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Flashes of Vice: Vol III

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Goodreads

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Vera Omwocha

Writer & Editor

Nothing short of outstanding, Vincent de Paul displays his mastery of the flash fiction form.

Chikata Chinamavara

Poet & Editor, Zimbabwe

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The Sunday Nation,
26 January 2014

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Principal Education Secretary
Kenya National Examinations Council

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NaijaStories

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Lighten Up
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FLASHES OF VICE

Volume III

a collection of flash fiction stories

VINCENT DE PAUL

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For

Nishal Ron

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The 72 Virgins

There are no 72 virgins in Paradise ... Heaven in the Islamic faith does not include 72 wide-eyed sex goddesses ... The confusion that exists arises over one oral tradition by Imam Tirmidhi. He cleverly crafted the '72 virgins' that have now become instilled in the minds of radicalised and misinformed Muslim men ...

Farhana Qazi

Virgins in Short Supply

Allah's Open Letter to Terrorists

13th October, 2015

Dear Mujahideen,

I HAVE BOTH GOOD AND bad news for you.

Good news first: your self-proclaimed, self-appointed face of terror, Osama bin Laden, is alive. He was never killed. He is cooling his heels somewhere in the Caribbean with a secret army of American soldiers protecting him and a seraglio of 72 American harlot models. See, the Americans lied about it, about Osama himself. I think you understand; it's politricks. Somebody wanted to remain in the White House where ISIS mujahideen wanted to raise my flag.

Now, the bad news. There is an acute shortage of virgins over here, guys. The forces of demand and

supply are really fighting, and I don't think the war will end any time soon. And who lied to you there are virgins over here anyway?

Sometime in May 1998, just before he sent you guys to Nairobi, Kenya, Osama bin Laden said that he is one of my servants, that you guys do your duty of fighting for the sake of my religion. I wonder whether you really know what my religion is. He claimed that it was his duty to call all the world to enjoy the great light, embrace Islam, and experience happiness in Islam and that *your* primary mission is furthering this religion. Seriously? People who refused to listen to my messengers *Īsā ibn Maryām*, Mohammed and other prophets would not listen to a bunch of idiots with a death wish.

It's a pity you think that the world can be righted through murder. Isn't there already enough death in the world from hunger, starvation, calamities, and the stupid wars you stupid humans wage against each other? You might as well expect me to have dinner with Satan.

I don't see a time when America will be peace-loving enough to stop its nuclear weapons stockpiling and convince Iran to give up developing its nuclear weapons. Or a time when the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, will understand that the world is too

big for him to rule and vacate Ukraine. Or a time that the Islamic State militants will be cajoled to dialogue with Syria and cool down their temper against the Christians they behead. I don't see a time that Boko Haram will understand that knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, that Israel will know that Palestinians too are chosen people, or that al-Shabaab will leave Kenya and go to Alaska as they said they would.

When you are being lured with sex by Imams and Sheikhs with a list of crimes I supposedly want you to commit against your fellow human beings, do you even take a second to think? Oh, I pity humanity! Lust is your downfall; it always has been. You blow yourselves into smithereens for the promise of sex? *Jannah* is not a place of immorality or a fucking brothel.

Smell the coffee, guys. There are no harems here. You people cannot let out my revenge as you are lied to when enlisted. The seeds of hatred are planted in you and consume your purposeless lives.

Well, in this age of social media and worship of celebrities, you will crave fame, which your terror activities guarantee. I understand that a lone shooter can hold a whole city hostage. All the media will swarm to you and glorify your *Kaffiyeh* face to the world. What a glorifying moment?

It has become an adage that all terrorists are

Muslims, but not all Muslims are terrorists; anyone refuting it? President Obama insisted in a public response to ritual beheadings that "That isn't Islam!" You laughed at him in merriment. Or was it my religion, the religion of peace? Tell me, I command you.

The Islam al-Qaeda, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Taliban, Hamas, and the rest propagate is, indeed, the madness of psychopathic people with lots of loose nuts in their heads that need tightening. Unfortunately, I can't tighten the nuts without having to kill you first, and I don't have workshops down there. To make matters worse, if I trod the same ground with you guys, I fear you might kidnap me and demand I give you your virgins down there.

Listen: Mullah Omar, Taliban shedding all the blood in Afghanistan does not establish my laws on earth. It is a crime against humanity; genocide is the word. William Plotnikov, Dagestan is part of the universe I created; you think I don't know what is happening there? Abu Muasa'b al-Zarqawi, the beheading of innocent people is against what I expect you know from the Koran; Bin Laden, in his Caribbean safe house, regrets whatever he did to you people. I could give you his satellite phone number, but then you'd kill him.

If your self-proclaimed commanders don't take it a little too far, Sheikh Aboud Rogo and Sheikh Makaburi would be alive today, or did you think you'd move about killing other people and expect them not to hit back? I know al-Shabaab is a snake whose head is in Little Mogadishu, Kenya. Too bad for the Kenya Defence Forces—they are hitting at the snake's tail in Somalia—but you can tone it down a bit.

The Garissa University College attack, where you, sadly, killed 152 people, was supposed to be an April fool's day prank. Why did you morons go ahead and mow down the students? The over 200 girls you kidnapped and raped in Nigeria are scarred forever. Or did your commanders tell you that the 72 *houris* had descended and you needed to save them from the infidels you were fighting? Almost two years later, Westgate Mall has not resumed business. The London train bombing is forever etched in the minds of the victims. New York's 9/11 scars never healed, and so have the memories of the 1998 Nairobi and Dar es Salaam twin bombings in Kenya and Tanzania never faded. Do you want me to continue? The litany of your atrocities is endless.

Dear mujahideen, here is a reality check: with the unprecedented numbers of you guys enlisting for my cause, which, unfortunately, I do not endorse, the

Vincent de Paul

virgins you are lied to exist here are in short supply. I did a headcount this morning. You would stop your campaigns if you knew how many virgins I found. Considering the rate you guys are blowing yourselves up, the supply will end soon. Have your jihadi brides and all the sex you want while you still can because, for real, and seriously, there are no virgins here.

And if I may give my unsolicited advice, you are not the Creator. I am. Know your place. Tend to the little garden I gave you. The world is too big an adversary, and eternal life is not gained by spending your earthly life committing crimes against my people.

I hope this letter gets to you, you who is holed up somewhere planning your next attack. You who are about to press the switch on those vests you love to wear and are about to explode. I may expect a reply, but I'm not counting on it.

Yours One and Only,

Allah

You know Whom I Am.

Don't Die a Virgin

(My Terrorism Journal

21st August, 2015)



DON'T DIE A VIRGIN; TERRORISTS are waiting for you in heaven.

I am every terrorist's wet-dream girl. I have big, wide, lustrous eyes, like pearls, as the Quran describes in *Surat Al-Wāqī'ah* 56:22=23. I am tall, baby-faced (what the Hadith calls eternally young), light-complexioned like Samantha Lewthwaite, the once most wanted terrorist in the world, voluptuous, and full-breasted. I am everything the Quran and *Hadith* promise terrorists will get when they die for Allah, including an appetising vagina (I think mine is), except I am

not a *houri* (virgin), I'm not chaste and pure, and definitely I'm not non-menstruating.

I escaped the terrorist's bullet by a whisker on September 21, 2013. I was part of the cooking competition on the rooftop of the Westgate Mall in Westlands, Nairobi, when al-Shabaab terrorists besieged it. At the time, it did not occur to me that I could make love to the same terrorist in heaven as his reward for killing other innocents and me for Allah's cause. Perhaps he did not know that I was a virgin, or it was sheer luck that he did not send me to wait for him in heaven.

When those who survived the Westgate Mall attack rush to shrinks to empty their traumatised minds to deal with the ordeal, I go to have sex. I am a student and a strong believer in the Kama Sutra; sex is a ritual of union with the gods.

I decided to break my virginity immediately after September 21, 2013, so that, in case I died, I did not end up with a terrorist, whom I would be expected to spread my legs for forever. Or where does their eternal supply of virgins come from in heaven? I imagine that they are girls who were virgins on earth, and when they die, they go to heaven and get premium membership in a harem for terrorists. I wonder what happens to women mujahideen. Do they get 72 virgin men to screw forever too?

I am under eighteen, but I have had more sex than my mother has had her entire lifetime, more even after the Garissa University College terror attack on April 2, 2015. And no, I will not reveal the identities of the men I have sex with. I would not like them to be dragged to court by moral police and sexual offences campaigners for defilement. My life, my choice, right?

The terrorists claim they find her virgin each time they sleep with a *houri*. Besides, the penis of the terrorist never goes limp. The erection is eternal; the sensation they feel each time they screw their dark-eyed virgins is utterly delicious and out of this world, and if anyone could experience it in this world, they would faint. Each terrorist will marry 72 (*sic*) *hou-ri*s besides the women he married on earth, and all will have appetising vaginas. That's according to one very old sex-maniacal sheikh who is said to have died sometime in the Middle Ages, around 1500 CE.

The thought of having sex, for eternity, with a mass murderer is disgusting and repulsive. I can't even imagine.

Being good in this life won't help. Be a bad girl—the *baddest* even. Heaven doesn't exist, especially for virgins. It is hell up there if you don't tear up your clothes for MTV, indulge in orgies and sell your three/foursome sex tapes to YouPorn while on earth.

Terrorists are not going anywhere, and Muslim heaven will have a short supply of virgins very soon. Al-Shabaab terrorists have had a field day massacring Kenyans and now they want to go to Alaska; Boko Haram in Nigeria have already snatched 200 virgins to have their paradise on earth; the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terror group wants to establish an Islamic world; al-Qaeda, the mother of all terrorists, have become WWW (world wide web), and Islamic radicalisation is growing at alarming rates because of the promise of an eternal supply of virgins. It is seductive, being a terrorist, I mean. The numbers are unprecedented. Woe unto you if you die a virgin.

The Terrorists' Virgin

MAMA ALWAYS SAID SHE'D GIVE me the best. Sending me to Kaffir schools for Western education is what she called the best, yet she ran a *duqsi*. Doesn't she know Boko Haram? Western education is forbidden.

Enslaved by her 17 odd years, I got free on 2nd April. She wouldn't have guessed I'd let my mind drift so far away. She always said I was destined for great things, but it didn't occur to her I would ever steer my destiny.

My brother's wedding in heaven was on the evening of 2nd April 2015. He died for Allah when Kaffirs stormed Garissa University College. They wanted to kill him. He wouldn't let them. He blew himself up and killed more kaffirs.

It's like Mother already knew. I found her at the *duqsi*. She was with other women. She said, "I feel agony and pain because I have lost my son, but I am happy because he is in heaven. He will marry the dark-eyed virgins. I already miss him. I will always miss him. I will never forget my Abdikarim. It's not like we don't love our children"

Mother was surprised to see me. Somebody in her congregation winked at her, and she stopped abruptly, but I had heard everything.

"Fardosa," she said.

She took my arm and dragged me out of the place she had banned me from stepping foot to because she wanted me to have a good life while she taught others the Quran and the ways of Allah. Why did she not want me to learn what she was teaching the others?

"You're not supposed to be here," she said. "Go home. I'll meet you there."

You'll never see me again. I almost snapped at her.

I have everything that the Qur'an highlights those fit for Janna should have. I am what martyrs for Allah will get in paradise. I wondered why my mother was keeping me away from it.

She always said I was a dreamer for big dreams, but that evening as I walked away from her *duqsi*, I was dreaming jihadist dreams that were making me

run away from home and go to Somalia; aspirations like having a taste of heaven here on earth by being an al-Shabaab terrorists' bride, and then join the harem of the 72 dark-eyed virgins to make love for eternity to martyrs for Allah in paradise, *inshallah*.

But my dream was cut short. Halfway the long and bumpy Muhsin Bus ride to Mandera, where I was to meet Auntie Sherafiyah to take me to Somalia, I was arrested by the Kaffirs in El-Wak, blindfolded and bundled into an ATV. I am now cooling my heels in a stinking police cell somewhere I don't know. How I wish our brave mujahideen storm here and kill them all.

The 73rd Virgin

SINCE I JOINED THE ISIS terror group, the media call me a jihadi bride. Whenever the brave *mujahideen* go out to massacre *kafirs*, they return to our haven and find me waiting for them. In this life, I don't get tired of being screwed by the terrorists because most of them have erectile dysfunction, or ejaculate on my thighs even before they can feel the puckering of my *yoni*. I have the time of my life because I will be a by-the-way when they go to *Jannah*.

Can you imagine waiting in heaven's longest queue for 72 hours, 72 days, 72 weeks, 72 months, or 72 years to have your turn with the terrorist? That's ludicrous. Before they go to *Jannah* and have their 72 *houris* for eternity and ignore me, I am their *houris* on earth. Those stupid, naïve virgins who think they

would be the first to have sex with the brave mujahideen are mistaken.

I have 72 terrorists who give it to me daily. I have more sex than your grandmother has had all her life. Isn't that *Jannah*, my *Jannah*? I am enjoying life before I suicide-bomb myself, and the day is nigh.

Are you a nympho? Do you wish the man who gives it to you lasted longer than his trademark 30 seconds, sixty tops? Do you find yourself masturbating long after the shenanigans while he is snoring beside you like a locomotive? Do you go shopping, not for shoes and dresses like regular girls but for dildos?

If you answered 'Yes' to all the above questions, you are me. Do you know that you can have sex forever, as in eternal? Yes, you can, with a man who never gets tired or whose erection never goes limp. But there's a catch: you have to be voluptuous, round and full-breasted, have breasts that don't sag; have big, dark, wide, and beautiful/lovely/lustrous eyes, like pearls; be a *ka-yellow-yellow* (forget the black is beauty bullshit, and if you are dark-skinned, go for skin-lightening concoctions); you have to be tall and baby-faced, and your vagina has to be appetising, how you know this is upon you. You have to be a *houri*, chaste, pure, and non-menstruating. It is a requirement if you want to have sexual healing. It is

written in the Quran in Surat *Al-Wāqī`ah* 56:22–23 and the *Hadith*.

The subtext is that you will join a harem of 72 virgins in heaven, where you will have an eternal sex life with terrorists whose erections don't go limp on you when you are about to scream your head off. Their erection is eternal, just like the brainwashing they get at Masjid Musa mosque and others. Now you are armed with the truth, which is, sadly, known to very few, the chosen few.

I'm telling you this because you, too, can have *jan-nah* here on earth. Just join me. There is a training ground in California, Nairobi. The National Intelligence Service and the Military Intelligence nincompoops are still focusing on Eastleigh. Little Mogadishu is for amateurs like Al-Shabaab. ISIS is the real deal. Al-Shabaab just wants to hurl grenades at people in churches and kill girls who could be their heaven here on earth, but ISIS mujahideen are focused. They are claiming territories to conquer the whole world. Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) now includes the Levant, ISIL, and soon it will be the world, Islamic State in Iraq and the Word, ISIW. They are relentless, crude, and ruthless. Surely they will go to heaven, right? The thought of them killing the infidels so they can have a taste of me in heaven for eternity

is orgasmic. I want to go to heaven with the Mujahideen, whom *Al-Kafirun* call terrorists. Since I'm a nympho, I will have an eternity of sex; that's the good news. The bad news is that I will have to queue for 72 minutes or hours, days, weeks, months, or even years before my turn.

But, well, I have a way out. I joined ISIS while on earth, so I may have my share of the terrorists before I go to *Jannah* and start queuing. And, we women are inherently jealous. Wouldn't the first virgin to be shagged want to keep the terrorist to herself? I foresee a lot of catfights, hair-pulling, and name-calling over there. Or if the first virgin won't be so jealous, the second one may be from Nyeri, and she will chop off the terrorist's manhood. What would happen to the 70 others waiting for their turn?

See, I don't justify why I joined ISIS to be their jihad *whore*, but I am the 73rd Virgin, the one who is not talked about, and perhaps will never be talked about, the logical one, the one who knows that the 72 *houris* story is a hoax and the one who will never suicide-bomb herself because if they send me to do it, I will run to Boko Haram, or end up with the armature al-Shabaab before taking advantage of the Kenyan government amnesty even if the grace period has expired.

War on Terror

*How can you have a war on terrorism when war itself
is terrorism?*

Howard Zinn

*The problem with terrorism is some groups of people
believe they are the chosen one by God to commit mass
murder in the name of God ... At the end of the day,
as long as people believe their religion is the only true
religion and all others are false, there will be no world
peace, no end to terrorism and all anti-terrorism effort
will be futile.*

www.geckoandfly.com

Al-Shabaab Hostage

The dropping of bombs on people – isn't that terrorism?

