

ISAHLUKO IV.

Athe ukuba angene amaJaji kawabe esakhuluma kakhulu ngalolusuku lwesihlanu icala eliqula. Adane athi qhwi, qhwi izinhlamvana, labe liyamlahla njalo uMasovenyeza icala.

Akudingekanga nokuba aze atshelwe ukuthi limlahlile. Wazibonela yena ngokubuka ubuso bukaVavini, obase bubheje baba bomvu; wazibonela ngokuqhaqhazela kwebhulukwe likaDanyela. Athe ukuba aqede amaJaji, uVavini wabutha amabhuku akhe, wanyolozela waye waphuma ngomunye umnyango. UDanyela wasuke wakhohlwa ukuthi wenzenjani ngoba nangu uMasovenyeza emi eduze kwakhe. Wathi uyakhuluma wabheda nje. Wabubula wonke uQwabe, esevumelana ukuthi icala loniwe nguVavini, ukube ubeliphathe kahle ngabe lilahle uZulumancansi, njengoba lenza enkantolo yeMantshi.

Lapho uMasovenyeza usejuluke usemanzi usethe te. EMgungundlovu abantu babesavunyelwa ukuba baziphathele amawisa. NoMasovenyeza wayese naye uSabisamadoda. Uthe lapho ephuma emnyango wema, wacabanga ngokujulile, abakubo sebephume bonke. Abanye bathe uma bedlula kuyena babuza ukuthi kunganjani ukuba okungenani lisale seledlulela eBloemfontein. Kuleli akaze aphenhula; inhliziyo isisesibayeni ekhaya. Bayakukhuluma konke lokhu uMnguni ucabanga ngokunye. Inhliziyo isikulomlungu owone icala. NoDanyela, lokhu naye kwakungowakwa-Qwabe, ekhule belusa noMasovenyeza, akasabonwa lapho eshone ngakhona.

Unyamalala nje uDanyela yingoba ukhumbula into eyake yenzeka kwelakwaQwabe, lapho uMasovenyeza wake washaya indonya lena efakwa emhelaneni wawonongqayi, wayiqhuzula ngewisa lakhe yaye yabangwa zinkuku! Iphoyisa leli ulishayela ukuba lingene ngokungendlela

emzini wakhe. Uyafika phambili ecaleni iMantshi iyamsola ngobuphoxo bakhe; kodwa imthethe ngecala.

Kuthe esemi esacabanga uMnguni, thushu uMsi Vavini, namagilazi amasha. Uza kuMasovenyeza uyamoyizela. Mamo uMnguni! Labhiza phambi kobuso bomlungu iwisa kwachoboka amagilazi. Wamangala nje umlungu ukuthi kwenzenjani. Wathi qala, qala wase eshilo ngephimbo: “Daniel! Daniel! Where’s Daniel?” Wezwa uDanyela ukuthi uyamenyezwa, weza esegijima, kusongathi kukhona obe kusamzinile. Uthe efika, ebona uMnguni engasadle nkobe zamabele, wase emela kude. Pho, kungumuntu owayekhule eliqanda, uvalo lwalusheshe lumeqe ikhanda, abese eqhaqhasela nje. Uma eseshaywe luvalo uDanyela nesiNgisi leso sawo-1881 wayeyaye ethuke sesimphunyukile.

Umlungu-ke yena usalokhu emangele ukuthi konje konke lokhu okwenzeka kuye kubangwa yini. Abuze ngeliphansi kuDanyela athi: “What is the matter with my client, Daniel?” Esakhathazwa luvalo uDanyela, aphenhule engingiza athi: “I don know baas. I don know. Dis native he hit!” Umlungu amangale nje ukuthi isifundiswa sakhe singenelwa yini ukuba silusonte kangaka ulimi lwamaNgisi.

Asuke ajanqule uMasovenyeza athi kuDanyela: “Uthini? Uthi M’ don know; uthi M’ don know wani? Kawumtsheli ngani umlungu iqiniso? Mtshela ukuthi ngithi ulonile icala lami!”

Asondele kuDanyela uMsi Vavini. “What does he say, Daniel?” Abone uMasovenyeza ukuthi uyathathela uDanyela, esalokhu eqoqana nezimhlamvu zesiNgisi ezisabalekile, abese eziphendulele yena kuVavine athi: “You, baas! You spoilit my case!”

“No, I did not.”

Akabe esalinda ukuba aze aqede umlungu uMasovenyeza. Khona lapho uSabisamadoda wabhiza emoyeni. Kwathi nesiqumbi esasesibangungile sahlakazeka. Kulobobuyaluyalu kufika usayitsheni wamaphoyisa, ehamba nehele lawo, ufike uyambamba uMasovenyeza, umbeka icala lokudunga ukuthula kwezakhamuzi.

