanka esithi yena ngokwakhe uzama ukuzikhulula. Wathi uNomsa makakhe atsale umnxeba lo ngamandla koko akezanga nanto wahle waqonda ukuba le nto iya kufuna ukusikwa ngento. Ngelishwa wayengenamela ngako oko wazama ngentonga le ayiphehiteyo wayifaka phakathi komnxeba nomlenze lo wenkomo. Kodwa yaba yeyonanto imbulalayo le uNyawuza watsho wabonakala exhuzula ngamandla ezama ukuzikhulula. “Ndingenza ntoni, bethu?” wafuna uNomsa ezingqondweni. Wafumane waphumputha apha naphaya phantsi efuna nokuba lilitye elingaba linobukhali, waza kunjalo weva kusika kabuhlungu apha esandleni. “Shu! ingabi yinyoka” watsho uNomsa othukile. Ngethamsanqa yathi kanti asiyiyo koko yinto ebukhali le kanye ebe yifunela ukushunqula ngayo umnxeba. Wathoba uNomsa ephumputha kwakhona ukuba abenokuyiqonda le nto ibimsika. Wayifumana! Kanti lilitye elibukali oku kwemela lithe thlu kancinane emhlabeni. Walimba uNomsa, into leyo eya funa ukuba nzima wada phofu walikhupha wathi ukuya oku kuNyawuza eliphethe wanga akanyatheli. Wafika wee guqaqa ngamadolo phambi kwale mazi yenkomo wathi eyibambe ngomkhono ngesi sandla ngesinye waxabela ngelitye elo umnxeba lowo. Loo gama uNyawuza ufumane wee ndwanya ngaloo mehlo andongela. Wafumanisa uNomsa okokuba ukunqumla lo mnxeba kwa kungelula nangona ilitye lona lalibukhali. Wawulukhuni unencindi apha eyatsho wasebenzeka nzima ukuwushunqula. Kodwa ngokuwuhlalela ndawonye ude wawutshuca. Kwaba ke kukukhhaululeka kukaNyawuza oko.

Wayeseledinwe cyiloo nto ngoku uNomsa wathi khona akucinga ngekhaya lathi ukuba kude langa lisemalanda-lahla. Waza emcenga uNyawuza wakowabo wamthundeza kancinane emqhubela ngasekhaya apho unina wayebalindele. Kolo hambo lwabo emnyameni begoduka uNomsa wahamba ethetha nale nkomo eyenza mbuna ngokuyithoba izibilini. Kwakhona wahamba egxaleka ekhubeka ezigangeni angaziboniyo, maxa wambi ade ange uya lahleka akasayiqondi nendlela egodukayo into ebitsho novalo lubethe.

Yathabatha ixesha into yokuba ade aqonde ukuba ngoku usendleleni ayiqhelileyo nesinga ekhaya. Waza khona aku-

qiniseka ukuba ngoku ukufuphi nekhaya wathi ngenxa yemincili yovuyo wamana ukuyiphulula inkomo nalapha enceleni. Ithe kukothuka yiloo nto yaxhuma nantso ibaleka ukuya kungena ebuhlanti yada yafuna nokubagila abanakwabo aba.



UNyawuza imazi yenkomo ebilahlekile

Ubethe wadlula yena kubo uNomsa akathetha nelimdaka engxamele ukuba adibane noMdingi kwangoko. Laye ixesha lokusenga lise lidlule nemazi le seyifake lada langathi ibele eli lidumbile. Uthe engekafiki nasebuhlanti wabe uMdingi selebaleka emhlangabeza kubonakala ukuba noko izibilini nazo zihlile. “Kumnandi uyifumene! Bendingonwabanga konke ngenxa yakho.” Akabanga namazwi maninzi nakuba uMdingi wayengathetha nangaphezulu kodwa uNomsa wamqonda ukuba ubindekile uvela ngaphakathi.

Wathi ethethela phantsi uNomsa, “Khawuleza uze nethunga, uNyawuza uya tshiswa ngamasi.” “Kulungile.” watsho noMdingi naye eqonda.

Nanko yena uNomsa esiya kungena kwabanye abantwana ababedlala umdlalo wokutshicela. Kulo mdlalo umntu ube dlulisa isandla apha emlonyeni ze akuxelelwa asitshicele kanye njengokuba sidlula. Umntwana ke ngamnye bekusithiwa makaqashe apho abethe khona amathe esandleni. Wakhe wabukela uNomsa oko mzuzwana kodwa ukudinwa kwakumonganele engenako ukuba naye angangena adlale.

Uthe kanye xa aza kungena endlwini wabona ngoyise chleli

phambi kwendlu ejonge inyanga iphuma etshaya ngenqawa yakhe yophondo. Uthe engajikanga amjonge, "Asikukho nokuba ndiya vuya, ntombi yam, uyifumene le nkomo." Yammangalisa le nto uNomsa engazi ukuba wathini na uyise le nto wasoloko wazazi izinto ezihlileyo apha ekhaya zingaziswanga kuye.

Uthe ke phambi kokuba azandlalele ngokhuko lwakhe wakha wathabatha amaceba ethanga nenyamana eyayibilisiwe yaphekwa ngamanzi watya kubonakala ukuba noko uyozele. Ngokubona oko noMvuleni wangena wancedisa naye watya baligqiba kunye clo thanga naloo nyama. Wathi ke eyigonileinja yakhe ngokubeka ingalo entanyeni wazolula wanaba waza walala cum.

ISAHLUKO SESI-6

AMALUNGISELELO OKUYA ESIJADWINI

Into yokuqala uNomsa ayicingayo akuvuka yaba yile :
“ Kanene namhlanje lusuku lokuya esijadwini kuloDamasi. Mandihle ke ndigqibe ukusebenza ukuze ithi ifika nje injikalinga ndibe se ndikhululekile ukuba ndihambe.”

UMdingi noGangatha nabo babese bevukile. Babezele yimincili loo nto unokuyibona nasemehlweni, kumnandi nakubo, kuxhelwe eXhukwana, waqonda noNomsa ukuba nezabo kanye iingqondo zikule nto yesi sijadu. Into leyo eyenza ukuba baphume nempahla kwanini namhlanje. Bangena bazikhelela ukutya phaya embizeni. UNomsa yena wafaka iinkuni wakhwezela umlilo owawusele ufuna ukucima esenzela ukuba unina ze angaqali phantsi xa ephinda ebeka enye imbi-za, oku ukutya kuphelile. Bathe noko mabamshiyele unina noThemba ze babenentwana abayifumanayo bakuvuka.

Baphuma ke belandelelana uNomsa noMdingi kwakunye noGangatha bonke betyela ezandleni. Baza bakhangela esibhakabhakeni befuna ukuqonda ukuba ngaba uya kuba ngumhla onjani na lowo waloo mini. Wathi uNomsa akuwaphosa elundini amehlo wabona ukuba libi liyezisa. “ Hayi ngathi ayintle noko le mini,” watsho kubonakala ukuba konke udanile. “ Ngathi unyanisile. Kodwa ndinenkolo yokuba noko lingatyhila emalanga phambi kokuba sihambe.” waphendula uMdingi watsho. “ He ! ngathi iza kuna,” wafumane wadumzela naye watsho uGangatha engaqondi konke. “ Yiza sihambe Gangatha,” wamyalela watsho umkhuluwa wakhe.

Kwangelo thuba uNomsa yena wayeseleya kuphuma ngesango waza weva ngomnye wodade wabo embiza, “ Wena Nomsa ndilinde wethu.” Kanti nguHlamba intombi yowesithathu konina. Unina kaNomsa yena wayengumfazi wesine kuyise. UHlamba naye wayesiya emlanjeni ephethe eyakhe ingqayi eyithe khu kakuhle ngesinqe phezu kombhinqo wesikhaka sakhe sengca. Wamlinda uNomsa uHlamba wada wafika “ Sakubona wethu. Inene ndiya vuya ukuba sibe sihamba kunye. “ Si ! ntombi, kanti sewuwanxibile

la maso akho matsha! Ukuba mahle kwawo! Isikhaka esi sona ngaba sesi uza kusinxiba phaya esijadwini kulo-Damasi? ” “Hayi noko, sona ndisigcinele ukuze ndiphume ngaso xa sesihamba. Ndithe kodwa mandingabi salinda nokulinda ngamaso la.” Wayithetha le nto uHlamba ngokuzidla apha okukhulu. Wayemde ethe fuxu yena kuno-Nomsa, sefifikisa kubonakala ukuba selengena ebuntombini ezibona naye ukuba ngoku ufikelele kwithuba lokuba abe nokunxiba izikhaka eziyelele zasondela kwezikanina “Kanene nam ndakufika kweli xabiso kuya kufuneka ndinxibe isikhaka sengca,” wafumane watsho engena nto noko ingako imqhubayo uNomsa. “Kunyanzelekile ubona nje, kuba kaloku uya kuba usexabisweni lobuntombi ngoko.” “Mh! ngathi ndiya zibona, ngeminyaka emibini sekusithiwa ndiyintombi,” watsho uNomsa ethethela phakathi phofu. Le nto noko yayingamonwabisi. Imfeketho yobuntwana wayengekafuni kuphuma kuyo konke.

Engathethi ethe cwaka, ingqondo ikude wahamba ithuba ekunye noHlamba lo. UHlamba yena wayengayekanga ukuqhuba incoko ngoku uNomsa esemke nezinye iingqondo. Waye mxelela ngendlela aza kuzicoca azizobe ngayo ukuze afaneleke kweso sijadu babejonge ukuya kuso. “Khawutsho wena Nomsa uya kuzicoca njani kodwa?” wabuza uHlamba. Watli phaka ngoku uNomsa iingqondo zanga ziya buya kwakufika kule ndawo ingaye. Yaqhuba incoko yenjenjalo kuthethwa ngesijadu esi bada baya kufika ekhaya. “Uyazi ukuba udade wethu uSiziwe uzifake imivambo umzimba lo wonke?” Wafakelela wabuza uNomsa. “Awu, kwangoku? Usebenzise ingqanda nokuba usebenzise izinti ezinomlilo phezu kobulongo ekwenzeni iintlanga ezo esikhumbeni?” wafuna ukuqonda uHlamba. “Ngathi usebenzise ingqanda, kwaye ndiya kholwa ukuba ziya kuhlala ezo ntlanga zibonakala de kudlule usuku lwesijadu.” watsho uNomsa. “Hayi nam ndiya kholwa, ngakumbi emva kwenkxamleko nokuqaqanjelwa okungakaya eziqaphula.” watsho uHlamba ebonisa ukumvela.

Ekufikeni kukaNomsa noHlamba namanzi ekhaya amakhwenkwe amadala ayesele emka ukuya emadlweni. Kwakuse kusele iintwana zodwa zidlalisa apha ebaleni, zizenzela eyazo imizi neenkomo kwanabantu, ngodongwe olomiswe

elangeni. Phakathi kwala makhwenkwana wayekho naye uThemba ezenzela iinkomo zodongwe neentlanti zazo, ezinkomeni apha emana ekhupha amaqela ange uya kuloboia ehlawula ikhazi labafazi abafunayo naye njengamadoda onke.

Kudlalwa nje ngabantwana aba iintwanazana ezi ngathi sezikhulile zancedisa onina ziya bhequza phaya ezindlwini naphandle lixhaphetshu. UNomsa yena wayeseleqqibile ngoku ukuhlakula phaya esifeni sikanina nanko ebuya nento enkulu yethanga elithe dle ngesandla sekhohlo. Ngesokunene wayephethe imfe. Ukho lo mthamo wezele usemlonyeni ahamba ewuhlafuna ewumfimsitha ekhawulezile ukuya kungenza endlwini. Apha entloko ezinweleni wayeqaqele ngeentsiba zencanda, ezimabala, ziintlanu. Walithi xibilili kakuhle ithanga eli kwanamazele akuba esemnyango waza wazityhalala ngaphambili phakathi endlwini njengokuba naye engena. "Wahle wabuya, wakhawuleza bo namhlanje, ntombi, andithi!" watsho unina emncoma. "Ndiya kholwa ukuba akugqubelanga wantlakaza ukuhlakula wabuya." "Ndicokisile, mama, kakuhle. Khawubone izinto endikuzele nazo," watsho uNomsa esalatha ezi ntsiba zisentloko.

Unina wakha wanqumama ukuvubela utywala abekwenza weza kubuka ezi ntsiba watsala lwalunye elurola entloko kuNomsa walufaka kwezakhe iinwele wamana eyonwaya kancinane intlonze yentloko ngalo. "Yu! ukubaza kwencam yalo. Khawutsho uzifumene njani ezi ntsiba?" "Ndithe ngokuya bendihlakula ndabona ngencanda irubuluza ingena apha ngaphantsi kwamahlala othango. Ndathi ukuba ndiyibone nje ndayigibisela ngamandla ngegaqa ledumbe. Ibuye umva yabaleka kodwa lithe igaqa eli ukuwa kwalo lasuka neentsiba zayo." Wahleka unina, wakuza akalibala. "Yinile, ntombi, inene nabanakwenu abangekudluli ngokuchana. Kwaye kucace mhlophe ukuba ulizingela elingasoloko leza nento ekhaya." "Kanti ke mama, xa sendikuxelela ingqondo yam, mna ndikhetha ukuba lizingela kunokuba ndibe ndinxibe isikhaka," wayithetha phandle namhlanje le nyaniso ngaye uNomsa. "Kunjani noko ukuba ube zizo zombini ezi zinto. Kanti ndikuxelele uya kubuye uqonde ukuba kukwamandi ukuba yintombi. Khawutsho kodwa kunjani ukudla emasimini? Ngaba selevuthwa amapayina?"

“Hayi mama, asekrwada kuba aselukhuni. Ndihambe ndiwacofa onke. Kodwa iimbotyi zona oku kwazo ziya kuba sezilungile kwangomso lo. Yo! mandiye kuchola-chola iinkuni kwangoku.” “Kulungile Nomsa. Khawuleza ukuqoshelisa wonke umsebenzi wakho wendlu khona ukuze ufumane ithuba elaneleyo lokulungiselela ukuya esijadwini.” Wancuma uNomsa evuyiswa yinto yokuba abe unina umqonde kakuhle kangaka engazixelanga apho kanye zikhona iingqondo zakhe. Wathi ke akubuya neenkuni wawa elityeni waguba amazimba ngoku. Uthe unina akubona konke oku wabonakala emkhalimela esithi, “Hayi ngathi kwanele oku, ntombi enkulu, nemini seyibufudumala. Ngewuzilungisa ngoku uziqaba.” Akalinda uNomsa nokuba makade aphinde unina ukumyalela. Waqubula amatyana akhe echitywa kwangoko wathi ewaphethe ngamagqabi waphuma nawo wawabeka phandle phaya emthunzini ngasendlwini weza namanzi kwakunye namafutha egusha. Uya hlula-hlule uNomsa imibala le, emana egalela ngoluthi ithontsana kumgubo ngamnye kulo ubomvu ngoku, kwakhona komnyama, nakulo umhlophe nawo, wagqibela ngokuyidibanisa namafutha intlanyana nganye wayibonda yabambana. Oku kwechule okanye lale nto wayemana ukulivanga ichitywa ngalinye efuna ukuqonda ukuba alibaleki na libe ngamanzi mhlawumbi liqine gqitha, mhlawumbi limhlophe kakhulu na, mhlawumbi libe mnyama lagqitha na ebaleni alifunayo. Ubemana ke elibeka apha engalweni ibala ngalinye akhangele ukuba lifanelene na naye.

Ude waba wanele ke uNomsa, waza ephethe iintupha zemivundla wamana ethabatha umbala ngamnye ezichokoza ngawo umzimba lo wonke, phofu eqale ngembola le ibomvu waziqaba ngayo umzimba, loo nto yasitsho isikhumba esi salibala lentsimbi yobhedu. Walinda ke ithuba lokuba yome ihlale. Phezu kwale mbola wawabeka kakuhle amabala wawenza imifakazo awayeyicingise kakuhle kwangaphambili. Wenza izazinge ezimhlophe kuqala, phezu kwazo wenza ezimnyama. Waza ngoku watsho ngezixwexwe ezibazileyo nemigca enjijo wagqibela ngamachokoza afakaziweyo ngaphezulu, yaza yadibana yonke le nto yatsho ngomfanekiso omhle obonakala ukuba wenziwe ngumntu okwaziyo ukudibanisa amabala. Ukuza emhlana kwafuneka ecele omnye

umntu amncede wabiza uSiziwe awambona ephuma phaya kowabo.

“Tyhini wethu sewugqibile wena ngoku mna ndingekawu-fezi nomsebenzi wendlu. Kukhona ndisaya kuchola-chola iinkuni ndibuye ndigube isitya samazimba. Sendizincece ngokuzifaka iintlanga zemivambo umzimba lo.” “Ndiya kuba sendikunceda ngokusila oku Siziwe ukuba wena uya kundizoba apha emhlana ngemva ngolu hlobo ndilufunayo.” “Ndiya kuyenza ngemihlali loo nto Nomsa.”

Kwangoko ke uNomsa waguqa phezu kwelitye kuloSiziwe, loo nto eyenza ezilumkele khona ukuze imbola ingachachambi isuke emzimbeni. Waqala ke wasila emana egalela elityeni ibinza lesandla seenkoko esenjenjalo eguba. NoSiziwe wakhuthala naye ngoku nanko sehamba ngokubaleka ukuya kuchola-chola iinkuni.

Njengokuba esebenza nje uNomsa umana ukuzibuka wonke lo mzimba ungaphambili kubonakala ukuba wancle mpela ngumchokozo lo awenzileyo. Wayeqinisekile ukuba uya kuba mhle gqitha khona akuba ezithe shwe ngamafutha okokugqibela ukuze avele aqaqambe onke amabala la, wathi ke ngaphezulu wafaka izacholo neentsimbi zakhe ezingalweni nasentanyeni, waza akalibala nokuba auxibe la ngxowana yakhe isukiweyo yesikhumba senkomo. Wayesleyizalise ngeentwana-ntwana zakhe ezixabisekileyo awayecinga ukuba angananisa ngazo ebantwini phaya kuloDamasi afumane ezinye ngazo ezintle mhlawumbi nangaphezulu.

Akubanga thuba lide waba selebuyile naye uSiziwe eza ephethe iintsasa zokubasa. Walibeka elo bathu phaya egoqweni, wangena nentwana elingene ukuba unina aze abe nento yokubasa okwethuba. Wee gwiqi ke waphuma wonda ngoNomsa wafika waguqa ecaleni lakhe wamhlutha imbokotho le yokusila. “Bendisengaqhubayo mna ndisila ukuba wena ubunokuya kuthabatha imbola leya undiqabe ngayo apha ngemva.” Wabaleka kwa oko uSiziwe waya kuloNomsa esiya kuthabatha ichitywa. Wathi ukubuya kwakhe uNomsa wamxelela ukuba alihlaziye ngamanzi. Akuba egqibile ukumqaba umhlana angazipha kangangoko afunayo kweliseleyo. “Unobuntu kambe, Nomsa, inene.” wathi esitsho uSiziwe wabe elihlaziya ngamanzi ichitywa elo, loo nto eyenza ngenyameko enkulu. Waqala ke wamqaba ngaloo mbola uNomsa

umhlana wonke wamtsho ngebala elidibeneyo layinto enye. Wamana ukugigitheka uNomisa ehleka engayeki, enyunjazwa leli nqina lomvundla aqatywa ngalo. Akuba ewasebenzise onke amabala uSiziwe eboniswa nguNomisa wavakala esithi, "Hayi ngathi ndikugqibile ngoku kwaye wenzeke kakuhle gqitha." Wathi noNomisa, "Makhe ndikwenze apha emhlana njengokuba nawe undenzile." Olo ncedo lukaNomisa lwatsho waggiba msinyane uSiziwe naye ukuzichokoza.

UNomisa wabuyela endlwini esiya kuthabatha iintsimbi zakhe. Waphuma ngoku ezigaxele zathi zikho ezi zisesinqeni, entanyeni, nasezingalweni zabe zikho ezi zisemaqatheni, emilenzeni, nasemadolweni. Wayezithambisile wonke watsho wakhazimla khona akuphuma elangeni. Ingxowana yakhe yesikhumba senkomo yayijinga izele yatsho yenza isikhahla apha entanyeni. Entloko wayeqaqele ngentsimbi emabala amhlophe, aluhlaza nabomvu. Wathi njengokuba esondela nje uNomisa kubanakwabo nodade bakhe bonke bema bekhwenene bakhe bayeka yonke into ababeyenza bemondele. Bamkhungela bebuka bencoma imizobo nezihombiso ezi zakhe. Baziphatha-phatha zonke ezo ntsimbi nezacholo bemangalisiwe yinto yokuba abe wayezenzele zonke zilolo hlobo yavakala enye yezi ntwana isithi, "Nam ndifuna ukuya kwesaa sijadu sikuloDamasi. Ngaba uzenzele ngokwakho esisacholo sengalo?" "Uwafumene phi wona la maso?" wabuza nomnye.

UMvuleni wathi ngoku akumbona uNomisa selenje, wakhonkotha akayeka ekhathazwa ngala mananga-nanga abuya engawo. Oko kukhonkotha loo mikhwazo nemibuzo ehliwa apha ukubuzwa kukhungelwe uNomisa noSiziwe, loo nto yatsho ngengxolokazi apha eya khupha bonke onina ezindlwini bathi bevele ngeentloko babe bekhwaza bebangxolisa ukuba mabayeke loo ngxolo bayenzayo. "Thulani," noNomisa naye wanqanda, "ngale ndlela niza kuvusa zonke ezi ntsana zileleyo." UMvuleni yena wamphatha apha entloko wamphulula emlalisa uboya azekonwaba ayeke ukukhonkotha. "Bonani nabaya nabanye besiza sebezilungise kade" watsho uSiziwe.

Yayilishumi elinethoba lonke elo lamakhwenkwe namantombazana, bonke bezicoco bazibhala ngemibala, imizimba ikhazimla ngamafutha kungekho ndawo apha emzimbeni

ingenazacholo nazintsimbi. Kwafumane kwaba sisiqhu no-gxudululu nje phaya esangweni wonke umntu ezilungiselele ukuba seluhambeni ngoko nangoko. Amanye amantombazana ayenxibe izikhaka zemikhanzi, amakhwenkwe wona etsho ngamabheshu ezikhumba zeenyamakazi, eqala loo mini ukuwanxiba loo nto selemana ukuwaphatha-phatha cwaphulula. Entloko apha etsho ngezidlokolo zeentsiba zeentaka ubuso bona buronozwe ngamabala efutha, into leyo eyawatsho athi efuna ukoyikeka abe ekwahlekisa wakuwajonga.

Bangena nabo apho esiqhwini, uNomisa noSiziwe, phaya esangweni. Wonke ubani wabake ulungele ukunduluka ukuya esijadwini. Abantwana aba basebancinane bafumane bona bazixolisa ngokutsiba-tsiba, bekhwaza, bevuyisana nabo bahambayo.

Iinkungu zona zakusasa zazise zinyibilika nakuloDamasi kubonakala ngaphesheya endulini. Nanjengokuba uNomisa wayehamba, bechwayitile bonke nabanakwabo nodade bakhe abalishumi elinethoba, wayemana cyiphatha-phatha le ngxowana yakhe yomqala ecinga ngoDamasi kwanobumnandi bokuba akhe abe nokumbona.

ISAHLUKO SESI-7

ESIJADWINI KULODAMASI

Kwakukude kuloDamasi, kodwa olo hambu zange lube nakuvakala kuNomsa nakubanakwabo lonke elo thuba babenze loo mngcelele besingise khona. Elundini phaya kude babone ukrozo lwabanye abantwana besiza nganeno kubonakala ukuba nabo baya kwasesijadwini apho. Wanga angafuna ukuqonda uNomsa inani labantwana abanokuba bangakho apho kuloDamasi. Walithelekelela ekubeni lingasekhulwini.

Yayimthimbe ingqondo uGangatha into yokuba naye abe uya emgobeni komnye umzi. Wayeqala loo mini ukwenjengjalo. “Ngathi sesikufuphi ngoku, Nomsa, akunjalo yini?” “Ewe sesizakufika” waphendula omnye waza wathi akumjonga ebusweni wafa yintsini ehleka loo maronorono emibala awasuka ayenza impumlo le yanga icandwe kubini. Akayithandanga noko le nto uGangatha wafumane ke kodwa wangumntu odlulisa ebusweni eso sandla noko singaxeliyo, esithi makasuse loo nto emayibe ibonwa ijinga apho. Phofu wakhawuleza uNomsa wathi noko makamthobe izibilini. “Inene ngathi akukho namnye apha kuthi sonke ozihombise njengawe. Ndjongile nje ngathi kuya kuphunywa nawe phaya kakade oku.”