Alice Walker

THE LAST THING I EXPECTED my sister to do was point a gun at me. Growing up, she was Daddy's *Malaika*: heart-shaped face framed by long lustrous hair forever hidden by the burqa. She had almond-shaped eyes if you were lucky to get a glimpse of them through the slit of the *niqab*, high cheekbones, a long nose, a long slender neck, flawless caramel skin, and breasts like minarets calling men to worship. At sixteen, she was five feet seven and not ready to stop growing.

"I see you are still Muslim at heart," I said.

"Ten years is a long time, Brother," she said. "After all, that's what a true Muslim is expected to be."

But she removed the burqa and looked at me. "So

you may see what I look like after all these years."

She hadn't aged a bit. She still looked twenty. Exquisite beauty.

She continued, "It is the perfect disguise"

"Even against *mahram*?"

"You are dead to me."

"And yet here we are?"

"You are more important to us alive."

"Ahem ... would you please point that gun at something else? Guns kill people, you know."

"No, Brother. Guns don't kill people. People *with guns* kill people."

"So, what gives, Sister? I don't suppose I'm here to pay for my past sins." I paused. "And consider letting big bro know where he is 'cause I don't think we are in Garissa. We looked for you everywhere"

"It's about justice, Brother."

"For you?"

"No, Mubaraq. For Somalia," she said. "And for where you are, it doesn't matter. But if you insist, as I know you, you're in Jilib, Somalia. Don't expect *your* Special Forces to stage a rescue—"

"And you think pointing the gun at me will—?"

"My relation to you, or what you did to me, has got nothing to do with this. Right now, what matters is you collaborated with the infidels and helped them

murder your brothers and sisters. You are no true Muslim.”

My hands were tied behind my back to the wooden chair I was sitting on. I was slowly trying to loosen them the way they do it in movies, but whoever had bound me had done a pretty good job. When the tête-à-tête with my sister was over, I was going to ask her how I got there.

“Since those *kuffār* invaded Somalia, they have been killing our brothers, raping us, defiling our lands. Crimes which you too are complicit, aided by the mighty America”

At that point, two *Kaffiyehed* men armed with AK-47s entered and stood guard. Sympathising with terrorists, I could understand, but *not* having muja-hideen as bodyguards.

The memory of my sister as a child flashed through my mind. She had a heart bigger than the world. She was this joyous kid, generous. Daddy’s beloved. Playful. Clichéd as it may sound, she couldn’t hurt a fly—family’s eye candy.

Somehow she bottled up all the anger after I campaigned against her joining the army and lobbied through Mommy. Surprisingly, Dad supported me on this. For me, it was simple: the army is not for women, more so for Muslim women.

Having been in the army for three years, I had seen it all: female trainees stooping too low during training so the training would be smooth. Instructors demanded sex from the female cadets to be lenient on them during training, and female recruits knew that the only way to get through the training was through peddling their bodies to the instructors. Not to mention the horde of *Team Mafisi* male cadets who had nowhere else to release the training tension if they weren't masturbating.

I couldn't let my sister join the army. A'shadiieeyah kissed her joining-the-army pipe dream goodbye.

She went to the University of Nairobi, journalism studies.

On April 2nd, 2027, UoN was attacked by al-Shabaab. They were marking their 12th Anniversary of the April 2nd, 2015, Garissa University College attack, where 148 students were massacred. A'shadiieeyah disappeared then. The media reported that a second-year media studies student was the mastermind, worse than the then infamous, most wanted female terrorist, Samantha Lewthwaite, the White Widow.

I knew the nameless burqa face that the police gave belonged to my baby sister, no one else had a clue, and blood is thicker than water.

With her beauty, brains, and strong Islamic faith,

I couldn't imagine how she was the target for those monsters who told her that she would join the harem of 72 virgins in *Jannah* if she engaged in group sex with them before they went around terrorising people. They hurdled her into a *miraa* pickup truck to Somalia, twisted her faith into something barbarous, and took the love and innocence in her heart and made them terrible weapons.

"I understand you, A'shadiieyah, but that doesn't justify terrorism"

"You understand nothing. You had your chance to understand me, but you didn't," her voice trailed off. "Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen is fighting for us. *You* call us terrorists, but what *are you*?"

"Since 2026, your army has been acquiring armed drones and missiles to kill us. Are you any less terrorists? Al-Shabaab has not invaded Kenya. It is your soldiers who invaded Somalia. Somalia belongs to Somalis in the same sense Kenya belongs to Kenyans. Nothing can be said against al-Shabaab fighting for Somalis' rights against all odds."

"Sis, I still don't see why I am here. That gun you are pointing at me is giving me the shivers. For all I know, you could not hurt a fly. I don't even know they trained you to handle guns."

"It is Somalia that your soldiers occupy," she

ignored me. "Since 2011, bombed by the infidels you've sold your soul to."

"And lecturing me will achieve what exactly?"

"No, I'm not lecturing you. I'm telling you. You are going to help us retaliate against your army."

I laughed derisively.

"And how am I going to do that, *Angel*?"

"Al-Shabaab has acquired a missile-guided system like the Kenya Defence Forces. And you, my brother—or may I call you Major Mubaraq?—are from the Kenya Army Corps of Engineers. You have been working on the system, modifying it, and improving it. You can now track the missiles with a mobile phone; dial in. That's where you come in.

"And before you say it, this is not a negotiation, and no, we're not going to kill you," she undeterred. "Mark you, we have enough suicide bombers. They are prepared to die for the cause, but we cannot guide our missiles to the specific targets."

My sister looked at me and smiled. My stomach churned, my muscles went taut, and my heart sank.

Al-Shabaab Hostage: End Game

*Everybody's worried about stopping terrorism.
Well, there's a really easy way: stop participating
in it.*

Noam Chomsky

THE TERRORISTS KNEW I WAS the brainchild behind the Kenya Defence Forces' state-of-the-art missile-guided system. If the terrorists got hold of it, the implications would be catastrophic. Anywhere could be targeted. Suicide bombers did not need to die anymore. The terrorists could as well demand that Allah gives them their 72 virgins on earth.

Africa at large was under threat: Boko Haram had already established a caliphate in West and Central Africa, and they were now terrorising the xenophobic South. Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) had

caliphated the North, and the ISIS-Shabaab alliance in Eastern Africa was fast gaining momentum.

Terror. Violence. Death everywhere. Their main aim was not just to create caliphates all over the world. It was to make the whole world Islamic.

A tic ran down my face. A moment later, I heard the code: *The Prince is delivering the eggs where the Queen wants them.* I knew the rescue was on the way.

I was among the very few High-Value Persons (HVPs) in the KDF with a microchip in my brain. The chip was activated if I went off the radar for more than three hours to give my location. Special Forces would be sent in for rescue regardless.

A'shadiieyah steadied the gun in her frail-looking hands. She was dead serious; she wouldn't think twice about killing me. There was no vestige of the sister I knew in her eyes.

"So, dear brother, you are going to redeem yourself," she said. "Second chances are hard to come by these days."

"What did they do to you ...?"

"Looks could deceive, Mubaraq. I am well-trained."

I moved my hands behind my back. In my mind, I was in a movie, trying to untie myself.

"... and don't you dare try that, Brother. Trust me. I won't hesitate to shoot."

“You don’t need to threaten me, A’shadiieyah. Smart soldiers know better than to argue with an AK47—”

“Believe me, Brother. You won’t be the first.”

The buzzing in my head increased. The stealth KV2050 attack helicopter was near, or perhaps it was hovering on the rooftop.

And then it happened, in slow motion. I saw the first soldier rappelling in my peripheral vision an instant before three of them burst through the windows. They took the mujahideen security guards first.

That’s when A’shadiieyah realised what was happening. She swung her gun towards the intruders, squeezed the trigger, and then ... click! She pulled the trigger again. Nothing. Her hands shook as she fumbled with the cocking handle and the rifle’s safety catch. Then she gave up.

She threw the gun down and reached for a pistol hidden inside her burqa. She was fast. The soldiers never saw it coming. Headshots. Bull’s eye. The three soldiers went down one after the other as she fired the shots—three good men, *mashujaa*, killed by my mujahideen sister.

“Don’t worry, Bro, not all missions go as planned.”

I was shocked at my sister’s mastery. Al-Shabaab-trained. Well-trained.

Plan B: I hopped backwards and smashed myself into the wall, shattering the chair and loosening the ropes. Before she reached where I was, I freed myself and stumbled up to my knees.

“The love I still have for you is the reason you are still breathing, Mubaraq,” my sister said, pointing the gun at my head. “And we need you”

She came closer to where I was. She ordered me with the gun to stand up, my hands raised and kept where she could see them.

And then she made a mistake—she blinked.

Within a fraction of a nanosecond, I grabbed the gun and pointed it at an astonished A’shadiieyah.

Outside, an explosion plummeted down from the sky. My ride back home was gone, but that was the least of my worries.

“Are you going to kill me then, Brother?”

“You won’t be the first to kill, Sister.”

I heard raucous chants of *Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!* outside and then made the decision.

I put a single bullet in my sister’s forehead. The last thing I saw as she fell was her shocked beautiful face and almond-shaped eyes zooming the world out; life snuffed out instantly.

Letter from Somalia

MY MIND IS AS MUCH a battlefield as the quiet graveyard of the unburied before me. Corpses lie among the desert shrubs and grass. Their eyes are as immobile as their limbs. These men, who have paid the ultimate price, are now meat for birds and worms. Their souls have long departed to the celestial planes to be with *Mungu wa Majeshi*. The battle has been lost; the enemy has won. Now they are ransacking the camp, filming their victory.

Before the dastardly attackers see me and send me to the hell I belong to, let me bid you farewell, my far-away lover, wife and mother of my children. I try to wipe away all emotion to focus on the task at hand. You are the only thing on my mind now.

Forget the *'If I die on the battlefield, pack me up and take me home, tell my mother I did my best...'* song you heard us sing during route marches. The truth is, I'm not the tough guy you know. I'm afraid. Trembling. The fear is more acute and commanding than waiting for the enemy to come and kill me. At this instant, the adamantine faith in my ability to control and influence my fate is a delusional conceit. The prospect of facing my death is debilitating.

My friends are fighting to their last breath, and the terrorists are not sparing any. They kill even the already dead. The wounded and the dead lie thickly over the dusty ground, garish scarlet soaking into the loose soil. *Allahu Akbar*, they are chanting.

Outnumbered, outgunned, and without a victory, death is better than being captured. And if they don't kill me themselves, understand I will take the coward's way out. But it is an honour. These terrorists are on a slaughter mission as though our blood is an aphrodisiac.

I've dreaded this moment. I would do anything to see you again, to hold you in my arms, but I understand that can't be. I am sorry for putting the job first; I was always on the run, and sorry for not being there for our son, but you never wanted me there anyway. You never understood that time for us was leased.

What with the fights, the distrust, the resentment? Al-Shabaab mujahideen have ended all the pain you kept inside you even though I apologised for being wrong.

I don't think there is any one of my friends playing possum. I'm the last man ~~standing~~ lying down. I don't worry about them breaking the 'Bro Code' and you loving it in their arms. After all, it was till death put us asunder. Be happy. ~~Dead men make no love.~~ Live. Take care of our son.

There are still more gunshots. They are killing the dead now. I think one of them has heard something. Perhaps he has seen me. He's looking in my direction. I'm sure he can't see me, but he can see me. The good thing is, I have had the chance to bid you farewell that the others didn't.

I'm not sure you'll get this letter. Jeez, he's coming. Soldier's instinct, just to confirm, make sure that he is not hearing things.

I'm a mess. Under the circumstances, you would be. I'm out of ammunition. I didn't even spare one to do myself the honour.

I would love to write more, tell you how much I miss you, love you, how I wish ~~you~~ we scripted our love differently—

He's here now. He doesn't seem to have seen me ...

Vincent de Paul

yes, he has seen me. His portent eyes—

Babe, I love yo—

Allahu Akbar...!!!

Law-Abiding Lawbreaker

The point of serving your country is not to do your own thing or to go rogue but to work as part of the process.

Kal Penn

THE MAIN DUTY OF LAW enforcement is law-breaking. Right now, the disciplined forces' jobs are the reserve of the 'elite' and security has little meaning. Money is the arbiter of law-breaking. That's why I decided to leave my 'well-paying' state security job to join the self-employed masses in one of our republic's maximum security prisons because it wasn't logical for me to obey the law in a system that sanctioned me to break it, a system where both crime and punishment are 'baked into the cake'.

This is how I changed roles from being a state security guard to being a state guest at Kamiti Maximum

Prison: I was not born in a home with golden spoons, but somehow someone forced it into my mouth. A far-away uncle from another genealogy bribed National Police Service recruiters at my father's behest. Large sums he chunked, but he promised Dad that the return on investment was guaranteed.

Despite my acquired desire to join the Directorate of Criminal Investigations to rid our city of the criminal gangs that enforced the law better than the police, I ended up being posted to the elite traffic department. I belonged to the streets, narrowing the crime margin, but my Assistant Inspector General of police uncle wanted me on the roads.

I was controlling traffic at the Westlands roundabout on Saturday, September 21, 2013, when al-Shabaab juvenile terrorists attacked Westgate Mall. I was the first to respond, but no one saw me; the Recce Company hijacked the moment before KDF guys came in and deflated the Recce Company's ego when the Somalia boots killed one of the Recce Commandos. When they were vacating the building, cussing, one of the Recce boys saw me, and that was my ticket from the roads where I couldn't refuse to take bribes because my uncle's accounting company was a dragon breathing fire on my back.

I joined the Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU). I went

where the action was—Garissa. There, ATPU was the terror. Actually, there were no terrorists in Garissa. There never was. After months of looking for terrorists who always seemed to move ubiquitously in groups of hundreds but were never caught, I was ordered to report to the ATPU headquarters. A fucking desk job!

As the fight against terrorism continued, anxiety and paranoia in the population grew to fever-pitch, but the real terrorists were treated with leniency and let out to terrorise the country repeatedly. The Inspector General directed that all tinted vehicles in the country remove the tint as one way of combating terrorism.

A special ATPU team was formed to enforce the IG's directive. Despite my experience on the roads and short stint hunting for terrorists in Garissa, I was not in the team. However, no one obeyed the directive. Most of them were politicians and businessmen with links with the State House. For them, this was an uncalled-for nuisance by the IG, a knee-jerk reaction to which they couldn't be a party. They wanted to fight it in court even when it was to make our country safe.

Then one day, I pulled a stunt. I joined the special team that was impounding vehicles with tinted

windows. Having worked in Garissa, where the police were the law, judge, prosecutor and executioner, I thought I could do whatever I wanted in Nairobi. I was wrong.

Only tinted cars were on the roads in the areas we patrolled, but they were not impounded. When I asked why, I was told that the owners had a 'Movement with Tinted Windows Permit' from the office of the IG, even when I could see wads of cash changing hands. I decided to be the law-breaker Kiganjo Police Training College trained me to be.

I flagged down an all-glossy-black Range Rover Vogue. The driver stopped. He was a dreadlocked celebrity-wannabe kid with a scrawny modellesque girl passenger. I ordered them out, reached into the car, shut off the engine and walked away.

"Hey, what the hell do you think you are doing?" he screamed at me with that Runda accent all spoilt rich kids fake.

I didn't say anything. I continued to walk on. Shortly afterwards, I felt hands on my shoulders. "Perhaps you don't know who I am, but I have a permit allowing me to drive my tinted car—"

"From whom?"

He fished a document out of the back pocket of his sagging trousers.

"The Inspector General of police," he said, smirking.

I looked at the paper. It was true it was from the IG's office. It authorised the bearer to traverse the city (perhaps carrying terrorists) with his tinted fuel guzzler that the government had banned two years earlier. I looked at the IG's signature and stamp, dazed.

I was supposed to be shocked, but I wasn't. Everyone should follow the rules and the law, but no one does. In training, the first thing they tell you is, 'don't enforce a law that you can't break'.

The Inspector General of Police's son snatched the permit out of my hand and demanded I give him his keys. Instead, I curled my right fist around the keys and said, "I'm not giving you the keys. Do you think the rules don't apply to you? Come get your keys."

And I continued walking.

And he did what he was told to do—he took out his cell phone, hit a button, and began speaking calmly into it.

A moment later, a police Land Cruiser with a siren blaring screeched to a halt beside me. The other guys stiffened and trembled as the Assistant IG of the police stepped out.

"You have gone too far this time," my uncle said in greeting. "The IG wants your head on a pike, and I

Vincent de Paul

sure will deliver it to him.”

“Fine. I’m sorry. Perhaps I got carried away,” I said.

The IG’s son and his skinny girlfriend looked at me contemptuously. I was not going to do what they were dreaming of, though.

“Come get your keys,” I told the top cop’s son.

He walked over to me.

I held the keys out to him, but when he reached for them, I dropped them.

“Oops! Clumsy me,” I said and walked away.