Bathe besithela noMasovenyeza, yayizwakala isho ngompongo intombazane yakuboZulumacansi, uQimbile, umkaMasovenyeza. Kubonakale ukuthi naye lona wesimame ubangela izihlonishwa, amaJaji, umsindo. Kodwa asheshe athule uma amaphoyisa esemexwayisile ukuthi naye uzolandela indoda yakhe aye esitokisini.

Khona malapho athi esuka uMsi Vavini abe eya emaphoyiseni afike anxusele uMasovenyeza ukuba ayekelwe. Bamhloniphe uMsi Vavini, bathi bangamexwayisa ngesenzo sakhe, ebese bemyeka.

Wathi ingani womile uMasovenyeza, akabe esaya eMatsheni. Wasimze wabanga esiteshini, wangena enqoleni, wathula wathi du. Inhliziyo isisesibayeni ekhaya; ibuye yedlule iye eBhiyafu, lapho athenga khona umuthi wesithunzi; ibuye iphenduke ize kuDanyela. Athi lapho ecabanga ngoDanyela, inhliziyo izigaye izigayisisile izibozi. Azitshela athi inxa engake ambone khona lapho angamthatha ngoSabisamadoda.

Uthe efika ekhaya indaba yase igcwele bonke uButhunqe bukaMagayi. Kwathi ingani abaningi bayajabula ukuthi icala limlahlile, isithunzi sakhe kwafumaniseka ukuthi kasilimele kakhulu. Okusihlengile yilizwi elithe uphume enkantolo wabanga kummeli wakhe, wafike wafahlaza amagilazi ngoSabisamadoda. Babubula bonke uButhunqe ukuzwa ukuthi umfo kaMaqhude akabesabi abeLungu. Isithunzi sikaSabisamadoda kwaba sobala ukuthi sizoba sikhulu ngokweqile ebandla ngoba useke wahlala emanka-

nkeni kumlungu. Kwathi uma sekuthiwa uthe noma esebanjiwe, wafike waphuma ngaphambili eShantshihhovisi, awu, lapho nezitha zikaMasovenyeza zabona ukuthi mkhulu lomuntu owesatshwa nangamaphoyisa.

Lena eButhunqe kayaze yaphathwa nakancane njena indaba yokunxusa kukaMsi Vavini. Izwi lathi sithunzi zikaMasovenyeza esimkhululile. Nokuba uZulumacansi limthethile icala akwabe kusaba nalo idumela elingakho.

Ufika ekhaya uMnguni abakwakhe sebefike kuqala. Ufika amabala aseshanelwe asemhlophe athe qwa; sekuthule konke lapha kwakhe kuthe cwaka, usungula uthi kufiwe. Lokhu umuzi mkhulu, unezingane eziningi, nazo zithule ungathi kazikho. Abantu abedlulayo bayamangala nje ukuthi ziye zanzwatshelwa kumuphi umgodini. Nezinkukhu zakhona imbala zihamba ngamanzonzo lapha ebaleni; zihambe zikhawuleza. Zase zizazela ukuthi uma umnumzane ethukuthele zona kazibokwenzenjani ukuphepha kuSabisamadoda noma uSabisabafazi. Uma umnumzane ethukuthele uSabisabafazi ubeyaye ahlale edolweni kumfazi, enkukhwini ahlale engileni; inkukhu isho kanye ithi "klo", kube ukufa kwayo.

Washaya kancane uMasovenyeza ebaleni lakwakhe, waye wangena elawini, wahlala phansi wathula wathi du. Abesimame bashayana ngamakhanda, abanye baletha amanzi; abanye basheshisa ukudla: abanye benza lokhuya nalokhuya. Kepha bonke baze beze elawini bafike bathiyeke emnyango. Unele wangena elawini umnumzane wavala ngesihluthulelo wangena embhedeni. Babone abesimame ukuthi kubi ngoba umnumzane akafuni nakudla, akafuni natshwala, akafuni lutho. Baphindela emuva bebuso bude.

Ngokuhlwa kwaba yilowo wabiza okungamachwanyana kwakhe; wakuqoqela ndawonye, wakupha ukudla masinya.

Kwayilowo waphuthuma kweyakwakhe indlu. Bonke ngalelilanga balala bengalele.

Buhambe kancane ubusuku, abantu bengalele. Kuthi kuphakathi kwamabili bezwe songathi kukhona umuntu onswininizayo elawini. Lubashaye lubaqede uvalo bethi kukhona okuklinya umnumzane. Baphume ezindlini bephangelana, nalabo abesaba ubumnyama. Abanye bagijima amehlo balokhu bewaphonsa ngalena kwegogo lezingulube; abanye sebebona izithunzi khona lapho, phezu kokuba umnyama ukhasa phansi. Bathi kodwa noma bezicabanga zonke lezizinto, kwabe kukhona emiqondweni ikakhulu ukunswininiza komnumzane.