Bathe ke bakude babe ngoku baya sondela abantwana apha eluthangweni lweminga olujikeleze umzi wakuloDamasi wakhawuleza uZabala wee gqada ngaphambili wakhokela olo ludwe lwabantwana abangamashumi omabini onke bendoda cnye enguyise kaNomsa. UZabala lo wayezalwa ngumfazi okwakusithiwa ngomkhulu kuba wayengumfazi wokuqala kuZitu waye ke njengonyana omkhulu eya kuba nguyee inkosi ngenye imini esikhundleni sikayise kaNomsa, uZitu.

Uyise kaDamasi kunye noyisekazi nabafazi babo bonke babemi apha esangweni lomzi ukuza kwamkela iindwendwe ezo. Babalathise izindlu ezazisezilungiselelwe isijadu eso kade. UNomsa wamfumana uGangatha ethe nca ngakuye ewavule onke kubonakala ukuba uzimisele ukuzibona zonke

kunye izinto zalo mzi afikayo kuwo. Lwaye uthungo lwezinto eziphekiweyo lusiza ezimpumleni, into eyatsho uGangatha waziva selevuzisa amathe kukubawa.

Waqala kaloku noNomisa walungisa umqhele wakhe wentsimbi obusentloko kwanezacholo zeengalo ebezithe ngenxa yohambo azema kakuhle. Nakodadewabo apha yayikwa yiloo nto kulungiswa izikhaka zabo kwanenkciyo.

Wayisombulula uZabala impi nanko ke ngoku esiya kungenena ngomnyango kuloDamasi endlwini elandelwa lelo shumi linethoba lonke lemivo labanakwabo nodade bakhe. Wakhe wema ngxingxilili imilenze ithe sa neengalo zijinga nje, wathinta isikhohlela ngamandla "H-km." Kodwa ngenxa yengxolo nemikhwazo yemincili ngaphakathi endlwini apha kwaba ngathi akeviwanga esazisa ukufika kwabo. Kwakhona wabuya wathinta isikhohlela wanga uthi "H-km" ngaphezulu ngoku balandela nabanye kwangaloo "H-km" emva kwakhe. Loo nto yatsho uZabala wajwaqeka wafa ngumsindo, ngenxa yolu needo alunikwa ngabo engakhange alucele.

Beviwa kodwa ngoku. Kwaza kwafumane kwee nqum cwaka ngaphakathi. Kwangoko kwathi thu intloko izele ingabonakali ziintsiba zcentaka, eziluhlaza nezibuzulura ezimthubi nezibomvu. Kanti nguDamasi lo sebona ngoncunco ebulisa esithi, "Sanibona, sanibona." "Usaphila," nomnye, "usaphila," zonke iindwendwe zaphendula zatsho nazo zibulisa.

Namhlanje uDamasi yayinguye ingqwayingqwayi, yonke into elunge nalo mgcobo iphethwe nguye. Wabakhoba ebabizela bonke ngaphakathi. Waba selengena uZabala kuqala. Kwalandela ukrozo lwabanakwabo nodade bonke belandela nabo begaqa ngezandla namadolo.

Le mpi ifikayo yakuloNomisa yabonakala kuqala noko ibunyewura incentloni, kodwa ke yaba yinto nje yexeshana leyo kwathi kungekudala bakhululeka kwasekhaya. Kungephi ingxolo apha endlwini yanga kukubetha kwamaza olwandle. Zongezelela ukufika nezinye izimpi loo nto yatsho ingxolo yaye ikhula kuba shushu ngaphezulu apha endlwini. Abonakala amakhwenkwe ezikhetha esiya ngacala nye eshiya amantombazana engelawo.

UNomsa wonda ngethole elalikhulekwe ngesisinga phaya elongweni lendlu. Lalisand' ukuzalwa liselincinane kakhulu ukuba lingaphuma liye edlelweni. Kwakukwakho netakane lebhokhwe apho nalo likwayinto yokudlalisa abantwana. Ibingeninzi into yokuba amantombazana abonwe ehlalelene neenkomo kunye namathole, waba ke ngoko uNomsa ufume-ne ithuba lokumana edlala ephululana neli thole.

Kwakukho negxuba lwezinja ezazize nabantwana aba apha emgobeni zimana ziphuma zingena naphakathi kwemilenze yale mpi isemfutshane ilapha, zichola iintwana eziwayo zokutya. Loo nto itsho ubone ngezimbini sezingqavulana zisilwa ngaloo ntwana yokutya zithe kanti ziphangelene ngayo.

Oku kungqavulana nale mivungamo yatsho iinkuku ezazilapho nazo zothuka zahamba zivuthulula zibetha amaphiko zikhala, nazo ziphapha zide ezinye ziye kukhwela nasebantwaneni aba. Loo nto nayo yongeza, ngoku kwachwayitwa ngaphezulu, kuhlekwa eyaschlathini intsini ehla apha, into eyatsho nethole eliya libotshelweyo laxhuzu-xhuzula lafuna ukuqhawula isisinga libaleke. Walimbambazela uNomsa elicenga-cenga ukuba lingothuki licinge ukuba kukho ngozi.

Uthe esacengana nethole elo wabona ngoNtombi, udade boDamasi owayemdadlana kunaye esiza kuye wafika wathi, "Lihle inene, eli thole, ligqibile. Ndibona ngathi nawe uyalithanda akunjalo yini?" "Ngubani kodwa ongelithandi!" waphendula watsho uNomsa. "Liya kuba yinkomo entle inene." Uthe esitsho wabetsalwa yingxowana kaNtombi eyayibonakala ukuba izele ziintwana-ntwana, waselesalatha apha kuyo ebuza ukuba ngaba kukho zinto zini na phakathi. "Ndingakubonisa okuphakathi ukuba nawe uya kundibonisa okukweyakho," watsho uNtombi.

Wathi esatsho wabeseleyivula eyakhe ingxowana uNomsa, waza warola usiba lwentaka olumabala mabini elibomvu nelihlaza oluya wayelufumene mini apha wayeye emlanjeni ngoku selubugoba. "Mh-mh-mh-mh" wawakala encoma uNtombi. "Ngaba yintoni enye onayo?" Wasifaka ngoku sanga siya tshona uNomsa. Ruthu waphuma negaqa lodongwe elimabala-bala yimigca ebomvu elubhelu nemthubi. Lalingena kuba ngaphezulu apha engwenyeni ngobukhulu, waza elirola uNomsa wabe esaleka esithi, "ubona nje ndilibumbe ngokwam. Ndabhaqa udongwe olungaqheleka-

nga ndayidibanisa le mibala ndaza ke ndalomisa elangeni. Ulithanda njani kodwa ? ” “ Ndiya lithanda kakhulu inene. Ukuba unokupha ngalo, mna bendingakunika le nto, ” watsho ekhawuleza ethukulula ingxowana yakhe naye ekhupha into embala ulubhelu enamachokoza amhlophe. Le nto yabonakala inoboya, isukiwe yathamba. “ Tyhini yimpukumthi, uyifumene phi kodwa ? ” wabuza uNomsa. “ Hayi ndayifumana isitya phaya entsimini yakuthi, ukuba uya yithanda ndingakunika yona, wena undinike elaa liso lakho lodongwe. Ulumke ungaliwisi laphuke, ” watsho uNomsa emnika uNtombi, ethabatha yena impuku-mthi leya. “ Yafa kudala ubona nje, watsho uNtombi ebona ukuyilolonga okukhulu kukaNomsa loo nto yakhe intsha nayixabisileyo. “ Ngaba isengatyiswayo ke ? ” wabuza watsho. “ Leyo ke yona into andingeyazi ungasewusiva ngezinyo, kodwa sona isikhumba sisengasetyenziswayo, ” watsho uNtombi. Ngoku wayivula yaphelela le ngxowana yakhe embonisa yonke into elapho uNomsa, amatye, iintubi, izacholo, konke awayehamba ekuphethe apho akhoyo. Wathi vumbululu uNtombi kwakanye wangathi wothukile wavakala esithi, “ Yo, nabaya beqala omnye umdlalo ! Nathi masiye kungena Nomsa. “ Badlala ntoni ? ” “ Ngathi badlala indoda nomfazi. Umnandi loo mdlalo uyazi ! Ndingavuya uZabala akhethe mna, ” watsho engena eluhlwini uNtombi esondela apho emakhwenkweni, khona ukuze abe selisweni likaZabala. Wada wamtsala nangaliso ehleka, into cyatsho akabanakungamboni noZabala.

Hayi ngathi uya dina noko lo mdlalo. Bendikhethe ukuba phandle mna, yaphala yenjenjalo ingqondo kaNomsa ukucinga. Watsho wemela bucala apha esiqhwini ebukele xa amakhwenkwe azikhethela abafazi iyintswahla intsini kuhlekwa, engacingi nto yokuba naye angakhethwa. Weva ngesandla simphatha apha egxalabeni, kanti nguDamasi “ Ungumfazi wam wena kulo mdlalo. Andazi ke ukuba uya kuba noku-ndifeza. ” watsho umnene. “ Kanti ke nam ndokha ndibone ukuba woba yindoda enjani na, ” waphendula noNomsa.

Aselequbula izithebe neengobozi ke amantombazana azitsho zazala zizipheko azenzela wona namadoda awo.

UDamasi ebhekisa kuNomsa wathi, “ Ndiva kusithiwa wena akukho nto inokwenziwa yinkwenkwe ongenakunga-

enzi nawe. Ngaba ke nokupheka oku uya kwazi? Kaloku yeyona nto leyo kuwe." "Yeka wena uza kubona," waphendula watsho uNomsa, "kodwa ke mandiccele nje le nto kuwe. Ndithembise ukuba sothi sakugqiba apha khe siphume siye kubetha othinti phandle." Wathi esitsho, wabe selelungiselela isidlo esikhawulezileyo. Waza ngethutyana elingephi wamzisela uDamasi isidlo senyama yenkuku, umbona, ithanga, inyama yebhokhwe neenkumbi ezojiweyo yonke loo nto idibene sithebeni sinye. "Hayi upheke kamnandi," wawakala encoma uDamasi. "Ndigqithisele amasi ke ngoku ube ugqibile." Amasi la yingqaka apha yobisi oluvuthiweyo, athandwa kakhulu nanguNomsa ngokwakhe. Ayinto elunge kakhulu ekuphuziseni ubushushu nasekupheliseni unxano. Wathi ke uDamasi akuba chluthi waqala wabhodla watsho kakhulu, walandelisa ngokuthi, "Heke ngoku ke siya kukhe sibone ukuba ungangumzingeli ofezekileyo na kwangale ndlela ukwazi ngayo ukupheka. Waphendula uNomsa wathi, "Kulungile, ukuba ugqibile ke singakhe siphumele phandle." Baphuma ke kunye. Wangena kwenye indlu uDamasi waphuma nezaphetha zazibini kunye neentolo waza wanika uNomsa esinye wathi alathe emthini, "Khawutole elaa sebe sibone," Wema kakuhle uNomsa watsala ngesokunene esizisa ngakuye wayeka. Lwaphuma lungumpu utolo lwatsho kanye esiqwini phakathi esebeni. "Tyhini le! uya chana hi!" wadanduluka watsho uDamasi emangalisiwe. "Khawume ke. Emnye makatole izihlandlo ezihlanu sibone ukuba ngubani na oya kuchana ngaphezu komnye." Uthe uDamasi esathi uya qala ukutola wabe uNomsa selebona ngentaka idlula iqinisile iphapha kude kufuphi, akaba salibazisa wayeka ngotolo. Gilili intaka yawa kwangoko. "Hayi, akamaninzi namakhwenkwe angachana intaka iphapha! Uyazi kodwa?" wancoma watsho uDamasi. "Khawuxele, ukufunde phi ukuchana oku?" "Ndakufunda phaya emasimini ekhaya," waphendula uNomsa.

Bathe besathetha njalo babona ngoMdingi esiza selenyathelela phezulu, ecela csithi naye makanikwe atole. "Masi-nikane amathuba. Qala wena Damasi. Ulandele Mdingi, zeyibe ndim ke," watsho uNomsa.

Wakhawulezisa kwa oko uDamasi wawatola onke awakhe.

Waba selebala uNomsa zazithathu izithonga ezichanileyo esihlanwini. Wabaleka ke waya kuwachola lawo awileyo. “Nguwe Mdingi, ngoku.” Watola ngawo omahlanu wachana kane kweso sihlanu. Wavakala ekhwaza uMdingi ezizela ngokwakhe. Kwathabatha uNomsa ukugqibela wachana kathathu kweso sihlanu. “Tyhini ubethe oku kwam Nomsa,” watsho uDamasi.

Ngeli xesha babese bediniwe ngoku abantwana ngulaa mdlalo wendoda nomfazi, ngakumbi amantombazana kuba kaloku ngawo awayesebenza esebenzela la makhwenkwe. Aqala la Mancinane ngoku adlalisa ngabantu bodongwe amakhwenkwana wona athi sa phandle ekhwela amahashe ngeentonga. USiziwe weza kuNomsa wafika wangxola wathi, “Noko uya siphoxa, ucinga okokuba abantu aba bathini ngezi zinto uzenzayo zokub’ uzenza inkwenkwe usenjenje. Iya kunceda ntoni kuwe into yokuba ube uya kwazi ukuthiyela neentaka uchane nangeentolo. Soze uyivunyelwe yona into yokuba uye kuzingela, yincame nje leyo.”

Waselehamba ke uNomsa, emshiya apho uDamasi, esiya kwamanye amantombazana awayevela kweminye imizi. Wahhlala apho noko kungekho mdla awuthabathayo konke kuloo mabali awayebaliswa ezinto ezihlileyo kwamawawo okokoko ahlukanyo, kwancnani labantwana abazelweyo, neengozi ezihlele abantakwabo, kwanemifuno esemasimini akwamawawo njalo njalo. Athi ekwezo abe engena kwezemizobo azenze yona emizimbeni, aze athi ekwezo abe ekwizikhaka neentsimbi ezi, kwanamazinyo la matsha aphuma apho bekukhumke amadala.

Ixesha lona lokutya elimiyo lalingekho. Abantwana babemana njalo bengena bephuma apha endlwini engulowo ezanceda ngokuthanda. Loo nto ingumtyhutyubezo wesidlo esingade sibe siya phela.

ISAHLUKO SESI-8

IMBASA NOPHUME PHAMBILI

Wangena ngaphakathi ngoku uNomsa kulo ndlu ishushu, esiya kuzifunela intwana yethanga, kodwa wabuya waphuma kamsinyane. Wawurabula umoya waphandle wawusela nzulu, wathi esenjenjalo wabe ezisula ukubila ebunzi.

Wathi ebhekisa kuNtombi, “Inene umnandi umoya wasebusuku. Nenyanga seyiphezulu, iinkwenkwezi nazo sezi-khanya.” Besathetha njalo kwavakala isililo somntwana, waza ngoko uNomsa waphosa amehlo kuNtombi owathi kuye, “Uyazi um’omncinci unomntwana ontsuku zisibhozo ezelwe. Ubungathandayo ukuya kumbona?” Wavumela phezulu uNomsa, kuba wayebathanda abantwana engazenzisi, ngaphaya koko ekwafuna nendlela yokukhe emke kula mantombazana athetha angayeki. Bakhaphana ke ukuya apho endlwini. Bathe xa basemnyango kanye wajika uNtombi wathi ebhekisa kuNomsa, “Ina nalu uthuthu lwa-magqabi ekhubalo. Qaba iinyawo ezi ngalo phambi kokuba ungene. Kaloku ubuhambe indlela ende ukuza apha, kuloo nto ke kunokwenzeka ukuba ziruqa ububi bokunqumla imikhondo. Iya funeka into yokuba sibalumkele abantwana abasebancinane kwezi zinto.

Akabanga naphike noNomsa kule nto waseleziqaba ngoko iinyawo zakhe ngolu thuthu, wabe yena uNtombi selethinta isikhohlela kancinane ukuzazisa ngaphakathi. Laza ke ilizwi lokuphendula laba selivakala lithethela phantsi libavumela bangene.

Bangena ke kunye apho endlwini. Waba selencuma uNomsa eqhutywa bububele akumbona lo ntimekwana, emanzi ephuma esityeni sokuhlambela.

“NguNomsa lo mama,” watsho uNtombi ebhekisa kunina womntwana.

Lwalungafihlakalanga uvuyo lukaNomsa ekumboneni kwakhe lo mntwana, waza kungephi wakhulula intsimbi yomqala eyenziwe ngonokrwece abancinane wamnxiba yona kuloo ntamo inemingqeba. “Esi sisipho endimpha sona lo

mntwana,” wabhekisa kunina womntwana, waza waqokela wathi, “Ukhangeleka omelele emkhulu kuncentanga zakhe. Ndiya kholwa ukuba uya kukhula, akhuthale nasemsebenzini wamakhwenkwe kwanowamantombazana.”

“Besingekamthiyi negama ke,” watsho unina emangalisiwe yile minqweno mihle kangaka kaNomsa. “Kodwa ke ngoku sendisazi ukuba uya kuba ngubani na. Uya kuba nguNomsa, igama elithetha ububele, silithathela kuwe.”

Yamenza le nto uNomsa wafuna ukuba neentloni batsho nobuso obu bakhe balelinye ibala phofu baqaqamba ngaphezulu. Ukuba awongwe ngolu hlobo loo nto yayiqala kuye, waba nemincili ke wachulumacheka bubumnandi.

Kwakamsinyane emva koku uNomsa enoNtombi baphume baya kwabanye abantwana. Bafika bonke benze isangqa esikhulu phaya enkundleni. Babejikeleze uDamasi owayesithi ekulo abe ekulowa umntwana elolonga iintlobo ababeyiqabe ngazo imizimba yabo. Uthe uGangatha akumbona uNomsa esiza wamkhwaza esithi “Khawuleza, Nomsa, nawe ungene eluhlwini ungasaleli.” Nabo ke benoNtombi ababanga sachitha xesha bangena batyhudisa apha kweli cala linamantombazana amakhulu, sebhleka beyihla apha nabo bethethela phezulu, belindele ukuba uDamasi ade agqibe ukuhlola abekwenza, iindlela abaziqabe ngazo.

Wavakalisa ke uDamasi wathi, “Emakhwenkweni nguFanase ophume phambili.” “Emantombazaneni,” waza engathi ufuna ukuthandabuza nengqondo ayimi ntweni kodwa waphelalisa wathi “nguNomsa.” Yena uNomsa engekabinakho nokuyikholelwa le nto wakhangele kuNtombi waza wabuya wajika ngoku amehlo wawadlulisela kuGangatha. Wafika apho kumntu obuso budanileyo nobuhlileyo. Ngenxa yokucela lo mnakwabo akabanga nakuchwayita uNomsa kukuba ephume phambili wanikwa ibhaso. Wathi ke esacinga ukuba elakhe ibhaso aselelinika uGangatha lo weva ngoDamasi ekhwaza esithi, “Ibhaso lowenze obona buoronono buhlekisayo liya kuGangatha.” Yaba yintswahla kuhlekwa. Benza inzwinini abantwana bevuyisana naye yangu “Vity! vity!” macala. Wema ingqondo okomzuzwana uGangatha engazi nokuba angahleka, angalila angathini na. Kwasekunceda uDamasi ngokusuke ambizele ngaphambili phakathi kanye esazulwini sabantwana abo amnikele ingobozi

yonke yezintlwa, iinkumbi namaqonya agcadiweyo, wafumane ke waqhekeka nje ubuso obu bonke yiloo nto ehleka naye, into leyo eyatsho nabanye abantwana bathatha phantsi nabo behleka, watsho umzi wonke wanga uya shukuma yintlo-koma yemincili yemivuyo.

Kwathi xa kulapho uNomsa noko ngoku wafuna ukurana wangathi uzakuva onina bephuma bebakhalmela ukuba bathule, kodwa akubangakho bani uthini. Kaloku isigcobo esi sasisesikaDamasi poqo, abantwana bonke ke ababe menyiwe babevumelekile ukuba bathi sa namhlanje benze ukuthanda okwaloo mini yonke.

“Khawuze ngaphambili Nomsa ubonwe nguye wonke ubani uhlobo oziqabe ngalo,” watsho uDamasi. Yangakumbi ngoku intswahla macala onke wada naye ngokufihla iintloni wathi chu uGangatha ngesandla waza namehlo akawaphakamisa wawagcina ezinzwaneni awamane ezishukumisa njalo. “Ngaba wena uza kufumana ntoni kodwa.” wamthethela endlebeni wambuza uGangatha. Akaphendula uNomsa, namehlo akawaphakamisa. Yayinye kuphela into eyayimmele ngoku, ikukuba akhawuleze ade abe ubuyele eluhlwini phaya ngakuNtombi. Wamangaliswa kukulibazisa kangaka kukaDamasi, kudlalwe ngaye ngolo hlobo lokuba abe egcadwe esidlangalaleni sabo bonke abo bantwana emi yedwa uNomsa apho ngakuGangatha. Kodwa uGangatha yena wayengabethelwa luvalo engazi nokuba kuphi. Nanko emana ethi lwa emlonyeni, ehlfuna inkumbi nganye, kubonakala ukuba kuxhelwe eXhukwana kuye aze ke abuye abale kwakhona inani lezinto azifumeneyo.

Ngequbuliso abantwana bathi xum bathula bonke. Waza wathi ukuwaphakamisa kwakhe amehlo uNomsa wabona ngoDamasi esiza ngqo kuye ephethe inkawana engwevu yaza yanemigca imthe nkwa ngazo zozibini entanyeni. Yatsho ngamandla ukubetha oku intliziyo kaNomsa, akuyibona le nkawu. Wathi ke ezikhulula kancinane iingalo zayo entanyeni uDamasi wabe eyinikela kuNomsa esithi “Ina yeyakho.” Waza yena uNomsa, edumzela into engavakaliyo phofu ebulela wayamkela ngokuyiwola ngazo zozibini eyisondeza kuye. Akazange abe nakuyikholelwa konke into yokuba ufumene ibhaso elinjalo ukuba lihle kwalo.

Aqala ke amantombazana amkhungela ngamacala onke iyileyo inga ingakhe ibe nokuyiphatha-phatha nje le nkawana. Kodwa yona yambamba nkwa uNomsa ayakhe izikhulule. "Tyhini uya yibona seyikuthanda kwangoku," watsho uNtombi. "Uya kuthi ngubani igama layo?" "Ngathi inemigca oku kweqwarashe," watsho naye uNomsa phofu engekade noko abe usezingqondweni zakhe zonke. "Sendicinga ukuba masendisithi nguDube." "Asikukho nokuba ndiya vuya yinto yokuba ulithande kangaka eli bhaso lakho," wangenelela watsho ngeliphantsi uDamasi. "Enkosi, ndiya bulela, Damasi wethu. Ndilithande gqitha inene. Andikholwa ukuba kukho bhaso ndakha ndalifumana eligqithe kweli."

Kwakusekudala latshonayo ilanga. Apho ilitha elimhlophe lenyanga lalingafikelelanga khona kwakuthe siba ngethunzi lobumnyama, waza wathi esemi njalo uNomsa emgonile uDube emana emphulula wabona ngoSiziwe esiza kuye. "Uza kubona Nomsa. Bazakukhupha amagubu ngoku. Kamsinyane siza kuwqala umxhentso, sidude." "O! kuya kufuneka ukuba ndihle ndihambe kwangoku ndiye kufuna indawo kwenye indlu ndimkhuleke khona uDube lo angaqhweshi. Uthe esitsho wabe esiya kwenye indlu eyayingenamntu, emthe dle. UDube akazange ayithande konke into yokuba abone seleshiywa phaya elongweni ethiwe qho ngentambo entanyeni. Wathi khona akuva amagubu wasuke ngoku uDube wangenwa nakukoyika wafumane wamthi nkwa ngomlenze uNomsa wangathi uya mbongoza emcengela ekubeni angamshiyi. Aphindile atsho amagubu "Yo! ndafa lihlonbe lomdudo bethu," wvakala esitsho ezithethela uNomsa. Kwacaca ngoku ukuba uphakathi kweengqondo ezimbini, ikho le ithi makahlale agcine uDube, kukho nale ingxamele ukuba abesemdudweni, wafumane ke waphelela kwelokuba azicengezele athi, "Hayi toro Dube, ndiyeke ndihambe andinakunyamezela ndihlale nawe." Wathi esitsho wabe eyibeka phantsi inkawu leyo ephuma esiya kungelelela naye emdudweni. Wafika kwangoko wangena kumgca wabantwana ababesebchamba apha bengcileza ngamlenze mnye, betsholozwa ngengoma ethi, "Ngcile! ngcile!! ndihlatywe ngameva," itsho ihamba nokubetha kwegubu elenziwe ngokhamba lwembiza. Eli gubu lalingeyonto iyephi

liyingqayi nje enkulu ebotshe yavalwa ngesikhumba sebhokhwe apha emlonyeni. Lalibethwa ngumza kaDamasi u-Bongoza, ngeminwe le yempama yesandla, athi ukuyiguquguqula kwakhe indlela le abetha ngayo atsho iinkxentsi zonke zithabatheke lihlombe zimke zibetha ngalo umlenze ngoku, ubone ziguquka zibetha ngomnye, loo nto ke yonke ihamba nemikhwazo nokungqumshela.