I was charged with assaulting the IG’s son, among 13 other charges. And that, my friend, is how I ended up here.

Terminated

I DID NOT SLEEP THAT last day, letting reality wrap around me like the wings of a heron. I listened to Shankaron's post-coital breathing even out beside me before she began snoring smoothly. I started considering my next move: to break her heart into a million pieces and trample on them.

Outside, the muadhdhin's call for morning prayers pierced the early morning silence. I tried to block it out. It was useless. In Garissa, you are privileged to live next to a mosque.

Shankaron rolled to her side, and I got hold of her the way I had for the past eight months. I felt full of her to the point of bursting. I did not know how I was going to live without her.

What else could I possibly do? I asked myself.

Stay, I answered, *have what you want*. I thought of making love to Shankaron every night, even convincing her that what she believed about sex during menses was a myth. I tried to picture her sticking by me, fighting for us to be together. I tried to picture her without a family, disowned, called a *kafir*. I tried to picture her, and I saw myself.

If I did not leave and return to Nairobi, to my job, I would be the man she had fallen in love with. If I believed in her and stuck around as I had said I would, I would be the man she had sworn to love forever. But how long would it take before she ganged up with her family and turned against me for destroying what she had always defined herself with?

What Shankaron Mohamed Aden had always wanted, I realised, was to rebel. To show her parents that she had a life of her own, that she was not a slave to Islam, and that she could break the rules. And at that moment, I realised that what Shankaron wanted all along was not a non-Muslim man; she wanted what I could offer.

I felt my stomach go taut and my heart tighten. *I don't want to leave.*

But the voice of reason said *you must!*

It was more. If I truly loved her the way I did, I

would spare her the pain of feeling used and manipulated, the pain of feeling like there was no place she could call home, the pain of lost trust.

I disentangled from her and stared into the darkness. She was serene in sleep, her breathing even, beautiful. I thought of her waking to make love only to find me gone.

I hopped out of bed, dressed in the dark, and looked at the sleeping beauty for the last time. It was work. The kind of work that required me to terminate the target. My mission was over. The Directorate of National Intelligence awaited me and my report.

Turning Shankaron, the daughter of a prominent politician suspected of financing al-Shabaab terror group, into a rebellious girl on hormonal attacks allowed me to spy on her father.

I leaned down and kissed her cheek, lingering the tongue a little, then straightened. The lullabies and songs that her body moving in rhythm with mine had sung for me were what I was going to carry.

I snuck out of the room, stepped outside, took a deep breath of the cool early morning breeze and left Garissa Township.

Death Row Conspiracy

EYE FOR AN EYE. THAT'S what God told the Israelites. Laws today are too lenient. Leaders nibble at the carrot dangled to them by donors to disobey God. Retribution for crimes has little meaning, and the president is the arbiter of denying justice; the man at the helm of a system where the thirst for power and pleasing the masters are like lovers.

For me, it was imprisonment; as one prisoner once told me, I was not different from him, who was caged. I was the chief warden at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison then. I had seen the whole lot of them—they never changed. If and when pardoned, the recidivism rate was high for death row and life imprisonment inmates. I felt that death row prisoners should

be executed immediately before the president was bribed with a donation by the Westerners and pardoned thousands during the election year.

The worst happened in 2009. Thousands of convicted Kenyans awaiting their appointment with the hangman had their fates reversed when, in one swoop, the president commuted their death sentences to life imprisonment. The move was hailed as positive by the marauding Non-Governmental Organisations and human rights activists—Kenya was moving towards eliminating the death penalty. That's when I knew the president did not have the country's best interests at heart; no politician does.

Twelve years later, in 2021, the death penalty was abolished. Immediately after, the president signed a bill allowing prisoners to vote. The incumbent was eyeing the 2022 general elections. Odds were against him securing another term, and prisoners were to grant him another five years in the much-coveted State House if tampering with the Electronic Voting System (EVS) did not work.

I had just been appointed Deputy Commissioner of Prisons. The first batch of death row inmates was released on that year's Jamhuri Day. The ink had not dried on the presidential decree when most of those released went back to their crimes. Despite what

analysts said, the same decree pardoning death row and life imprisonment inmates has been going on every five years just before elections. If politicians did not care for the victims forever scarred by the criminals they were releasing to vote for them, I decided to do something.

I entered into an agreement with organised crime gangs and *rogue* police officers who believed in natural justice. For prison aftercare programs, the prisoners would be recommended to work at certain organisations that are fronts for the gangs. The gangs would set them up for crimes and blame them; the rest is organised crime punishment—only death. My army of rogue police officers would hunt the others, gun them down, plant guns on them, and then the Inspector General of police would collect medals in the media claiming that his *mbois* had rid the country of another vicious criminal gang that was terrorising the citizens.

Life is sacred; one who takes a life should also have their own life taken away. Most death row inmates are murderers. It is in the interest of society that the justice system should be punitive and retributive to them. No killer can reform; they never do, that is what I believe, and sadly, it's the truth—over 30 years in law enforcement have taught me so.

Days of the Present Near Future

The future is not google-able.

William Gibson

Individual science fiction stories may seem as trivial as ever to the blinder critics and philosophers of today, but the core of science fiction, its essence, the concept around which it revolves, has become crucial to our salvation, if we are to be saved at all.

Isaac Asimov

The Nakuru Apocalypse

I sat in the dark and thought: There's no big apocalypse. Just an endless procession of little ones.

Neil Gaiman, *Signal to Noise*

14th October 2090,

NAKURU, KENYA'S ONCE CLEANEST AND fastest growing town in Africa, is out of place in the carpet of yellowing grass on the floor of the Great Rift Valley. The ghost town is barely discernible through the flora that has colonised it. Gaping holes stare down from dilapidated skyscrapers that kiss the grey sky above, and skeletons and ghosts inhabit buildings. The occasional window is still in possession of its glass, but it broke so long ago that there is no trace of the shards anywhere on the ground. In most homes, the roofs have caved in or, at the very least, sag like

a disappointing soufflé. The town has no future but to be slowly beaten by the weather till it succumbs to gravity without even a witness or person to mourn its passing.

All is eerily quiet. Time appears to have stood still. The town still stands as a monument to changing economic times, political upheavals, wars gone by, and catastrophes that have taken more life.

Today marked the 30th Anniversary of the world's worst biological and chemical weapons test programme when the Kenya Defence Forces released millions of infected mosquitoes into the town to see if the insects could spread the virus, which was being developed at Egerton University.

From 2008 to 2010, researchers at the Integrated Biotechnology Research Laboratory (IBRL) at Egerton University, Njoro, found that genetically engineered mosquitoes could be introduced into the ecosystem to eradicate the receptive anopheles mosquitoes, a sure way to control malaria. This was to be done through the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) by releasing sterilised mosquitoes.

The sterilised mosquitoes would prey on the non-sterilised, and within two to three years, the Anopheles mosquito would be extinct. The mosquitoes were harmless to humans.

A year into the programme, the sterilised mosquitoes were injected with chemicals that could be transmitted to the target. A basidiomycete serialised JO5289 was collected from an undisturbed habitat in Londiani Forest in Nakuru. The strain was manipulated and injected into the mosquitoes through gene therapy, but when people started complaining about the mosquitoes biting them, the programme went under for 50 years. Army researchers got hold of the strain, secretly weaponised it to military grade and prepared to test it on the people of Nakuru.

The biological and chemical weapon target was Uganda for claiming a large swath of Kenya's territory from the Western and Nyanza provinces and part of Rift Valley up to Naivasha, just 80 kilometres from Nairobi, reviving an almost century-old claim made by the former Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin.

Militarily, the weapons test was successful. No resident of Nakuru was evacuated. Thousands and thousands of people died overnight, and hundreds of researchers who had fled the town before the launch of the test programme contracted illnesses that included fevers, respiratory problems, stillbirths, encephalitis, and typhoid.

To this day, Nakuru is eerily quiet, and everything else is frozen in time. No one buried those who died,

Vincent de Paul

their ghosts roam the town even during the day, and
their frail cries can be heard across the country.

Nairobi in 2160 AD

THE KENYA'S CAPITAL IS A floating city, a metropolis controlled by GK2140 Satellites hovering overhead. It is a city of the third millennium. It has everything that the body wants but nothing the soul needs. Miles of grey skyscrapers, strangely naked-seeming in the clean, clear air, kiss the clouds like obsessed lovers, crisscrossing air routes and AeroCars.

New Nairobi City, the capital of New Kenya. Fifty million souls. Theirs is happily-ever-afters.

Before it rose from the ashes, Nairobi was a city of haves and have-nots. There were those in the upscale 'hoods with exotic luxury fuel guzzlers and enviable lifestyles, and there were those from the sprawling slums, drug-addled and impoverished. And there

was the middle class, neither here nor there, working all their waking hours to give their kids the best from international schools, talent academies, and foreign vacations.

The gap between the rich and poor widened when the epidemic started. Those from the upper scale of life barricaded themselves in their electric-fenced homes, going only to the remaining the-rich-only exclusive upmarket malls to get what was not air-dropped at their homes. Downtown roadside food vendors crawled into the city centre, became buddies with the City Council askaris, Kanjo, and continued selling their contaminated foods to the dying population.

There was misery in the streets. It soaked into the sidewalk cracks and graffitied walls. It was in the six-star hotels where once only the movers and shakers of Kenya's economy dined in, in designer clothes boutiques, and in the alleys where garbage never collected was perpetually searched, and not just by the cats and dogs. Then the people became garbage themselves.

The city was ghostly, frozen for the months the plague ravaged it. The rich didn't move from their uptown homes for fear of getting infected. Most of the people who had fled the country started coming back

to stand in solidarity with their dying brethren.

The second wave of deaths started shortly after. They were worse than the first, caused by contaminated foods. They began with tumours in the groin and armpits and spread in all directions consuming everything. Death came within an hour of infection.

As though that was not enough, a mysterious fire consumed everything else that the plague didn't devour, along with the corpses that lay topsy-turvily everywhere. All was gone.

From the ashes, like a phoenix, came the New Nairobi City.

We called ourselves Goddies. We were a group of pro-metahuman scientists who wanted to cleanse the world of lower-level humans. When the first genetically engineered baby was born in a lab at the Nairobi Hospital, we were holed up in a secret lab in the basement of Kenyatta International Convention Centre, experimenting on nanotechnology, genetic and mutation-engineering, and telepathic science. Project Homortals (*Homo immortals*) was the ultimate creation—longevity of up to 1500 years before rejuvenation, metaphysical powers, mind control, extra-terrestrial intelligence, and ubiquity.

We got the industrial bacterium responsible for the 14th Century Black Death plague from Japan. Japan

wanted to use it on China for Second World War atrocities on the Japanese. The bacteria was enough to wipe out the city before proceeding to the rest of the country.

With the *Homo sapiens* gone, we, *Homortals*, rebuilt the city.

New Nairobi City, the capital of New Kenya, is the solution to the legendary Nairobi floods, land grabbing, and dwindling resources courtesy of corrupt and selfish *Homo sapiens* politicians. It is a self-sufficient floating ecotopia covered in vegetation, generates its own power, grows food, manages waste, and provides clean water. It has eco-skyscraper cities where people live and work and can easily access gardens, open spaces, the beach, and even 'forests'.

The ghosts of the entire humanity we wiped out from existence ambush our AeroCars; sometimes, they sabotage the aerial routes. We live with ghouls and ghosts. It is like vehicles that take people heaven-bound when they die got stuck in space. The phantoms pass by, bitter with our presence. But perhaps they are locked in another time, imagining the things they didn't do, fantasising, and building 'castles in the air'.

Zika Vaccine

*We need to continue to decrease the growth rate
of the global population; the planet can't support
many more people.*

Nina Fedoroff

THE DEAD LAY LIKE DOLLS over the grass, limbs at awkward angles. They were grey-tinged, blue-lipped with blank stares. The bodies, once repositories of people as alive as we were, were abandoned shells left to rot in the open. There was no one to bury them and shed salty tears on their graves, no one to send them away with a love song and kiss the breeze that carries the dead heaven-bound.

There was no more sentimentality for the dead. It was easier not to think of them as people at all. Our senses of humour became warped and darkly

macabre. We laughed at their pallid expressions and gave them rude names. We tossed them higgledy-piggledy into the mass graves.

Before the virus, America was on top of the world, invading other countries, imposing its policies, and issuing ultimatums. After the virus, we were all equal for a short time. Equal in our universal grief for humanity. There was no Super Power until we Africans moved to America, removed the dead from their houses on the hill, and stole from them without guilt.

In the year 2076, a virus ravaged the world. It started in the Americas. The Zika virus spread faster than malicious gossip as everyone cowered in their countries, obeying their governments' travel advisories. The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared an international emergency of the virus.

First discovered in Zika Forest in Uganda in 1947 in Rhesus monkeys, Zika Virus was identified in humans in 1952. It affected human new-borns. Babies were born with abnormally small heads. It was spread through mosquito bites by *Aedes* mosquitoes. However, the infected people spread it sexually.

As four million people in the Americas got infected, some started dying of nerve gas-related complications. And then the apocalypse started. Overnight, people started dying en masse. The world panicked.

America was as powerless to stop the virus as it was of the deaths. The plague, natural or bio-engineered, had over 95 per cent kill rate. No amount of money or sophisticated technologies could save them.

Then there was a glimmer in the proverbial tunnel: the cure was discovered among the little-known Ogiek people of Kenya who lived in the Mau and Mt Elgon forests. The people, who lived all their lives in the forests, save for a few who sought western education, were immune to the virus.

Kenya became the fifty-first American state, CIA became the Kenya police. The Ogiek were targeted. Mysterious disappearances, abductions, and illegal detentions abound. A remote lab was established in Mau Forest. American scientists used our blood and bone marrow to develop a vaccine. It never worked. Most of the people who had mysteriously disappeared or were abducted returned home and narrated their ordeals in the hands of American researchers and the CIA.

And then I happened. I went public with the truth, why we were immune. We developed the vaccine with friends from Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI).

Consequently, Zika Sans Frontiers was formed. *Zika* is Swahili for 'bury'. We volunteered to bury the

dead all over the world.

America was ghostly. There was so much horror to take in. We went around looking for dead bodies to dispose of. Sometimes, we saw a pallid person staggering to a health care centre that didn't exist. We rushed to vaccinate them, but sometimes they dropped right where they walked. I doubted if any of the medics had survived and would help for fear of becoming infected.

Once we were done burying the dead world, our American Dreams came true. We did not go back to Mau Forest or Mount Elgon. We became Americans straightaway without lengthy applications for the almighty Green Card.

Being the brain behind Zika Vaccine, I was voted the President of the United States of America unanimously. Dr Sophia Lebo, an Ogiek, POTUS. Unbelievable!

One day in the Oval Office, I stumbled on TOP SECRET documents. Zika Virus was created by the Centre for Disease Control in the US on recommendation by WHO as an austerity measure to control the exploding world population, then a rogue white supremacist general at the Pentagon weaponised it.

Alien Invasion

In our obsession with antagonisms of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity. Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognise this common bond. I occasionally think about how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world.

Ronald Reagan

Dear Dad,

I HOPE YOU ARE NOW the Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces. It is a thousand years over here in the Galaxy Cloestolphea since we arrived, but I think Earth's years are longer than Planet Spyria's. I am writing to warn you of an alien invasion on Earth. I

don't know how or whether you will get this letter, but I have to try. If you get it, mobilise your armies. Mobilise the world. The aliens don't care what or who you are. They want the planet cleaned of human life. They want the Earth to themselves.

When we arrived, the aliens took their standard planetary health check. They do that every time they visit that 'backwater', Earth. The readings were off the charts, though I did not know what they meant. They studied the data on us, but the more they interpreted it, the more conflicting it was. They tried to download memories from us to understand us better.

Aliens started visiting Earth long before they made their first contact on 29th June 1856. They were responsible for the disappearance of the Cuban resident Portuguese hot air balloon pilot, Matias Perez. Before then, they stayed unnoticed, ubiquitous, and observed for centuries, gathering data and learning about every form of life on Earth. They knew that humans were the end of the Universe as they [humans] pumped toxins into the skies while the aliens struggled to correct the imbalances. By the alien calculations, humans' actions would kill the planet and all life she cradled, so they had no choice but to open communications.

From his space station, the alien commander stretched out his antennae and tuned into humans'

minds; what he felt almost killed him. There was intelligence, determination and courage from many humans but the selfishness, pain and destruction that flowed from the *Homo sapiens* almost fried his neural network. He dissolved into the wall of the spacecraft to mingle with his comrades. It was not a discussion but a joint feeling they arrived at: humans had to be re-educated or eradicated. In their telepathic manner, they decided that the abduction of humans was the best way. They summoned the Intergalactic Snatch Squad (ISS) and issued the orders.