Wabe elokhu empongolozile uMasovenyeza ngaphakathi elawini. Baklele phambi komnyango abesimane, baqale ukumemeza, abanye sebekhihlila isililo. Kuze kwethuke nezingane, nazo bezilalele zilalela ovalweni. Kube yilowo amemeze kakhulu ukuze umnumzane ezwe elakhe izwi “Yini kangaka? UMnguni udliwa yini bo? Vula emnyango yise kaBambimpi.” Bahlokome isikhathi eside abesimane, kuyilowo ezibuzela okufika kuyena. Bamemeza njalo abanye bajeqeza emnyameni ukuthi akuqhamuki lutho yini.

Aphikele lapha ngaphakathi uMasovenyeza ekhala ethi: “Kahleni makhosi bo! Ngigeke ngiphinde! Hhayi makhosi umlungu bengingaqondile ukumbulala. Bengenziwa ukuthukuthela nje. Bengilwa noZulumacansi.”

Abanye besimame baqale ukusisithekela phansi uma bezwa umnumzane ehayiza kanjena. Kodwa laba abahlekayo basheshe bazikhuze uma sebezwa abanye bethi yimithi kaZulumacansi yonke lena. Leli ligunyise ukwesaba kubona kabusha, manje bese becabanga ukuthi uZulumacansi ungalena kwegogo; umele umnumzane. Uvalo lubenze bazilahle amathambo, bathathe imbazo, umnyango

bawushaye bawuhlekeze ngayo. Bangena qede elawini base bekhanyisa. Lapho okuzingane sekulunguze ngamakhanda kuwo onke amaqhugwana. Kuthi lapho kuthi dwi uku-khanya kwesibane, bambone umnumzane, esezigingqi phansi, ewe embhedeni; usejuluke usemanzi te. Bangabaze kaningi. Abanye kuthi kabazilahle phezu kwakhe ngenxa yomnyu; bathi lapho bethi bayaziphonsa bakhumbule uSabisabafazi. Abanye kuthi kabakhale kakhulu, bamemeze. Nabo bathiywe livuso likaSabisabafazi. Bame bathi khimilili, kuthuthumela imizimba, bengakaboni kahle ukuthi konje okufanele ukuba bakwenze yikuphi.

Bathe basaklelile waphenduka uMasovenyeza, wathi ukuzelula, wavula amehlo wase ehlala ngesinqe. Wathi ukubabheka bonke, wase ebheka isibani, washo ngelipholile wathi: “Ngipheni amanzi!”

Baphuma bephangelana abesimame beyofuna amanzi. Babuya nawo bamnika. Uthe ukuba awaminye wayesethi kabamlethele ikhofi. Pho, lokhu abafazi unabo bayisithupha, ngokuphazima kweso langena selishunqa intuthu; langena lilandela amanzi okugeza. Wabuhlamba ubuso, wezwa umzimba uthi dwi, nekhofi lehla kamnandi emphinjeni. Bamphuthuma nangokudla. Uthe lapho ephakathi nokudla, abesimane bonke sebeklele kahle beguqe ngenkulu inhlonipho lena phambi kwakhe, besalinde ukuthi abatshela ukuthi kwenzenjani, bezwa esethi: “Uphi uSabisabafazi? Mletheni lapha.”

Leli laphelisa nasozwaneni kwabesimame. Basimze bakholwa ukuthi okuyilona asebone ngalo yiliphi. Abanye bakhumbula ukuthi konje babulale umnyango ngembazo; abanye bakhumbula ukuthi bamemeze kakhulu; abanye abanephimbo bazisola ukuthi izwi baliphakamiseleni emnyameni bememeza umnumzane. Kwayilowo wakhumbula awakhe amacala. Isigcino bamletha kodwa.

Banele bamnike amthathe, athi ukumyaluzisa emoyeni, abese embuka. Lowo nalowo wesimame alindele ukuba uSabisabafazi ahlale kuyena edolweni. Bathuthumele bonke. Athi esuka uMasovenyeza abe ethi: “Mthatheni niyomshisa!”

Baqale bethuka abesimame, bacabanga ukuthi mhlawumbe bashaywe zindlebe. Waphenduka wabheka kubona uMasovenyeza wathi: “Mthatheni niyomshisa uSabisabafazi.” Ukujabula kwabo kwabenza kabaze banyakaza. Kwasukuma wamunye vo, inkosikazi, wamuthi thasi uSabisabafazi ngazo zombili, wahamba naye ngesikhulu isizotha lesi wabanga exhibeni. Laba abanye bambuka bamangala nje ukuthi yini lena eyenzekayo. Inkosikazi yaphuma naye qede yabanga lapho kucandelwa khona izinkuni. Ukuze izanelise ukuthi uzosha kahle, yamcanda, yamcanda ngembazo yase ingena exhibeni, yashanela eziko. Yathatha izingcezu ezincane zikaSabisabafazi yokhela ngazo umlilo, yafaka ezinkulu, wavutha. Yawubuka, iguqe phambi kwelangabi kwaze kwehla izinyembezi kuyona.