Emva kwalo mdudo khe babeka iphika waza uDamasi weza nesaphetha esenziwe ngoqalo olugotyweyo lwaza lwabotshwa lwaqina ngosinga lwenkomo. Elinye icala eli lesaphetha wayelithe nkamfu phakathi kwamazinyo, wamana elutsala ngobhontsi usinga olu wanga ubetha ugwali. Loo nto yathetha ukuba bangene komnye umdudo baza nabantwana ke basebephakama besima ngeenyawo kwakhona.

Abo babethabatha inxaxheba bema benza ungecelele, ngoku baziqwebela owabo nje umdudo. Bema bajongana, wathi etshotsha umntu wabemana efinga nobuso obu. Watsho umntu wathi ukuba mbi oku wanga ngunomgogwana. "Le nto inokothusa nengonyama ngokwayo," yakhawuleza yatsho ingqondo kaNomsa. Kwabakho into ethi makaphume eluhlwini ahlale phantsi abukele. Kodwa ngoko kanye amehlo akhe athana mandla noGangatha ebufinge wabushwabanisa ubuso ngendlela apha cyatsho uNomsa waphela yintsini wahleka kwabuhlungu iintumbu. Wavakala esithi, "Hayi wena Gangatha umbi ulihlazo inene."

Kwangoko uNtombi naye waphuma eluhlwini waza wacebisa uNomsa wathi, "Kunjani siqokelele iinkozo zombona sidlale ngazo laa mdlalo wokuqasha sibiza amagama centaka." Bahamba ke besiya kufuna izikhwebu ezomileyo, bathi apho bazifumene khona bazichuba, iinkozo bazigalela engobozini. Zithe zakuba zanele bathwalisana ngengobozi leyo bafuna indawo ephangaleleyo. Bafika bazikrozisa ezi nkozi zenza imiqolo apha phantsi emhlabeni. Bakhungela ke abantwana bonke betyhudela ukuza kungena nabo kulo mdlalo mtsha, Yangu "Ntakani, ntakani leyo," bakhwazana benjenjalo bebiza igama lalo mdlalo. "Amakhwenkwe makabe calanye phaya, amantombazana wona kweli," wayalela watsho uNtombi.

Aba bancinane abantwana abangenanga bona apha emdlalweni, bafumane bema nje babonela. Umntwana ngamnye

unikelwe ithuba lokuba abize igama lentaka ibe lukhozo olo, amakaluchole lube kuye ukuba ubize igama ebelingakhange libizwe ngomnye ngaphambili. Ukuba akanagama lahlu-kileyo alibizayo makaphume emdlalweni abe "ufile."

Kwathi apha ekuqaleni zakhawuleza iinkozo ukuphela kuba umntwana weli cala wathi ukuba abize ujobela wabe lowa welinye icala ebiza intak' obusi, mhlawumbi isomi, isinqolamthi, kungenjalo ing'ang'ane. Wamangaliswa kakhulu uNomsa linani leentaka ezaziwa ngaba bantwana, waza wabonakala ethe khubaxa noko yinto yokuba yena cphume umdlalo ungekabi uhambele phi. UMdingi wayesabanyusa ummango ebambene nzima noDamasi, uZabala yena no-Bongoza. UNomsa wabonakala ekholiwe kakhulu ngumnakwabo lo. Bathi abasaseleyo bengekaphumi banconywa bakhuthazwa ngababukeleyo.

Kude ekuhambeni kwexesha kwasala uMdingi yedwa wangoboyise bonke. UNTombi wamthi jize ngebhanti yofele lwenkomo oluhonjiswe ngentsimbi eyenze amanquma ajingayo, wathi ukuba ayinxibe uMdingi kweso sinqana sakhe baduma bonke abanye.

Kwanikelwa ithuba ngoku kule mpi incinane ukuba ikhe idude nayo, mhlawumbi yenze owayo umdlalo. Waselephuma kwangoko uGangatha weza ngaphambili, wamisa indlu yonke ngomdudo ongaziwayo oqwetywe nguye. Wathi engqumshela wamana esuka amadlu exhumela phezulu ezikhaba njalo apha ezimpundu ngezithende ezi. Balandela bonke abanye abantwana nabo bamlinganisa.

Yayingumdudo onzima lo into eyatsho badinwa bazizinxeke-nxeke abantwana nemiqala le yee khothe lunxano, nengoma ngoku yaphuma imana ukuqhawuka phakathi. Ukuphelisa olo nxano kwagqithiselwana ngeebhekile zevanya namasi.

Kuthe kusenjalo kwaphuma enye inkwenkwe kula maddlana yeza ngaphambili ihamba ibetha inkwili kwezi zenziwe ngethambo lomhlathi wentini. Yathi vu phantsi yabetha ingonyana elusizana ; ngalo elo xesha abanye abantwana bona bayijikelezile, besitya iingwenye, amaqunube, amakhiwane kunye namaqonya awojiweyo. Yathi ukuvakala kokububula kwale ngonyana yenkwili yatsho bee yaca abantwana, izibothwana ezi zona zabonwa sezithe yoyi bubuthongo zilele,

kwafuneka zifunqulwe ukuthuthelwa ezindlwini ziye kulaliswa ezinkukweni.

Ngoku kwakusezinzulwini zobusuku nenyanga imana ukusithwa ngamafu itsho iwakhanyise abe mhlophe kuku-khanya kwayo. La makhwenkwe seleqolile azithi wungu odwa emka. UNomsa yena wagqiba kwelokuba abuyele phaya kulaa ndlu inoDube endaweni yokuba angene emdlalweni namanye amantombazana kwakhona.

Kancinane ethe cwaka waphutha-phutha ephumputha indlela, efuna ukuze anganyatheli bantwana baleleyo wada waya kutsho kwelaa longo linoDube elindele, lonke elo xesha, ukuva ngaye seleziphosa ezingalweni kuye. Hayi bo kwathi nya noNomsa ngoku wada wacinga ukuba makabe ulele.

Wavuya ke ngoko, nesazela sokuba ebemshiye yedwa sanga sithe gogololo. Kwakumnyama mbe, kwaza ke kwafuneka efune ngezandla. Ude ekugqibeleni wayifumana intambo yesisinga. Kodwa yona inkawu ebotshelelweyo yayingekho. Wothuka waxhuma uNomsa yakuthi tha kuye into yokuba makabe uDube uqhawule wemka. Wathwethwa ke kancinane efuna apha endlwini, elumkele nokuba angavusi bantwana, enethemba kodwa lokuba angamfumana uDube ezithe nca ndaweni ithile. Ude waphuma ngoku uNomsa kule indlu engayazi kanye eyona nto amakayenze. Waza wagqiba kwelokuba afune kuzo zonke izindlu aqale kuleya kanye inkulu apho amantombazana ayethontelene khona edlala 'upuca.' "Awu! Nomsa kanene ubuyawa umke namakwenkwe waya ezindle, kungenjalo ubuye kulala neentsana kwenye indlu? Thetha!"

Wafumane wababetha ngoncumo, phofu olubandayo, waza uNtombi wayigqiba le nto ngokuthi, "Khawuze wethu Nomsa khe sidlale. Ndiyazi ukuba ungasigqitha sonke apha kupuca. Sewuthabatha la am amatye, ndisadiniwe." Wanga uNomsa angathi udiniwe yena yile midlalo yamantombazana ingayi ntweni, kodwa wafumane wayeka waza wathi vu ecale-ni likaNtombi wawathabatha loo matye omahlanu.

Intliziyo yakhe yayisebandezini engazazi apho akhona ngoku awaphetheyo loo matye esandleni. Umdlalo lo wona ufuna ukuba umntu awabuthe onke amatye la aze aphose libe linye phezulu athi engawalahlanga amanye aligange kwangeso sandla eliya abeliphose phezulu. Athi qho ke amane

ewaphosa phezulu ngamanye ngexesha. Ukuba lowo udlalayo uthe waphosa lawa akaliganga ilitye abe ufile aphume ke emdlalweni. Yayilula le nto kuNomsa. Namhlanje kodwa wayengathandi kudlala loo nto wasoloko esithi akunga amehlo amanye amantombazana ayemka awakhangele kuye aqalaze afune apha endlwini ukuba akangembali na uDube.

Loo nto ke wathi ingqondo ingekho kule nto ayenzayo wawaphosa amatye phezulu wanga uwajula nje waza wamana njalo ekrwaqula apha nangapha ewabuyisa amehlo kuphela kanye xa kufuneka eligangile ilitye kwakhona.

Uthabathe ithuba uNomsa edlala kodwa ke wabuya wayeka waphuma apho endlwini. Wwabuyisela kuNtombi amatye waza yena wee nyebelele waphumela phandle apho emoyeni opholileyo wesibhakabhaka esizele ziinkwenkwezi zobusuku. Amantombazana wona adlala njalo elibele nokuba kwakha kwakho nomntu onguNomsa apho.

ISAHLUKO SE-9

INGULUBE

Phandle kwakumnyama kuthe cwaka. Ngubani ngoku kuloo meko injalo obenokuyibhaqa into enjengenkawu. ? Yayivakala kuNomsa imikhwazo yamakhwenkwe amakhulu kude phaya. Ekukhanyeni kwaloo nyanga itshonayo nanko esiya kungena kwezo zindlu ebengekafiki kuzo cvuya ukuba makube kusekho iindawo asenokufuna afunise kuzo.

Wathi esaya kwindlu eyona ikufutshane nesango wothu-swa yinto engathi sisithunzi eside esimnyama, eyathi njengo-kuba eya esondela nje kuyo yabe yona ibuya umva iroxa isimka ngokukhawuleza. Wema bhuxe uNomsa esoyika phofu ingqondo yona kubonakala ukuba ithabathekile. Waqinise-ka ukuba ikho le nto ikhoyo izula-zula apha phandle emzini. Kwakungekho mathandabuzo kuloo nto.

Yaphinda kwakhona le nto yathi phinzi apha ngasesa-ngweni yangathi ibifuna ukungena kodwa ayade ingene Waziva ngoku enamanwele uNomsa waza wasuka nomzimba lo weejadu yinyama yenkuku . Ngaba le nto liramneo elize kubangenela kusini? Makathini ke bethu. Wayengena sixhobo abengaliphckuza aligxothe ngaso mhlawumbi alibu-lale. Kwathi makabaleke kungenjalo akhwaze kuze umntu nosizo. Wafikelwa yingqondo yokuba abantwana aba banokuba basengozini xa kunje, loo nto yafuna ukuba abe nento ayenzayo ngoko nangoko angalibazisi. Waye ukuba ukhe wakhala wavakalisa ukwenzela ukuba uyise noyisekazi bakaDamasi bamve, loo nto yayinokubangela ukuba anike ithuba lokuba le nto ikhwele kuye imhlasele.

Ubuye wayibona le nto kwakhona phofu iluzizi. Kwathi kanye ngelo xesha inyanga yayingathi iphuma emafini uNomsa wabona ngeliso engalindele, into ekhanyayo ende enobutsolo, iphoswe nje apha ngaseludongweni lwenye yezindlu. Ngu-mkhonto yintoni bethu? Inene ibingaba lithamsanqa le-ngcuka into yokuba ithe kanti le nto sisixhobo esithile. Ithe inyanga iya kutshona wabe uNomsa ekhawuleza esiya kuyi-chola le nto athi yena sisikhali, yaza yathi kanti siso nene.

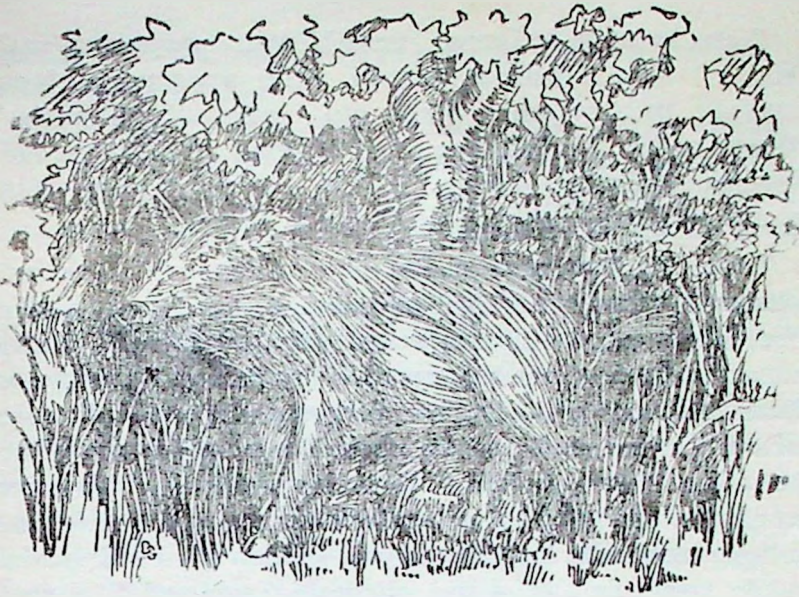
Wathi ke esichola wabe esivonya, esiva, waqiniseka ukuba siyahhlala esandleni, siya fana nento akhule nayo eyazi. Wanela ngoko uNomsa ukuba uya kukwazi ukusisebenzisa. Kaloku kwakukaninzi ebona amadoda la namakhwenkwe ebinza ngemikhonto. Naye xa angabonwayo ebemana ukuziqhelisa ngokubinza ngeengqanda ezinde nezinobunzima boswazi lomkhonto.

Weva ngomnwe ukudla oku komkhonto wakufumana bulubengu ukuba bukhali oku, waza wema ke walunga. Wathi ukuba makafake amehlo aqwalasele ukukhangela zasuka zema iinwele akuqonda uNomsa ukuba kanti le nto yingulube yasendle into engewangu ingathethekiyo, nethi khona umntu akubona loo mabamba ayo ayingozi athi ukoyika noku-yithiya oku ange unyusele. Wema apho ke uNomsa ethe nca ngomva eluthangweni kufutshane nesango, ewuphakamisele phezulu umkhonto elungele ukubinza phofu ezimele ethunzini.

Walindela njalo ke, uNomsa ezibambe umphefumlo elindele ukuba ibuye ize kunyondla le nto, waza wabuye waba nethamsanqa lokuba athi kanti akemanga ngeli cala livela umoya, loo nto yathetha ukuba ingulube le ingabi nakumva. Yabonakala ingalo ingcangcazela nje ngokuba wayeyiphakamisile kodwa yabuya yaqina kwakuloo nto elalele njalo.

Yavela ngentloko kwangoko esangweni ingulube ingekude apha kuNomsa kucacile ngoku ukuba ifuna ukungena. Elo yayilithuba engafumane ilifumane. Into eyayiqhelekile yayiyeyokuba kube kuvaliwe apho esangweni kodwa ngobo busuku isango lalishiywe livuliwe kwenzelwe laa makhwenkwe madala ayephumile. Kancinane eli ramnco lacotha, lanyongoba langena esangweni ngaloo mzimba walo usindanayo. Lithe ukungena kwalo langa liya yithoba intloko liya yiqubuda, laza langathi live into lathi lifutha lathyudisela kwelaa cala linendlu leya amantombazana aye kuyo edlala upuca ngamatye.

Akabanga alibazise konke ngoku. Wawakhupha onke uNomsa wabinza ngomkhonto wawutsho wamila apha entanyeni engulubeni kanye apha eqebeni. Kwangoko yathi igquma ngumsindo yazifohla kuNomsa umkhonto usemi njalo entanyeni. Yakhubeka yawa kodwa yabuye yavuka kwakhona. Imigqumo yayo idibene nemitswino ebangwa ziintlungu yavusa oyise bakaDamasi naye wonke ubani owa-



Ingulube emabamba

yelele apho. NoNtombi noSiziwe nabo baphuma basukela loo mkhosi, belandelwa lihlokondiba lamanye amantombazana. Baza bathi bakubona le ngulube iyingxwelera babaleka bazaphula ukuya kusithela ngemva kwendlu.

Ingulube yayiwile ngoku kufuphi nenye yezindlu apho. Yaza yenza umzamokazi ifuna ukuma ngeenyawo, yada yabonakala ngathi ivukile xa kanye afikayo uyise kaDamasi. Wayihlabanisela ngotolo ngoko kwakanye wayosela yaba iya phela ngoko nangoko. Wabalekela kuyise kaDamasi lowo uNomsa wafika wathi, “Asikukho nokuba ndivuyiswe kakhulu kukufika kwakho kanye xa kusenyingsweni.” Waza wabuza omnye emangalisiwe ukuba ngaba nguye na kanye lo uyibinze ngomkhonto ingulube. Wancuma wanqwala nje ngentloko uNomsa.

Yakhungelwa ke loo ngulube ifileyo wonke umntu emangalisiwe yile nto. Wavakala uyise kaDamasi esithi, “Hayi, le ntombazana uNomsa ikhaliphile. Benisazi ukuba nguNomsa oyibonileyo le ngulube waza wayihlabanisela. Ngokwenza kwakhe oko usisindise sonke engozini enkulu. Esi senzo sakhe sobukroti ndiya kusixela nakuyise unkosi uZitu. Waduma wonke ubani owayelapho wathi, “Hawu, incene, le ntombazana likroti negora.”

Waza ke uyise kaDamasi wamthi wole ngegchalaba wathi kuye, “Yiza kuzibeka phantsi ukhe unqengqeqe. Inene mawube udiniwe emva kwale nto ingaka ukuba nkulu.” Waselelandela okwexhwane naye uNomsa ukuya kula ndlu inonina kaDamasi nosana lwakhe oluyinkwenkwe. waza akuba ezandlalele ukhuko wazithi luqe walala tywa.

Yaba ithi tha kuye ngoku into yamacebetshu aphume phantsi kwawo kwanokubhungca abe nokusinda ngako. Wayedinwe mpela ngoku eziva efuna nokulala. Waqala wazamla waza waqamela ngengalo kodwa kwalile kanye xa kuthi makalale athi cum kweqatha engqondweni into yalaa nkawu yakhe ilahlekileyo nabe seleyilibele ngoku ngesi sithuba sobu budididi. Weva ngamehlo sezezalisa iinyembezi kwanzima nokuthoba isingqala esisemqaleni. Wazigquma intloko ngezandla kwaza nokuyola kwaloo mini wakuva kumkile kwaphela. Iihutyana elingephi ngaphambili ebengumzingeli okhaliphileyo, kodwa ngoku uzive engento yanto ngaphaya kokuba eyintwanazana kuphela enesimbonono sokulahlekelwa yintandane yesilwanyana sayo.

Ude ke ekugqibeleni wanqwaleka wozela, walala uNomsa, waza waphupha ngathi uhamba ethingaza efuna inkawana yakhe emahlathini amnyama naneengozi. Uphathe kubhuda nokubhuda uNomsa eguqu-guquka ezimbola koko kulala kwakhe. Kwathi kunjalo kwakho into ethi makezise isandla apha entanyeni azonwaye. Wathi engalindele weva ngento ethambileyo eshushu ikhwele apha egxeni ngathi ifuna ukuza ngemva kuye entanyeni. Vumbululu wavuka othukile wathi makayibambe le nto ngezandla zozibini. Wathi ukuba ayizise ngaphambili weva ngesikhalo sentlungu. Kanti ngu-Dube nkqu! Loo nto yatsho kaloku ukothuka kwakhe kwaguquka kwaba luvuyo ukuthi kanti le nto ayithe nkwa ngesandla ngumsila wale nkawu. Wafumane wayibiza ngegama “Dube!” “O! ndingathi kanti ndikubulele ndakubamba ndatsala ngamandla!” wakovakala esitsho uNomsa emwola uDube ngezandla emsondeza kuye.

Unina kaDamasi waba nentsini akuyibonela le nto waza wathi, “Asikukho nokuba ndiya vuya ukubona ukuba uyithanda kangaka le nkawu. Uyazi uDamasi uthabathe inkxamlako enkulu ukuze ayibambe okuya ebesindle aluse

iinkomo. Ibiyintanda yakhe le lonke eli thuba de wayinikela wena yalibhaso lakho.”

Kanye esathetha le ntwana yakuloDamasi yasitsho isikhalo “Thula, thula mntwana. Yo! masiyeke ukuthetha ngoku” wathi esitsho wabezithi qukulu elukhukweni apha ngasemntwaneni emthuthuzela, wabuya walala ke umntwana kwakhona.

UNomsa naye walala kolwakhe ukhuko waza wamsondezelela kufuphi kuye uDube emgonile njalo wamana ukumsebezela endlebeni ngothando embuza apho ebeye khona ade amvise kakubi kangakanana nje. NoDube aphendule ngesinkawu sakowabo, atsho ezisondeza ngakumbi kuye. Bathi ubushushu obu bomzimba apha egxalabeni batsho wec cole cum walala obentlombe uNomsa wothuka xa kuph-iph-iph esiva imikhwazo, “Phakama sihambe. Lithuba ngoku lokuba sibe sibuyela emakhaya. Khawuleza, ntombi, thina sesimi ngeenyawo ngoku.”

Kwakuxa lithi chapha ukuphuma ilanga. Isibhakabhaka sasibhinqiswe yimibala ngemibala ebomvu neluhlaza. Kodwa umoya wentsasa wawuhlaba, loo nto yenza ukuba abantwana aba balungiselelayo basoloko bezigcine bedloba-dloba ukuze babeshushu. Iintyatyambo nazo ezibomvu nezinemibala ekhanyayo zasezibonakala phaya naphaya engceni sekukho neentaka esezivukile ziphaphazela.

Laa makhwenkwe ayemkile ngobusuku ayebuya nawo ngoku ngamanye, emana engenelela apha kwabanye abantwana kubonakala noko ukuba adiniwe kwaye engenanto ininzi yakuthetha kuba kaloku ebe ngakhange abuthi qhwe obephezolo ubuthongo. Kodwa athi phaka, thwa, akuva soloko kuzingise njalo into kakuba “ukhe weva na kodwa? Uyazi kodwa?” “Phulaphula ndikuxelele.” Abonakala nawo ekugqibeleni enyibilika ebuzisa ukuba yintoni na kanye le nto ihlileyo? “Kutheni ningayithethi nje? Sixeleleni nathi!” “Wowu! uNomsa! Ingulube!” Wathi esitsho lo wabe nomnye nomnye elandelisa ekwatsho “uyibinze yafa ngomkhonto!” “Ungaya kuyibona nawe nantsiya ithe gangalala phaya ezantsi kobuhlanti beenkomo!” Bathi ababengekayiboni babaleka baya kuzibonela babuya imilomo bengayihlanganisi. Bonke bamvuma uNomsa ukuba akadhulwa nkwenkwe nakwizinto zobukhwenkwe. Waza no-

Siziwe akabi nakho ukungayivumi inyaniso yokuba basindi-swe nguNomsa bonke ngokukwazi kwakhe ukubinza, ukutola nokuzingela.

Iintanga zikaNomsa ezingamantombazana zamjonga zonke zamncoma ezinye zanomona noko yile ndwe azithwalise yona. Waza ke wakha wanqumama wacinga ngobuninzi bezinto aya kuba nokuzibalisele uThemba ekhaya. Zange abe nakubucingela ubuso bakhe ukuba kuya kuba njanina xa ambonisa le nkawu yakhe. Wayazi kodwa ukuba eyona nto aya kufuna eyiphinde wada wabuya wayiphinda iya kuba yile yale ngulube ayibuleleyo.