That's what I have learnt.

Under the intergalactic law, no species is considered intelligent if it destroys its home world, no matter how advanced or complex its technologies may be. Yet humans have the cornerstones of true intelligence—love, imagination, and empathy. Lack of true intelligence means a mandate to eradicate problematic, destructive species.

The alien agents on Earth follow orders without question. It is for the benefit of the whole Universe. Since 1856, hundreds of aircraft have disappeared mysteriously without a trace. Others have crashed battling the aliens. That's why aviation investigators never found Malaysian Airlines Flight 370, which disappeared on 8th May 2015.

On the day you say the Kenya Airways Flight KQ707 disappeared like the Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 in the Earth year 2017, on 13th July, we did not know aliens were hijacking the plane. We thought it was terrorists at first, but when they removed the *kaffiyehs* and transformed themselves before us, we knew that they were not ISIS, Al-Qaeda, or Al-Shabaab. They commandeered the plane to their ship in stealth mode in the Earth's atmosphere. Giant metallic hands grabbed Flight KQ707 and attached it to the ship as though it was part of it. After that, I don't know how we moved.

Even today, so many years later, I can't describe the aliens that took us. All I can remember is how their hexagonal eyes glowed, and they smelt like nougat. Whatever else they were like has somehow been erased from my mind.

They enter our bodies through the cerebral fluid whenever they want to know something about us. You know nothing of the attack except you can smell something quite metallic. Once inside the body, they feast on the sugars. We have lost so much weight to the point of being scrawny. We were happy at first, and we hoped we would be coming back to show off our new physiques. But the loss continued no matter what alien food we ate, the monsters getting

increasingly efficient at taking our blood and sugars, growing tendrils ever deeper. If you want it to end, you must accept to be alien-kind, made a human-alien hybrid (*hulien*).

Most of the passengers of Flight KQ707 are now *huliens*. I have seen others who told me they were on Malaysian Airlines Flight 370. The *huliens* have penetrated the aliens' leadership and command. They now know the aliens' plan for humans—to take over the Earth. And it is soon.

The aliens think that they have won by turning most of us into *huliens*, but there is something they can't turn—humanity. The *huliens* still feel, love, imagine, and are empathic like humans, and still think, communicate, and transform like aliens.

The aliens have a beef with humans. They are planning an invasion. A word from the *huliens* states that the aliens have decided that humans' final days on Earth are nigh. The alien High Council and High Command have decided: extermination is the only solution, and intergalactic laws must be applied.

One of the *huliens* in High Command has come across a TOP SECRET document detailing why the human race will be exterminated: *humans abuse their kind, kill each other, wage war after war despite being told not to kill, run the economies to the degradation of the*

Vincent de Paul

planet. Humans have been warned by the Creator Herself, but still, they ignore it. Remorse is easy when humans face annihilation, but it doesn't last long. If humans weren't all so desperate to get to their 'heaven', they would have realised they were already there. But before they complete the process of making it a 'hell', we will go to save Planet Earth, whether they like it or not ...

Dad, some *huliens* support the aliens. If you get this letter, tell the world to mobilise your armies.

I don't speak alien; I have a *hulien* friend. I'm still Annie, but I go by Xathanael.

Always,

Xathanael

Daughter X.

Cursed Blessing

WHEN I APPLIED FOR A job in Kenya's first nuclear plant, I did not know there was no plantation there. I did not know how quickly it would move me from Kibera to Huruma, drain the blood off me, how I would go back home desiccated, a husk of what I used to be.

Before this, we lived in an iron sheet structure I had grown up knowing only chickens resided in. My wife was the famous *Mama Mboga*, who supplied the whole Kibera slums with veggies grown from sewage farms. We thrice survived fires that were known to ravage such estates of penury. We blamed the government for our woes and waylaid and attacked government officials who wanted to make us their charity projects.

We survived the government-sanctioned eviction by the National Youth Service when it was discovered that we were renting out the bed-sitters the government had built for us, preferring our former Squalid Quarters (SQs), where toilets flew like birds.

Ten long years have passed, and now I have few days to live. There is a motorbike outside my house that I should be looking for scrap metal dealers to sell to. The City Council tow trucks delivered the junk to my doorstep after my cousin, whom I had elevated to working class, succumbed to injuries after a street-racing stunt went wrong on Jogoo Road.

My latest addition to the world is on my lap, a bundle of disfigured joy my wife delivered two years ago. The girl has never spoken a word, and though doctors tell my wife that our daughter might be late in her development, as though she is an infrastructure, I know that she will never speak.

Twenty years after nuclear energy was discovered in Kenya in 2011, the first plant was built. It opened job opportunities even for the youth, whom the President of the Republic of Kenya (PORK) had been promising jobs since independence. It was a break in the economy, and I applied for the Chief Security Officer position in the plant in charge of opening the main gate to the compound and keeping idlers from

Mathare and Kibera away. The night of the day I was hired, my wife and I made what we called love till the large cock we were preserving for Christmas crowed, telling me that it was time to go and report for work.

With my new social class, I moved to Huruma so the idlers I used to entertain at the Kibera's 'Job-less Corner' for days wouldn't find a money-minting machine in me. If they thought by our past association they would claim connections to the Chief Security Officer of the plant and canvass through me to get a job in the nuclear plant as engineers, then they were mistaken.

A year later, one of the reactors exploded.

The radiation spewed was ten times Hiroshima's, according to the *Daily Nation* newspaper pieces Maina of Kwa-Njugu's Butchery wrapped meat for me with. The tragedy robbed the country of its beloved men and women. Others gave up their lives and their future to save the country—firemen, Red Cross workers, volunteers, disaster managers, the gallant Kenya Defence Forces personnel who had survived al-Shabaab's Improvised Explosive Devices and ambushes in Somalia for two decades, and those who went to build the first shield to entomb the reactor. Over a million people died from the initial radiation. Another seven million are exposed to date. The result

was a trail of cancers, genetic abnormalities and birth defects of which my little Ciku is a living testimony.

Until I was given six months to live three months ago, I did not know what I had done by applying for that job, even for generations, not until I saved the last meat-wrapper from incineration by my wife, who wanted to light the *jiko* with it. Whatever my body gulped in gallons for ten years in that plant will live with me for generations to come. Up to my tenth, or even a hundredth, generation, genealogy was forever altered—inoperable tumours, mental retardation, genetic configurations and other effects of the radiation that my body absorbed during my stint at the plant as the Chief Security Officer and passed it to my wife while consummating our love instead of rubbering it off.

Special Annihilation Squad (SAS-13)

HISTORY REPEATED ITSELF IN 2035: hundreds of Kenya Defence Forces soldiers were massacred. Our position in Kismayo, Somalia, was attacked and overrun by joint al-Shabaab and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Mujahideen. It was worse than the January 15th, 2016, El Adde attack. Only 13 of us survived, and no, we did not fight the dastard terrorists to the end—we escaped when we still could. Only the Indian Ocean stopped us from running. A US Destroyer, *USS Trinity*, which was somewhere close by, speedboats saved us from the terrorists closing in on us.

In Kenya, for the cameras, we were heroes; but to the system, we were cowards—we failed to pursue the enemy, whom it was our duty to pursue; we

did not assist, to the utmost of our ability, our fellow soldiers; and for me, Captain Olmeda, I improperly abandoned my command. We were court-martialled and sentenced to death by firing squad.

Speeding along Thika Superhighway, thoughts trundled through my brain like a train, with no intention of stopping. As every passing minute confirmed our imminent death awaiting us at the army's secret execution site, where we were being taken to be killed by the army we had fought its wars as it propagated the imperialistic foreign policy of a government that cared less about internal security, I wished to live a life where little or no interest could be found in one gang of despots launching attacks upon the other.

Then, suddenly, the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) personnel car that six of us were in swerved out of control. There was an explosion that lifted the heavy car off the ground. A moment later, there was a clang of metal against the tarmac. My body jerked forward, restrained by seatbelts and the Smith & Wesson Belly Waist-chain handcuffs fastened to the floor. *What a way to die.* I looked at the others slumped against the wall of the overturned heavy vehicle. My bones, muscles, joints, and organs felt like they were being crumbled and smashed into a tiny box. My lungs contracted with such force that

I was afraid they would fold into themselves. My vision kept flashing from bitter darkness to blinding white light. The only sound that filled my ears was the crushing of glass mixed with the distinct crackles of my bones.

“Get them out of here,” I heard a stern voice say.

The rear door of the MRAP was pried open, and I glimpsed combat camouflage and boots before blinding light took away my vision along with consciousness.

When I came to, I was in a brightly-lit room with the others. A horde of medics in KDF Special Forces uniforms was tending to us. And then he entered—towering, muscular, commanding—the Commanding Officer SF.

“Welcome to hell,” his voice boomed. “Bad news, you’re alive. Good news, you’re dead.”

It took a moment for his words to sink in, and I knew that we truly were heroes.

“The system did not want you; it never wants anyone when you cock up. You are brave, and I will make you proud of yourselves. To the world, you are dead, but here we are. In the system, you were cowards; in your death, you will be super-soldiers ...”

NO military commander has ever become great without audacity, and I had never admired a commander more than I did Colonel Fidel Ombieno, CO Special Forces.

At an underground, secret laboratory and training facility at the foothills of Lions Hill, Nakuru, the 13 of us were turned from coward soldiers and weaklings of the battlefield to veritable super-soldiers. This may sound like military science fiction, but it happened: we were genetically engineered; whoever had a hereditary disease was cleansed of the malaise; implanted with cybernetics; I wouldn't say brainwashed, but we were given a purpose to die for our country again; and were injected with an extreme training regimen and super-soldier serum that gave us extreme physical strength, rapid healing, and offered protection against chemical, biological, electromagnetic, and ballistic threats, including direct fire from a .50-calibre bullet.

The kitting was super: SuperCombat camouflage dress, engineered with full-body ballistics protection; integrated heating and cooling systems; embedded sensors, antennas, and computers; and life-saving oxygen and haemorrhage controls. It incorporated audio, visual, and haptic sensors, including thermal imaging for the eyes, sound suppression for the ears,

and fibre optics from the head to the fingertips. We had Night Vision Contact Lenses, Thought Helmet that could turn pre-speech thoughts into quantifiable bits of information and beam them to the others, enhancing 'silent talk' without giving anything away to the enemy.

Technically, we were immortals. Not even the high-impact Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosives Devices (VBIEDs) al-Shabaab and ISIS were using to target our troops in Somalia could put a single super-soldier down.

Colonel Ombieno was stinking rich. His oil magnate father owned OilOmbi Kenya Ltd, an oil exploration company that drilled oil wherever it was discovered in Eastern Africa—Turkana in Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, and the contentious oil-rich Ilemi Triangle that led to the one-month Kenya-South Sudan war in 2030. He used his money to fund the top-secret *Project Phoenix*. From the ashes came 13 secret super-soldiers.

"There's no honourable way to kill, no gentle way to destroy. There is nothing good in war. Except for its ending," Colonel Ombieno told us on the day he sent us out. "This is a call of duty. You are going deep behind enemy lines in Somalia as an elite Black Ops super-soldier with only one aim—to finish al-Shabaab and ISIS. Make Kenya safe, make your mother proud,

and make the system see their mistake in court-martialing and killing you”

In all my life in the army, I had never been more motivated to go to Somalia and put my life on the line for my country.

When the KDF entered Somalia in 2011, commanders thought capturing and liberating territories from al-Shabaab was the ultimate win. They termed it propaganda when al-Shabaab claimed they had made a strategic retreat when Kismayo, the terrorists’ financial hub, was captured. Four years later, the terrorists made a comeback with a bang. The terrorists overran African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces’ positions, killed many soldiers, and took equipment, weapons and ammunition they used in their next attack.

After the 15th January 2016 attack on the KDF position in El Adde, Somalia, al-Shabaab faced another enemy—ISIS. There was a lull as al-Shabaab focused on routing out the Caliphate-forming Mujahideen of the Middle East from their turf, but ISIS were invincible. AMISOM became a peacekeeping mission where gullible commanders advised against leaving Somalia for self-enrichment from import and export businesses along the Somalia Coast ports. When no terror group seemed to win, al-Shabaab and ISIS merged,

and AMISOM became the common enemy. Their first attack was on our position, Kenya contingent Sector Headquarters, in Kismayo.

“Your mission is total annihilation of the two terror groups,” Colonel Ombieno told us.

And so, we, 13 veritable super-soldiers, formerly cowards, ended terrorism in East Africa. Somalia today is the region’s main economic hub. Thanks to us, Kenya is a superpower in Africa—the Special Annihilation Squad Thirteen (SAS-13).

But something happened to me on our last mission to Nigeria. We eradicated the last Boko Haram sleeper cell in Borno State. I don’t know what happened to my SuperCombat dress, but I was the only one injured when our Humvee hit a landmine on our ride to our extraction pick-up point.

There are nights I dream in such vivid detail that when I wake up, I am confused, forgetting for a fraction of a second that my sight is gone. I feel grief all over, the loss of things I never even consider missing. My life as a super-soldier was all action, all hero, never slowing for even a day. Once the sadness becomes less acute, I reach for my cane and slowly tap my way to the laboratory, where I became someone else, something else. I will never see my ageing, forever 28 in my mind’s eye, though my fingers will tell

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me of the wrinkles and hair loss in due course. Part of me wonders if the dreams would change, if one day they would be the same monochrome shadows of my super-soldier days ...

Lost Souls

*The world is full of lost lives and unfortunate souls
ruined in the name of unreasonable religious rules, but
... Not every lost soul wants to be found because not
every soul is lost. Some of them found something or
many things or even everything in their lostness!*

Mehmet Murat ildan

The Prostitute Killer

I am the punishment of God ... If you had not committed great sins, God would not have sent a punishment like me upon you.

Genghis Khan

YOU ARE THE PUNISHMENT OF God, the voice tells me. If they had not committed great sins, God would not have sent a punishment like you upon them.

I am the punishment of God, I affirm.

If they had not committed great sins, God would not have sent a punishment like me upon them. Someone shouldn't spend all their God-given lives earning a dime and a bob on the Holy Spirit's temple. It is a sin against God and nature. As a servant of God, I feel it is my duty to protect womanhood and sexuality from degradation.

When I started in Nakuru, I did not stop until I went to all 47 counties. God had sent me to the lost ewes of Kenyan towns. I picked the prostitutes easily. I knew they would not be reported missing right away and might never be reported missing. I knew I would kill as many of them as possible without getting caught. I reasoned that they had to be secretive and discreet since they were doing illegal work. Many were drug addicts and estranged from their families and desperadoes, so they were less likely to be reported missing. Anyone involved with them, in the trade, wouldn't be super eager to speak with the police.

I guessed wrong.

People talked, but not to the police. They spoke to my all-time nemesis, the media. The jackals gave the tarts unnecessary media coverage. The reporters were like vultures, doing it not for the love of the dead but for the feast. I wondered when humanity became so shameless. The lucky ones who escaped my snare took to the streets yapping about their rights, demanding the government protect them as though the delineation of police duties included standing guard as the whores peddled their southern sector.

Mathew 10:23—'when they persecute in one city, run away to another ...'

The media jackals were persecuting me, talking

about me, and warning others to beware of a serial killer targeting the oldest professionals in human history. I had to run away. But I was not running, really. I was moving on to another town for, truly, I tell you, I had to go to all the 47 counties to spread the Gospel. Serial murders of prostitutes were reported in every town in the republic, with no single case solved; all murders turned frustratingly cold.

When I killed them and drank their cold blood, I took their precious vaginas and breasts with me. Psychologists on national television trying to analyse me said that I was taking souvenirs with me, so each time I looked at or touched them, they would remind me of the victims and that I connected with them. They wouldn't have been further from the truth. God had ordered me to take the parts to present as exhibits on Judgment Day.

Now, I have gone to all the counties except Nairobi City County.

Nairobi is where the final mow-down of prostitutes will take place. Like Samson, I will kill more on my death than in my lifetime. I never planned on getting caught. I can't be caught. I can't go to prison. It is the proper road to take to spare the victims' families further anguish, save the taxpayer the burden of trying me and feeding me in prison and save the

police the trouble of investigating me because, if I go to court, the burden of proof will largely lie on them.

Today is December 16th, the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers. Can you imagine that? Sex workers, my ass! Today, I will fulfil my mission in this world. Today, Saint Peter will open the gates of heaven for me, an aide will take me to God's well-furnished office, and I will hand over the evidence for lockup in the evidence cabinet and await the judgement day when the prostitutes will get what was coming to them.