“Hhawu!” ikhuluma newisa eziko. “Nguwe lona Sabisabafazi? Namuhla siyizalukazi eziqhugayo njena nguwana. Usuziqedile izingane zabantu kulomuzi. Kawukhethi ntombi iganile. Sonke sesigula ngamadolo, ngisho nezingane imbala. Yifa mthakathi.”

Lishe iwisa lize libe umlotha, inkosikazi enkulu iwuthathe kahle umlotha iwubuthele esoseni, ihambe nawo iwuse elawini lomnumzane.

“Nangu-ke baba, uSabisabafazi.”

“Hamba uyowulahla phandle umlotha,” kusho uMasovenyeza.

Uthe ebuya phandle lona oshise uSabisabafazi wayekhuluma nabo bonke uMasovenyeza ethi: “Kusasa nivuke noke nigeze, nibe bahle, nifake izingubo ezinhle, nihambe niye kumfundisi, lowo nalowo othanda ukutholwa akholwe. Senginibonile ninezinhliziyo ezinhle. Yinina abafowethu bempela.”

Basho kanyekanye abesifazane bathi: “Mnguni!”

Ukusa kwaziwa yibona. Baphuthuma bakhama utshwala. Isishilo inkosikazi enkulu yathi makuyiwe kumfundisi ngelanga elilandelayo ngoba ngalolusuku kwakuzofika amadoda ezokhalela umnumzane ngoba elahlwe licala. Babuvova kahle, babuthela ezinkanjeni, lathi lapho liqala ukufudumala atheleka amadoda. Umuzi kaMasovenyeza-ke ngumuzi womnumzane ngempela; mkhulu, unenkundla yawo, lapho uMasovenyeza ehlala khona nebandla, kuphuzwe, kuxoxwe izindaba zezwe. Atheleke abe maningi amadoda enkundleni, phansi kwemithi.

Kuthi lapho selibalele ngempela, namadoda esephelele, kubonakale ukuthi isixoxwe yaze yavuthwa indaba kaMasovenyeza noZulumacansi.

Laphayana ngasesangweni lesibaya kudlala izingane zikaMasovenyeza, ziholwa yinkosana kaMasovenyeza, uBambimpi. Yikhathi ekhumuka amazinyo uBambimpi ngoba wephuza ukuthola umntwana womfana uMasovenyeza. Athi ehleli exoxa amadoda ezwe izingane zilokhu zikhala zithi: “Hi! Hi! Hhayi mina! Hhayi mina!” Zibelesele izingane aze aqale ukwethuka amadoda. Alalelisise. Ezwe okunguBambimpi kusho ngelengence, izwi kuthi: “Kahleni makhosi bo! Ngingeke ngiphinde! Hhayi makhosi! Hhayi makhosi!!!” Kuthi kusenjalo kuchwaze okungamantombazane okuzalwa noBambimpi kuthi: “Yini bo? Udliwa yini uMnguni?”

Ethuke amadoda athi: “Awu, mhlola muni lona ohlolwa zingane?” Azuke aye kuzona izingane, ecabanga ukuthi kukhona osekuvelile. Ayafika khona akufica okuzingane kwamantombazane kuklele kuzungeze uBambimpi. Yena ulele phansi, uyajanqula, imilenze uyiphonsa le nalena ekhonya, usejuluke waze wabe manzi, elangeni lasehlobo.

Abuze amadoda athi: “Nihlola mihlola mini zingane na?” Kuphuthume khona okunguBambimpi kuthi: “Siyadlala thina. Mina ngingubaba. ONozintethe noGezephi noBathobile bona bangomama. Ubaba kade ekhala ebusuku, samuzwa thina, omama babulala isivalo ngembaso, sazezwa bethi ubaba bamfice elele phansi esejuluke wamanzi ekhala. Thina-ke sesidlala obaba.” Ahleke amadoda abese ezishiya khona lapho izingane. Azishiya nje uMasovenyeza useke wathi ukuziswacela, zase zigodola.

Athi lapho esephindela enkundleni amadoda, asehambe ebhekisisa iminyango emzini kaMasovenyeza. Nebala ahle awubone owaselawini wephukile. Ase elokhu ethintana ngezindololwane nje amadoda, enambithisisa indaba lena ayizwe ngezingane. Kwaba wokhelekile umlilo. Amakhehla acobelana ugwayi ngokukhala kukaMasovenyeza elahlwe licala.

Akuthi ngelinye ilanga ebandla, phambi kukaChief Dumdumu, kuthethwa icala, bese kusuka uyise kaPotolozu akhulume okuphambene kakhulu nezifiso zikaMasovenyeza. Khona lokho njena ukuba umnumzane waseMayezeni abe nesibindi sokuphikisa uMasovenyeza kuwamangalise amadoda. Amanye aqale agqulane ngezindololwane esekhumbuzana indaba yezingane esangweni lesibaya.