Kwathi kusenjalo kwavakala ikhwelo lisitsho. Babonakala abantwana besenza ungecelele lwezidwe ngezidwe bonke bebulisa apha kuDamasi nabanakwabo nodade nakubo bonke abantwana bakowabo bezindlu ngezindlu. Bediniwe benjalo namhlanje, bekwaronoronwana ngaphezulu, baziruqa bakroza beyindlela yokubuyela emakhaya. Abanye bahamba betyhalana bengqinibana kungekuhle iziingxabano yonke loo ndlela ikukugoduka; kodwa ekugqibeleni baya kufika emakhaya baba nokuqala imisebenzi yabo ngethuba, amakhwenkwe aphuma neempahla, amantombazana ajongana nemisebenzi yendlu. Amakhwenkwe ayesazi ukuba noko angakhe athi ngqwa amane ecuntsula ephungula ubuthongo bephezolo ngoku alusileyo, kodwa amantombazana wona ayesa zi ukuba akukho nokubuthi qhwe oku lide libuye liye kutshona ukuze abuye afumane ukulala kwakhona. Wathi noNomsa ukuba nje angene ekhaya kunye nabanakwabo nodade wonda ngendlu yakowabo ukuya kuqala owakhe umsebenzi.

Kungekudala nanko ke ephuma kwakhona esiya emlanjeni uDube emthe ngcu phezu komphanda owayewuthe khu ehlezeni. Yabetha kuhle intokazi yanga iya tyityimba ukuhamba oku ihlisa loo ndlela, ithi yakuthi krwaqu apha kuDube ichulumacheke yakucinga ukuba kanene namhlanje kukuphela kweentsuku zesizungu zokuya emlanjeni wedwa ungenaqabane. Ithi yakufika kuloo ngcinga intokazi izibone sel' imjija kancinane ngendlebe loDubana wayo, naye ke afumane athi thwa amehlo asitsho "esakwaNkawu" phofu naye ethakazela luvuyo.

ISAHLUKO SE-10

UMTHUNYWA KAZITU

Kwisininzi saba bantwana iimini ezilandela olu suku lwesijadu zafana nje nezinye iimini azahluka nganto. Kodwa kuNomsa akubanga njalo. WayenoDube ngoku iqabane lakhe.

Ubchamba naye ngamanye amaxesha xa aya emlanjeni. Kodwa amathuba amaninzi ubemshiya ekhaya noThemba owayefana naye ngokuyithanda kwakhe le nkawana. Ngenye intsasa uNomsa wayehleli noThemba kunye noDube phandle ebalisela uThemba ngomgcobo lowa wawukulo-Damasi kwanangengulube leya yasendle. Eli bali kwakuninzi embalisela lona kodwa uThemba wayengadinwa lilo ethanda ukuliva liphindwa njalo kwakhona.

“Wena Nomsa,” wambiza unina uMaMakhanya. Waphendula omnye ngokugaqela ngaphakathi endlwini. Unina wayesafunza uNomabali, waza wamyaleza wathi, “Xa uye kuhlakula phaya entsimini namhlanje uze undikhangelele ukuba yimifuno naziqhamo ziphi na eziya kuba sezilungele ukukhiwa ngomso. Kaloku siza kuhanjelwa nguyihlo. Ngathi uza kumka ithuba elide emva koku, ngako oko ndifuna ukuba olu tyelelo lube sezingqondweni kuye angalulibali.” “Ngaba ubawo uza kuya kuzingela iindlovu kolu hambo lwakhe lwakamsinyane nje?” wabuza watsho uNomsa.

Wavuma unina, nakuba engabanga nakwazi kanye ukuba uya kuhamba nini na. Kodwa umqondiso wawuya kuba kukuthunyelwa kwesigidimi kwizibonda zamaziko akufuphi.

“Kowu! andisakunqweneli ngako ukuba ndibe nokuhamba ndiphume naye,” walekela watsho uNomsa. “Hayi suka, Nomsa; Khawuyicinge nawe le nto uyingqwenelayo. Uyazi mhlophe into yokuba akukho mantombazana aphuma nephulo lokuya kuzingela iindlovu. Ukuba kunokubakho mntu uhambayo uphuma apha ekhaya inokuba nguMdingi Icacile loo nto.” “Ndiyazi nam ukuba koba njalo kanye,” waphendula uNomsa ngeliphantsi.

“Kodwa yintoni le nto unganeliyo wena wonwatyiswe ngumsebenzi wobuntombazana njengoSisizwe lo nabanye?”

Uyihlo, ewe, ebe nokuyithanda onwatyiswe yinto yokuba ngobuchule nobukrothi bakho, kodwa ebenokuvuyiswa ngaphezulu kukuba ezo nto zithethwa ngomnakwenu lo kunawe. Uyazi ukuba xa kufike ixesha lokuba wende abantu baya kuba besithi, 'Azi ukuba uNomsa unokuba uyilobole ngeenkomo ezingaphi na indoda eza kutshata naye endaweni yokuba kuthiwe wena, Nomsa, ulotyolwe ngeenkomo ezinga inani lazo.' Wayihleka uNomsa le nto waza wathi, "Hayi ubona nje noko andithanga nqa kukwenda mna. Ndinganela kukuba ndisoloko ndaba lapha ekhaya kuwe." Wancuma kancinane unina yile mpendulo engayekanga ukukakaza uNomabali ngamasi. Waphendula ke wathi, "Ewe okwangoku usengaka usengatshoyo."

Wathi gwiqi waphuma uNomsa wagangwa nguThemba owakhawuleza wabuza ukuba abangedlali mdlalo na. "Hayi ndisaya kuhlakula emasimini kuqala," walandula watsho uNomsa. "Ukuba kunjalo ke khawundenzele intsomi," wazicengezela ngoku uThemba.

"Ewe, kodwa ndakubuya. Ma sendifunqula uDube lo, wena uphume noMpondo nibe nisiya kudlala," watsho uNomsa emshiya nelo.

Wathi akubuya wafika selelindile uThemba egibisela umbuzo, "Uthini ke ngoku ngala intsomi yam?" "O, ndisadiniwe okwangoku," waphendula uNomsa. "Khawuphumle ke kodwa ube undibalisela intsomi leya," wacebisa uThemba watsho. Wadungudelisa omnye wafumane wathi, "Hayi ke kulungile. Kodwa khawume khe ndizifuncle into yokusela noDube."

Wathi ukuba aphume kwakhona wabe uThemba selekhawuleza emenzela indawo ecaleni kwakhe ebuza ukuba mayibe intsomi yakhe iza kuba ngantoni na namhlanje selewathe nta namehlo kukungxama.

Wacinga okomzuzu uNomsa engazi ukuba angabalisa intsomi ithini na. Waza wabuza, "Ungayithanda njani le yengcuka cyayizama ukudla inyanga?" Wamqinisekisa kwangoko uThemba ukuba uya kuyithanda. Waqala ke uNomsa wahambisa wathi: "Kwakha kwathi kudala ingcuka yachola ithambo. Yaza yalithi nkamfu phakathi ngomlomo yemka nalo. Inyanga yayimhlophe kakhulu ngobo busuku, namanzi emi emlanjeni ethe nzwanga esizibeni. Loo

ngcuka ibawa kunene yayibona inyanga ikhanya kuloo manzi azolileyo, yathi kuba yayicinga ukuba le yinto enkulu yesiqo senyama etyebileyo elinqatha yalilahla ithambo yazama ukubamba le nto ikhanya phaya emanzini. Yaziphosa yonke ngentloko. Adungeka amanzi, yaza ngoko nengcuka idane iyiloo nto yaphandlewa ayabi nakubona nangamehlo.

Yaphuma yachopha phezu komlambo ithe cwaka ikhangele emanzini. Abuya azola amanzi kwakhona nesithunzi senyanga sabuya savele. Yaphinda yatsho ngobandayo umtsi ngoku iziphosa esizibeni ilinga ngako konke ukuyibamba inyanga ime nayo. Kodwa endaweni yenyanga yasuka yabamba amanzi, yaza ke yabuyela kwaselunxwemeni kwakhona ingaphethe nto ngomlomo.

Kwesi sithuba kwavela enye ingcuka phezu komlambo yachola ithambo eliya yemka nalo ingabonwanga. Leya yokugala yathi qho yona yamana ukubamba amanzi la kwada kwasa isenza loo nto inye yaloo msina-ndozele wamapatalala elize, yaza nenyanga ngoku yaqala yafiphala ayabi nakubonakala emanzini. Kwalile kaloku ngoku ingcuka yakhumbula ithambo eliya layo ibilibeke phantsi okuya ibifuna ukubamba inyanga labe lingasafumaneki. Izingise iintsuku ibuyela emlanjeni seyiqhutywa ngoku nangumsindo ibhuqa ifuna apho phezu komlambo ide ingene nasemanzini iwagxobhagxobha. Yaba yinto yentsini kuye wonke umntu xa yayibonwa iphinda-iphinda ibuyela emlanjeni iziphosa naphakathi imana ibamba into engekho ngaphandle kwamanzi la enkala kuphela."

Waphosa amehlo uNomisa kuThemba wafika engqiyame ngendlu kubonakala ukuba uyozela ngoku. "Uyithanda njani le yanamhlanje intsomi?" "Mhm?" Wafumane wazibuzisa uThemba evuka. "Kuphela njalo? Noko khendikuve ubalisa emnandi kunaleyo. Kodwa ndiya bulela, enkosi." "Nankuya uNocuba esiza, ndiza kudlala amahu naye watsho seleshiya esiya kuye emhlangabeza.

Ngentsasa clandelayo wathi xa uNomisa nonina bebeka imbiza eziko beva ngamagidigidi ezingqi angaqhelckanga phandle. Bathi mabavele baqonde ukuba ibiyintoni na. "Kanti nguGangatha kha nimbone!" Bonke bathana mandla nento kakade kuloo Gangatha, ironorono elinjalo elizele zizazinge ezibomvu zomzobo umzimba lo wonke,

liphethe ngesandla amabhekebheke amakhulu amagqabi omxalagube.

“Unyule mna ubawo ukuba ibe ndim ohamba esasaza udaba olubalulekileyo kwimizana yonke ekufuphi. Ndimdala ngoku,” kwatsho into enelunda kakade, loo mabhekebheke amagqabi iwaphakamisele phezulu. “Ndithunywe ukuba ndihambe ndixelela wonke ubani ukuba ingqina enkulu yezindlovu iphuma ngomso omnye lo !”

“Ungalibali ukubaxelela apho kuya kudityanwa khona kwanexesha lokudibana. Baya kuyazi kodwa into oyithunyiweyo ngokubona loo mabhekebheke uwaphetheyo. Ungathethi uxele nto ungabuzwanga. Wakubuzwa baxelele ixesha abazingeli nalapho ma bahlangane khona.”

“Awu ! ngaba le ntombi-nkwenkwe yam izaze njani ezi zinto ?” wazibuzisa uMaMakhanya le nto ifuna ukumhle-kisa. “Yintoni kodwa uyihlo angabi ebethume wena nje ngokuba uyiqonda kangaka nje indlela yokumema ingqina.”

“Ndiyazi ngokwam, ningandixeleli into emandiyenze,” wabaqinisekisa watsho uGangatha. “Kwaye ngaphaya koko kufuneka ndikhawulezile ukuya kule mizana ndize kubuya ndincedise uMdingi ezinkomeni.”

IS AHLUKO SE-11

UNOMSA UYA VUZWA

Wayehleli phezu kokhuko lwakhe lwemizi akhe isathanga uNkosi uZitu, phaya kwaMaMakhanya umfazi wakhe. Wathi akunikwa ukutya ngesitya nguNomsa, wakha wakurogola.

“Ndiya yiva ngevumba le nyama ukuba yeyanyamakazi nina,” watsho ebhekisa emfazini wakhe, waza waphendula uMaMakhanya eqhayisa wathi, “Ewe unakho ukuyiva. Yeyalaa ngulube kaloku ibulewe nguNomsa.” “Sendiyivile nam loo nto,” watsho ekhangela kuNomsa. “Ukuba uNomsa lo ebengeyiyo intombazana ebeya kuba lizingela elitshatshelayo. Ngendisazi nokuba ndinenkwenkwe eyomeleleyo nekhaliiphileyo ebizakuba ligalelo kule ngqina.”

“Ukuba ubungandivumela ndiphume nawe mhlawumbi bendingathamsanqeleka ndibulale enye ingulube apha endleleni,” wafakelela loo ngqondo kuyise uNomsa eziva noko ngathi ufumane wathetha waza wamkhalimela unina wathi, “Wasakufumane uthethe, Nomsa, uthini kaloku ngoku?” Wancuma ngobubele uZitu, wamthi xhamfu bugadalala ngenqondo esiva iintsinga ezi zakhe. “UNomsa lo womelele oku kwenkwenkwe nakuwo ibe yendala kunaye. Kwaye ngaphaya uphaphile, ekwakhaliiphile.” Wabuya wayijonga le ntwanazana yakhe, ngoku wawadlulisa anchlo aya kutsho kwinkosikazi yakhe waza wathi, “Ukuba uNomsa uya thanda angahamba nale ngqina, kodwa inye into endifuna yona kuye kukuba angandidanisi.” Wawakhupha onke uNomsa kukumangaliswa yile nto ithethwayo uMaMakhanya yena waphelwa yintetho akabi namlomo. Wavakala edubuleka uNomsa esithi, “Enkosi kakhulu, bawo, ngokundivumela ndibe nokuphuma nawe kule ngqina. Ngxatsho!” Wathi esitsho wabesondela kunina emqinisekisa ukuba uSiziwe wothabatha indawo yakhe kwizinto ezininzi apha endlwini.

Oku komntu kanye oseleyigqibe yonke into apha engqondweni uyise wathi, “Khumbula okuya wayelahle inkomo uMdingi, waya kuyifuna wena weza nayo. Akayi ngoko yena engqina namhlanje. UGangatha yena noko usemnci-

nane. Ngako oko unyoko woncediswa ngabanakwenu aba bobabini noSiziwe kuwo wonke umsebenzi wendlu," wathi esitsho wabesithi tshitshilili isitya elandelisa ngelithi selegqibile ukutya. UMaMakhanya wamdlulisela ichitywa lelitye elimhlophe ukuba aphothule izandla asule namafutha. Wathi ke akuba uNomsa emzisele amanzi ngomcephe waxukuxa ngawo, wafaka nomnwe ehamba unlomo waza wavungula namazinyo waba ke ucokisekile ngoku.

Walungiselela yonke into emalunga nale ngqina waza ke wamana ukubhekisa izwana encoko-ncokola nomfazi wada wateketisa nosana oluya. Wabona uNomsa naye ngoku ukuba makathi nyebelele aphume.

Wayengaziva yimincili yovuyo wabona ukuba makakhe abe nomntu amakaziphokoze kuye. Nanko uThemba emi phandle efumane walikheswana yedwa. Wathi ngokufuna ukukhupha le ngqondo akuyo waya kuye wafika wamfunqulela phezulu wamtsala nangenwele ezi kuhle, wambhekisa intloko ezantsi, izithende zasemoyeni. Yamonwabisa le nto uThemba, noDube waxhuma-xhuma ethe manga ngulo wana-mhlanje umdlalo.

Kwavela uSiziwe ethwele imifuno avela kuyikha entsimini leya yakowabo. Akabanga salinda kubuzwa uNomsa waselelophoza exela konke kwangoko. "Uyazi Siziwe, ntombi, ubawo uthi nam ndingahamba ndiphume nabo kule ngqina bayiphumayo yokuya kuzingela." Kangangokumangaliswa awayemangaliswe ngako uSiziwe zange abe nakwenza zwi kule nto konke. "Nceda, toro, undigcinele uDube lo okweli thuba ndiza kungabikho," walandelisa watsho uNomsa.

"Kulungile, dade, kwaye ndingaya kuncedisa naphaya endlwini kowenu," wongeza watsho uSiziwe. "Kodwa khe-ndibuze Nomsa, ucinga okokuba amanye amantombazana la akucingela njani ngale nto?"

Kwakungekho nto iyephi amakayilungiselele olu hambo lwakhe, loo nto yatsho ezo ntsuku zimbini ayeqokelelana ngazo amabutho engqina zanga zingunyaka wonke kuNomsa. Ngeyayimnandi kuye into yokuba amane ethethana nabantu balapha ekhaya ngale ngqina. Kodwa ngenxa yokubona ukuba uMdingi wenzakele yinto yokuba kuhambe intombazana kunaye asale yena, uNomsa akabanga nakuba sayiphatha konke. Imfanelo yayikukuba kuhambe yena. Kodwa, uyise

wayeseletshilo ukuba yena Mdingi akahambi kuba kutshanje, ebesandul' ukulahla inkomo. Wafumane ke uNomisa waphosa lalinye kuMdingi, noko kukho ukoyika kodwa zona izimvo zakhe efuna ukuba abe nokuziva. "Noko mntakwethu ndinga ngeyinguwe ophuma nale ngqina." "Ayinanto loo nto ungafumane uzikhathaze," watsho uMdingi engathi akakhathali. Kodwa uNomisa wayeyiqonda into yokuba umfo lo noko ayimhlalanga kannandi le nto. Wafuna engqondweni ukuba ebengenza ntoni na ukumnceda. Nge-wayenezinye iingqondo ngaye ukuba uZitu wayebazi ubungcali bakhe uMdingi kwizinto ezinje ngengoma nokwenza amabali, kwanobuchule bakhe ukwazi ngeentaka nezilwanyana. Kwaye okunye wayechana into ewayo, ewabetha amanye amakhwenkwe xa kujoliswa ngotolo. Loo nto wayeyibonisi kwesaa sijadu sasikuloDamasi.

Kuphela isifo sakhe uMdingi yayikukuba angabonakalisi ngqondo imilileyo, njengomntwana oyinkwenkwe, kwizinto ezinjengokutola, ukuzingela, kwanezinye izinto zolo hlobo. Waziva cwile kukuthi inkosi yalathe umntwana wayo oyintombazana omakaphume naye ingqina kuyokuzingelwa nasezilweni iindlovu, endaweni yomntwana oliduna kwinto enjalo.

Kusempondo zankomo ngale ntsasa yokuba kuhanjwe uNomisa wanyongoba wacotha kancinane ukuya kuphuma endlwini ethe khu umphanda oze wamanzi. Wayefuna ukuba unina ze azifumane zonke izinto zilungile ngexesha lokuvuka kwakhe. Ixesha lalisekho lokuba aye kukha amanzi, agube isitya sombona, aze aphembe nomlilo phambi kokuba abe umkile. Wathi ekumseni kwakhe kuloSiziwe, uDube wangathi noko uya yizonda into yokuba avuswe ebesalele. Wavakala uNomisa esithi kuye, "Kuzakuba nzima kakhulu kum, Dubana wam, ukuba ndikushiye, inene."

Wathi esitsho wabe crola intambo awayibophelela esibondeni ngaphandle apha endlwini kuloSiziwe laza elinye isondo walithi rintye entanyeni kuDube. Waza ke wamsondezela isitya samasi awayewathanda kakhulu. Akalibazisa naye wangena esityeni watya, wathi khona akuva ingqaka kwanga kuxhelw' eXhukwana kuye.

Ngeli thuba atyayo uDube amehlo kaNomisa aphaya endlwini kayise afuna ukuqonda ukuba sekukho bazingeli

bafikileyo na. Wabona bababini bengena ngesango, imikhonto le, nezo zixwexwe zamakhaka igonelwe kufuphi. Kwangoko uNomsa wamshiya apho uDube wabaleka ukubuyela endlwini kowabo. Kukho into awayeyilibele yokuba azifunele amafutha okuthambisa umzimba uzokuphela ukugcaba ukhazimle ufane neyabanye abazingeli. Ngaphezu koko wayekhe eve kusithiwa amafutha enza umntu abelula athambe nemisipha. Akuthabathanga thuba lide oku kuzihlikihla ngamafutha ezigudisa, wazitsho wamhle uNomsa kwabonakala ukuba angahamba ngoku akukho nto isileleyo. Wakhanga-khangela ke ukuba abone into enokuba isasele ingenziwanga ukulungiselela unina akuvuka. Akabonanga nto, waba selephuma ke chamba.

Wathi xa athi qengqecele eyishiya indlu esithi yena akukho mntu ube nokuvuswa kukuphuma kwakhe weva ngelizwi linokozile limbiza, "Wena Nomsa khawume." Wajonga ngemva, othukile, wabona ngoMdingi ephethe iintolo nesaphetha esandleni. Le nto yatsho yaxhuma intliziyo yakhe, yafuna nengqondo. Ngaba lo mfo wakowabo uvuke nelithi makuhambe yena, aze yena, Nomsa, ashiyeke! "Yintoni?" wafuna ukuqonda omnye. "Ina thath' apha ezi ntolo nesaphetha. Kuya kufuneka uxhobe ngezinto ezizizo," watsho emnika. "Kwovu, wada wandinika ezona kanye zakho zizizo!" watsho uNomsa emangalisiwe kunzima nokuba azithabathe oku.

"Ndithanda ukuba zibe kuwe. Ewe, khona ndiva kakubi ukuba ndibe mna ndiya sala apha ekhaya, kodwa kuloo nto yonke andilwanga nawe."

Woyiswa kwaphela uNomsa yile ntelekelelo kaMdingi lafumana lamya akabinakufumana nto yakuthetha. Wakhe wathandabuza kodwa wagqibela ngokuzithabatha ezi ntolo nesaphetha azinikwayo. "Enkosi, mntakwethu, kubi kum, ukuba ibe akusayi kuba nguwe ngokwakho oya kuzisebenzisa ezi ntolo nesaphetha. Kodwa qiniseka ndiya kuzigcina."

"Azinanto zona oku kokwazo. Eyona nto kum kukuba uzilumkele ungalhiwa nto. Siya kuba soloko sajonga enkalweni ngamehlo abomvu silindele ukubuya kwakho." wagqibela ngelitshoyo uMdingi. Wathi esitsho wabe emphulula apha engalweni waza engalekanga limbi wabaleka waya kushona ebuhlanti.

ISAHLUKO SE-12

IPHUMILE INGQINA

Wayeselephumile endlwini naye ngoku uyise kaNomsa, ephumela ukuza kubulisa amkele abazingeli ababesebekho, ababe sebemana ukuthinta nezikhohlela ukuzazisa ubukho babo. Nanko emi engaphambi kweengxilimbela ezimbini zabamelwane kuthethwana kuhlekwa kumnandi.

UNomsa wasondela kuyise apha ephethe isaphetha neentolo zikaMdingi eziya, waza wema wakhahlela ngembeko wathi “Bayethe!” Esehlongweni ngentombi yakhe uZitu naye wathi, “Heke, selelapha uNomsa intombi yam.” Waqokela kwakhona emana ebetha iliso wathi, “Ndiqinisekile siza kubona neendlela zokubambisa iingulube zasendle. Lichule eli kuloo nto.”

Ngenxa yengxolo eyayisenziwa ngabazingeli nabo bangahambiyo babesebevukile nabo ngoku, baza bakhawuleza bema bezizicuku mgama bejonge ukuba ngaba kwenzeka ntoni na. Nakuba uThemba wayengenakumbona udade wabo, uNomsa yena wayenakho ukumbona selethe nta loo mehlo, esifa kuku-funa ukuqonda konke okuqhubekayo. Baya bethontelana abazingeli befika nezinja zabo, lada inani labo laya kumashumi amane amadoda namakhwenkwe, nezinja zakwishumi elivayo.

UNomsa weva omnye wabazingeli esithi, “Le yaminja ndiyivimbe ukutya iintsuku zada zantathu ndiyihlupheza ukuba izibebukhali kule ngqina.” “Neyam ikwanjalo; yingcuka le ngoku kukuhlutshezwa nayo kukungafumani nto itywayo okwethuba.” “Khawutsho ngaba, elaa xolo lomthi likrakrayo obundixelele ngalo ukuba ndilihlafune ngentsasa yemini yengqina, liya kundigcina ndingabi naphika? Okwanguku andikeva nto yakuba liya sebenza.” “Yo! kanti ufumane wathetha, ndingakuqinisekisa ngalo, andikazange ndive kusithiwa alisebenzanga,” wvakala esitsho lowa wokuqala. “Jonga phaya! Ukho laa mntu utshayelayo kulaa

ndlu. Lilishwa lodwa elo. Phaya kowethu thina akukho mntu konke uvunyelwa ukuba abe ebhequza etshayela nge-ntsasa yemini yengqina kuba loo nto ayinyali kwenza amado-da abuye ephancaza engezi nanto.”

Wathi ukuba ayive le nto uNomsa wothuka wafuna ukufa leli shwangusha waselesuka ngoko nangoko egqotsa ukuya kuThemba ephuma naphantsi kwaloo milenze mide, imnyama yabazingeli wafika wathi kuye, “Nceda, baleka uye kuxelela udade boSomcuba ukuba makayeke ukub’ etshayela izindlu ngoku siphuma ingqina, loo nto iya kusizisela ishwangusha.”