After today, 'The Call Girl Killer' will never be heard of. The murders of those prostitutes will enter the Kenyan history books of unsolved murders. From today, the police will stop looking for me, and the National Intelligence Service will take over my case. Well, not my case per se, but they will be looking for the terrorist who killed all those prostitutes gathered at Uhuru Park, demanding protection from the government. Today, when I'm gone, it will be another al-Shabaab terror attack on Kenyan soil.

Hail Mary, full of grace, I roll the rosary beads in my hand. Pray for us sinners, now and in the hour of death. Amen.

I finish the prayer and make my way to the centre of the crowd. Zawadi Nyong'o's security is trying to

shield her from fans. She has been a superstar since organising the first International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers in Kenya. Her entourage includes the Queen prostitute, the Chairlady Kenya Sex Workers Alliance (KESWA).

My heart is palpitating, my stomach taut, hands clammy.

You are the punishment of God, the voice tells me again. If they had not committed great sins, God would not have sent a punishment like you upon them.

Hail Mary full of Grace, I repeat silently. Pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death. Amen.

I'm now close. My body is expanding, and the suicide vest is almost snapping open and falling to the ground. Shove becomes push, and I know I don't have much time. I'm drenched in my sweat and nauseated by the prostitutes' sweat. They smell of pheromones, menses, and semen. Too bad I have to be promoted to glory surrounded by them, carry their stench to paradise, but it is my mission.

I call unto Mary, the Mother of God, for the last time and reach for the switch inside my trouser pocket. I want to scream, 'God, have mercy on us sinners', but what I say is, '*Allahu Akbar!*'

The Birthday Killer

WHEN YOU LOSE SOMEONE YOU love, a part of you is lost. I have seen it in my short illustrious career in the police's Special Crimes Unit. Whenever I tell someone their lover, spouse, child, or parent is dead; I watch them shatter before me. Some vent their anger on me, the police ... the government.

In another life, I must have been the Angel of Sorrow.

It had never occurred to me that, one day, I would feel the same sorrow I delivered sledgehammer me, hack me like a butcher, pound by pound.

Lia was funny, intelligent, and model-beautiful. We would have contracted a catering company for a proper cake befitting our bourgeois life, but she

believed that money was why love and romance were being entombed under the splurge sarcophagus. She wanted to celebrate differently, to feel the sheer joy of celebrating her twenty-fifth birthday in style. She wanted a personal touch to everything.

That last birthday, I made her cupcakes. The day I won the battle inside me and told her that I loved her and asked her whether she would love to be the mother of big-eyed children like me, and she said yes, I catalogued everything I knew about her: she loved cupcakes; liked her tea black; sushi was her favourite; she wouldn't be caught dead wearing anything but black, like me; she slept on the left side of the bed; she hated makeup, and weaves; she liked it when I called her Lia instead of Cessy; she wanted to have kids with me.

I was preparing a Bloody Mary when she came to where I was to tell me that the guests were about to begin streaming in, and we had a very short time; how about a quickie? Otherwise, I would arrest her for sexually harassing me. I told her that I didn't mind arresting a jailbait like her and baiting her in jail, where I would be the warden.

By the time we finished mixing the cocktails and mocktails, the house was filled with friends she had invited.

“Welcome to Lia’s Pub,” I said to those who wanted to get high and low.

She was happy.

She laughed, often winking at me, danced to the live performance by one of her diva wannabe friends, dared me to kiss her bellybutton as she gyrated her hips in song and dance, and distributed the cupcakes saying that she was sharing her chocolate craving with everyone she wanted to carry down memory lane.

As I watched her, my heart beat faster. My head began to swirl and my body to twirl. *I love this girl. She brings out the girl in her at the best of times and makes me come alive.*

My heart palpitated when she gave her birthday speech, which she was good at. I had never seen her more radiant. Too bad, the following day, I had to go to work; I was supposed to brief my commanding officer on the progress of The Birthday Killer case I was investigating.

THE Birthday Killer watched the detective kiss his bitch goodnight. The killer had never been afraid of getting caught in his psychopathic career. But

Detective Alex Muthee was good. Detective Alex discovered that the killer murdered his victims on their birthdays and suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after watching his fiancée get shot by a stray police bullet on her birthday.

The killer watched his next victim get kissed and her breasts fondled by her horny boyfriend from the shadows.

Get a room, lovebirds, the killer said under his breath.

A moment later, the kissing couple disengaged from each other, albeit lazily, and the boyfriend left.

When the coast was clear, the killer came out of the shadows and entered the house using a master key. He couldn't resist taking a bite of the cupcakes he found in the fridge in the kitchen before he stealthily made his way to the bedroom, snuck in and stood over the sleeping beauty, staring at her.

She was beautiful. He liked watching her curl under the sheets like a kitten like Mia used to.

He fumbled for the hypodermic in his coat pocket, took it and removed five phials of Anectine and set them on the nightstand. Playing the doctor he always thought himself to be, he emptied the five vials into the sleeping woman's body.

WHEN I brought myself to, I touched her cheeks. They were soft to the touch. Her body was cold. I touched her neck as though checking her pulse for the umpteenth time would bring her back to life. I pulled the duvet. She was so peaceful, serene, in her sleep. The diaphanous negligee she was in clung to her body so I was jealous of it. I was supposed to be the one stuck to her like that.

THE butcher from hell hacked me pound by pound. When the crime scene guys cordoned off Lia's house and declared the room where we used to make love a crime scene, I wondered when our love nest became a crime scene. As they carted her away, my heart followed her, deader than hers.

I was left with the husk that was filled with rage, vengeance, and justice. And that's how I became a workaholic, alcoholic, melancholic, and a wonder-kid in solving homicides.

Interview with a Vampire

*It has been a long time since he last shed blood for
his Gods.*

Amy Kuivalainen

25th December,

IN 2008, WOMEN STARTED DISAPPEARING mysteriously in Naivasha, Kenya. Fathers thought their daughters had eloped with their surreptitious lovers, and estranged men believed their wives, fiancées, and girlfriends had loved it far from their arms. To date, the women have never been found.

After investigations, police in Naivasha arrested 24-year-old Mukoma wa Wairimu, cousin to Geoffrey Matheri, alias Fungo, who had confessed to and was jailed for kidnapping, raping, and draining his

victims' blood and drinking it as instructed by his bishop.

Mukoma wa Wairimu confessed to sacrificing the women to gods. The case never went to trial as the police never adduced enough evidence. Mukoma was remanded at Naivasha Maximum Security Prison, the hell where he was to rot in.

The self-confessed serial killer and self-proclaimed 'Hand of God' spoke to me from Naivasha Maximum Security Prison. I don't want God to tell me that He was in prison and I did not go to see Him on Judgment Day. After all, it is in the spirit of celebrating Christmas the way the church says we do it.

As if from the shadows, the automatic door of the Max Room opened, and a tall figure in Smith & Wesson Belly Waist-chain handcuffs entered. When I could see him better, I held in a gasp. He was nothing like the media stories we had told the world: tall, dark, and handsome, with no overgrown fangs, just your regular guy. His ebony skin glistened in the fluorescent light, and his dark eyes fixed on me as though he remembered me from another world.

When he settled across me on the other side of the table, I went straight to the interview. The miniature camera on my blouse was recording for my *Nut Cases* series for *Crime TV*.

ME: Why? Why did you do it?

MUKOMA: The gods, cute lady. The gods. They wanted it. They ordered me to. I am an instrument of the gods. And not just gods. For God. It is in the Bible. Come to think of it: God makes terrorists look like boy scouts. According to the Bible, this God is directly responsible for many mass murders, rapes, pillage, plunder, slavery, child abuse, human sacrifice and killing, not to mention the killing of unborn children. If you think I'm a nutcase, read your Bible before airing this investigative piece for your *Crime TV*.

This God and His Celestial Choirs of Principalities ordered me to kill those women even after the Ten Commandments say, 'Thou shall not kill'. Read First Chronicles chapter twenty-one, Deuteronomy three, Joshua six, Judges twenty-one—

ME: Why women, then?

MUKOMA: Aha, women. Sacrifice is the synonym of woman, and woman is the synonym of sacrifice. It is

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much easier to get the required blood from women than from men. The trick is to rape her, and all the blood drains to the upper body, especially around the neck. Then puncture one of the veins, and *voila!* You have mugs and mugs of blood. Plus, women are not of much use to God?!

Look, Allah gives them up to terrorists for eternity. Seventy-two of them to a single terrorist for screwing forever. Does that show that God has use for them?

ME: (Astounded) You don't seem sorry for what you have done ...?

MUKOMA: Sorry? Sorry for what? I am the Hand of God. God has to be worshipped. And this worship involves sacrifice. Tell me, what wouldn't God do if He sacrificed Jesus, whom everyone believes was His son? Who *you* believe was His son? Blood is the tincture of true sacrifice.

ME: OK, you are scaring me. But tell me, does this god have a religion?

MUKOMA: Aaahaa! I know what you want to say, that I am in a cult. God is God. It doesn't matter whether He is Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Indian, or whatever.

He is just God. I know you are a Christian, and you believe that God is a good and loving god and wants *you* to do good things, like visiting me here today. But you don't read the Bible as you should. You just read certain passages in church on Sundays. That's understandable, as there is no time to read the Bible. Also, many priests and pastors don't like to read certain passages in the Bible because they present a message that would drive the people away from their churches—

ME: (Interjects) How would you go about it as though it is normal?

MUKOMA: I was chosen and given special powers by God. When you are chosen, you are not supposed to aid the police in their investigations or reveal more about your sacrifice. The least you can do is tell the police that your victims were sacrificed. Whoever wants to see the bodies can ask God Himself and ask Him—

ME: Human blood and flesh?

MUKOMA: Is very sweet and delicious. I killed so many women that my house looked like an abattoir. I took their blood to Mugiki shrines for oath-taking

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and other rituals and their breasts and private parts to a certain church in Nairobi. What do you call them these days, prosperity gospel churches?

ME: Do you think you will ever be released?

MUKOMA: Madam, it doesn't matter. Whether I'm released or not, I will get out of here, Maximum Security or not. It is the will of God. It is a cycle. Every thirteen years, He must be sacrificed to with as many sacrifices as possible to last for another thirteen years, or thirty-nine. This time round, it is thirteen. I have been in prison for nine, right? I must be out on the thirteenth year because I am still the Hand of God. I can't die until I have offered sacrifices to Him at least thrice ...

MY interview with the vampire of Naivasha took hours. Christmas well spent. He was not sorry he had killed all those women and hinted nothing about where he buried them. The killings were like a banquet for him. When I looked horrified, he just laughed and said it wasn't like he was doing something wrong, he was on dispensation by higher prelates, and I

shouldn't worry. Since I had visited him in prison, he wouldn't sacrifice me when he got out—

"Sophia's voice is sexy on *Nut Cases*. I can't take it away," he said. "I am a diehard fan of *Crime TV*."

Black Widow

I STARTED GRIEVING THE NIGHT I was married. The army killed my husband, Captain Mwoni, a piece at a time. On our wedding night, his Commanding Officer called and ordered him to make love to me hurriedly because murdering terrorists mattered more than consummating our marriage. That was my first grieving.

Somalia became his home, he forgot about me, and I grieved for the future I had hoped we would have. Sex brought him home three or four times a year. It was sheer luck I got pregnant. When not in Somalia, he was in Boni Forest in Lamu, Garissa, or Mandera, hunting the dastard terrorists. With no way to make him come home, a chasm opened between us. After the third year of marriage with a ghost for a husband,

I began to cry as if he were dead. I cried until nothing was left inside but a raw emptiness that nibbled at my insides like a hungry rat.

Then, one morning, I had visitors from the Department of Defence Headquarters—my husband was dead. He was among the hundreds of soldiers killed when al-Qaeda-linked terrorists, al-Shabaab, overran a Kenya Defence Forces' position in Somalia. I did not have words, just tears. It was more than crying. I was drained of all hope. The pain that flowed from me was palpable. Soon, people came to pay tribute and comfort me, only telling me that I would be paid lots of money by the KDF and AMISOM, the African Union Mission in Somalia, as though the money would replace him. I kept my tears silent, looking up to the watery skies and heaven beyond.

When the army came to bury him, I tried to be strong for our daughter, but I sank to my knees at the grave, not minding the damp mud that dirtied my dress. My tears mingled with the rain and my gasping wails. Noisily, I cried like a child with running snot and choking sobs, and I was not ashamed. The numbness of his loss was raw, and the pain hit me out of nowhere, doubling me over and racking my body with sobs.

There was nothing I wanted with the money the

CO who came to bury my husband promised me. I made my own, and to take my husband's felt dirty. It was a tidy sum, alright, not to be sniffed at. Once it was wired to my account, I built a mausoleum for him, and the rest I donated to a children's home.

I guessed that would be the end, but then another woman cropped up—my husband had had a secret family, and she had a marriage certificate to prove it. She was an officer from the Air Force.

A court battle ensued, but an out-of-court settlement ended the legal tussle. She ended up with all the property they *owned* with my husband—multi-million-shilling estates in Utawala, Nairobi, and Section 58, Nakuru. I ended up with three-acre farmland in Eldoret.

The Discovery of my husband's betrayal after his death turned me into someone else: resentful, bitter, and vengeful. When we married, I vowed he was the first and the last man to know my body, to explore every curve and edge, to trace every valley of my breasts, and to enter me. Not even death was to change that. But the betrayal faded my love for him, even in death, and turned me into a serial killer.

My targets were the officers, my husband's friends who found it acceptable to whack their dead friend's widow. I was their *mpango wa kando*, no strings

attached, several of them at once. I played them like a grand piano, a serial heartbreaker mistress on a mission.

My first victim died in a car accident on Lang'ata Road. Captain Luka and I had drunk till late one Friday night at 7th Battalion the Kenya Rifles' (7KR) Officers Mess, had a quickie in his Subaru Legacy, and then I blew him the kiss of death. I gave him time to leave the barracks to his death, then went back to the Mess and started flirting with his boss. I had ripped Luka's car brakes. The news of his demise came thirty minutes later as I gyrated my hips beneath his boss, Major Otieno.

I poisoned another: a slow death, made sure he felt his body break just a little more every day. With each new visit to the doctor, his pain medications were increased, and the prognosis was ever bleaker. Another month and he lost the ability to drink the potion on his own. I accompanied him initially and stood by him just to make sure. When he was admitted to Defence Forces Memorial Hospital, I stopped going to see him. He died in greater agony than my heart was.

I killed six army officers. I managed to have three of them leave me part of their wealth. Not after, but before, their deaths. I was not ready for legal battles.

I knew chances were I wouldn't win or would take forever to solve.

It's ten years now, and the anger has not run its course. I met a brigadier two years ago. He was not living happily ever after with his wife. I was sent from heaven. He got over himself, and the fool divorced his wife and threw away his whole life for a mistress. Now he is dead.

I recall pondering what it would be like to have his money and what I would do with it. Now that memory is a stain of guilt, not strong enough to take me under but sufficient to fill me with a sense of regret I haven't had for some time.

The army has wired the money to my account. I stare at the ATM screen, a mosaic of queries, instructions, and numbers. The digits are displayed in blue, tempting me to go on a splurging spree. This is what the brigadier's life came to; money earned putting his life on the line in Somalia.

Now, for me to take it is a simple task of inserting the ATM into the slot. He made me the beneficiary; I will squander it on whatever I want. I won't be guilt-conned into handing it over to anyone; I will fritter it to pat myself on the shoulder for doing unto others what was done to me.

The Human Shrine

I DID NOT REMEMBER GETTING TO the woods, no matter how much I racked my brain. What it managed to do was pump adrenalin into my body. I darted my eyes, looking for a landmark to tell me where I was or show me the way home. I did not even know whether it was Karura or Lang'ata forest in Nairobi. I figured that being in the woods was a nightmare I was waking up to, but I was not a member of the Night Runners Association of Kenya. Bodies were everywhere. Human bodies tied to trees, nailed to X crosses, stakes driven through their hearts, sprawled spread-eagle on the forest floor at odd angles—people painfully resting in peace.

When I commanded my limbs to move, they

disobeyed my orders. I felt like a commander on the battlefield whose soldiers had refused to take his orders. I then decided to do whatever I wanted my limbs to do myself. I couldn't. I was bound, hands and legs. Plan A failed. Plan B was to scream my lungs off, but when I opened my mouth, I felt like I had swallowed coir. What came out was the wheezing sound of my lungs expanding and contracting.

I tried to lift my head. I had forgotten how to do such basic human body things. I was in the Seventh Circle of hell. Or what else could explain the violence? The stench was overpowering. I finished taking stock and lay back down, limp, lost in shock, horror, and fear.

Was this someone's idea of an April Fool's Day prank?

Are my friends trying to spook me on my birthday?

Halloween night?

But there were no answers to my questions. How could there be if those who were supposed to answer them were pitifully dead and roasting in the hell of the assassins, the tyrants, and the warmongers? I could as well see foul birdlike creatures with human faces making their nests.