Abuyise izinhlonzi uMasovenyeza. Angaze anaka lona okhulumayo, aqhubeke nje nalokho akushoyo. Aswace aze

esabeke uMasovenyeza, lokhu akamphethe uSabisamadoda. Aqhubeke nje umnumzane waseMayezeni. Athi uMasovenyeza lapho ebona ukuthi lona omunye akanakile, abese ethimula kakhulu, abuye akhwehlele. Kuthi ngelikade umnumzane waseMayezeni athi ukuphenduka, abheke kuMasovenyeza, amfice lapho eseswace izinhlonzi sekumemeza zona zithi lento ekhulunywayo iyisinengiso kuMasovenyeza. Mamo, uyise kaPotolozu, lokhu ukhuluma ngezwi elincane futhi elinensayo!

“Ma-mo! U-swa-ce-la ba-ni we-mfa-na ka-Ma-qhu-de? Uyanga-zi mi-na u-ku-thi ngi-ngu-ba-ni? Mi-na o-wa-mi u-mu-zi ngi-ya-kwa-zi u-ku-wu-pha-tha. A-ba-mi a-ba-fa-zi ka-de ba-kho-lwa. Ka-ba-gu-qu-lwe ku-la-hlwa li-ca-la e-m-a-Ja-jini. E-za-mi mi-na i-zi-nga-ne a-ku-thi ku-gcwe-le a-ma-do-da zi-be zi-kho-nya zi-ngi-li-ngi-sa ngi-kha-la ngi-di-li-ke em-bhe-de-ni. U-bo-ba-khe-tha a-ba-ntu bo-ku-ba u-ba-swa-ce-le. Hha-yi a-ma-do-da a-yi-phe-the ka-ngcono i-mi-zi ya-wo nje-nga-mi nje!”

Athule athi swayi uMasovenyeza abheke phansi. Nebandla lithule kube songathi kufiwe, lisamangaliswe yilesisibindi somnumzane waseMayezeni, osicoco silengela ecaleni ngoba kade kwasa siqhuzulwa liwisa likaMasovenyeza, uSabisamadoda. Aqhubeke umnumzane ephikisa okushiwo nguMasovenyeza ecaleni aze aqede kahle. Athe lamadojeyana afundiswe ngoSabisamadoda ukuthetha amacala, ukuba abone ukuthi uSabisamadoda akaselutho, nawo ase equnga isibindi azimela ngokwawo. Waya ngokuya uMasovenyeza encipha ebandla, waze waphetha ngokuba alibale ngaso sonke isikhathi ukuba aziphothele ubusengi, kuthi njalo ngokuhlwa athi hulukuqu naye aye ekilasini kwaMfundisi.

IS AHLUKO V

Kwathatha isikhathi eside kabi uButhunqe bukaMagayi buvungama ngendlela icala likaZulumacansi benoMasovenyeza elihambe ngayo. Nalaphaya ebandla kwasheshe kwabonakala ukuthi isithunzi sikaZulumacansi sikhula ngamandla. Kwathi ingani ubeyaye athi noma ekhuluma into esile, amadoda abese ekhumbula isilevu esashiswa ngumuthi kamesisi, yonke inkulumo yakhe bese ilulazeka, manje laqala izwi lakhe ebandla ukuba lilalelwe. Kwathi nalabo abebeyaye bathi inxa bemdiliza bathi ulayitha waseThekwini, lokhu ngempela bekusho ngasese, manje kababe besakusho – ngoba phela ezweni laseButhunqe icala laleqiwa endleleni ngempela. Ingekho indoda engafunga ithi yona iyoze ife ingatholanga cala.

Lokhu ukuhloniphekha kwegama lakhe kwamjabulisa uZulumacansi. Nabakubo bajabula uma bebona igama lakhe selihlonishwa ngoba phela ehlule inkunzi malanga, uMasovenyeza. Naye uQimbile imbala wathi hulukuqu weza ngasekhaya kuliSonto, evela esontweni. Uma efika ufika uyizeka njengoba injalo indaba kaMasovenyeza nephupho phakathi kwamabili. Edlule aze afake umhlola owagilwa nguBambimpi, kuhangene amadoda ezolilela uMasovenyeza. Kuhlekwe lapha kwabo kuze kube buhlungu izimbambo.

NoManamuza linele elaseButhunqe liyihlafunisise indaba kaMasovenyesa, abese ethanda ukujwayela lapha kuboZulumacansi. Uthe-ke uZulumacansi ukuba limvune icala wase ethi hulukuqu waya ngaseThekwini wafike wakhapha imali ayeyifake eposini. Wedlula lapho wathi ebuya wayethenga izinkomo ezingamashumi amabili, ngelanga elisenhloko, ezithenga kubelungu basemapulazini akhelene nobukaMagayi uButhunqe. Lento yaba yinhle kakhulu impela kuManamuza. Wase elokhu evama ukuba azophuza lapha kuboZulumacansi. Bavungama

uButhunqe. Pho, buvungamela bani? Lokhu uManamuza yena uphike ngokuthi angeke alokothe athinte muntu ngesandla. Induku uyisebenzisa emzini wakhe agcine. Lapha ngaphandle bayaye bathi noma sebethi uligwala lekhehla; bathi ontangayabo noma sebethi ubugwala lobu wakhula nabo, yena abese esuka efulathela ehamba athi: “Oho! Thina kasiyingeni-ke leyo.” Bathi noma sebemgolomba, bemlandelisa ngamazwi aqojeme bethi: “Onke amagwala asho njalo,” angaze anaka uManamuza, asho ekhwela phezu kwenkabi yakhe emhlophe, ayishaye ibheke emzini wakhe.