Waselesuka kwa oko uThemba ebaleka esiya kunqanda ngokomyalelo kaNomsa. Bathe ke abazingeli bakuba sebhlanganisene benjenjalo bazahlula bazenza amaqela ngokweziduko nobumelwane babo. Baqala ngokukhahlela enkosini yabo apha, baxhentsa bemana ukuwisa phambi kwayo. Laza iqela lebuthe ngalinye emva koko lamana lixhentsa libaleka lijikeleza umzi lo wonke wakomkhulu, likhwaza lizibonga ngenxa yobukhalipha namandla alo. Bonke bagqibela ngokwenza into enkulu yesangqa bejikeleze inkosi bemi ngembeko phambi kwayo amehlo bewathobile.

Waza waqala ke uyise kaNomsa wabayalela ngokumalunga neendawo zabo ngabanye eluhlwini lwengqina leyo. Ngalo lonke ixesha athe wathetha wanga uya phelelisa, uya kuva ngokuduma kwabazingeli bebinza phantsi nangemikhonto bekhwaza besithi, “Sewutshilo kade wena.”

Ekuthetheni kwakhe uZitu wayesithi, “Nonke ndiqinisekile, niyayazi imithetho yengqina, ngoko andingebi sanika miyalelo, kodwa ke apho kunokuba kukho oselelibele manditsho ukuthi yazini into yokuba indoda enkhonto uhlabo kuqala yeyayo loo nyamakazi. Elandeleyo nayo yachana imka nomlenze, zekuthi ukuba inyamakazi ayiwanga de kwabinza owesithathu lowo yena uya kumka nesiphanga. Inkosi yona inxaxheba yayo ngumlenze kwinyamakazi nganye ewisiweyo.” Wakha wawafaka amehlo efinye neentshiyi efuna ukuqonda okokuba onke ayephulaphule na wabuya wahambisa wathi, “ukuba kuthe kanti kukwezi zincinane ewisiweyo inyamakazi loo mzingeli makakhawuleze eze nayo kum aze kubeka ibango lakhe. Loo nto iya kwenza ukuba kungabikho mpikiswano. Ndiya kholwa ukuba nonke nivile, anditsho yini?” Yayimikhwazo esitsho onke ukuthi, “Awu,

incene, sive kakuhle.” “ Masihambe ke ngoku,” wagqibela ngelo uyise kaNomsa.

Wathi ukuba atsho kwabe sekuvakala imbomba yabantu abonwabileyo kweso siqhu loo nto ihamba nesandi sokubethana kwemikhonto, amakrwane namakhaka abazingeli be-xwaya imiphongolo yaloo mikhonto, iintolo nezaphetha neentambo zethwathwa kwaba ke njalo baya nduluka.

Yaba nzima ukungena engqondweni kaNomsa inyaniso yokuba, nene, baphumile ngoku bayinqina. Bekrozile benguningcelele njalo ukuphuma kwabo uNomsa yena elapha kanye ngemva kuyise uZitu wathi makakhe akrwaqule ngenmva mhlawumbi kungenzeka ukuba abe nokumthi tshe okokugqibela uDube wakhe, kuba kunokwenzeka abe uSiziwe ukho kweso sihlwele basishiyayo uze nayo inkawana yakhe. Kodwa ngelishwa uNomsa akazange abe nakubona nto ngenxa yoqilima olwalwenziwe luxudululu lwaloo madoda atyuhudileyo onke. Wawungenakho konke ukuba ube nento onokuyibona ngaphaya kwawo.

Bathi ke behamba njalo yavakala imitha eshushu yelanga liphuma, ibetha emhlabeni owambathiswe ngumbethe owatsho kwaluhlaza yaka, kwazola, kwaphola. Ingca emanzi yona yasoloko njalo imana ukuresha loo mizimba ize yabazingeli. Waza uNomsa wanga angaqonda ngelizwe apho iindlovu zikhona ukuba lona lelinjani na? Ngaba liya kuba lelenduli nezihlambo ezinemilanjana ebaleka amanzi na mhlawumbi lelamathafa anotshwathi lwamaqunde sini na? Ubengazange ngaphambili emke kakhulu uNomsa ade aye kutsho ngaphaya kwezaa nduli zileleyo kumi kwenye umzi wakulo-Damasi. Yinto awasoloko wayifunayo engqondweni ukuba kanye lilizwe elinjani na ngaphaya kwazo. Wayeyazi phofu into yona yokuba kukho amazwe anezilo ezinje ngeengonyama, iindlovu, amanyala neembabala njalonjalo, loo nto eyiva xa kubaliswa ngamaphulo eengqina zangaphambili. Wayesel ayiva nento yokuba kukho lizwe lonke lithile lesithabazi samanzi ekuthiwa lulwandle anokufika kulo umntu ukuba ebenokuhamba njalo abhekise empumalanga ngqo angajiki.

Kwahanjwa kuncokolwa isisiqhazolo intsini yabazingeli kuthi konwatywe kunjalo kwalathiswane ngento ethe tshe yabonwa mgama phaya. Babethatyathwa nayintwana engekho, ubone sebethe phatsha, namchlo sebewavule ee

ndla, kuthi kunjalo uve sebehleka nokuhleka. Kanti no-Nomsa yamcubhula ngentsini into yokubona amadoda emadala enemfeketho esenza izinto zobuntwana. Wawungekhe utsho ukuba ngabantu abakhulu kunabantakwabo abangoku abangaphantsi kwakhe noNomsa. Kuphela umntu owayezindilile nguyise, owayekhokele enyathelela phezulu ngaloo milenze, iliso soloko libukhali neendlebe ezivule njalo zombini.

Ekubeni uNomsa ebehamba nabo okwethuba ngequbuliso uZitu wajika wangathi ukhumbule ukuba kukho umntu kanene onguNomsa ohamba nabo. Waza wamjonga wathi kuye, “Nomsa indlela yethu isende ngaphambili. Ndiya kholwa ukuba akunguye mntu udinwa msinyane.” “Andifumane ndidinwe konke,” uphendule watsho uNomsa emjonge uyise uZitu kuloo mehlo namhlanje abonisa ububele. Ngelo thuba wadibanisa ngalo amehlo naye wafumana kunzima ukuba angaze nakancinane amcingele nanini na ukuba angangumntu owoyikekayo nonomsindo. Kwabakho into ethi makabuze ukuba kukude kangakanani na kwilizwe elineendlovu? Bekungaba kuhle ukwazi angade asuke azibone sezibacumza zibanyathela besahamba bengalindele nto. Le ngcinga yayingenziwa kukuba esoyika kodwa yayilungile into yokuba azi oko kunokubehlela.

“Sondela, Nomsa. Hamba apha ngakum, khon’ ukuze ube nakho ukundibuza nayiphi na into ofuna ukuyiqonda,” wacebisa watsho uyise. Wakhawuleza ke noNomsa kwango-ko wasondela wazama ukuba makanyathele kunye naye angasali. Waza wangathi noyise ubucotha ukulinganisela yena angade noko aqhuqhe ukuze angashiyeki. “Ngaba kusekude kangakanani elizweni leendlovu?” wabuza uNomsa. Wathi uZitu ukumphendula, “Hayi ziintsuku zintlanu ku phela sifike,” watsho amehlo ewagcine endleleni apha phambi kwakhe, “kodwa ke andingetsho ndiligqibe kuba kungathi kanti sesikufuphi kunoko mhlawumbi sibe sisekude kunoko. Yonke le nto ixhomekeke ekubeni thina ngokwethu siya khawuleza na, nokuba okanye asihlelwanga nto na inokusilibazisa. Sijonge ngoku ilizwe leentaba nemilambo emikhulu apho iindlovu zithanda ukuba khona.”

Waphulaphula ngononelelo uNomsa, kuba wayefuna ukwazi ngoko kanye. Wahamba ke intloko eyiphakamisele phezulu kungekho nto imqithayo. Wabona ngonowambu

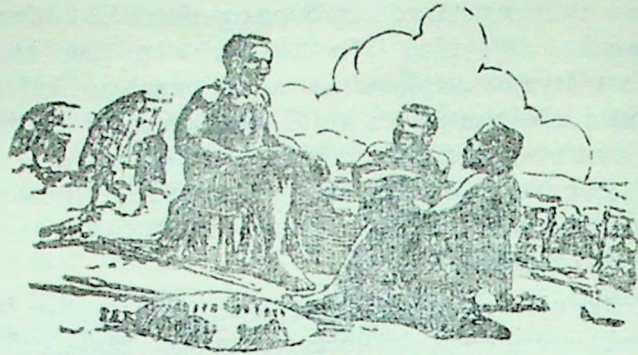
onesicholo awayengazange wambona ngaphambili kodwa waba nokumqonda. "Tyhini, khawubone, tata, laa ntaka!" "Ayityiwa leya," waphendula uZitu engaseso kuloo nto. Waza wathi uNomsa seleza kuthi ebethanda nje ubuhle obu bayo le ntaka wabuya wazinqanda, kwakho into ethi kanene kunokwenzeka, ukuba abazingeli aba abacingi nganto yimbi ngoku ngaphandle kwento etyiwayo nengananiswayo enjengeempondo zeendlovu.

Wahamba njalo enyathela kuhle ecinga ngegqange lasehlathini abekhe walibona kwaneentyatyambo zamathafa nazo abekhe wazibona kwasendleleni apha. Kwathi khona akuba esimka ngokumka kwezi ndawo azaziyo loo nto yenza ukuba imithi le neentyatyambo zibe zezinye zahluke ngoku mpela kwezuya. Wazimisela ukuba akasakukhe alibale angamxeleli uSiziwe ngalaa nyibiba ayibone phaya ngakulaa mlanjana bakhe bema basela kuwo. Yinto angasobe akholwe nokukholwa bubuhle bayo leyo. Okweentaka zona andisathethi! NoMdingi ngokwakhe zange azibone czingaka ubuninzi. Wada wabona nodebeza emana exhiphula amasele phaya emgxobhozweni.

Bathe bakuba behambe umgama ovayo uNomsa wabona ngoyise esula ukubila kwebunzi ngomva wesandla waza wathi "Ngathi ilanga seliphakamile kakhulu. Bekufuneka sikhe sema safumana into etyiwayo, sahlala phantsi saphumla lide ilanga libe buphola."

Bafika ke emlanjeni omanzi mahle abalekayo yaza inkosi yajika yabhekisa kubazingeli yathi, "Nantsi indawo enokusilungela sityele kuyo siphumle nokuphumla. Basebcqokelelana ke kwangoko apho baza banga sebevene kade ngeento emazenziwe, bathi aba besiya kuzingela ozimbila nemiqha emahlathini babe abanye besiya kufuna iinkuni kwalapha. Baza abanye basala bevula iingxowana zabo berola omithwane namadumbe.

Kwakungekho nentye into emphosayo uNomsa idlule engayibonanga. Wakha waya kusela waba nokuthoba unxano naye phaya emlanjeni. Waza ke naye wakhawuleza waya kutheza elakhe ibathu leenkuni baphosa emlilweni phaya owawusewuvutha kade. OZabala noDamasi namanye amakhwenkwe nabo bayenza eyabo indima bethunywa le nale ngamazingela la madala.



Abazingeli basaphumle

Kuthe ke emva kwethuba babuya abazingeli bemana ukufika ngabanye bephethe omivundla, izakhwatsha, izagwityi nozimpangele, zonke ezi zaxhwithwa zeziphoswe eziko. Lo gama izinto ziseziko uNomsa wathi makakhe aziphose phantsi aphumle. Kunjalo ubone ngoDamasi esiza ephethe imilenze emibini yesakhwatsha emnika omnye ukuba batye.

Bakuba abazingeli betyile bonke bakha balala phantsi engceni phaya emthunzini opholileyo waloo mithi mide nemi-khulu. Babephumle apho abanye bada bakha bee ntlithi nobuthongo okwethuba, emva koko uZitu ke wayalela ukuba babuye bathabathise kwaseluhambeni lwabo kwakhona.

Kuthe kodwa ekuzeni kutshona kwelanga wabe uNomsa selezirola kukudinwa akabi salindela nakuyise ukuba abe nguye oyalela ukuba kumiwe. Nakuba wayengafuni kuyivuma inyaniso amagindi-gindi ezingqi zezilwanyana ngoku afuna ukumothusa ekude. Weva nomgqumo ombi wengonyama kwanokukhala angabanga nakukwazi ukuba kokwasilo sini na. Wathi kodwa akukhangela apha kwabanye wasuka wafika kubantu abangathi abaziva ezi zinto. Nenyanga yahle yaphuma, yaphakama yatsho kwakhanya baba nokuhamba ekuhleni ngalo lonke ithuba abathe bazigcina kumhlaba ophangaleleyo. Kuhambe kwahamba ekugqibeleni kwanyanzeleka ukuba kumiwe ngenxa yokuba ngoku babona ngehlahi elimnyama ngaphambili, nokukhanya kwenyanga apho kwakungena kugqobhoza, waza ke uZitu wayalela ukuba kumiwe.

Kwabaswa apho kwangoko umlilokazi omkhulu. Loo mlilo wawungenzelwanga kupheka nakothiwa kuphela koko

wawuza kugcinwa uvutha ubusuku bonke ukwenzela ukugxotha nezilwanyana ezihamba-hambayo zingasondeli. Kwaza ngobo busuku abazingeli abazinika thuba lakuya kufuna kutya basebephelela emiphakweni yeenkobe namadumbe eyayisezingxowaneni zabo. Nakuba oko kutya kwakungekuninzi noko kwakunentswane kuhluthisa, waza wathi ke ngamnye akuba ekhongoziwe wafumana esakhe isabelo walala kufuphi nomlilo. Akuya ukuba uZitu ubeke omnye wabazingeli abe ngunoboniselwa angalali wavuya kakhulu uNomsa.

Elele ke njalo ngomhlana amehlo akhe ejonge isibhakabhaka sithiwe qwelele ngeenkwenkwezi, engazi nokuba mababe bakude kangakanani na emakhaya, wabona ngento ihambahamba phaya phezulu emithini. Yangongoza intliziyo yakhe yabetha ngamandla kwangoko. Wathi makavuke achwechwe aye kuhlaba umkhosi kuyise, suke wabona ngamagqabi ebuya emana ukushukuma kwakhona. Kanti yimfene! Ikwanenye ephethe ithole yona! Yayingumzi wonke wakwamfene phezulu phaya emthini.

Kusunjalo kwavakala isikhalo yanga le nto ivalwe umlomo neempumlo, kanti lithole unina ulitsala nangeenwele ezi zisekhosi. Ekubonakala ukuba le ntwana ibanjwe inkwamla iphosa emlonyeni into ebingenalungelo layo, unina ngoku uyigqotha ngomnwe ekhupha loo nto. Esi sikhalo sitsho bavuka bonke abazingeli bawa ezikhalini besozela benjalo. Bathe kodwa bakubona ukuba ziimfene ezi wathi omnye wabo ebalalisa ufuba, "Asingezikhathazi nganto akukhonto zinkusenza yona ukuba nathi asizenzi nto."

Yavakala inkunzi isitsho ngomvungamo yanga iya ngxola ithi, "Thula apho wena, sukufundekela!" Saba siya phela njalo eso sikhalo kwabuye kwathi cwaka kwazola emamfene. Into yonke yanga imi kakuhle kuseluxolweni macala onke noNomsa wazunywa bubuthongo walala.

ISAHLUKO SE-13

ISIDLO ESASINGALINDELWE

Kuthe ngentsasa elandelayo abazingeli ngoku babhekisa amabombo kumhlaba ophakamileyo oziinduli. Ilizwe apha lafuna ukuba nomfa-nkungu. Kuloo mfa-nkungu uNomsa uve ngezwi limbiza, kanti nguDamasi, seletsho ngamazinyo amhlophe ehlekiswa nguNomsa lo. Bahambe kunye okwethuba phofu ukuthetha kungekuninzi kuba ummango wawumde, bafuna ukuba nephika ukuwunyuka.

“Hayi kukude kwilizwe leendlovu,” wafumane watsho uNomsa ckugqibeleni. “Unyanisile” waphendula uDamasi. “Kangangokuba bathi abanye siseentsuku-ntlanu silala sivuka, abanye bade bona bathi singadlula nalapho.”

Kubethe imini emaqanda kodwa besephezulu ezintabeni. Bathe bakuphosa amehlo ezantsi baba nokuwabona loo mathafa acambaleleyo ezantsi anengca, nemitha yelanga yatsho umoya lo wanga ngamaza ashukumayo enzonzobila. Bathe ke bakufika ngasengxangxasini eyayiqukuqela isihla phezu kweengqukuva zamatye ukuya kungena emathafeni ezantsi uZitu wayimisa eyinika ikhefu impi yakhe, waza uNomsa waqonda ukuba kumelwa ukukhe kufunyanwe into esiwa phantsi kwempumlo. Kaloku waye ngayiqhelanga into yokuba umntu athabathe ithuba elide kangaka engakhanga asule nomlomo. Phaya ekhaya xa abantwana belambile bafumana into etyiwayo kwangoko kuba soloko kwabakho ukutya ngokwaneleyo.

Lo gama uNomsa noDamasi namanye amakhwenkwe bathe mababe besiya kutheza iinkuni ezomileyo zokuphemba umlilo, amagqala kubazingeil aba aya kuziphozisa ubushushu phaya engxangxasini. Kwakuhlekwa konwatywe kuyiloo nto, kukhwazwana kugityiselwana nangamanzi. Wakuba umlilo sewuvutha akhawuleza aphuma amadoda engxangxasini athabatha izixhobo zawo nango ephuma, baza oNomsa noDamasi noZabala nabo bafumana elabo ithuba lokuya kungena kwa kulaa manzi abalekayo. Baphuma ke beziva bepholile behlaziyekile baza bazigqatsa elangeni besomisa loo mizimba yabo yayivuza amanzi.

Wathi ukuba uNomsa awaphose mgama amehlo ezantsi ethafeni, wabona into angayazanga. Le nto yaba ngathi ziingqungqumbana ezimbini entsundu nemnyama zihla zikhawulezile phaya elundini, zaba ngathi azinyatheli naphantsi, zathi khona zakuba zisiya zisondele imibala le yaya icaca nazo zikhula. “Jonga, Damasi, ngaba ziintoni eziya?” Watsho ebuza. Waphakamisa amehlo uDamasi wakhangela ngelo cala wayesalatha ngakulo uNomsa phofu engade abe unento ayibonayo. Emzuzwini kodwa ubuye waqonda wavakala esithi, “Tyhini ziinciniba eziya. Yinkunzi nemazi. Ikho le nto izothusileyo. Ngoku zibaleka ngamandla, kangangokuba imilenze le yazo ishiya amehlo ngokukhawuleza.” Wabona uDamasi ngoNomsa selehleka esithi, “Nathi ngathi besingavuyayo ukuba besinokubaleka ngolwaa hlobo xa sisukelwa ngamaramnco asendle.”

Kwathi ke kusenjalo beva ngezinja zixoxa zixela ukubuya kwabazingeli. Babebuya bethwele, waza ke wonke ubani waselesiwa phantsi exhwitha, ehlinza iintaka neenyamakazi ezo ziza kojiwa. Bathi bakuba betyile ke balala. UNomsa engekade athi ntlithi ukulala wanga uva imikhwazo ethi makuvukwe kuhanjwe kwangoko.

Lalingekho konke ixesha lokuba umntu abe usazolula enqwaleka nokunqwaleka xa uyise ethe makuhanjwe ubesitsho kube kanye angadlalisi. Nomlilo ngoku wawusewucinyiwe ngabazingeli.

Kwathi ngengomso ekutshoneni kwelanga babe bekumhlaba omathafa anezinga ezithe shinyi. Wathi akukhangela kweso sibhakabhaka sibomvu sokutshona kwelanga uNomsa waziva ethanda, kumnandi, naye ethakazela. Kakade ke wayesoloko wamangaliswa kukukhawuleza kokuphela kwelitha kwanamabala akhazimlayo okutshona kwelanga, onke efiphala ade afune ukuba mnyama. Into yokuba lithi litshona kube sekuba mnyama kwangoko, loo nto yayingumhlola kuye. Laya kutshona njalo ilanga ngaphaya kolundi langa ligityiselwa oku kwelitye esizibeni senzonzobila. Athi namathunzi aya eba ngqindilili ukuba mnyama ngaphezulu. Abazingeli ngoku kwafuneka bebaze iindlebe namehlo. Ilizwe ababekulo ngoku lalilelithandwa ziingonyama. UNomsa wanga uyise akangeqibi kwinto yokuba balalise kumathafa anje ukuvusa amanwele. Waziva engumntu

ophakathi kwengozi. Wanga angabuza ukuba bangatyhuda disa bahambe umgama ongakanani na kumnyama kunje. Nezinja ngoku nazo zaqala zakhwenyela imisila zathanda ukuza emadodeni.

Kwathi kunjalo laa mpi ibiphambili ngequbuliso yabonakala inqumama isima. Kwathi cwaka akwabikho uthethayo bonke bawa ngezikhali zabo. Ngaba kwakutheni? Wakhangela kuyise uNomisa wanga uya buza, koko omnye yena wayetolosele ngamehlo ejonge ntsho phantsi komnga omkhulu engayithabathele ngqalelo into yokuba makabe uNomisa unento ayibuzayo.

UDamasi noZabala ababenyanzelisile ngoku baba ngaphambili bamalathisa into ende nenkulu nantso iqungquluzile ithe tywa phantsi. Esiqwini apha yayisisikhahla esenze amaqhuma abonakalayo amabini. Le nto kwakunzima nokuba ishukume kuloo nto iyiyo yaza yanga ifile.

Abazingeli baya besondela kuhle kuyo izinja zona bezibambe ngentambo koko kungxama kwazo. Bathi bakuba kufuphi ngokwaneleyo uNomisa waba nokuyiqonda ngoku le nto ukuba yinyokakazi enkulu iginye inyamazana. "E-e! Ifile," watsho uyise, "Masesiyiqangqulula sibone ukuba iginye ntoni na." Basika ke kanye apha kule ndawo iliqhuma, bafumana ukuba kanti linxala khange lithiweni iliginye njengoko linjalo kwaye kungekudala loo nto yenzekile. Ezi ndawo zimbini zibalaseleyo phantsi kwesikhumba apha zii-mpondo ezisahlumayo zenzala elo.

Wakhawuleza uDamasi wathi kuNomisa "Ngaba uya yiqonda into eyenzekileyo? Le nyoka ilibambe elinxalana yaza yaliginya bimbilili ingalihlafunanga, yalala ke ukuba iletise. Suka ngoku ileleyo iimpondo zona zayikrazula inyama kwavuleka isisu yafa yiloo nto. Ngathi siya kutya sinyamnyeke, xa ndiqonda, ngokuhlwa nje."

UNomisa yena wayibonela ukuba le nto iya kuba ziindaba ezimnandi kuThemba ekhaya. Wavakala yena uDamasi esithi, "Lithamsanqa lengcuka kum eli, inene, kuba kaloku kudala ndayigqibelayo inyama yenyamakazi." Kwatsho into eyayiselisitya nomlomo lo ngoku ithethayo. Wafumane uNomisa wathi, "Noko mna andisalambanga ngolwaa hlobo bendilulo emini."

Wathi uZitu makwenziwe umlilo omkhulu. Laza inxala eliya lenziwa imibengo lojiwa ngabazingeli, kwalapha kufuphi nenyoka le ifileyo, bonke bengalilibali elo thamsanqa lokuzibona sebeza kutya lungaka bengakhange baxhamleke. Uku-yitya oku loo nyama banga abazange bayibone inyama okonyaka wonke, nakuNomsa watsho umqala wagquba lakuza czimpumlweni uthungo lwenyama eyojiweyo.

Kwabekwa okhala babe ngonobonisela okweli thuba kulelweyo, sakho nesithatha somlilo wokugxotha amaramnco ugcine nabazingeli befudumele ebusuku noNomsa noko namhlanje akabanga nakulala kamnandi ngenxa yesizathu seengcuka nodyakalashi baloo nqila ababetsalwa livumba lalaa nyoka ifileyo. Wawamilisela ke amehlo kuloo malangatye anyukayo, ezimisele ukuba akayi kukhe alale ngobo busuku, wayeza kuba ngunobonisela kakhala ozinyuleyo, noko okhala ababini abangebi baninzi. Kodwa akavumisanga bona ubushushu bomlilo nokuhlutha esiswini czoo nto zamoyisa akabi nakho ukuhlala ehleli. Walala yoyi uNomsa waya kuqabuka ukuphuma kwelanga ngentsasa elandelayo.