Perhaps I entered a catatonic state or died before

the cool night breeze resuscitated me.

When I came to, I could hear whispers of people around me, imaginary footsteps in the eerie darkness. Perhaps I was in a tomb, and fellow ghosts were trying to converse with me to kill time, but I could not understand their ghost-speak.

However, my eyes managed to slide open, taking in a wide panoply of stars, luminous darkness, and a familiar stench. The eyes wandered into the darkness and explored the night sky. I prayed to the stars to illuminate the way for somebody to find me just in case they were searching for me and were stuck somewhere in the night and wanted to give up. I felt lost and small, my mind and body shrinking and alone on a globe forever spinning like nothing was going on. The stars moved according to the physical laws of nature, their dim brilliance only in my mind, a mind that was a concoction of fear, horror, and confusion.

The wind began to blow. Clouds were on the move. Some were dark, blowing themselves up like froth. They intermingled with ominous greyish whirlwinds of heavy clouds, not enough to make rain. It seemed as though it was going to rain. It got darker and darker. Then, the clouds formed a larger monster cloud across the night sky, swallowing other clouds up.

It looked like a dragon. I watched the dragon in the sky eat up everything on its way. There seemed to be no answer to my prayers anywhere: no one was looking for me. Maybe they had given up on the search and decided I was a statistic of those who went missing every other day, or I had eloped with a lover. Was I in a 'Missing Persons' report at Muthaiga Police Station?

I heard a twig break, and the imaginary footsteps materialise, taking the form of light ghosts. I knew then that I would be thrown into the furnace of hot brimstone and prepared to gnash my teeth for eternity, but I felt hands on my shoulder, and my heart exploded.

"I don't even know why I give these stupid interviews as though repeating what I always tell you will undo what happened to me"

"Jenny, it's therapeutic. It helps in healing." Doctor Oloo coughs and swallows the phlegm. "You are the only survivor of the ritual killings that have been going on in Nairobi. You have no one else to talk to; that's why I'm here."

I swallow hard. I don't need to be told how to deal with the trauma. If anything, reliving it makes it worse. Why can't they let me be? Fighting my ghosts

is what I should do. What commander goes to war and lets his soldiers fight alone?

I'm alive; that's what matters.

"Jeez, *you* people suck," I snort before getting up to go.

The Bootylicious Spy

ACCORDING TO THE NAIROBI URBAN dictionary, I am a socialite: a young, beautiful woman with tantalising titties (anterior), a big ass (posterior), and no brains. Thanks to the (up-and-coming wannabe) celeb gossip columnists and paparazzi, I am the newest invention of the woman in town. I call it sexpreneurship.

According to the men's dictionary, I am the definition of beauty: booty and breasts. Who could blame me for my blessed butt and bust: my greatest assets. I am a goddess: venerated by women for my prowess, worshipped by men in private and public.

I have had my fair share of vitriol: I have a bright future behind (my forever twerking ass), and my

twins (breasts) are cosmetic; I am the epitome of slothfulness for young girls, and I symbolise women as sex objects. Do I give a darn? Hell, no!

Wherever I go, heads turn. Men and women can't get their eyes off me. The women envy me. The men can't wait to be all over me. I am the new breed of a daughter of Eve. Sexpreneurship pays for my bills.

Blue Chip Company honchos. Politicians. Musicians. They all have a share of me. They pay, just for my face, bust and rear. Diplomats too. I lend my body to them. I love it. The attention, I mean.

But I am not as conceited as you may think. I have morals. I have a boyfriend. One at a time. I'm faithful to him. He knows what I do. He's supportive.

My current boyfie is a diplomat—the High Commissioner of Uganda to Kenya. My ex was a Cabinet Secretary. CS for Defence. My first love was a minister. Minister of State for Internal Security. That was long before the dawn of the new constitution. I have also had my time with bad boys, from Nigerian drug lords to criminal masterminds and gangster wannabe musicians who earned me what I am famous for—Video Vixen.

You see the guys I sleep with? That's why I am a spy. And how old am I? You won't believe it. Let's say I'm in my early twenties. I haven't seen better days

yet. And before you start doing the math, I have only slept with three men, as all women do—my current boyfriend, my ex, and my first love.

The National Intelligence Service guys picked me up on the day the Minister for Internal Security dumped me. The fool had come to his senses and decided to go back to his family, a post-menopausal old hag and a bunch of intellectually challenged excuses of human beings he called children. I was drowning in my sorrow when *he* (the spy) approached me. He was TDH. Typical rebound guy. But he was not interested.

He recruited me. And trained me. Then I was sent out. That's how I ended up falling for the CS. And when the idiot got tired of me in a record two months, the High Commissioner offered a shoulder to cry on. He bought me the alcohol I nursed the wounds in my heart with.

The High Commissioner passes on sensitive *info* to me, and I pass it on to NIS. He promised to take me to Uganda when his term ended. Take me as a second wife. Or I might even make him divorce his wife. He is going to join politics. That's what NIS is banking on.

So far, I have raised questions with the Uganda intelligence services. Their antennas are up. The

Direction Finders have zeroed in on me. Triangulating. I am a girl to watch. Twice, I have been picked and grilled by the Internal Security Organisation (ISO) while in Uganda with my beloved.

Theirs will always be conjecture. Isn't that what intel guys do? They will never get me, my records are clean, and thanks to the media for publicising my booty and boobs, I am a socialite, preferably a sexpreneur, who sees business opportunities from dimwits who can't zip it up for the sake of their boring wives.

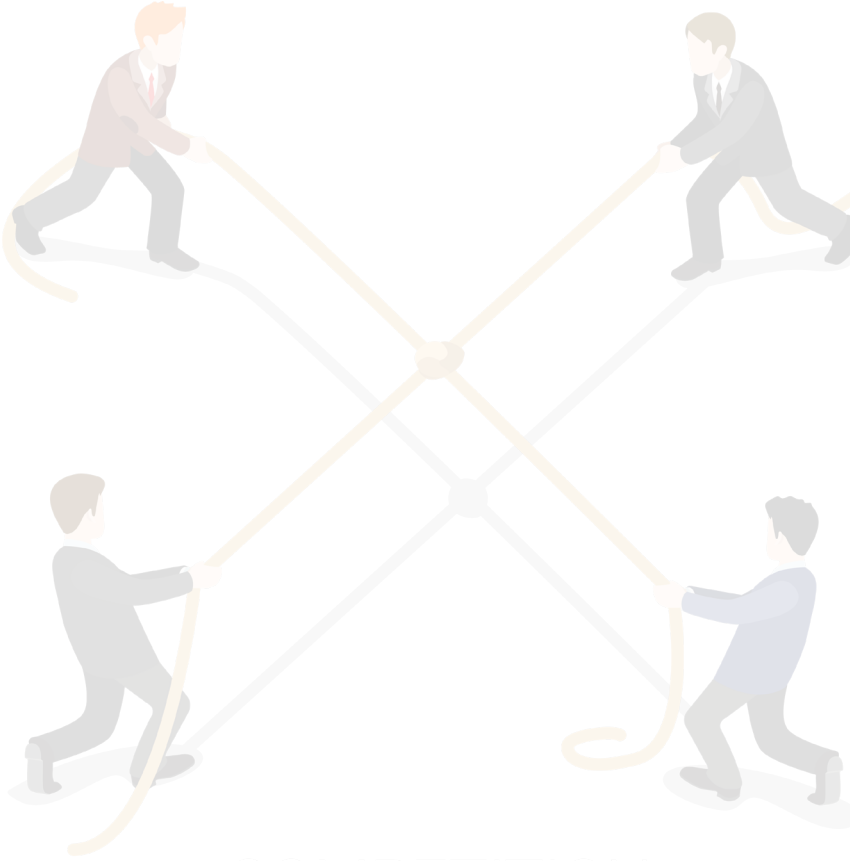
I am just a girl in love, unlucky to fall for the diplomatic corps, dignitaries, and policymakers. Love knows no boundaries, right?

And do I love my beau? God, yes. Very much. He brings out this girl in me that I barely know.

Family Ties

*... Families are forever, and I wondered if the slogan
was meant as a promise or a threat.*

Brady Udall, *The Lonely Polygamist*



COMPETITION

The 9th Circle

WHEN YOU GET DOWN TO it, you know that hell is not a pit of Dantesque fire and brimstone guarded by a horned, teeth-gnashing Devil. Hell is the choices we make, things we decide during our lifetime that we can spend eternity with or without. You plunge into the deepest level of hell, where the fallen angel, Satan himself, resides, eternally flapping his wings, producing chilling cold winds that freeze your life when loneliness becomes your companion. The three faces of Satan: black, red, and yellow, can be seen with mouths gushing bloody foam and eyes forever weeping as they chew on your body, might, and soul. Your life becomes devoid of vitality and warmth. Those

close and dear to you are frozen to the core by the cold in your eyes.

The day I decided I did not need anyone to tell me what to do, what was good for me, how to dress, to close my eyes and jump because they got me, or what to believe, I did not know that I was walking myself to hell. I did not know how quickly I would forget I had a family, a daughter, who wanted me there physically and emotionally.

Five is the number of years that have passed, and I have not had time to unwind. Five is the number of times I have been called to my daughter's school to listen to narrations of her metamorphosis. I don't know her as much as I know myself. I try to correct her, but I don't do an excellent job with my work demands, the struggle to climb up the corporate ladder, the education I chase after working hours, and the dreams I sweat for for a pound and bob. If anything, my bachelorette life has diluted much of the influence a mother should have.

So, I don't have much of a social life. I have lost count of the number of potential lovers I have turned down. I don't remember the last time I had me-time. I, close to menopause, am almost a grandmother—but still building an empire I won't bequeath to anyone. The little things that matter no longer have a place in

me. It's as if God is reminding me that all I'm doing is for vanity.

And when the United Nations offered me a job in New York as an Under-Secretary-General in the UN Security Council, I felt myself walk deeper into the 9th Circle of Hell. I had promised myself that, after I get the doctorate, I would slow down, open my own practice, and spend my sunset years with those I cared for.

I know there won't be time to take it slow. However, before I go to save the world; before I start singing the international peace and security anthem; before I decide to turn down the offer; before I decide family is much more important; before I cry round the clock through the lock for a daughter who no longer listens to anyone below the rank of her burgeoning ego; before I chase this loneliness and find a soulmate; before I ask Virgil to walk me out of hell ... I am going to start with the simple things that count.

Birthdays, family get-togethers, calls to a daughter who's almost a woman herself, and family, say lots of I-Miss-You's, I-love-you's, and blow kisses into my phone's mouthpiece, as well as other things too, like what my body misses.

So, today, my birthday, the 9th of October, I walk out of the 9th Circle of Hell, where traitors against

Vincent de Paul

God, country, family, and benefactors lament their
sins in this frigid pit of despair.

Father's Love

GROWING UP, PHANTOMS WOULD INVADE my bedroom; battalions of my father's doppelgangers that besieged the whole room and stood guard over me like a besieged city, and platoons of my mother's ghosts; I guess her soul had never rested in peace. I pulled the blanket over me, buried myself deep under the covers, hid from the ghosts that still managed to pass through the mosquito net, and got under the duvet. In the dead of night, I screamed my lungs off for Mother, anyone, to rescue me from the masquerades of my nightmares.

I spent my entire childhood in a haunted room. The lights I left on did nothing to chase the ghosts' shadows away. Most nights, in my cold bed and dark

room, I clutched against my chest all alone. There was no one to stop the shadows, to fight the doppel-gangers of the man who was supposed to be fighting for me but was attacking me. I let them slither into the room, and before I knew it, they materialised into the monster I feared.

There was no running away from this monster that paid me late-night visits. My room was where my fear began and ended. I couldn't run away from Dad.

The first time he came to my room, he had a lollipop. He unwrapped it and gave it to me like the loving father he was, but what he actually did was undress me. As I sucked on the lollipop, his hands mapped the continents he would travel with me on my body. That first night I cringed and held my legs closed tight as his fingers bruised my labia. He couldn't feel how I trembled as the fear snuck up on me from all corners of the room. The fear crawled back to where it had come from when my mother's gods answered my silent prayer, and he suddenly stood up and walked out, leaving me all alone.

For nights on end, I stared into the night, all alone in my room, silently crying out to a God who was on safari and had not left an assistant. And then, he came back and bit my lip. I tasted the alcohol he had drunk on his tongue, and I wondered why he would drink

it in the first place if it were that bad. His mouth took and drowned all my screams until all I did was just whimper, low guttural sounds of surrender, which he sensed from how my body became limp.

On the night that is forever etched on my mind, he found me getting ready to bury my head in the pillow and drench it with tears through the night to the break of the day. He was drunk, and even that couldn't prevent him from pulling me from under the bed. When he tore my clothes off and his hands parted my legs like the Red Sea, he fell on top of me and fumbled to hit the bull's eye between my legs. The lights were on, but all I saw was darkness. In the abysmal dark pit I fell into, I meandered through a maze of staircases to the deepest level of hell, where I met the Devil himself. When Satan flapped his wings, he produced chilling cold winds that froze me to death before forcing my eyes open to find myself cramped in my bed.

I started seeing the Devil in the lingering shadows the light didn't chase in my room. I wondered why God would be so cruel to take away my mother and give me over to Lucifer for adoption. Every morning I took long showers to wash away the memories before the monster of my nighttime drove me to school and told me to smile for the new day as I played and laughed with my friends, shining in class

yet dreading the fiend of the night.

Dad kept coming to my room religiously like it was a doctor's appointment for his chronic drinking, which I overheard an aunt saying was due to my mother's sudden and abrupt death, coupled with his gambling.

I kept the lights on in my room, hoping that my mother's outnumbered ghosts would protect me and the battalions of my father's doppelgangers would go away. In the mornings, I took long showers to wash away the memories, but when it didn't work, I stood alone in the night when it was raining for the holy waters of the heavens to cleanse me and perhaps wash me away along with the scum to the oceans.

Sexual Healing

The research into sexless marriages seems to indicate that women have low libidos, but it's not that they don't want to have sex. They just don't want to have sex with their husbands.

Dan Savage

21st March,

I DON'T CARE IF MY son, whom the President of this republic wants to give condoms instead of the laptops he promised, will stumble on this diary. All I think about is telling my story, and if chronicling my trysts would make me feel better than my offspring's knowing what kind of a raunchy father I was, then it is the least of my worries.

I don't know whether it's being plain stupid, for fun, memoirs to carry down memory lane in old age, or just being like the prostitutes who keep a list of the men they sleep with. All I know is that one day, I will be sorry, and I will sit my son down and give him words of wisdom on how to live this life.

My wife and I grew apart long before we were married; around the same time, I gave up trying to make it work for us. Over the years, the Valley has become Rift, though we share the matrimonial bed. I don't know her as much as I know the beautiful one I always dream of being with, who is not yet born.

My marriage is every woman's dream—happily ever after, but on the outside. This woman to whom I supposedly donated my ribs for her rib transplant at the beginning of time has been by my side for 13 years. Unlucky 13, enhe?

Men lose interest in their wives after they (wives) give birth. It's the other way for me. She lost interest in me, as though I was the one who was flabby and overweight after the birth of our child. Postnatal PTSD had nothing to do with this. It's as if she was angry at me for getting her pregnant, for putting her through a name-calling ordeal and embarrassment while giving birth.

Dry spells akin to Turkana's signature drought left

me wondering when the rain started beating us. Even nuns and priests don't malnourish themselves sexually if Vatican sex scandals and holy congress stories that abound are anything to go by. That's when I contacted the admin of the Lavington Cougar Lounge Facebook fan page, a Rubenesque blonde wannabe who promised to pay me if I offered sex to equally sexually starved women, married or single, at a fee.

Has there ever been a more lucrative proposition? Talk of killing two birds with a single stone. I tried to explain to her that I was not getting into it for the money. She stopped me and clarified these women paid for the services, and they wanted to get quality for their money.

I momentarily lost sight of what I wanted. The thought of money made it even more enticing. Isn't money why we are all alive? I assured her that I would deliver. She laughed sarcastically. I wondered what was funny. But she explained that her clients had had their fair share of men. They were virgins at the menopausal and postmenopausal stages of their sexually boring lives. Many man-boys had said so; how did she know I would not be a disappointment? It was simple; she didn't know.

Take a chance on me, Abba says; I told her. She gave me a number. Her name was not relevant. After all,

discretion and anonymity mattered to these women. Fine with me. I did not want to be known either. That night, I fell asleep somewhat calmly. Maybe this was the answer to my problems.

The good news was I would get laid for the first time in ten years and get paid for it. The bad news was I was going to cheat on my wife, whom I still loved more than anything in this world, for the first time in our 13 years of marriage. Did I feel bad? Hell, yes. Did I care? Heck, no!