Zonke-ke lezizinto kufumaniseke ukuthi zisiphakamisa ngamandla amakhulu isithunzi sikaZulumacansi. Ezwe esenesikhulu isibindi manje sokuba anikele kuBajweyele afike abuzisise ukuthi ngempela okuyikhona lentokazi ikuqondile ngaye yini.

Akathi-ke mhla eye kuyophonsa lombuzo kuyona, ayibone icathula kancane nesoka layo ngendlela ebange esiteshini. Ajuluke ezwe kumfoma ikhala. Angabe esabuza. Anikele khona. Athi lapho esondela, abone ukuthi impela ihamba naye umfo waseMayezeni, uPotolozzi. UPotolozzi ufake isudi likanokusho. Izicathulo zicwazimula elangeni zixhophe iso.

Lokhu noBajweyele uvama ukuhamba ngezinyawo, namuhla ufake izicathulo azithunyelwa ngudadewaboyise oseBenoni, lena ngaseGoli. Nawe uzibonela ungenandaba ukuthi lababantu bayathandana.

Asondele kubona uZulumacansi. Athi lapho ephambi kwabo eme, ababingelele. Aqale aswace uBajweyele, kodwa yena avume. UPotolozzi athi ngoba ebona intombi iswaca, abese ethukuthela, angaze avuma inxa embingelela uZulumacansi.

“Hhawu,” sekusho uZulumacansi, “wathula ngikubingelela ntangayethu.”

“Ubungabingeleli mina.”

“Lokhu ngibingelele nina nobabili, uwahlanekezela ngaliphi amazwi ami?”

Anginandaba nalokho mina.”

“Yiba nendaba ntangayethu ngoba ngikhuluma nawe.”

“Ungenza okuthandayo.”

“Ngaliphi ntangayethu na?”

Kushise phansi. Kuhlabe kuBajwayele, abese ekhuza.

“Lalela mina Potolozzi. Myeke uZulumacansi ahambe aye lapho eya khona. Musa ukumsonta umuntu kanjena; uzolokhu emi andisa amazwi.”

“Kuwukuthi uvuna yena wena? Uthi angimyeke njena asine phezu kokhakhayi lwami? Bese nikubophe naye lokho?”

“Musa ukukhuluma kanjalo kimina Potolozzi ngingahlanganise lutho noZulumacansi.”

Asondele kuPotolozzi uZulumacansi.

“Mina, wemfo waseMayezeni, akushiwo njalo kimina!” Asho eyigaxa emahlombe kuPotolozzi imvubu. Waphenduka ngokuphazima kweso uPotolozzi, wathi ebheke ngasekhaya kwase kuntaza isudi emoyeni. Waba lapha noZulumacansi. Kwadilika isigqoko ensizweni yaseMayezeni, sisisha, ibuye naso eGoli, kayanaka,

yalokhu intazile ibalekela imvubu. Wasicosha uZulumacansi isigqoko wamemeza wathi: “Nasi isigqoko sakho ntangayethu!” Yalokhu intaze njalo insizwa yaseMayezeni.

Wabuya naso weza kuBajwayele wafike wathi: “Nasi isigqoko saloyamuntu. Mgcinele mhlawumbe uyamazi,” esho ehleka. Wasithatha uBajwayele.

“Ulibhekisephi kodwa mntakaManamuza?”

“Musa ukungikhulumisa mina.”

“Uma ungasakhulunyiswa, umuhle kangaka, uyazi kuyodilika ilanga esibhakabhakeni lizokhuza lowomhlola?”

Athule uZulumacansi ayibuke intombi kaManamuza. Uthe ebona yayiphenduka isiphindela emuva nayo.

“Kanti beniyaphi!”

“Ingani phela sesenza intando yakho. Kawufunanga ukuba siye lapho besifuna ukuya khona thina. Sesiya lapho ufuna siye khona.”

Aphenduke uZulumacansi, ahambisane nayo ahambe ewubhula lomlilo osewokhelekile ize ibone nayo kodwa ukuthi ubengazange aphoxe yena ngalokhu akwenzile. Iye ngokuya ize ivume nayo ukuthi uPotolozzi usuke walalela ilukuluku lokuthukuthela. Bayehlukana noZulumacansi isiya ngasekhaya isihleka, isixoxa kahle. Ajabule afe uZulumacansi ehlukana noBajwayele kukuhle.

“Uboke phela uthi inxa unesikhathi uke ufike ngasekhaya azokubona umame weZulumacansi.”