ISAHLUKO SE-14

IZWE LEENDLOVU

“Namhlanje ngathi sifikile kwelithandwa ziindlovu.” Nakuba uZitu wayewabhekisa loo mazwi kuNomisa owaye-sondele kuye waphakamisa ukuwathetha kwakhe wenzela ukuba wonke ubani abenokuweva, waza wongeza wathi, “Ndicinga ukuba siya kuba nokubona amanqina azo eli langa lanamhlanje lingekatshoni.”

“Ingaba ubuchanile ke bawo, ngokuya ubusithi siya kuba ntsuku-ntlanu kuphela phambi kokuba sibe siya fika kweli leendlovu.” “Kaloku ndihambe apha amaxesha amaninzi.” yaphendula yatsho inkosi. “Yaye iindlovu ezi zithanda indawo enye. Loo nto ithethe ukuba akukho nto noko ingako ongade undincome ngayo uthi ndiya chana. Yinto le engaqondwa nangubani na.”

Wayemthanda uNomisa uyise ezidla kakhulu ngaye kanye ngale nto yokuba ungasoze umve ezenza umntu apha owazi ngaphaya kokuba esazi. Wayesiva kuthethwa ngezinye iinkosi ezazizingca ngolwazi nangamandla azo, zikhukhumele yiloo nto, kanti nesandla sempatho yazo sasingwanyalala ebantwini. Loo nto ke yazenza zakhohlakala. UZitu yena waye ngenjalo. Wayengazigabisi nganto nesiphatho sakhe ebantwini sasisihle. Njengenkosi wayenalo ilungelo lokuba athethe kangangoko athandayo kubo kodwa akenzanga njalo waziphatha yena njengomnye wabo.

Behamba kunye njalo uNomisa utsale iingqondo zikayise wamalathisa isicukwana esithile semithi wathi makakhe asijongisise. Loo mithi yayingemithi iqhelekileyo. Yayingathi ayinaxolo. Wafuna ke isizathu saloo nto. Wajonga uZitu naye wafumana kunjalo. Le mithi yayingenamaxolo nawayesele ayexotyulwe ejinga eye kuthi ngqu phantsi emhlabeni, neminye yale mithi yakhangeleka ngokungathi ixushekile kudala yagugayo.

“Kucacile ukuba bezikhe zalapha iindlovu kule mithi. Mawube izinto uziqaphela msinyane ‘bo, ntomb’ am !” watsho uZitu, wathi esitsho wabe eyijong sisa le mithi, nalapha phantsi kwayo, wabona ukuba le mincinane kuyo ifune uku-

sitshulwa neengcambu yonke, yaza ingca yona yabhuqeka yalala. Apha kulo mhlaba ufumileyo uphantsi uNomsa waba nokuyibona imbucqe yamanqina cendlovu.

“Phulaphulani apha,” watsho ngeliqinileyo uZitu, abazi-ngeli bamamela ngokuzola okukhulu kwangoko. “Nje-ngokuba sifikile nje ngoku kwilizwe leendlovu kuya kufuneka sonke silhambe silumkile sivule amehlo. Ikakhulu ndibhekisa kwabo bangaziyo ngengqina yeendlovu kwanobungozi bayo. Kukhe kwathi kutsha nje uCaluza iqhajana lomfana nabanye ababini bafa bengacinganga besenzakaliswa yindlovu eyayisemsindweni ikhathazekile. Sathi sisahamba kanti sezisivile ngevumba singekaziboni thina. Sabona ngazo sezisiza zinxakama, imiboko ziyijiwuza neendlebe sezimi zonke zifuna ‘undikho.’ Zeza zafunza esiqwini kwangathi kudala. Sathi cebu sema bucala endleleni yazo, silungele ukubinza. Kanti enye seyimbambe nqaku ngomboko uCaluza yamthi ntlale emthini yamphinda-phinda yamtshe wafa fi. Ayanela kumenjenjalo koko yamphosa phantsi ngoku yamnyathela ngamanqina, yamdobonga, yamshiya engumcaba.”

Akuba enjenje ukuthetha uZitu wakha wanqumama wabajonga bonke emehlweni waza ke ebuzekelela ngoku wathi, “Ewe khona sagoduka nalo uninzi lweempondo ngelo phulo kodwa ilahleko yethu yona yaba nkulu kakhulu ngaloo mini. Kodwa masithembe ukuba noko namhlanje siya kubuyela emakhaya singaphethe nto iya kubanga usizi neenyembezi ezintsatsheni. Kufuneka iindlovu sizibone kuqala zona zingekasiboni ukuze kulunge. Indoda nganye mayenze unakho-nakho wayo ngexesha ingayekeli kwamanye. Ndigqibe ke ngeli : Zesingangxami ngokuyibulala indlovu isekufutshane nomlambo kuba yosuke iziphose emanzini iye kutshona nezo mpondo zayo singazifumani. Ze nivule amehlo nizivule neendlebe. Ndigqibile ! Masihambe ke.”

Ekundulukeni kwabo waya ebaleka kuyise uZabala wafika wathi, “Khawubone phaya,” watsho esalatha indledlana ekucaca ukuba iindlovu zingena ziphume ngayo kwelo hlatana. Yayigudile igqusheke yalukhuni kukusetyenziswa amaxesha amaninzi. Kodwa omnye wabo wavakala esithi, “Noko la manqina akamatsha, ngathi sekuntsuku iindlovu zigqibele ukuba lapha kweli hlathi. Khangela iingqatha ezi

zazo sezindala.” “Masiphume sithi,” watsho uZitu ngoku walatha icala emabathathe lona. “Ninyathele kuhle. Indoda ilungele ukugwaza kodwa ilindele kum izwi elitshoyo.”

Apha ekuhambeni kwabo uNomsa wayemelwe zizinto ezininzi, ukuba zoba ngaphi na inani leendlovu abaya kuzibona zikunye, nokuba baya kwenza ni na ukuze bagoduke nenye yazo, kwanokuba wothini na yena siqu, ukuze abe nokufumana enye kuzo ngezi ntolo zikaMdingi ayitsho tyhamfu kanye ebomini ayosele. Yayimke nezi zinto ingqondo yakhe waza walibala akabona nalapho anyathela khona. Wathi ke engazanga waziva seletyhobeka ezintsaseni ezomileyo, ingxolo yaloo nto yatsho bothuka bonke abazingeli. Bathi guququ bonke ukujonga uNomsa bexakanisekile yile nto ayenzileyo. NoZitu wathetha ngeliphantsi wathi, “Uya bona kuya kufuneka ulumkile, asifuni kuhamba ngoku sesizisola sisithi sifumane senza ngokuthabatha intombazana sihambe nayo kule ngqina. Ingxolo enje ngale uyenzileyo ingasibizela umhlambi wonke weendlovu zisiwele mhlawumbi zisibaleke singabuye sidibanise nazo. Zingathi khe zasiva nje ngevumba mhlawumbi ngeendlebe sibe sesingabafileyo kwangoko zizo. Umntu ofumane wenza usifaka sonke engozini. Uze ungabuye uphinde ufumane wenze ke.”

Yayingekho konke imfuneko yokuba uyise ade athethe nokuthetha naye ngale nto. UNomsa wayeseledane eyiloo nto kade engazi nalapho angazifihla khona ngoku. NoZitu kambe naye ngewayeyiqondile into yokuba angahambi nentombazana xa aphuma ingqina kwakhona. Bahamba bona abazingeli njalo sebemlibele ngoku uNomsa neento zakhe. Nakuba wayekunye nabo kwakunzima kuye nokuphakamisa amehlo la. Iintlani nodano ezoo nto zazimambethe. Bakuba sebehambe umgama uve ngomntu emthi khu nge ngqiniba engalindelanga. Akayinanzanga le nto kuqala, wacinga ukuba mayibe ugilwa ngempazamo ngomnye wabazingeli. Kodwa yazingisa le nto wada wawaphakamisa amehlo. Kanti nguDamasi owamtsala ngokuhleka waza wampha amakhiwane asendle.

Akabanga namandla uNomsa okuba awathathe wafumane wanikina intloko ezilandulela. UDamasi akamnyanzelanga ngawo koko usuke akalibazisa wawatyela apha phambi kwakhe ekhangele. Bahamba umganyana bekunye waza

uNomsa wajika wamkrwaqula wafuna ukuqonda ukuba u-Damasi usenanto isaseleyo na ngoku amphe. Wayiqonda le nto ayithethayo kwangoko uDamasi, waza emralisela wamana eziphatha-phatha isisu esi sonke ebonisa ukuba uhluthi ngawo aye ebemnandi ade agqithisa. Wambonisa isandla singaphethe nto, size, waza walatha emqaleni apho aye kutshona khona onke loo makhiwane.

Wabonakala uNomsa edanile yaza loo nto yoko kudana kwakhe yayeyona uDamasi imhlekisayo ngakumbi. Wagqiba uNomsa kwelokuba lo Damasi akahlukanga konke uya fana namanye amakhwenkwe ngokunyoluka.

Ubuye uDamasi wamngqiniba uNomsa wamralisela kwangalaa makhiwane ebe mbonisa wona kuqala. Akafunanga kuhleka konke uNomsa yile nto, wafumane ke wancuma wathi kanti uDamasi akawatyanga kokuya ngathi uwatyile. NoNomsa ngoku akabi mnqumnqezi wawaxhiphula ukuwathatha oku akalibazisa.

Phofu wamahlulela inxeny e yawo naye uDamasi baza bahamba besitya kunye ke kumnandi. Kaloku wayeseleyilbele ngoku yonke laa mpoxo wayenzeke yona ngaphambili, kodwa loo nto ayimbangelanga ukuba ngoku anyathele nje naphi na.

Kuthe ukufudumala kwelanga wabe umkhondo weendlovu ungasabonakali uye kutshona kwisithabazi samathafa anotshwathi lwengca. "Kufuneka sithabathe engaphezulu ngoku ingqalelo," wabalumkisa watsho uZitu. Loo mazwi adluliselwa kubazingeli bonke ababelapho nabo batsho banonelela nangaphezulu ukufuna umkhondo kwakhona.

Bathe xa basondelayo kanye kumlambo owawumkhulu beva ngengxolo yokubetha kwamanzi. Bema ithuba bephulaphule baza babuya bahamba kancinane behlela emlanjeni apho. Bakuba besondele, isandi sokubetha kwamanzi saye sikhula ngaphezulu. Amanzi la wona anga asithwe ngamakhulu-khulu amaphatyu-phatyu amabhabhathane abuzulura ngebala amana endandazela evuka ehlala, asuke phantsi enyuke, aphakame kwakhona adlule ubude bendoda yonke imi.

Ngoku inkosi yabayalela abazingeli ukuba bazimele ngaphaya kwamatyholo bangawagxothi amabhabhathane baluchithe noqilima lwawo ukuze babe nokubona phaya emlanjeni. Wasondela uNomsa ecotha kancinane waphuma phaya ema-

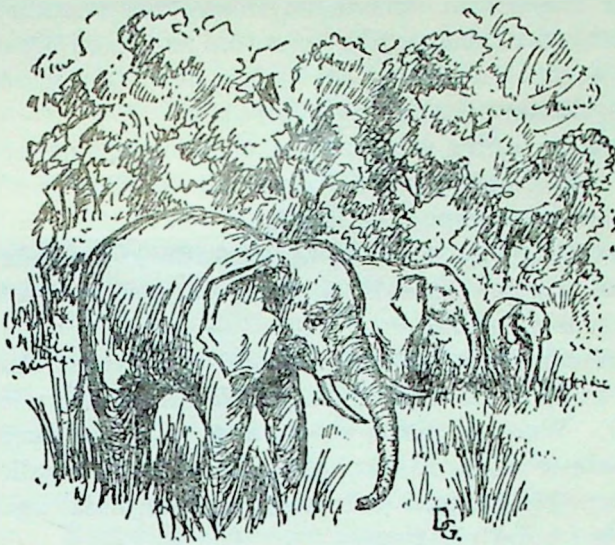
tyholweni ngokwenjenjalo wathana mandla nemazi yendlovu yaza yamchwayitisa into yokuyibona isunduzela ithole layo emanzini ukuba likhe lingene nalo. Lalingafuni lona kodwa unina wayengadlalisi, walithi nkamfu ngomboko walityhalela phakathi ngamandla.

Inkunzi yona yanga ayiboni kuko konke oku, yamana ukuzigalela ngamanzi ebiwafunxa ngomboko yawatsho ehla ngomqolo. Laphinda-phinda amaxesha eli qukunya likaqondovu alayeka ukuziphozisa, kubonakala phandle ukuba lonwabile lithe sa, loo mlomo sewuyinkebe-nkebe, amehlo wona ecimele ngeli thuba amanzi liwajula phezu kwelo hleza lentloko.

Imazi leya ide yaphumelela ukulifaka emanzini ithole layo nokuligalela ngamanzi umzimba wonke. Zange le ntwana iyolelwe konke yile nto yaza ke ngoko yasoloko yona izama ukubaleka iqabele ngaphezulu eludongeni. Balungela ukubinza kwangoko abazingeli bema belindele unyalelo wenkosi. Kodwa uZitu wabonisa ngesandla ukuba bangazibinzi iindlovu ezo.

Wamangaliswa uNomisa yile nto phofu yaba mnandi yona eyokuba ebanqandile. Uyise wamana esalatha esenza umqondiso wokuba iimpondo zazo zisencinane. NoNomisa wayiqonda naye loo nto ayithethayo. Kaloku babengezelanga kuza kubulala nje iindlovu, babeze kufuna ezona mpondo zinkulu. Waza wakhumbula nento awayeyivile malunga nabarwebi abamhlophe bona bafuna ezona mpondo zinkulu nabanika elona xabiso lifanelekileyo ngazo.

Eli thole lada ngoku lawaqhela amanzi, laqala nalo lamana ukuwabetha liwachitha ngale ndlela uyise nonina nabo babe-senza ngayo. Yonwaba ke yada yazilibala le ntwana ngokuthi ifunxe amanzi iwutsho uzale umboko ize iwaphokozele onke apha ebusweni kuyise. Inkunzi yendlovu yamangaliswa kakhulu yile ntwela-mbeko yajwaqeka ngumsindo lafa kwangoko. Yasuka kwa oko yalitsibela eli thole yalityhalela phakathi enzulwini apho latsho lafuna ukutshona. Lothuka ke lafuna ukufa, umboko lawuqhiwulela phezu latsho ngesikrakra, laxhuma, laza ladadela enycleni, lazabalaza njalo ukuya kuphuma lifunde isifundo sokuba lingaze libuye lilinge ligezele kuyise.



Iindlovu

Bahambela phambili bahlabela mgama ngoku abazingeli ukuwushiya kwabo umlambo. Baza ekuhambeni kwabo bakhe bemisa ukuba batye. Bemis njalo ithutyana uZitu wathi kubo “Makuhanjelwe phambili. Ndiya kholwa ukuba seniqonda ukuba sifikile ngoku kwilizwe leendlovu, kwaye andingi kungade kuhlwe ndingekade ndibe ndizifumene ezona zimpondo zizizo.

Bahamba umganyana waza wema uZitu wabeka indlebe. Namadoda nawo ema elindele isigqibo senkosi yawo. Koko kuthi cwaka kwamana kuvakala ukukhala kweentaka zehlathi loo nto yadibana nokukhala kwezilwanyana zasendle. Kwathi kunjalo kwakho isandi sanga kukuzongoma kwezulu nokuhlokoma kwamawa. Wamana ukukhomba uNomsa kweli cala isandi sivela ngakulo. Noyise wamana ukunqwala ewisa ngentloko, emvumela echwayitile, kuba wayeyiva naye le ngxolo, kwanamadoda la ngokunjalo.

Bahamba ke, becotha kancinane bebhakisa kweli cala livela le ngxolo izikhali ezi zabo bezibambe phezulu. Besahamba becotha njalo, ngamanye amaxesha bafumane babuye beme bengafuni kude baye kweli cala livela umoya, babone ngoZabala selelekuza ngengalo yanga ikho le nto athene mandla nayo wayibona phaya phakathi kwemithi. Kwa-

kumana kuphekuza kancinane ibhekebheke lendlebe enye phaya ungazi ukuba mayibe yeyantoni na ; kanti ngumhlambi wonke weendlovu ziya tya azilindele nto. Bafumane bema nabazingeli, xhwenene, banga bothukile.

Kwangoko uZitu wazikhomba emazingqengqiswe, indoda nganye wayalathisa indawo emayime kuyo eluhlwini. U-Nomsa yena wangena apha phakathi kukaZabala noDamasi. Wamana njalo enyondla elapha phakathi kwamasebe emithi ebuka loo mahem-hem ezilwanyana andlebe zide zaya kubetha kwaphezulu amasebe.

Zibe sisibhozo ezivelileyo azasitheka, ezintathu kuzo zizii-nkunzi, ezine ziziimazi, le yokugqibela ilithole elise lincinane kakhulu. Wabuya umvu uNomsa engcothoza ngeenzwane emise iminwe esibhozo ukubonisa uyise inani leendlovu azibonileyo. Nabazingeli babonisa ngokunqwala ngeentloko ukwanela kwabo yile ngxelo.

Wakhawuleza uZitu ngoku wanxunela phambili kancinane wanga uza kuvelela apha ezihlahleni. Ngokwenjenje oku wayefuna ukukhetha ezona kanye ziya kuba neempondo ezintle. Waphinda uNomsa wakhangelela ngoku ekunye noyise waza wabona umbono owamchwayitisayo kakhulu. Ithole nalo phantsi kukanina limana lityhuda lizama ukwanya ngoku unina atyayo yena. Waligcina likude unina yena wazama ukulibukula, kodwa lona langathi aliva nangeendlebe lathi qho langena kuye esiqwini.

Ubukhulu beenkunzi ezi batsho uNomsa akabi nakuwuhlanganisa umlomo. Zaba nkulu ezi zinto zanga yintaba yonke ; zatsho ngobukhulu angazange abubona ngaphambili Zathi ngoku zityayo zabe izisu ezi zixuxuzela zikhala, imilebe ishwabadela, amazinyo wona ehlafuna ngamandla njalo. Kule nto yonke akukho imiyo, yazola. Zonke ziya ngqunga ngamagidi-gidi ezingqi ngeenyawo ezi, iindlebe zona zibhakuzele ngobo bukhulu bazo aziyekanga.

Kwabakho czimbini apha ezinkunzini ezazineempondo ezibalaseleyo ngobukhulu. Waselezichula kwangoko ezo ezalathisa impi yakhe uZitu. Yema ke yonke kakuhle ezimboniselweni apho umntu wayenokuba nakho ukubinza into ewayo. Eyona nto yayingamandla kwakufuneka indlovu ehlatywayo ichanwe kanye ebomini kuba ungayiphosa apho ayinakufa. Kwaye ungayingxwelera nje ingafi uzithathele ke

noNomsa wayeyazi uburalarume baleyo. Waqonda ke naye ngoku ukuba baza kungena kwithuba lengozi emasikizi kubo. Yaqala nentliziyo le yakhe yabetha ngamandla kangangokuba naye wafuna ukoyika athi iindlovu mazibe nazo ziya yiva ukubetha kwayo.

Wanika umqondiso unkosi uZitu yaza impi yakhe ngoko nangoko yatsho invula ngeengecola yaziwela ezimbini iinkunzi. Akasala naye uNomsa wahlabanisela ngotolo watsho kwenye kanye ebomini apha emva kwendlebe. Kanti noZabala benoDamasi baphosile nabo ezabo izikhali babinza.

Zasitsho esikrakra iindlovu zonke zabhonga, zanzakama, iintloko zizithwele nemisila imi izingqajolo, zazifohla ematsholweni apho abazingeli babezifihle khona.

Gilili, kwavakala isandi sento ewayo, esatsho umhlambi weendlovu ngoku wenza inguqu wonke wasinga apho ubuvela ngakhona. Baphuma abazingeli kwindawo ababezimele kuyo baza kuqonda eyona nto yenzekileyo. Babona enye yezo nkunzi iqungquluze ngecala, kanti ifile, iyiloo mfumba yomdliva wenyama esongelwe kolo fele lumanya abala lingu-mhlaba.

Bafumane bonke bee thwa, noNomsa ngokunjalo, kujongwe loo ndibilili yento, kungekho ukholelweyo konke ukuba bangaba babe nokubulala inzunga yeenzunga-mahелеle engako.

“He, ndakukhangela, ngathi sisinde ngamabona-ndenzile ! Kambe kwenzeke le nto. Zithe ngokuya ziza kuthi suke yawa le yafa. Loo nto kanti iza kuzijika zonke zingafikanga kuthi.” Wathi esitsho lo mfo wabe emana eyiphulula ngeempondo le nkunzi ifileyo, wagqiba ngelithi : “Zintle zigqibile ezi ngokwenyani.”

UNomsa noDamasi bona bazinike ithuba lokuhlola umkhondo owenziwe leliya gxuba leendlovu ezibalekayo. Bafumana kuyimbuqe imithi isitshulwe neengcambu, nama-sebe ale isemiyo aphuke alutyobo. Wabuya uNomsa wawalasela phantsi emhlabeni. Wavakala esithi, “Nalu ukrozo lwamaqabaza egazi lwenze umngcelele apha. Ni-yayibona loo nto ? Ithetha ukuthi loo nto nanye leya indlovu mayibe ingxwelereke kakhulu.” Wayithetha le nto uZitu ekhasa phantsi ukuhamba oku eqondisisa lo mtshithi wegazi. Wabuya waphakama ngoku wakhangela ilanga waza wathi, “Ngathi selifuna ukusishiya ukuba asinakuyifumana kwana-

mhla nje le nkunzi yenzakeleyo asikuba nandlela yayo nge-
ngomso. Masilande umkhondo ke kwangoku," yatsho le
nkokeli ibarola ukuba balandele yona.

ISAHLUKO SE-15

INKUNZI ENGXWELERIWEYO

Imikrozo yegazi yaqala ngokulandeleka lula, kodwa kungekudala uNomsa waphawula into yokuba uZitu uxhalile mpela. Lalitshona ilanga wakhumbula uNomsa ukuba lithi litshona kwelo zwe kube kuba mnyama kwangoko.

Bakholisa ukufika kwiindawo ezingenamithi, apho ingca yayigqushekile kubonakala ukuba indlovu leya yenzakeleyo ngenxa yokusindeka ikhe yalala yaza yabuya yavuka.

Basoloko bewagcine phantsi amehlo emhlabeni abazingeli, neendlebe bezivulele ukubamba nasiphi na isandi esinokuvela. Babeyiqonda ingozi yendlovu eyenzakeleyo, kanti neyezinye izilo ezihamba-hambayo babeyazi ngokumhlophe.

Kwaya kuba nzima ngaphezulu ngoku ukuwugcina umkhondo wale ndlovu noNomsa wacacelwa yinto yokuba kuya kuhlwa bengekade bafike kuyo. Kwathi kanye ngoko babona ngoSikhulumi esima, esalatha ade athethe nokuthetha athi, "Tyhini bo! ndiyibonile, nantsiya" Baba nokuyibona loo ndlovu ingxwelerekileyo, phambi kwabo, ixhaseke esiqwini somthi owatsho wafuna ukuwa kukusindwa yiyo.

"Ngathi ifile," watsho uSikhulumi sel' etyhudele phambili kuyo. Wamkhalimela uZitu kwangoko kodwa akevanga. Langa lide elo wasukela uZitu ngoku ngeenyawo. Uthe ukuba athi uya fika nje kuye yabe seyizifunqule yema ngeenyawo indlovu yaseligibisela ngomboko yamthi we, thande, ngawo uSikhulumi. Kwabonakala kwangoko ukuba sele ngofileyo kukutyunyuzwa amathambo ngaloo mboko unamandla kunene.

Wabona uNomsa ngoyise selesondele ngokoyikisayo kufuphi nendlovu emi engeotshela ukuyihlaba ayichane ebomini, weva ngotolo lusitsho kanti lungena entloko ebuchotsheni.

Yawa okwelitye, qithi, kwa noSikhulumi ngokunjalo wajulclwa phaya phantsi eyiloo nto. Wakhawuleza uZitu wasondela. Kanti uSikhulumi uza kuvuka emc ngeenyawo kwangoko engenzekanga nto konke ngaphandle kwephaphasi nokothuka. Eyona nto kuye yaba bubunzima bokuba abe nokuphakamisa neliso eli lona, enze nelizwi enkosini yakhe.

Iintloni zasuka zamongamela. Wafumane ngelikade wathi, “Ubungeze, nkosi, ude uzibeke esichengeni wenjenje ngento engento endim, kuba imfanelo yam endingayenzanga ibikukuba ndibe bendilindele izwi kuwe endaweni yokuya kuzifaka engozini icacile.”