I signed a confidentiality agreement before I went to meet my date. Exclusive rendezvous. Affluent 'hood. I found her on a couch in the living room. Her sheer black negligée hugged her curvy, flaccid body, pantless. She had a glass goblet with some drink I guessed was alcohol, but I did not want to know. She slowly put it on the glass table at the centre of the room and smiled as I closed the door. My heart raced and pounded. This was the client? No wonder discretion and anonymity were of the essence. She got up and made her way to me. This was it.

Then it happened, fast. In the living room. On the stairs. In the bathroom. And upstairs in the bedroom. Words to describe it lack. Or perhaps I don't want to go into the details of the spectacular shenanigans in a diary that my son might stumble upon and teach

him *tabia mbaya*. It was one hell of a ride. Definitely, more than I wanted to give and more than her money's worth. Perhaps I should have cautioned I was sex-starved for a decade. She lay crumbled on the bed, battle-beaten, and the bed was like a warzone. I left, whistling. I was one hundred thousand shillings richer. Double what was offered.

Then reality hit me outside the house. I had cheated. And I had prostituted myself. When I go out to look for what my wife refuses to give me, it's different. Things just turned from good to better with the money. I left the affluent house with my head in the air. If anything, I was going to be happily married thereafter.

My phone vibrated just as I left the front gate of the palatial house of pleasure. It was a new message. It was from her. *Same time, the same place. Tomorrow. I can't get enough of you.*

That was good for business, right? But it did not feel so. For some reason, my hands were shaking and sweaty. I couldn't force it into my mind that she was just another sexually starved human who just wanted a good time, like me. This was giving our bodies what was denied to them. It did not sink into my head.

What I felt instead was I was treading dangerous ground. I didn't like the feeling. It felt like daring

Vincent de Paul

death. Or isn't it when you are screwing the wife of a powerful government official, rumoured to be a drug baron?

For Love

*The more you love, the more love you have to give. It's
the only feeling we have which is infinite ...*

Christina Westover, Precipice

Unlucky 13

OCTOBER BABES ROCK, THAT'S WHAT many Facebook statuses, tweets, Instagram, and Pinterest edited photos said when the month started. An insignificant month to others, perhaps, but to my hedonistic soul, this is the month I wake up one day and indulge myself to the point of bingeing—every 13th of October. Margaret Thatcher was born today. The Kenyatta's, the presidents, I mean, father and son, are October boys. Perhaps I will take the mantle of this country one day.

Luck and I are sworn enemies. If it's not me yelling about how Lady Luck is such a bitch, it is her frowning on me and ruining my days, and the worst of all, on my birthday.

First of all, I woke up late. I skipped breakfast because my bitch boss would vent all her menopausal mood swings and resentment on me, which she did often. Add the unfriendly working environment because it was *no-bra day* in support of breast cancer. When the corporate hag didn't expose her dentures during the morning staff meeting, I knew I would not get the afternoon off to celebrate my birthday.

It was already late in the evening when I arrived at Railways Terminal 13, the Cable Car Services boarding platform. Good time for pickpockets. It was a plus for Nairobi City County to implement the cable cars plan borne 20 years ago. However, all my caution was directed towards hijackers increasingly taking up the *matatu* and train services in Nairobi. I avoided taxis; there was an increase in missing persons reports almost everywhere. There were rumours of a serial killer on the prowl in the streets of Nairobi targeting taxi passengers, probably a taxi driver. So far, a dozen people were missing, the majority of them women, their defiled and mutilated bodies found dumped in some grimy place while others were never found.

The lateness had been caused by the unplanned, uncalled-for overtime task that the bitchy boss had slapped me with for being late in the morning.

So, I got in the long queue for the cable car. The

plan had worked to decongest the city. It was time I had my own car.

Dusk turned to night while I was still waiting for the queue to move. I was at the same spot where I had stood an hour before. As I learned later, one of the cars had malfunctioned, and the engineer responsible for fixing such problems had had an emergency. It took him 30 minutes to arrive, 30 to fix the problem, and 30 more before I boarded.

And of all nuisances, the car I got into had some electrical problems. It failed just after leaving the boarding platform, only for electricity to go out, leaving us suspended in the air like spiders. To make matters even worse, the backup generators short-circuited—talk of sitting ducks. I endured, cursing until the electricity was back on ten minutes later.

One hell of a day, I muttered as I alighted at the Embakasi disembarkation terminal. I did not even feel like going to my empty house. I had cancelled any plans, broke a few friends' hearts whom I had invited, and was bone-tired.

I wished life was voice-activated, and I would have said, 'Take me to my house' and mysteriously found myself in the house, 'lights' and the whole house would burst into brightness, 'dinner' and cooker and kitchenware would do as I commanded.

When I opened my apartment door and entered, I knew something was wrong. Some clever burglar had used a master key to access my house and made away with everything. I could feel it, smell the stench of his sweat in my dark house, but before I jumped to conclusions, I decided to confirm. Seeing is believing.

I switched on the lights. The living room came to life immediately. There was evidence of the break-in. How had the burglar circumvented the security? It was a gated community under 24/7 CCTV surveillance.

It took a few minutes before the sight before me sunk in. How had he managed all that? How did he know? How did he get my key? How...? How...? So many hows ... but the burglar was there, waiting for me in style.

"Are you not gonna say anything?" the burglar said.

"What do you think?" I asked.

I should have called the police, but not in a thousand years would I bring myself to unless he turned me into a human piñata.

How foolish, I thought instantly, to stand here when the laugh of my life stands there, arms wide open for me?

I crossed the distance between us in a matter of nanoseconds and threw myself into his arms. Like a

heron, he folded me in his embrace before seizing my lips and crushing them with his. I parted my teeth for his tongue to enter and receive the goodies that my mouth could offer, and at that very moment, all my woes this day vanished.

We had the whole night for him to tell me how he got the spare key to my apartment, who he hired to prepare my best meal and bake the cake, where he got the roses he spread everywhere on the floor to where I did not want to imagine, and why didn't he tell me he was coming.

"Happy Birthday, Babe," he whispered like an early morning bird.

Just those words and my knees grew weak. I felt myself fall into his arms, powerless, like a sacrifice, and I was no longer tired and hungry. I wanted to devour him.

Number 22

'HELP ME FIND MY FAMILY' was the *Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, and *The Nairobiian* headline. I went through all the faces of the children published by Glory Children's Home as though I was looking for one I had lost or knew.

She was there, Blessed Angie, but going by Brenda Kimanthi. Blessed Angie was dumped by her mother immediately after birth at Dandora dumpster. That's where Glory got her, named her Blessed Angie for the cameras, but in the Home, she was Number 22.

I found Blessed Angie two years later. I was a volunteer consultant child psychologist for Glory Children's Home. I was wrapping up for the day when I looked under the table, and there she was: the cutest

two-year-old toddler I ever saw, all smiles, playing with her doll.

She was staring at me, her eyes cloudy, her skin goose-bumped. Most children's homes do this: they expose some kids to diseases to get donor and sponsor funding. But when I extracted her from under the table and held her in my arms, I knew something other than child care was going on.

When Number 22 looked at me with her cataracts eyes, my heart knotted into a fist. A week later, she disappeared from the children's home. My version of a safe house, my home in Lavington, Nairobi, became her new abode. I fired myself from Glory and started fighting what was happening at the Home.

The National Medical and Research Institute had colluded with Glory Children's Home to experiment on the children. I confirmed my fears four years later.

NAMRI doctors provided paediatric services to the children while extracting their cells for research. I, too, was about to be recruited to conduct a stuttering experiment on the children—to give some positive speech therapy and others negative speech therapy.

The doctors were researching cell mapping. They had found that human cell mapping, through recombination, could be engineered on newborns up to age three. This, combined with HeLa cells—cells in

the immortal cell line used in scientific research—could be used for test research on HIV/Aids and cancer cure. Seemingly, Professor Obel's formula for his magic HIV/Aids drug had been stolen. But they did not get satisfied with that. They wanted more. They discovered that the hybrid cells could be manipulated to increase longevity at that early stage. They started cloning the kids, producing miniature super humans who could live up to 180 years or more.

These clones were being sold on the black market to barren women, career women who did not want to have kids of their own and didn't have time for the lengthy and bureaucratic adoption process, scientists in America and Canada for more experiments, and Chinese, who were using them for research on effects of radiation for their top secret nuclear plants in Kenya. The originals, after being hollowed out of their better parts, poisoned, and infected with HIV/Aids, were the ones Glory Children's Home published on dailies calling onto the public to help get back to their families. The kids didn't live for more than a month.

They wanted to take Blessed Angie from me now. Anyone seeing her with me would know that I had stolen her. I wouldn't have adopted her or given birth because I was once trapped in a man's body.

I scanned the newspaper again. There was no way they could have accessed Angie and taken her photo. Well, that's what age-progression software is for. And then my mole on the inside called—she had evidence. I could go public.

Blessed Angie, six years, with the brightest brain I had ever seen, loved reading. She surprised me when she did it before her third birthday—she read Vaishnavi Ram Mohan's *The Incredible Adventures of Pisho Pencil* and Joseph Bokea's *Magic* cover to cover. She was reading James Patterson's *Maximum Ride* series at that time. I imagined she'd have read all medical books when she was ten and moved on to esoteric stuff.

I had given Blessed Angie as good a life as possible. She suffered bouts of post-traumatic stress disorder and epilepsy. She was just learning to trust.

I know for a woman who can't conceive naturally or who won't be crazy enough to bring a kid to this fucked up world, not even with Jesus Christ himself, I'm coming out as a left-wing children's rights activist. No one knows Number 22 exists. I could be arrested and sued for abduction, which, probably, is the eventual scheme of things. But I was her protector.

Blessed Angie put her *Angel: A Maximum Ride* novel in her backpack and followed me. She left me

locking the door and setting the alarm and went to the car.

I watched her open the passenger door, get in, strap herself in, and open her bag for the book. I wondered how intrepid humans could experiment on such innocent kids as I headed to the car.

I did not want to keep the media waiting.

Because I Love You

My Dearest,

LET'S GET PAST THE CLICHÉ; I know you are fine. You always are *fine*. The truth can be glimpsed only through the eyes of death, and to truly love someone is to love them to death. That's how I love you. Love declared to one's lover while alive is no love at all. Isn't that how humanity is? We know how to love someone when they are dead and gone.

For you to know how much I love you, I realise that my love for you has to die. Not that love for another will grow, or grows, in me. No. I said forever. Forever is how long I will love you.

It hurts to lose the one you love. Loving and not

being loved back hurts a little more. Seeing the one you love love someone else hurts more. But what hurts most is to see the one you love not happy being with you.

You love it far from my arms. You are happy *not* with me. You laugh more while with someone else. You talk less with me; hell, you don't talk. I have to push you to talk to me. It's not like we have been together for so long that words have been exhausted and silence talks louder. We are yet to, but your aloofness started long before the tango began.

If you love someone, you wish them happiness even if that happiness is not found with you. I love you as certain dark things are to be loved, in secret, between the shadow and the soul, something you will never know, or perhaps you will know when I am gone. I will not try to convince you to love me, to believe me, to come back to the one who loves you in whole. You deserve better than that. You are better than that ... Goodbye is the hardest thing to say, yet I have to.

I wish you happiness. I know you believe that happiness can't be found with me. And because I love you as much, this love I have for you has to die so you can know I love you so much it hurts, so tenderly I wonder whether you know I cry so steadfastly that,

even if you want to go alone, I would be waiting when tomorrow comes; and when you need someone to ease the pain, I will be there for you.

The truth can be glimpsed only through the eyes of death. The love I have for you has to die because I love you.

Forever,

Because I love You.

From Saudi Arabia with Love

WHEN I GOT THE PAPERS to go to Saudi Arabia, I did not want to believe the horror stories told by those who had been returned home hollowed out, relieved of their better parts.

Before this, I was living in Ukunda, Kwale. I was tired of trying to keep my four children from watching uncensored pornography, courtesy of my mother's shenanigans, in the *makuti* shack we lived in. I was tired of prostituting in Chobingo Forest to provide for my children. I was much concerned about how my eldest daughter would turn out to be when she bloomed more than what I would feed them. My daughter survived an attack on her innocence by one of my mother's men, endured X-Rated sex talk, and

cut my mother's mattress into pieces to stop her first period, as heavy a bleeder as she was a sleeper, the red seeping through the mattress and the fabric of her torn pants to trail down her legs leaving pockmarks on the path wherever she travelled.

I sacrificed a lot for the money the agent in Kenya needed to get me the job. My inspiration was Vera Sidika, the celebrity socialite known for her big butt and blessed bust, but with my pea-sized breasts and lack of derriere, my hopes were dashed.

At Dammam King Fahd Airport in Saudi Arabia, I realised that my Saudi Dream was not what I imagined. We were many. After almost starving at the airport for a fortnight, our employers came for us. I ended up in Sakakah, a town in northwestern Saudi Arabia.

The *Sayidati* of the house treated me well, but her husband was the terror. You know, the silent ones are the most dangerous. When their 20-year-old son started frequenting where I used to work, the horror stories those who had returned to Kenya narrated started replaying in my head: the Indian woman whose hand had been cut off by her employer; the human skull that one Njeri of Nyeri had seen buried in a kitchen coop; the body of a Kenyan girl hidden in a deep freezer; an Ethiopian girl tied upside down to

the roof and whipped; starvation; and worse, sexual abuse. For all I knew, Khalid could be the serial killer of the family or a rapist.

He used to sneak up on me when I least expected as I cooked, washed dishes, and moved around the kitchen in bare feet. I regarded him and avoided his eyes though I surreptitiously glanced at him, marveling at his beautiful skin. When he tried to start a conversation, I cringed but secretly wished I knew how to speak Arabic.

Khalid and *Sayidati* showed me so much kindness I doubted the media stories about Saudi Arabia. Was it media propaganda to sell their papers? Were they retaliatory stories by fired employees?

Then one day, Khalid did something unexpected and insane: he confessed to having feelings for me. The idea was as crazy as it was impossible. I, knowing where I came from, did not entertain the foolishness. Was he trying to get me fired? Nonetheless, his visits increased. He almost began following me around like a puppy.

I, who was well versed in the myriad ways of sexing, knew that when I opened my Coastal honeypot for him, he would want more. I couldn't and wouldn't; that's what I told myself. But then, this day, he came to my room in the dark of the night and touched me,

and all hell broke loose—it was like I had received my first kiss. My *almuhabbal* cried rivers of pleasure, wanting nothing but his *qadib* to enter me and claim territories inside me.

Reaching for him, I untied his white *eaba'a*. His *qadib's* head glazed my hand for a moment, and my whole body melted.

When I lay back, raised my hips and opened my legs like gates, Khalid entered me with such gentleness I momentarily thought he really wanted me. I felt every movement he made inside me, every aperture and faucet of my womanhood being torn and tickled all at the same time. We didn't stop till the orangish rays of dawn speared the sky, and he sneaked out and went to his room.

That morning, he did not come to his corner in the kitchen to watch me as I prepared breakfast. I felt so alone and missing his company, not because I wanted him to watch me but because I thought his presence could stop the trembling of my *almuhabbal*.

When I went to serve breakfast, I heard a heated debate in the dining room, and I stopped and listened.

"You think I don't know about you and that slave bitch?"

"Don't call her that. She deserves respect, Dad."

"Says who? She's just a slave."

“Yes,” Khalid replied. “And because of that, I want to buy her. Sell her to me. I’ll pay anything—”

“And what are you buying her for? The work or the pussy?”

There was a commotion in the dining room. When I peered, I saw the man of the house on the floor, shielding blows from his son with his hands. At that moment, I realised what had happened—a man had fought for me, and that man had just killed me.

That day in the evening, when I finished my work, I retired to my room. With a kitchen knife in one hand, the terror of my life kicked the door open and forced himself into the room. He looked at me with portentous eyes, and before I could say anything, he was onto me. I did not know how I fell on the ground, but he ensured I stayed there. I pleaded with him not to kill me, but he stabbed me, over and over, as I hopelessly screamed for help, which I knew was never coming. I felt blood seep out of me, and when I was swimming in it, I smelt the pungent aroma of death. The last thing I remember was his swinging hand; I never knew whether it was blows, slaps, or whips.

When I came to, I was bandaged all over, immobile, feeling like I had been run over by a truck.

“Welcome to Al-Jawf Concentration Camp,” the voice said in fluent Swahili. “I have traded my chance

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for you. You can't make it here in the Camp; you will die. They are taking you to Jeddah for repatriation back to Kenya."