“Ngeke ngilubeke ngakini. Intombi kaMemunce ingangenzani?”

“Akalona izimuzimu umame. Yimina njena engithanda ke ngikubone uphendulana naye.”

“Ngeke Bajwayele. Ingani ngizwa ngikude njena ukuthi isalukazi sakho siwotha ubomvu ngalento engiyenze kumkhwenyana waso uMasovenyeza?”

“Iqiniso, wena....” isho imoyizela, imkhomba.

Kuthi cosololo enhliziyweni kuZulumacansi, ikhuluma ihleka naye kamnandi kangaka.

“Ngenzeni kodwa Bajwayele?”

“Ngisafuna ukukubona uphendula umame.”

“Ngeke ngilubeke kini. Kepha intombi kaMemunce ingizondela ubala nje. Umkhwenyana wayo ngambhalela kahle incwadi, ngibiza izinkomo zami ezasalela kuyena ngoba nami sengifuna ukuganwa. Ukuba wanginika ngabe akazange avelelwe yiwo onke lamashwa.”

“Akanandaba nalokho umame. UMasovenyeza ngumkhwenyana kithi.”

“Angazi-ke ngoba phela nami ngisenkonzweni enhle njena?”

Ihleke kakhulu intombi.

“Umame uyombekaphi?”

“Ohluphekile angaziphonsa nasemlilweni ezwa.”

“Cha-ke siyohlala sikulindele.”

“Hhayi bo, angisho ukuthi ngiyokuza.”

“Kanti nawe kukhona umuntu omesabayo lapha emhlabeni?”

“Wakhuluma kanjalo? Kanti umhlaba wadalwa ngubaba yini?”

Ihleke intombi ebese ithi: “Sala weZulumacansi.” Imfulathele. Ihambahambe, ithi lapho ibuqamamana, iphenduke ithi: “Uboke uze phela.”

Uyahamba endleleni uZulumacansi elibhekise ekhaya, akasacabangi lutho olunye; inhliziyo isikuleli lokummema. Uphike ngokuthi akasoze aya ethwabazela yedwa njena. Kuyothi mhla kuphuzwayo, ahambe nezinye izinsizwa.

Kuhlalwe impela esha amashushu ngayo intombi kaManamuza uZulumacansi. Kuthi mhla engahambanga waya lapho itheza ngakhona, abize okuyingane kaQimbile okuhlala noninakhulu okufunda esikoleni ekilasini lesibili. Ayinike ipensele ingane nephepha kanye nemvilaphu ngoba yena engakwazi ukubhala. Awagingqe amazwi kuBajwayele, ezikhalela nengane ibhala phansi. Ithi ingaqeda athathe iphepha leli elibhaliwe alwe nalo, elicikilisha ngoba phela wase eke walunguza kuNight School laphaya eThekwini, kodwa washeshe wayeka ngoba esexinwe yindaba yokucwala isilevu. Wayeka lapho eqala nje ukuba akwazi ukuba alokhu ewacoshisa ngalinye amachashaza lawa abhaliwe. Wayeka engakafundi ukuba awabhale yena amachashazi lawo.

Inele iqede intombazanyana lena abese-ke eyifaka phakathi emvilaphini incwadi, ayivale. Aqale phansi athathe imvilaphu ayibeke phansi ocansini endlini, alale ngesisu, ayisukele imvilaphu enza kuyona imifanekiso yezintaba ezikude, nenyoni ephethe incwadi yakhe nobuso bukaBajwayele nezinye nje-ke izinkimbinkimbi ayezifunde eThekwini. Uma eseqede ukwenza njalo athume yona

ingane ukuba igijime iye kwaManamuza iyonika uBajwayele leyoncwadi.

Zazivama ukuba zihambe ungohamba izincwadi zika-Zulumacansi. Afunde afunde uBajwayele abese eyibeka laphaya incwadi, angaze ayiphendula. Lokhu kwakungaze kungamhlupha kakhulu uZulumacansi ngoba wayeyaye aphike ngokuthi kulungile uma incwadi ifikile kuBajwayele, wezwa okuphakathi kuyona. Impendulo athi uyozilandela yona ngomlomo mhla behlanganayo.

Kuthe-ke kwenzeka konke lokhu, uZulumacansi wase eqala ukuba abone songathi kuthanda ukwehlela ngaku-Bajwayele. Wajabula wandiza phezu kwezindwani zotshani.

Ngaso sonke lesisikhathi uthule nje uManamuza uyabukela. Kuthi uma esebona inganyana kaQimbile isiyandile emagcekeni kwakhe, usebiza umkakhe ngelinye ilanga.

“Angithi yingane kaQimbile lena?” kubuza yena. Izibuthe zonke izinhlonzi eyazalwa nazo intombi kaMemunce. Iphendule ngelincane ithi: “Yilo leliqhalaqhalana likaQimbile. Kuqine kufunze unina. Wake wangilaya umntanami eyogana la kugane amaqidlana akoZulumacansi.”