UZitu wamphakamisa waza wathi, “Asikukho nokuba ndiya bulela ukuba ube usengophilileyo. Ndiya kholwa ukuba ugqibele namhlanje ukufumane wenze okwesiyatha.” Wagqibela ngokuthi guququ abhekise kwabanye athi, “Siza kulalisa apha ngokuhlwa nje. Kuya kufuneka sibase umlilo omkhulu ukwenzela ukugxotha amaramnco asendle.”

UNomsa waselehamba nabanye ukuya kuchola-chola iinkuni zaloo mlilo kodwa kuko konke oko zange abe nakuyilibala into kayise uZitu embona emi ngxi engagungqi ejongene nendlovu. Le nto wayibonela ukuba yeyona iya kufanela ukumana iphindwa iqalwe ekuqaleni imihla nezolo xa kujikelezwe umlilo ebusuku kothiwe emakhaya.

Abazingeli ngoku bayihlinza indlovu bazisikela imibengo yenyama bayiphosa eziko bayoja. Ayabiyonyama yangumdliva babethana ngayo! Yammangalisa uNomsa into yokuba kanti inyama yendlovu imnandi kangaka. Into owawu ngayigxekayo kuphela yayikukuba ilukhuni inzima ukutyeka. Bakuba betye bonke banela uZitu wabeka unobonisela abe ngukhala wokuqala ngobo busuku ngoku bonke abanye baleleyo.

Izilwanyana zatsho ngento enye ubusuku bonke zisenza umkhulungwane zigquma kuloo nto zaba nokuqondwa zahlulwe ngamazwi ngokhala aba bodwa.

Kwasekuseni ngentsasa elandelayo uNomsa nezo ndwayinge zabazingeli bavuswa luthungo lwenyama yendlovu. Baqala ngale ntsasa umsebenzi onzima wokugawula amabamba endlovu bewakhupha emihlathini. Loo nto yabathabatha ithuba elide. Kodwa noko ekugqibeleni bada bawufeza loo msebenzi, bazibekelela kunye phantsi emboniselweni yawonke umntu, zanconywa ubukhulu nobuhle nguye wonke ubani. Wanyula amadoda amabini amakaqale athwale, wathi kuya kuthwaliswana kodwa ngumntu wonke.

Kwathi njengokuba kuhanjwa nje uNomsa waziva sele ngumntu apha odiniweyo nonxaniweyo. Intloko yaba buhlungu kwabetha nemithambo. Yathi imini ibingeshushu

wasuka wangathi uya tsha yena bubushushu. Unxano lona zange lube nakunyamezeleka. Zathi izilwanyana ezimtyayo kwanokutshotshozela komzimba kukuhlalywa nokukrweleka akufumeneyo apha endleleni, into leyo ebekade engayiva, yonke yema ngeenyawo ngoku akabi nakuyinyamezela.

Noko kunjalo wazibamba kuba engafuni ukuba uZitu ngoku abe ngumntu ozisolayo ngokuhamba naye kule ngqina. Waza ke wazimisela ukuba akasayi kuthetha nto konke ngokunxanwa nokudinwa kwakhe. Kodwa waziva ephelelwe mpela ngumdla kwinto yeendlovu kwanakuyiphi na enye elapha endleleni abakuyo. Inggondo yakhe yahlala kwinto enye kuphela : amanzi nendawo yokulala aphumle.

Waqala wakhumbula unina uMaMakhanya. Kaloku wayekuphela komntu owayenokuyazi into amakayenze ukumkhupha kuloo meko wayekuyo.,

Ekugqibeleni waphelela uNomsa, wahlala phantsi wancama, bangahamba bamshiye abanye. Wafika endaweni emqengqelezi wazithi tshwa engceni ende apho wacima amehlo walala. Abazingeli bamdlula bekrozile bona bengumngcelele bengaboni ukuba ulele apho kolo tshwathi. Walala ithuba angalazanga naye uNomsa apho kuba wehliwa bubuthongo kuloo nto yonke.

Walala akashukuma kwaza kwathi kuphi-phi-phi wangathi uva umntu emthethela endlebeni esithi, "Ngaba Nomsa toro uya fa na ?" Le nto yangathi lilizwi elivakala livela kude. Wawathi balulu amehlo waza wathi "O ! Damasi wethu ! ubona nje ndidinwe ndifile. Kwaye ngaphezulu ndinxanwe ndom' umqala !"

"Kukho umlanjana ongekude kuya phi apha. Seside safumana nendawo apho yokuqubha nokuphumla. Yiza ke nawe siye khona." "O ! Asikukho nokuba undincedile ubuye uze kundifuna," wafumane washwantshwatha washwabadela watsho uNomsa. "Hayi noko ayibanga ndim okuqonde kuqala," watsho uDamasi, "nguyihlo othe sisahlali waphawula ukuba akukho, wandithumela ukuba ndibuye ndihambe ndikukhangela. Masihambe ke ! Yolula ingalo ndikuncedise uphakame."

Wathi akufika naye uNomsa kubo wamsa ngqo kuyise. Uyise wayalala ukuba ahlale phantsi, uDamasi eze namanzi. Wenza ngawo iyeza elakrakra okwekhala waza uNomsa wathi

akuba elisele wahlalanelwa ngumzimba. "Lala ke ngoku," wagqibela ngokutsho uyise. Wasela amanye amanzi uNomsa weva kuthe gogololo, umzimba uthe sa kamnandi kulaa nto ubuyiyo. Wambeka isandla apha ebunzi uyise waza wathi, "Ngathi akusafani nangaphambili ngoku. Fan' ukuba uyitye kakhulu laa nyama akwayihlafunisa. Nam yandigulisa ndancama mhla ndaqala ukuyitya." Loo mazwi amtsho uNomsa waziva ehlile noko izibilini ngoku. Ekuhambeni kwexesha waziva ethe thimbilili, omelele, elungele ukuphakama ahambe. Wayiqonda le nto noZitu waseleyalela ke ukuba kuhanjwe. Wathi, "Akuse kude apho besishiye khona laa ndlovu yokuqala.

Waba soloko uNomsa ebaze amehlo ngethemba lokuba yoba nguye oyibona kuqala loo ndlovu. Kodwa ngenxa yamehlo akhe abukhali uZitu wayibona phambi kwakhe. Efinge iintshiyi wema bamva esithi, "Hawu yintoni kaloku le ngoku?" Indlovu yayikhungelwe, yanga ziimbovane, yamnyama ngabantu abasithomo sifutshane. Ngaba yayingobani aba, befuna ntoni khona kulaa ndlovu kayise. Wafuna wenjenjalo uNomsa engqondweni. Kwacaca kodwa kwangoko ukuba akuzi kulunga akubona ubuso bukayise nobabazingeli buthe shwaca ngumsindo. Wathetha ngamandla kwangoko uZitu wathi, "Khwelelani. Le ndlovu ibulewe sithi. Yeyethu ke ngoko."

Aba bantu baphendula ngento ende yamazwi angabanga nakulandeleka kumaZulu la. Bathi bethetha ngemilomo babe belungele ukutola ngeentolo zabo. AmaZulu wona ngelawo icala aphakamisa imikhonto elungele ukubinza ngako nje ukuba inkosi yabo ithi mabagwaze. UNomsa kaloku waqala watyhwatyhwa kukoyika waqonda ukuba kuza kuliwa apha kakade oku.

UZitu walithoba ilizwi ngoku wathethela phantsi. Wabonisa nangezandla ukuba noko mabafumane oku kweempondo zona zodwa nokuba inyama yona abayifumani. Bada baqonda ke ngolu hlobo. Bazibeka phantsi izixhobo, zehla izibilini kumntu wonke. Nale yakwaZulu impi yazibeka phantsi nezayo izixhobo yaza yasondela kancinane kufuphi kule ndlovu ifileyo.

Abaya bantu bafutshane baqala ukuyityhuthula loo ntaba beyibenga. UNomsa wabona ukuba bamana ukunchothula

imisebe le nobunye uboya obude obu busezindlebeni. Waphawula nokuba obu boya buxatyisiwe ngaba bantu.

Abanye babo babezisikela imibengokazi emide baze bayitye loo nyama ikrwada. Kwabakho into ethi kuNomsa, "Inene baya kugula bonke."

Wafuna ukwazi ngaphezulu ngaba bantu uNomsa waza wasondela kuyise wambuza ngabo ukuba ngabantu bani na aba bangafaniyo nabo. Wathi uyise, "NgabaThwa base-mahlathini amakhulu asentla." Wababona naye kwakanye ngaphambili. Mababe bahambe kakhulu ukuba bade babe balapho, kuba lunokuthabatha ishumi lonke leentsuku uhambo lokuya kufika elizweni labo. Wabajongisisa uNomsa aba bantu bangaqhelekanga kangaka. Wafumanisa ukuba oyena mde kubo wayengemde kuya phi apha kuye. Babe-ngathi baya khanya kunamaZulu ngebala bexhonti bona kunawo.

Ngoku abazingeli banqumla amabamba endlovu uNomsa umj yena kufuphi nabaThwa aba, esenzela ukuba abe nokufunda ngaphezulu ngabo. Babe-hamba ze benganxibe nto ngaphandle kwesidweshana sofele lwempofu abalubhinqe esinqeni ngezantsi kwala magqubhelana ezisu zabo. Babe-nge-nazihombiso ziyephi nezaluphi na uhlobo. Loo nto ku-Nomsa yatsho babuxelegura, banga baze, kukungabi nanto yamaso nantsimbi bayigaxeleyo. Iingalo zabo zazingathi zinde kunemizimba le, yaza imilenze yona yamifutshane iinyawo zankulu. Kodwa eyona ndawo yayibalasele yayizii-nzwane ezi. Zazinde ngohlobo lokuba zibe ngathi yiminwe yesandla. Zanga zilungele ukubambelela ekukhweleni emithini. Wayicingela njalo le nto uNomsa.

Aba baThwa baya khawuleza baye benengqondo ebukhali yokwenza izinto. Wada uNomsa watsalwa ikakhulu kubo aba kukuchwayita nendlalo abanayo, kwanendlela abanobu-bele nabancedana ngayo. Babekho aba bakhwezela umlilo beqhumisela imibengo yenyama abayihlome ezintini. Kanti babekho naba bona baruluba ngezisu apha phakathi emzimbeni wendlovu bezisikela entliziyweni nasesibindini bephosa nakwaba ngaphandle.

Kuthe ekuhambeni kwexesha uNomsa waphawula ukuba kukho aba baThwa bamana ukuthi nyebelele baye kutshona ehlathini bethwele le nyama inculwe ngezinti ibigqwagqwa

phaya emsini. Wanga ke angazi apho baya khona nayo. Walangazelela ukuba uyise amvumele abalandele.

Kodwa ithuba lokucela lalingekho konke. Uyise waye xakekile ngoku imkhathaza ingqondo nento yokuba athi ngeli xesha asebenzayo kube kubhubhuzela aba baThwa enyathelana, egilana nabo kunzima nokuba lapha naphaya. Kanti aba bantu nabo babefuna ukwazi ngamaZulu la kwangale ndlela uNomsa naye wayefuna ukwazi ngayo ngabo.

Wathi akuswabuluka uyise uNomsa wasondela kuye wathi, “Bawo ndifuna ukwazi ngaba bantu indlela yonke abahlala ngayo. Andingekhe na ndilandele omnye wabo xa abuyela ehlahini?” Wakha wema uZitu akaphendula noNomsa wada wacinga ukuba makabe uyise uxakanisekile bobu budenge bakhe bokude acele into enje ngale. Kodwa ubonakele ejika ebiza uSikhulumi esithi makakheze. Wasele esondela ke uSikhulumi naye akalibazisa waza wathi uZitu kuye, “Uya yibona le ntombi yam, ifuna ukukhe iye kubona apho abathwa aba bahlala khona. Hamba nayo, uyikhangele. U-neendawo oziqhawulayo wena apha elulwimini lwabo. Woba luncedo ke kuyo.”

Wavuma uSikhulumi. Olu gxibha lomfo lwakholwa yile nto, lwakhukhumala kwayinto yokuba inkosi ide imthume into enje ngale emva kokuya kufumane enze kwakhe kwayizolo. Waza wathi uZitu encuma, “UNomsa kaloku ubathandle aba bantu. Mhlawumbi woselumfumanela nesoka kwalapho kubo.” Wayihleka le nto uSikhulumi uNomsa yena wathi, “N’gong’o, ngunongekhe ke lowo.”

Kwathi ke xa omnye emkayo nowakhe umthwalo uZitu wambamba apha egxalabeni wathi ehleka wamalathisa kuNomsa. Naye lo mfo wahleka wajonga kuNomsa wanga uya thanda naye. Kwacaca noko ukuba akaqondi eyona nto kukuyo. Wabhekisa amabini mathathu uSikhulumi kulo mfo ngesiwabo. Lo mThwa wagqibela ngokufumane athi nqeke amazinyo avume ukuba uya kubakhokelela kule ndawo ahlala kuyo amawabo.

ISAHLUKO SE-16

UMZI WABATHWA

UNomsa noSikhulumini bamlandela lo mfo becanda kwelo hlathi lishinyeneyo. Wayenyathcelela phezulu lo mfo, kodwa ekhetha ukunyathela, ngokude abengathi ngamanye amaxesha uza kubaleka ethubeleza phantsi kwamatyholo namasebe aruqa phantsi. Kwakungekho ndlela apha ngoko kwafuneka bekhawulezile ukuze bangashiywa ngulo mThwa, balahlekane naye. Ukuba babenokwahlukana naye loo nto yayiyakwezisa ukuba kubenzima ukuyifumana bayichane indlela yokubuyela kwabanye abazingeli, kwa neyakubafikisa emzini wabaThwa.

Wayemana lo mThwa esima cfuna ukuqonda ukuba basalandela na. Ngamanye amaxesha ubede ahambe kancinane ukwenzela ukuba basondele bamfumane. Wawungadela umqulu kulo mfo, kanti wayomelele. Nakuba wayethwele into eninzi yenyama zange eme nakanye athi makakhe afumane ikhefu.

Ekugqibeleni bade bafika ekhayeni lalo mfo, kuloo mzi wakwaGqogqushu. Uthe wakubabona, uNomsa noSikhulumini, wema ngeenyawo wonke. Lo ubesiza nabo waphosa izwi apha nangapha kwabanye abo emana esalatha kubo zindwendwe, lonke ixesha. Basondela bancedisa ngokumothula inyama le, bayithuthela kwenye yezindlwana zabo.

UNomsa waphawula ukuba ezi zindlu zakhiwe ngokusuke kugotywe amasebe la emithi kuthungelwe ngeminxeba. Phezu kwala masebe kwakufunjwe amabhekebeke amagqabi kukhuselwa ukuba kungangeni langa namvula ngaphakathi. Zazincinane ezi ndlwana zingakhiwanga nangenyameko. Isizathu sokuba bangacoseleli benjenje ukwakha kwabo mhlawumbi sasikwinto yokuba umThwa akahlali ithuba elide ndaweninye. EzakwaZulu izindlu zazinkulu zomelele kunezi kuba wona ayesima imizi ndaweninye ithuba leminyaka emininzi.

USikhulumini wamchazela uNomsa ukuba abaThwa baphila zizilwanyana zasendle abanakho ukuzibamba, kwanazii-

ngcambu namaqunube emithi anokufunyanwa emahlathini. Babengafani namaZulu awayefuye iinkomo, etyala emasimini awo into eninzi yemifuno neziqhamo zasekhaya. Loo nto yayiwenza ukuba angabi soloko efuduka efuna iindawo ezinezinto ezityiwayo njengabaThwa.

Lo babeze naye umThwa wabacela ngoku ukuba bakhe bangene naye ngaphakathi endlwini, waqonda uSikhulumi ukuba yena uya kuba mkhulu gqitha axabe endlwini waseleyalela uNomsa ukuba ibe nguye ongenayo. UNomsa ungene ngaloo mnyango mfutshane egaqa, waza wabona umfazi ongaphantsi nakuye, ebeleke umntwana emqolo. Yayikho le nto iphekwa ngulo mfazi emlilweni ngembizana emnyamana.

Yangena iphuma le ntokazi isiza namaqonya nezintlwa, kungenjalo iinkumba noroqotyeni namacikilishe, yonke loo ngqokelela yezilwanyana iyiphose embizeni injalo. Okunye kwada kwangena ntwana ithile iphethe ibuzi, nalo langena kwasembizeni.

UNomsa waphawula nento yokuba aba bantu babengandlali zinkuko koko babelala ezimfeleni nasemagqabini awo-mileyo. Kwakuze apha endlwini, into ekhoyo ingamaselwana ambalwa kuphela. Yonke into apha yayahlukile kwazaziyo zakwaZulu wayiqonda loo nto uNomsa. AmaZulu akowabo wona ayeba nezinto ezininzi ezikhoyo endlwini kuba ayehlala ithuba elide ndawonye. Kodwa kwaba baThwa kwakungekho mfuneko yazinto zininzi eziya kuba yingxaki ngoku xa kufudukwayo.

Uthe ukuphuma kwakhe endlwini uNomsa wafika uSikhulumi ethetha nomnye umThwa owayenamagama awaqhawulayo esiZulu. Wayecela ityuwa apha kuSikhulumi. USikhulumi wayemlandulela ethembisa kodwa ukuba uya kumphathela ukuba babuye babahambela kunyaka olandelayo.

Lo mThwa wayethimbeke ingqondo nguNomsa selembuza nokuba selekhe wenda na? UNomsa wayeyihleka le nto emqinisekisa ukuba akangebi selenda eseminyaka ilishumi kuphela nje ubudala.

Wamangaliswa yile nto lo mfo. Wasondela kuNomsa wazimisa-misa apha ecaleni kwakhe, wazifumana evela kancinane kuphela kuye. Wathi njengokuba emi uNomsa wathatyathwa yintambo yomqala awayeyinxibile lo mfo. Wayiqo-

nda nento eyenziwe ngayo. Waba nokusazi ke isizathu sokuba abaThwa aba babeke lungaka emisebeni yeendlovu abazigcinele yona.

Wayibona uQhinebe into yokuba uNomsa uyithandile le ntambo waseleyikhulula empha yona clandelisa ngelithi yomzisela lukhulu. Wafumane wakhangela kuSikhulumi uNomsa wanga angabuza kuye ukuba ayithathe na? “Yithathe, Nomsa, khon’ ukuze ube nento abangayaziyo obabonisa yona abantakwenu ekhaya,” wacebisa watsho uSikhulumi, waza wajika wabuzisa apha kuQhinebe ukuba bona baThwa bazibulala njani na iindlovu.

Lo mfo waselembiza kwangoko ukuba ambonise, weza nezaphetha neentolo kwanemikhonto zonke ezi zinto zincinane kangangokuba uNomsa wazibonela ukuba bezinokulungela kwa uThemba nasebantwini.

Ezi ntolo zazenziwe ngeentsasa zomthi olukhuni okhiwa kwalapha ematyholweni. Umva lo wotolo ngalunye wawukrazulwe kwaza kwafakelwa igqabi lomthi endaweni yosiba awenza ngalo wona amaZulu. Walatha iintloko ezi zeentolo nemikhonto wathi, “Yityefu yodwa apha!” Wabuza uNomsa apho bayifumana khona le tyhefu. UmThwa wamchazela wathi bayiqokelela kumagqabi namaxolo emithi anobuhlungu baze bongeze ngetyhefu abayifumana kwimbovane emnyamana ethi apho ikutye khona unge utsha ngumlilo.

Wathetha nangezandla lo mfo ebonisa ukuba bakhwela nasemithini belalele iindlovu ezi xa zidlula zisiya kutya emadlweni ezindle. Umntu athi ekhwele emthini aphose ngeengcola ezifakwe kule tyhefu ayihlabanisele indlovu ngazo, kanti abaya baphantsi bona baya tola nabo ngeentolo ezikwanale tyhefu.

Ukuba ayifanga kwangoko bayazi abaThwa ukuba loo tyhefu iya kusebenza ngaphakathi ize isiphelo iyibulale. Ngale nkolo ke bebeyilandela belindele ukuba ide iwe. Yaye loo nto ibingathathi xesha lide.

Imibuzo yayisemininzi kuNomsa ngoku ngaphezulu. Wabuza ngamakhwenkwe abo ukuba aya zalusa na iinkomo njengabanakwabo, wothuka umThwa yile nto, wamxelela ukuba abafuyi zinkomo bona baphila kukuzingela.

Wabuza ukuba lixesha elingakanani na bekule ndawo. Wathi omnye ziinyanga ezimbini, kwaye kufuneka bebuye bemka kwakamsinyane. Kaloku ezona ndawo zineziquhamo namaqunube amaninzi, kwaneemfudo neenkawu ezingaphezulu zezisand' ukumiwa. Wathi ukuba athethe ngeenkawu kwangoko uNomisa wakhumbula uDube. "Ngaba uya kholwa ziinkawu nawe?" wafumane wabuza. "Tyhini ewe, kaloku zimmnandi zityiwa."

Kwafika ixesha lokuba bahambe. Baba baninzi abeza kubona ukuhamba kwezi ndwendwe. UNomisa waphawula okokuba abafazi njengamadoda nabo babengenazintsimbi nazacholo zakuzihombisa.

Wabuza lo mbuzo wokugqibela uNomisa. "Kancene apha kuni indoda iba nabafazi abangaphi? Wothuka umThwa ngulo mbuzo kodwa wafumane wahleka wathi, "Indoda iba mfazi mnye kuthi akukho yimbi indlela. Bebenokuba bangaphi kakade?" Akabanga nakuzinceda angabaveli aba bantu uNomisa. Le nto kuye yayithetha okokuba abaThwa aba ziinkambuza zamahlwempu kuba kaloku kwaZulu zizilambi zodwa eziba mfazi mnye kuwo.

Laa mfo wayebakhaphile wayeselclungise wagqiba elungisela ukubabuyisela kulaa ndawo babebashiye kuyo abanye. Baphuma bonke abaThwa ukuza kubulisa kwezi ndwendwe zabo. Omnye umfazi kubo warola into ampha yona uNomisa iqokobhe elikhulu likaqongqothwane elibukhulu angazange abubona uNomisa.

Njengokuba ngoku lo mfo wayengena mthwalo awuphetheyo nje wathi ukuhamba oku wanyathelela mgama watsho kwanzima kuNomisa noSikhulumi ukumelana naye, akaba sakhathalela noku kokujonga ukuba basalandela na, bephi na khona ngemva. Mhlawumbi wayesenziwa yingqondo ecinga ukuba nawuphi na omnye umntu unokuba selewuqhelile umhlaba abeselekhe wawuhamba.

Ilanga lalise litshona namathunzi amnyama emithi oluka ngoku atsho kwanzima kubo ukuba babe nokuba sambona umThwa. Kwathi ukugqibela, kwehla into ababesoloko beyoyikela. Wabona selemi uSikhulumi bhuxa ingqondo ithingaza engazi icala amakaye ngakulo, waqonda uNomisa engaxelelwanga ukuba ulahlekile ngoku. UmThwa wayethe nya, bona bengayazi indlela yabo. Waphelelwa kaloku

ziinyani uSikhulumi. Kwathi xa kanye kunjalo bafumane beva ngekhwelo. Wakhwaza uNomsa wathi, “Nguye lowo ndimvile ! utsho phi ? ”

Waba ngaphunguza uSikhulumi akabi nakho ukumfumana apho akhoyo. Lada labuya laphinda ikhwelo, wahleka uSikhulumi, waphakamisa amehlo wajonga emasebeni emithi phezulu. Nanko umThwa emana ephinziza phakathi kwamagqabi. Wehla kwangoko, yanga yinkawu ukukhawuleza oku. Wehla ephethe into enkulu yekhaphela leenyosi, obunye bobu busi wabunika uNomsa lowo noSikhulumi. Wanyathela kuhle noko ngoku behamba besitya obo busi kunye. Kodwa uNomsa ngoku wasoloko emgcine ngeliso lo mThwa, eranela ukuba angafaka engqondweni into yokuba abuye akhe abaphambe kwakhona.

Bade bafika ngoku kwabanye bengakhange babuye bangene kwenye ingxaki. Bafika abaThwa besagqwagqwa emsini laa nyama, abazingeli bakwaZulu bona bengathi basagqibile ngelabo icala. Kwahlaliwa ke kwakhiwa isathanga kujikelezwe umlilo, kutyiwa, inyama kudliwa imbadu. NoNomsa benoSikhulumi bangenelela nabo bafaka ezabo izandla batya.

Wathi uZitu, “Ndicinga ukuba kumnandi kuthi sonke ukuba sibe nempumelelo entle kangaka kule ngqina. Ngomso kwakusasa ukuthi chapha kwelanga kuya kufuneka sihambile sabuyela emakhaya. Zesesilumka ngaphezulu ke sonke kule ndlela yokubuya singabi sahlelwa lishwa lanto. ,

UNomsa waziva ephethwe bubuthongo ehleli njalo ngasemlilweni, amabali amnandi anawo nawaphathele uThemba athi tha engqondweni. NoMdingi wayeya kuba naluninzi angenza ngalo izibongo ezimnandi ngezinto aya kuziva ngoNomsa. Waziva elangazelela ukuba sekhaya kanye kwamngoluya hlobo wayelulo ukuphuma kwakhe.

Wonke ubani wafuna ukulala ngoku kwabekwa okhala ke bobo busuku. UNomsa wakha wakhangelela phaya kubaThwa wafuna ukuqonda ukuba mababe bona benza ntoni na. Ukungena kobusuku kweza nengqele ezi ntwana zamana ukwambatha izandla zisondela ngasemlilweni apha. Wabona abanye babo bengena apha endlovini wacinga okokuba baza kubuye baphume kwakhona. Zange baphume wathi akuya kuqonda emva kwexesha wafika befumbene belele phakathi apho endlovini.

IHLOSI ELALEYELE EMNGXUNYENI

Endleleni yabo yokubuya uNomsa wahamba ebuka izinto ejonga iintaka ezi nezilwanyana. Kwacaca ukuba wothetha angaphelelwa ebalisela uThemba noMpondo kwanabanye abantakwabo abasebancinane ngezinto azibonileyo.

Bathe bakuba sebenosuku olunye ngoku phambi kokuba bafike emakhaya bakhe bemisa okwethuba entabeni elithafa phezulu. Wathi ekhangele ezantsi emlajeni uNomsa wabona umbono ongaqhelekanga. Wabona iinkunzi neemazi zeengonyama zinamathole azo zilele engceni. Ezi zinkulu zazingathi ziyozela zifuna ukulala apho elangeni, kodwa amathole wona ayengazolanga. Ayedlala oku kwamathole ekati, ebhuqana, elumana iindlebe nemisila.

Ayengathi kuNomsa ambuna awanangozi naburalarume. Kodwa noko anjalo wakholwa kukuba abe sezantsi phaya kude kuye nabanye abazingeli. Kwaza kwathi ntalu inyamazana kude kufuphi kodwa aziyinzanga iingonyama kuba eli lalingeloxesha lakuzingela. Iimazi zona noko zikhe zavungama zabetha nangemisila. Amathole ayikhangela le nyamazana aze abuye akhangela konina. Zisuke iimazi zanga ziya kuyo ngoku zavungama zakhuthaza namathole la ukuba afunze kuyo nawo.

Wavakala uDamasi owayemi ngakuNomsa esithi kuye, “Uze ukhangele, ezi mazi zizakuwafundisa ukuzingela la mathole azo ngale nyamazana. Enye yazo yaxaba endleleni yayekela amathole ukuba ayixine inyamazana. Yathi kunjalo yabuya yayiyeka yabaleka isenzela ukuba amathole ayisukele ayibambe ewodwa. Athe akungathi ayoyisakala kwakhona imazi yayibamba yayiwisa phantsi inyamazana, kodwa yabuye yayiyekela kwasematholeni apha ukuba ayibambe.

Kwenzeka ukuba elinye lawo lingaqondi konke libe liphuphutheka lisukela into elingayaziyo, lithi ukusuka apho libe lidlalisa ngokuyibamba ngomsila. Wasuka kwangoko unina walibetha ngempama wanga uya lingxolisa uti malazi ukuba

*Ingonyama*

liyingonyama iphela lingabi lifeketha, lidlalisa, libhibhidla okukantamekwana.

Ngewayeyihlalele wayibukela le nto uNomsa kodwa ama-Zulu akowabo, ngokwesiqhelo sawo, ayeselemi ngeenyawo kwakhona, elungiselela ukuba seluhambeni, ukuhlala ndawonye kade kungasekho, neentliziyo sezisemakhaya ngoku.

Phaya elundini zazibonakala iinduli ezikufuphi namakhaya. Loo nto yamkhuthaza uNomsa kuba wayeselekhamsile ngoku kukudinwa eziva ukuba inye ngoku into ayilangazelelayo, lukhuko kuphela aya kulala kulo athi sa.

Wasoloko emana ukusalela kwabanye ngoku, akwabikho namntu umbonelelayo kuloo nto. Mgama kuye ngaphambili yayinguDamasi benoZabala, kubonakala ukuba kumnandi kubo bachwayitile, baya hleka yintswahla kuyiloo nto. Wajwaqeka ngumsindo uNomsa akubona noDamasi ngokwakhe engasamse so, engasamazi nokuba wakhe wangumntu okhoyo naye, engasajiki nokujika akrwaqule nangasemva kuye ambone apho akhoyo.

Wazirua, waxomoloza, wahamba njalo eyiloo nto kukudinwa, phofu kumnandi kuba ngoku eyindlela ebuyela ekhaya. Kwakumnandi ngaphezulu kuba wayeza kubonana nonina nomsakwabo lowa uselusana, kwa nabanakwabo oMdingi noGangatha ohlekisa kunene. Loo nto yatsho ingqondo yalibala nokudinwa oku kwakhe waza koko kulibala wasuka wanyathela, akakhetha, naphi na ukuhamba oku. Ukuba waychamba ekhangela ngononelelo, ngewayeqondile ukuba indlela apha yayigqunywe ngamasebe emithi kwaye nengca le yayigqushekile, aze ayiphephe loo ndawo njengokuba abanye babenzile.

Kodwa ngelishwa iingqondo zikaNomsa zazikude ngeli thuba waza wathi engazanga wazibona selesezantsi konzulu wona umngxuma emi ngeenyawo apho phezu kwehlosi. Ngethamsanqa lalifile lihlatyaniselwe ngotolo entanyeni. Into yokuqala eyafikayo ezingqondweni ukubuya kwazo yaba yimibulelo ukuthi kanti eli hlosi lifile. Kodwa uthe kungekudala waqonda ukuba akasobe abe nakuphuma apho engancedwanga mntu arolwe. Wabona ukuba icebo linye kuloo ngxaki kukuba akhwaze acele amancedo kodlulayo. Waza wafuna engqondweni ukuba kuya kuba kade kangakanani na elapho. Woze aphume na khona ukuphuma kuba kungenzeka baqonde sebesemakhaya abazingeli ukuba kanti yena usele.

Ukuqina kwesibindi kona kwakukho kuNomsa, kodwa woyiswa namhlanje yinto yokusuke kube mnyama, nanga-phezulu, kube shushu apha emngxunyeni. Kwaye wayedinwe efile ngaphaya koko. Ixesha lathi ukuhamba oku lacotha, waqala wapheliswa bubukhalipha bezingela waziva esoyika ngoku okwentombazana eminyaka ilishumi kuphela.

Kwaba ngathi ngoku akasoze abuye abonane nonina nabantakwabo kwakhona. Wangathi akasoze abe nakufunyanwa kwaziwe nento eyamlilelayo. Akuba lapho zaphuma iinyembezi kuNomsa kwanzima ukuzibamba. Waphinda wakhwaza, kodwa lasuka ilizwi latshona loxe. Wabethwa lunxano umzimba wanga ufakwe embizeni ebilayo, watshisa, wamanzi. Waqala kaloku wazizonda wazidela obaa bunganga bakhe bokude azenze izingela naye. Ukuba wayanele kukuzihlalela ekhaya ngewayengazange wazifumana ekwimeko enje ngaleyo.

Wafumane ke wazama ukuzenzela iindawo zokubambeleva ngeenzwane apha emacaleni omngxuma kodwa umhlaba ngenxa yokuthamba wasuka wavuthuluka wawa phantsi. Ngoku waye selengasazi nokuba kuxesha ni na. Kwanga ngunyaka wonke weyclayo kuloo mngxuma, woyika wagubha akucinga ukuba kanene angachitha nobusuku bonke elapha, into leyo enokwenza nokuba kuwele nesilo kwalapho. Ingqondo kaNomsa yatsho ngoku yambonisa ozingonyama namahlosi emsinekela emphala nangeenzipho. Wathi akuba lapho waziva edubuleka ekhwaza ngamandla kwakhona. 'Suka kwehla isimanga abengasilindele. Weva ngelizwi liphendula,

waqiniseka ukuba elo lizwi lelukaDamasi. Wayekhwaza naye efuna ukuba uphi na.

Watsho ngelibukhali uNomsa, ezixela apho akhoyo, ezantsi emngxunyeni. Kwakukho indawo evulekileyo apha emagqabini nasemasebeni aphezu kwawo, waza waba nokubona uDamasi ekrobile emlondla. Uzabala yena wayothuke engazinento anokuyenza. Wafumane wathi ke, "Yo! into yakho isothuse safuna ukufa inene." "Akwenzakalanga kodwa?" wabuza uDamasi esoyika nokuthetha. "Hayi akukho nto ndenzeke yona ngaphandle kokoyika. Hayi ke kona!" watsho uNomsa ngelityhafileyo. "Akakho obengenakungothuki kwinto enje ngale," watsho uDamasi eyikhangelisa yonke loo nkontyo yomngxuma. "Singathini bethu ukuze simkhuphe apha?" wafumane wazibuzisa wenjenjalo uZabala kucacile kodwa ukuba yena ufuna ukwenza into ebonakalayo kule meko. UDamasi wathatha ezantsi ukucinga. Kodwa uNomsa yena namhlanje wasuka 'wema ingqondo.' Wanela kukuba ayekele kwakubo havele necebo. "Masifune iminxeba eyomeleleyo siyiphothe idibane," wavela nelo uDamasi.

Watsho esithi, "UNomsa angazibophelela ngayo loo ntambo size simtsale." "Nithobe neyesibini, ngathi kukho into apha endiya kufuna ukuphuma nayo," wacebisa watsho uNomsa. "Ngaba iya kuba yintoni leyo?" wabuza uZabala. "Khawume wobona ngoko," waphendula uNomsa, kubonakala ukuba ikho le nto ayifihlayo.

Wazithoba ke uDamasi zombini ezo ntambo zilukiweyo. Wakha wazivavanya uNomsa kuqala, wazifumana zomelele. Enye wayibophelela apha ehlosini, enye wayithandela apha kuye phezulu esifubeni, waza wakhwaza wathi selelungile. Bazifaka zatshona iinyawo emhlabeni bawakhupha onke, batsala. UNomsa yena wayebambelele ethe nkqi entanjeni., iinzwane zona ezifake emacaleni omngxuma lowo, waza okwaloo mzuzu wazinqwenelela ukuba ezo nzwane ngezikhule zande zafana nezabaThwa.

Wada ke waphumela ngaphandle emngxunyeni, waza waziphosa phantsi waya kulala tywa emhlabeni ekhefuzela liphika. Bamlolonga uZabala noDamasi bada bamphatha-phatha befuna ukuqonda ukuba akenzekanga nto na.

Esakhefuzela njalo uNomsa wayalela ukuba batsale enye leya intambo. Kwabalula noko ngoku kubo kuba kwaku-

tsala abantu abathathu. Lathi lakuvela ihlosi uNomsa akabi nalo nethuba lokujonga ezintwana ebusweni. Waziva nje ngcendlebe xa zithi, "Hawu lihlosi, bafondini, inyani!"

Babesancoma bengalibali ubuhle besi silo ukuvela kukaZitu nkqu chamba noSikhulumi nomnye umzingeli besiza bengxamile. Wavuya uyise kakhulu akuyibona intombi yakhe uNomsa iphilile. Wathi khona akuva ngendlela uZabala no-Damasi abenze ngayo wawathanda la makhwenkwe akabi nakuzinceda angawatsho! Wawancoma wawathetha wathi, "Inene enze ngokwamadoda."

Waye bumoyika uyise uNomsa waza emba ukumjonga wathi, "Asikukho nokuba ndidanile, tata, ukuthi ngokuswela kwam inkathalelo ndinifake enkathazweni engaka ukuba nkulu." Wanqwala nje ngentloko uyise walandelisa yena wathi, "Ewe unyanisile imposiso ikakhulu ibe kuwe. Kodwa nam ngokwam andimsulwa kuba ekungxameni kwam ukuba side sifike ekhaya, andibanga sakhangelana nangasemva ndiqonde apho ukhona. Sondela sihambe." Waleka wathi, "Asiyi kuba sadlula sakufika kwabanye phaya. Siya kulalisa apho kuba sekuhlwile."

Wathi amadoda mawalibophe imilenze ihlosi alityathe ngomkhonto babuyele bonke kulaa ndawo baza kulala kuyo.

"Lelakho eli hlosi, Nomsa. Uya kwenza oko ukuqondayo ngalo," watsho uyise.

Wavuya kakhulu yile nto uNomsa watsho walibala noba wakha wangumntu obediniwe. Kwamnandi kanye le nto azibona kwakhona esahamba. Nale nto uyise engamqumbelanga ngokwa kufathula kwakhe nayo yamonwabisa watsho waziva ewadlula onke amanye amantombazana ngemivuyo yentliziyo enombulelo.

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INGOMA KAMDINGI

Bathe bakuba besondela emakhaya abazingeli baphuma bonke abo babesele, beza kubahlangabeza. Bathe khona bakubona ezaa mpondo zine bakhuza abalibala, bencoma. “Zange ebomini bam ndizibone ezinje ukuba ntle,” lavakala lisitsho elinye ixhego elalise lilidala, latsho limana ukuziphulula liziphatha-phatha ngesandla. “Ziya kuba nexabiso elililo ngokwananiselana ngazo.”

Wathi akubona unina uNomsa waba selebaleka emhlangabeza. UThemba yena wamwola wamana emfunqula embeka. “Themba, ndiya kubalisela ude udinwe, ngezinto endizibonileyo,” wathi esitsho wabemnika esandleni elaa gobhoza likhulu likaqongqothwane awayeliphiwe ngulaa mfazi womThwa.

USiziwe watyhudisa wazenzela indlela apha esiqhwini wangena etyethe uDube egxeni. Yayibuzoyika le nkawana ezi ziqhu zabantu kwanale ngxolo bayenzayo. Waye ngasaqondi uNomsa nokuba sel’ alityalwa na yile ntwana. Wabulisa kuSiziwe wazama ukuteketisa apha kuDube, ukuba alive nje ilizwi lakhe. UDube wasuka wangenwa kukungcangcazela komzimba wonke wanga unomzananda. Watsala-tsala waxhuzula wafuna ukumhlangabeza naye. Waza wasuka kwakanye waziphosa wonke ezingalweni kuNomsa ekhala, wangathi uthi kazi ubuye phi na eli thuba lide kangaka.

“Isathanda wena le nkawu ngaphezu kwabanye bonke abantu,” watsho uSiziwe noko kungemnandi kuye ukutsho. “Usengadlalayo nayo nanini na uthanda. Andinakho ukuyilibala dade wethu, into ondenzele yona yokundigcinela uDube wam,” wabulela watsho uNomsa.

Wayeqonda uNomsa ngoku ukuba, nene, ubuyele ekhaya, kwangakumbi khona akuva izwi likanina limbiza liphuma kwenye indlu lisithi, “Nomsa, ntombi, khawuye kundikhelele amanzi.”

Wathi ukuhla kwakhe ukuya emlanjeni waba elandelwa ngamanye amantombazana nawo eye kukhelela onina amanzi.

Ayehamba embuza le nale uNomsa, aza emka kakhulu nale nto yabaThwa, ahleka kakhulu khona akuwaxelela ngalaa mThwa wayembuza ukuba akakendi na. Yatsho yathabatha ithuba namhlanje into yamantombazana yokubuya kwawo namanzi emlanjeni. Athi ukubuya kwawo afika kumiwe ngeenyawo emakhaya kulungiselelwa isidlo sobo busuku bemivuyo yokuba kubuywe engqina kukuhle kumntu wonke.

Kwakuthuthelwa iinkuni phaya ngaphandle komzi kuza kwenziwa isithatha somlilo ngazo. Kuloo mlilo kwakuza kojiwa inyama yenkunzi yenkomo exheliweyo kunye nombona. Kungekudala kumiwe kwenjiwe nje baqala bafika nabanakwaboNomsa bebuya neemazi emadlweni. Kaloku namhlanje babeyalelwe ukuba bahle babuye bazokuba luncedo nabo kuloo malungiselelo aloo mini.

Wabaleka uNomsa ukuya kubahlangabeza abanakwabo nabo wafika abanye wababiza nangamagama, oMdingi noGangatha. “Zininzi iindaba endinazo nibona nje!” “Valelani iinkomo ezo nikhawuleze nize ndinibalisele.” Baqokelelana bamngqonga uNomsa, bonke waza wababalisele ngenyoka ayibonileyo iginye ixhama elimabala-bala, wababalisele ngabaThwa abatsho ingqondo yomntu imke, nangeengonyama ezihamba kunye zingumhlambi, waza waggqibela ngokubabalisele ngento emhleleyo yokuwela kwakhe emngxunyeni. Baphulaphula bonke wanga akangeyeki.

“Ngewuphi kodwa ngoku ukuba elaa hlosi lalihleli lingafanga,” wafumane wangenelela watsho uGangatha ehanjelwa ngumzimba yile nto. UNomsa wasuka wahleka waza wathi, “Nantsi into ndikuphe Gangatha. UmThwa ondiphe le ntambo yomqala uthe iya kumzisela ithamsanqa lencuka wonke umntu okhe wayinxiba.” Waseleyithatha uGangatha eyinxiba kwangoko, noko ebuthandabuza kukusindwa yile nto ingaka uNomsa amenzele yona. Waphakama uMdingi yena waza wathi, “Nomsa zimmnandi zinencasa ezi ndaba uza nazo. Mna okukokwam andikaneli.” “Khawume sikhe siye phaya endlwini. Ikho le nto nawe ndikuphathele yona.” Bathe bakufika apho endlwini uNomsa wamthela ruthu ufele lwehlosi oluya wayecele uSikhulumi ukuba amhlinzele lona, wamphosa ngalo. Lwaluluhle lugqibile! UMdingi wafumane wamatsheka akabi namlomo mpela yile nto, wavakala esithi, “Inene undisik’ umlomo dadethu!” “Kanti

oyena mntu uzaliswe luvuyo ndim ngokuba ndilunike wena olu fele," watsho uNomsa. Kaloku wayemelwe yilaa nto yokuba uMdingi wasalayo akabinakuhamba alelwe yena ukuphuma nengqina mhla-mnene.

Wathatha ithuba uMdingi elubuka olu fele ade amane eluphatha-phatha eluva nangeminwe. "Kukho nenye into endikuphathele yona," wabuya waphinda watsho uNomsa. "Yaye yona ke le yahlukile mpela, kodwa ndiqinisekile iya kuba nolutho kuwe." Wathi esitsho wabemxelela ngalaa ngxwelera yendlovu eya phantsa ukulimaza uSikhulumini, owasinda ngokuvikelwa nguyise ngamandla obukhalipha bakhe. "Ukuba bendikwazi ukubonga njengawe bendiya kwenza ezimnandi ngesi siganeko."

Kwangoko kwabakho into ayibonayo uNomsa apha ebusweni kuMdingi. Kwaba ngathi ubona kugqitha umfanekiso wale nto abeyithetha apha engqondweni kaMdingi namazwi akhe ezibongo angathi selegilana afuna ukuphuma ngomlomo. Wee guququ uMdingi elusongela esandleni olwa fele wajonga kuNomsa kwakhona waza wathi ngoku, "Enkosi, Nomsa, inene enkosi, ndiya bulela."

Kwakulixesha lasebusuku kukhanya, inyanga isisonka. Amathunzi emithi ayecacile, amadangatye omlilo emana ukusiphuka etsibela phezulu. Wonke umntu wayetye wasela wanela, ngoku kuhleliwe kwenziwe isangqa esikhulu, kujikelezwe isithatha esikhulu somlilo kuphulaphulwe iimbongi zimana ukuphakama iyileyo ithetha ezayo izibongo kubongwa amazingela namagora akwaZulu. Ezinye zezi zibongo zazise zisaziwa, kodwa abantu babethanda ukumana beziva ziphindwa.

Yaba nguNomsa yedwa ongamangaliswanga kukubona ngoMdingi naye selephakama esiya kuma phakathi esazulwini ngaphambili ejika ejonga ebantwini selesitsho ngelizwi elibukhali nelicacileyo :

“Phezulu kwiintaba ezikude,
Kulapho iindlovu zikhona,
Izilo ezikhulu zamahlathi.
Kushukum' imithi apho zihambayo,
Kunyikim' umhlab' apho zinyathelayo.”

Wamangaliswa akalibala uyise akuya unyana wakhe esenjenje ukuchaza nangamalungiselelo engqina kwanokukhuselwa kwabantu bayo yinkosi ngokwayo. Kaloku imbongi le yinto ethandwayo ngabantu khona yakuphakama. Kodwa uZitu wayengazange nakancinane wamazazi ukuba unyana wakhe lo unje ubuciko bakhe.

Wathi khona akuhambisa zanga iindlebe ziya siphuka ebantwini, wabonakala noNomisa selesoyiswa likhwele naye ngenxa yomnakwabo kwakuba nje. Akuzange kube naku-nyamezeleka konke akuwalandelelisa amazwi awenze intambo atyibele ukuwakhupha oku awenjenje lo mfana. Wathi khona akuza kufika kwindawo enoSikhulumi wesuka wemka nabo abantu akuthi, “uSikhulumi izingela elimehlo ngathi lukhozi, owayibona kuqala indlovu eyayingxweleriwe, amathunzi okuhlwa esangana enjalo.

USikhulumi into engabethelwa ntaka, eziphosa yonke eramncweni.

Into eyathi ngamhla uthile kanti izinakile

Indlovu ife isiqaqqa iza kuvuka umvuka ifun’ undikho.”

Wathi kanti lo mfana eza kule ndawo nje uza kowona mongo nomxholo ofunjethwe zezaloo mini izibongo: Ubukhalipha nobubele benkokeli yala maNantsi. Le ndawo wayitsho ngobuciko bamazwi amahle nakhethiweyo. Wathi ukuba aye esiphelweni babe abantu bonke sebemi bengaqondanga bekhwaza “Hawu! hawu!” bengenakuzinceda. Yaba yimini leyo engasokuze ilibaleke.

Wathi akuyeka waya kuma uMdingi ngakuZitu, waza uyise eziva eyithandile namhlanje le nkwenkwe wabeka isandla sakhe egxalabeni kuyo wakhomba kuNomisa wathi: “Kha-wuze ngapha Nozingelana wam. Ndiya bona ukuba nguwe lo usizisele la mathamsanqa abe ngaka! Qobokazana!”

Lafumane lamya waneentloni uNomisa akumva uyise ade enjenje ukumncoma. Waza wavuya akuba nendlela yokuzithi nyebelele azimele phakathi kwabanye.

Kweza uDamasi kuye wafika wathi: “Akutsho ukuthi le mini ibe mnandi nezithawuthawu zayo?” Wayingqina uNomisa naye ukuba ibe mnandi. Kancinane uDamasi waqhuba wathi, “Ndibona ngathi uMdingi uxakathe ufele olutsha lwehlosi noGangatha unentambo yomqala eyenziwe ngoboya bendlovu. Ngaba kukho nto ozigcinele yona kodwa

wena?'' Wanikina intloko uNomsa elandula, ''Kaloku mna ndide ndaya nasengqina, ndazaneza ngaloo nto. Akukho nto ke ndiyinqwenelayo eyiyenye.''

''Noko uya kusewuziphathela awakho amaxhoba kule ngqina yonyaka ozayo,''' wafaka loo ngqondo uDamasi. Kodwa uNomsa wala wathi akayi kuhamba yena kunyaka ozayo; kuya kuhamba uMdingi. Wamjonga uDamasi wawafaka amehlo ukumjonga oku, waza wamvumela wathi, ''Ewe mhlawumbi loo nto iya kuba noncedo elwenzayo. Kodwa andikholwa ukuba uMdingi lo angabuya neendaba ezingangezi uze nazo, andikhathali nokuba uphinde amaxesha ngamaxesha ephuma ingqina.''

''Kodwa mandiyithethe yona inyaniso. Ndiyithandile into yokuphuma kwam ndiye kuzingela iindlovu. Akukho nto ndakha ndayibona ebomini bam efana nayo,''' wagqibela ngelo uNomsa.

Wawuphela umlilo. Amadangatye abukhanyisa ubuswana bukaNomsa. Wamkhangela lo mntwana uDamasi phofu akathetha. Yasengqondweni kuye into yokuba ubomi buya kusoloko baba mnandi kulo Nomsa ndini wase maNantsini.



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