“Musa ukukhuluma kanjalo nina kaBongani.”

“Ngiyekeleni? Angithi uBongani uyinkosikazi laphaya emzini wakwaQwabe? Angithi umntanami leliqhalaqhalana elinguQimbile selidlala ngaye ngoba lona lazala umfana, owami ezele amantombazane? Mina angibafuni nokuba ngibabone lababantu bakoZulumacansi. Babi kabi. Umntanami akabatholi nje abafana yibona.”

“Licala ukunuka umuntu nina kaBongani.”

“Pho, khona lapho ngibanukile bayongenzani abafokazana labaya?”

“UZulumacansi akusiye umfokazana...”

“Umfokazana nezinkonyana zakhe kimina.”

“Uma usumnuka phela uyobe usungenisa icala ekhaya.”

“Khona la lingenile, uma nginuke umfokozana kuyoba nani?”

“Awu, imfuyo lena itholakala kalukhuni. Amacala abanga indlala nina kaBongani. Singeke sithi sesisebenze kangaka, sesiguga, sesibheke ukuthi sidle okunamafushana size sife, wena bese uthi uzokhalima indlala izihambela ngendlela uyilethe ekhaya.”

“Angazi nje ukuthi ngingenzenjani. NoBajwayele ngimbona eseyejwayeza nje lengane lapha ekhaya.”

“Pho, kunani, nina kaBongani?”

“Enzeni? Athandane noZulumacansi? Ngingafa nasebusuku.”

“Hhayi bo, musa ukusonga kangaka ngendaba yesingane.”

“Hhayi lona owami umntwana.”

“Uma ingane ibona yona ukuthi ulungile uZulumacansi, musa ukuyithikazisa.”

“Angiyazi lengane ukuthi ingihlolelani. Ifuna ukuyeka

inkosi yomuntu, lomfana waseMayezeni. Abantu baseMayezeni kabalwi namuntu; kabasi muntu ezinkantolo. Ngabantu abazithandela ukuthula nje.”

“Uthi pho ngingedumazeke kabi inxa intombi yami igana eMayezeni?”

“Senakuthanda nokudumazeka lokhu. Ungadunyazwa yini lapho?”

“UPotolozzi sekukaningi ebukela uyise bemshaya phambi kwabantu basiphule isicoco ekhanda. Athule nje uPotolozzi; athi esuka abe ethi akuhanjwe. Yeka eyami insizwa. Uba yena? UDumezweni? Angashaya amakhala kabili umfo wami, kufuqe umusi, nalowo ongiqalile abese azi ukuthi uwusukele umsebenzi. Ngimthandiswa yilokho lomfana uZulumacansi. Uma uhamba naye usuke wazi ukuthi uhamba nendoda uqobo lwayo.”

“Nina-ke enihamba imizi yabantu. Thina esizihlalela emakhaya nje kasazi nokuthi silwane sini sona uZulumacansi. Kimina siphoxo nje esihlupha umkhwenyana.”

“Futhi phela unempahla lomfana. Izinkomo zigcwele isibaya. Umntanami angeke alambe.”

“Bekuthiwe uphuma endlaleni yini uBajwayele, lapho ezohamba eqalazana nezibaya zeziphoxo?”

“Udlala ngoZulumacansi. Uthi usiphoxo wedlula lesi esingumkhwenyana wakwakho, esiphathela amadoda nabafazi amawisa.”

“Akafuni ukuqalwa umkhwenyana.”

“Wake wamuzwa umuntu eqamba induku igama?”

“Futhi nalawomawisa kawasekho. Usawashisa. Abafazi bakhe sebengamakholwa manje. Naye useke avakashele ekilazini.”

“Qha, siyambongela umkhwenyana.”

“Uthi ukube uyambongela abe ududulela umntanami kuZulumacansi, efundile yena? Umuse ebumnyameni laphaya? Kobunjani bona? Umlungu eThekwini waze wathi akake abuphungule ngomuthi wasekhemisi.”

Athule uManamuza abheke phansi. Kuthi ngelikade aqumele phansi, amane athi nje: “Mh! Zinkulu izindaba.” Abuye athule. Kwale ukuba athule nalendaba esesifubeni kuyena, nakuba ebona ukuthi lihloma liza neziphepho ngasentombini kaMemunce.

“Phela siyakhuluma nina kaBongani. Kasixabene.”

“Nami ngiyakhuluma.”

“Lokhu phela wena usulwa nje?”

“Angilwi. Ngikhuza lomhlola oza nawo.”

“Ngize namuphi?”

“Uthi uBajwayele angagana uZulumacansi?”

“Njengoba-ke yena kusobala ukuthi useqala ukubona ukuthi laphaya kuboZulumacansi angaphatheka kahle, wena ufunelani ukumthikazisa?”

“Yazini ingane?”

“Usho ukuthi nami ngiyingane uma ngithi wenza kahle?”