Teen Horniness

*Teenagers are free verse walking around on two
legs.*

Dorothy Allison

Crime Scene

THREE MONTHS AGO, BEFORE BLOOMING to the woman I was dreadful of, I became a Crime Scene Investigator. I did not know that my first crime scene would be to investigate my death. It felt like a rite of passage.

Blood was on the bed sheets, the floor trailing the path I had taken to the bathroom, and the toilet seat. I surveyed the scene, evaluating and making mental notes of the biological evidence. But it got messier the more I walked around. That's how I knew that the red pockmarks staining the floor were coming from me.

I hugged myself, and pain shot through me from my breasts. Were they the ones bleeding? I undressed and checked. They were OK. Arms? Check. Neck?

Check. Back? Check. Waist? Check. Legs?—it happened before I could check. Blood gushed out of me, seeped through the pantie, and dripped on the floor like the tear of an orphan.

I stood there, vividly picturing myself stomping into an emergency room and screaming at the nurses to prioritise my crisis before I bled to death or being wheeled into the emergency room and a doctor examining what was wrong with my vagina. But before I made a fool of myself, I realised what was happening.

In my delusion that the day was never coming, I argued that sanitary pads would feel like diapers, but I did not care at that moment. Actually, it felt exhilarating going back to being a baby and wearing diapers. If my mother were a constant in my life, she would show me how to insert tampons because I did not want to risk putting them in the wrong hole.

I survived my first crime scene, but I never overcame the shock of discovering it would happen every month. I can't wait for menopause to relieve me.

Holy Desire

WHEN GOD WANTED TO PUNISH me, He sent me to my boyfriend. When the Devil wanted to tempt me, he sent my boyfriend away.

I was still wallowing in the pre-TGIF mood when my phone chimed with the arrival of a new text message: *Thank God It's Friday*, it read. *I can't wait to be with you.*

It was him, my ridiculously handsome boyfriend. I couldn't wait to be with him too. I did not need parental consent to spend the night out. But I did not want my mother to imagine her nun-to-be daughter was having the ride of her time on a Member's Day orgy, so I perpetuated my teen horniness at my

holier-than-thou aunt's house.

Aunt Sarah had gone for a three-day retreat at the Marian Shrine in Komarock. I was sure she and her hypocritical husband wouldn't bust in later that night. It wouldn't do for them to find Mark and I wrapped in the heat of our bodies.

Mark promised, for the umpteenth time, that he would wait on the world's longest queue for me, or the rest of his life, to have a taste of me. Heck, I would have given everything for Mark to mark his territory in me, but God frowned on premarital sex. I sure didn't want God pissed at me.

The hardest part was surviving the night with my body's cravings. We did not even kiss that night as though it was our punishment for having stolen moments not sanctioned by our mighty parents and their Almighty God. I sat in the valley of Mark's legs, and he would cross his arms over my stomach before slowly cupping my breasts.

"Let's get married," Mark said, and for a second, I almost said yes.

But I did not want to get married because my body was on fire. Even if I said yes, then sex would be the reason behind it. Long after the archetypal orgasm in the silence, I would hear God's voice asking what I had done. I, full of shame, would say that Mark had

tricked me into marking the area where the tree of life was in the Garden of Eden. I would blame my hormones for letting me down and Mark for lighting the fire.

"Come on, you horny bastard," I said. "You haven't even treated me like the queen I am, yet you want a wife to boss around?"

In the morning, I slipped out of the house and walked down the path leading to the rhododendrons hoping to thaw the night's memories with morning chill. Over the night, I had given heed to my mother's advice and listened to the voice of reason not because I was more afraid of teenage pregnancy than contracting HIV/Aids but because, at that witch hour when lust was at its peak, God awakened the fear of hell in me and I smelt the stench of eternal damnation.

God, God, is terror. But thank heavens, I managed to keep my virginity intact.

I sensed Mark behind me.

Hell, if he touched me right now, I would turn into a pillar of salt. I turned and looked at him. I had never seen such a beautiful man. All he had to do was make the first move, and I would take the deal. He reached up to where I was standing and wrapped me in his arms. I felt my nipples harden against the soft chiffon gown, penetrate the fabric and glaze his chest.

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Tremors ran through me, even in spaces I did not imagine existed in me.

God, I wanted him like hell, very much, at this moment. He just needed to ignite the spark, and there would be no turning back.

Please, God, don't let it be here, in Aunt Sarah's holy gardens.

But it was not to be.

As though I were a two-year-old toddler, he picked me up and carried me upstairs to the bathroom. He put me in the tub where I had once found Aunt Sarah making love with her husband and stood aside, staring at me.

He stared at me more, then announced, "Lemme go and prepare breakfast."

God, why has he changed his mind?

I wanted to say to Mark, "Take what's rightfully yours. I will marry you. My mind is made up, you are mine, and I'm yours. Why not just do it?"

But Mark was already gone.

I got out of the tub and got rid of the drenched gown.

I returned to the tub and sank slowly beneath the hot water watching the steam go up and condense on the white tiles. I massaged myself with the soap bubbles, leaned back, luxuriating in the bath oil, and

felt my clenched muscles ease. The girl-on-girl and solo girl YouPorn clips I watched on my Smartphone under the blankets with headphones on showed me how I should touch myself. I leaned my head back against the tub's rim, closed my eyes the way the girls in the clips did it, and tried to think of what I ought to feel.

I imagined Mark kissing me, his tongue pushing into my mouth, his soft hands all over my body. God, it was heaven, and I moaned, only to realise my hand was touching me where it shouldn't.

When I opened my eyes, Mark was standing over me. I tried to cross my arms over my chest and twist my legs, but he had seen it all. A flush of embarrassment ran from the pit of my stomach up to my cheeks.

"Don't," he said. "You're so beautiful—"

"No," I said, standing up abruptly, grabbing a towel and sloshing water all over the floor as I avoided his eyes.

Sex on the Beach

A MONTH AFTER BREAKING MY heart alongside my virginity, the man responsible for the crime committed the same heinous act with my younger sister.

We were living in Mombasa, on a beach house at the edge of the Indian Ocean overlooking its warm waters. There were lush and colourful gardens where palms, tropical flowering shrubs, and bougainvillea formed a superb backdrop for a water garden and its many streams and fountains. The house's architecture was influenced by the Swahili architecture featuring coral blocks with *Makuti* thatched gazebos.

For one month, I knew exactly how to go to hell and back. I could map out its geography on the sketchpad I doodled for my art class or on the canvas where I did

serious works. I felt like Dante himself, as though I was his guide during his journey through hell. I could feel the romance, the horror, the mystery, and the crime of falling in love evident in Dante's *Inferno* in his epic poem, the *Divine Comedy*, in the whole elegiac poetry of my short-lived romantic relationship.

When I fell in love, it was head over heels. And then I headed for the hills, which abruptly became the edge of a cliff where if a friend on Facebook poked me, I would fall over.

I was so sure I was doing the right thing. It was an affair so natural that when my parents knew about it and wanted me to end it immediately, it was more exhilarating and right to let it flourish than to break it off. When he looked at me, I beamed. When close to him, I trembled. When his hands roamed over me, I transformed: I was no longer the obeisant teenager who shook right from the foundation when I heard my mother's—the queen she-devil's—voice but a woman for whom feeling came before thought, heightening my infamous teen angst. But I wondered whether nineteen was teenage or adulthood.

When he stole my virginity and broke my heart, I wanted to blame a loose nut in my head, temporary insanity, hormones, my fragile heart, or anything but my stupidity. It hurt as it should at nineteen and for a

girl out to ascertain how far her organ was designed to accommodate phalluses. He broke it off three days after the act, saying we should see other people. That's when I went for a tour of hell.

I often sat on the balcony of our beach house doing nothing but reminiscing on the good, and now bad times, we'd had. The beach held the best memory I was to carry down memory lane to old age because it was where I got my first kiss and ultimately got laid for the first time. But the beach also carried the most painful memory: the fool shattered my heart there and trampled on the shards before leaving them there for the high tide to wash them away.

Every time I look at that beach, I giggle and cry at the same time. It is the only place that wakes me up in the middle of my fantasy for a reality check—I was fooled like any budding woman-wannabe.

The man who hurt me that much was a *mulatto* with a litany of broken virginities to his name, courtesy of the girls' naiveté and lust to drink the waters of womanhood. He liked them virgins and old white women touring the Coast for the first time to splurge their dead husbands' pension or divorce shares on sex-thirst beach boys who were up to the task, thanks to Viagra overdose.

I felt disappointed in myself, not because I had

perpetuated domestic sex tourism with the beach boy but because I was too over myself to think straight.

But when Cindy came from her evening walk the other day, I knew that she had been up to some mischief—she looked a bit flushed.

“I met this drop-dead-gorgeous guy,” she said. “I like him, I guess.”

“Ah,” I muttered, understanding what she hadn’t said.

“Guess what?”

I was about to say that I am not good at guesses when she continued, undeterred.

“I’m no longer a virgin.”

Not exactly the mischief I had envisioned, and she had three more days to her eighteenth birthday.

“It was on the beach. Gosh! I screamed my head off,” she said. “My pussy is still fluttering like a butterfly.”

I looked at my sister with indifferent fury.

“That was my ex-boyfriend. I saw you—”

“What do you mean, Elsie? I know your *ex* ...”

“Well,” I said. “You win some; you lose some. I never liked him that much anyway.”

It was the beach boy. I had seen them on the exact spot where he gave me my first kiss, which I now wanted so desperately to forget ever happened. I’m

not a voyeur, but I watched my younger sister lose her virginity and convulse in the aftermath. I wouldn't have done anything to stop it—my sister wouldn't have forgiven me if I interrupted her initiation into adulthood.

That's when I knew that the beach boy was a perv. And I knew he would break my sister's heart three days later, on her birthday.

Church Heathen

Man is not defiled by his impurities. It is the other man pointing out his impurities to him, whom he is defiled by ... God made us impure. If he had a problem with that, He would have made us gods instead.

C. Joy Bell C.

Blessed Virgin Merry

I WAS BEATIFIED ON THE same day Sister Irene 'Nyaatha' Stefani became 'Blessed'. While Blessed Irene Stefani began her journey to sainthood, I began mine to slut-hood. The only thing I share with Blessed Irene Stefani is Roman Catholicism and seven-frilled habits. Habits are religious clothes, you moron. You can say dresses if you are a fashionista, fashion blogger, or clueless.

While Irene's beatification was a public ritual, mine was private. An over six-hundred-people-choir sang for Irene's ceremony in falsetto in a sweet immix of voices; mine was incessant mosquito tunes. Not that I enjoyed it, I cursed the senseless Mother Superior of my Order throughout for her tough stance against

necessities like mosquito nets. She insists that we should suffer throughout our lives, even to the point of risking Anopheles mosquito bites and contracting malaria. For her, flagellation, the crown of thorns, crucifixion, and all that Jesus went through are much more than being bitten by mosquitoes.

Sitting with my hands on my knobby knees like a Sunday school six-year-old girl, a holier-than-thou smokescreen for the shenanigans to come, I watched the most handsome man I'd ever seen undress before me. A distant cousin of Irene. These things run in the family, right? Perhaps in 2105 AD, people will flock to Brescia, Turin, Italy, for his beatification. The Devil's Advocate won't know of this night what he did with a young virgin Gikuyu novice who couldn't keep her raging hormones under control and to herself the very day his distant cousin was beatified.

You know, we Gikuyu women are go-getters. The whole day I plotted how to get one of Sister Irene's male relatives to break my virginity. It's not advisable to die a virgin, especially if you could end up in a harem of 72 virgins who would be given to terrorists in heaven. Can you imagine how it would feel to have sex with a mass murderer, worse still, who's not of your religion?

We were having common dinner after the day's

tiring events. He was seated next to me. I felt his leg slip onto mine, but I did not try to dodge it. Instead, I pastiched the Song of Solomon 8:1–3:

‘If only you were to me like a brother who was nursed at my mother’s breasts! Then, if I sat on you now, I would kiss you, and no one would despise me. I would lead you from here and take you to my cell that Mother Superior has forbidden another soul stepping. I would give you what you desire, the feel of warmth betwixt my legs. Your left arm under my head and your right arm fondling my breasts’.

Well, he was not expecting that. Talk of being honest and raw.

It was not difficult to get him to my cell. After all, who could suspect what I was up to?

Sex is central to human life. Since Moses brought the Ten Commandments down from Mt Sinai, religion and sex were forever linked and separated! ‘Thou shall not commit adultery’. The seventh commandment addresses the married, and so is the tenth commandment: ‘Thou shall not covet your neighbour’s wife’. Nowhere it’s written that sex between us, the chosen few, is wrong. We are ordained to partake in the holy of holies, and so did God ordain sex for procreation. See, it is a holy union after Holy Communion, right?

So, welcome to divine sex. Off went my habit.

Thanks to him, a man of slow hands. Too slow, I felt like he was not that into me. But he was. Being the much sought-after *ka-yellow yellow*, I did not have reservations that I'd be embarrassed about my body. I was just a hue darker than what he was used to.

Then it happened. We intertwined, fondled, and got oral as one. And then I let him get into me. Holy union. Vicar of Christ and nun one. Baptism in semen. The virgin me took the fun, merry actually, of all time.

Where did I get this idea to seduce and have sex with Blessed Irene Stefani's cousin? From terrorists. They were wreaking terror in Kenya from Lamu and Mombasa through Nairobi to Garissa and the whole of the North Eastern Province so they could have sex with their voluptuous, big-breasted virgins in heaven. I fit the Koranic description of their *houris*, only that I don't know whether they would accept having Christian *houris*. But when I am in doubt, I don't take chances. So, I am not the Great Prostitute of Babylon.

However, here is the problem: the baptism in semen transformed me into something else. As I drenched in the holy liquids and as they seeped into my body, I felt life beginning, taking form, in me. First, leaving the hospices of the church is a no-no. And biting the hand that feeds me is a crime. So, I can't disgrace the church. That's why I have decided to abort.

I can't take people for fools by giving birth and claiming that I did not know that I was pregnant like that Italian nun who thought that we fell for her gambit that Immaculate Conception (*sic*) could happen, if not at all, to her. We can pretend to believe the story of the Mary of the Bible—we were not there, and no one seems ready to think like a woman—but somebody who's denied sex by her career in the church and happened to have a one-night-stand and conceived from the tryst is a disgusting liar.

So, I will abort. Not because it is common practice amongst us women who men fantasise throughout but can't get, only the ordained chosen few enjoy our goodies, but because I have my reservations. I could give birth to a terrorist who would wear suicide vests carrying Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) launchers killing and bombing people. He could be a street urchin who'd forever forage and scavenge for food with vultures, blowflies, dogs, and crows. He could be a drug baron, sell his drugs to youths and turn them into vegetables forever. He could be a serial rapist, killer, or both, or another 'Vampire of Naivasha'. Or I could give birth to the Great Prostitute of Babylon who'd display her loose body and booty and kill many able men who could be soldiers in defence of our country. She could be a jihad bride who would

Vincent de Paul

start seraglios of seventy-two times seventy-two virgins in Eastleigh and California, Nairobi, for her terrorist friends. Or she could be the reincarnation of the most lethal terrorists to have walked the face of the earth, Samantha Lewthwaite and Osama bin Laden.

And above all, my pregnancy, my choice, right?

Visitors of Warmth

WHEN I LEAST EXPECTED, THE Pope called me. It was a call a little too late, and the conversation was clipped partly because we, the Poor Clares, are not supposed to have cell phones and partly because the wing where my dingy cell is cell phone network is weak.

All other Clares had been asked out either by Cardinals or high-ranking priests. The previous night, I realised that I was the Cinderella of Santa Chiara nunnery of San Severino and that I wasn't going to get my joints oiled by one of the rich and famous priests we always gossiped about in hushed tones when Mother Superior was praying her incessant rosaries in her refurbished cell. So, when I heard the Pope's

Chamberlain's distorted voice telling me that I was wanted at the Vatican, my heart somersaulted and landed in the pit of my stomach in anticipation.

After the three-hour ride, the chauffeured limo bearing Vatican diplomatic plates glided down Via di Porta Angelica and connected into Largo del Colonnato but veered to the right to a network of streets and lanes that led to the *Passetto*, the secret passage between Vatican City and Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome, Italy. The limo parked outside the church, and an aide guided me through the secret tunnel from the tomb of the Roman Emperor Hadrian to the papal apartments, where a party was going on.

It was a day of 'consistory' when the Pope promoted cardinals. After the formal celebrations at St Peter's Square, the newly elevated cardinals hold a private party. Selected nuns, commonly known as *visitator di calore* (visitors of warmth), are invited to warm the church elders' beds through the night. Anything goes this night, from binge drinking and strip dancing to unprotected sex. Now you know why that nun gave birth and didn't know she was pregnant until she was taken to hospital after her water broke.

I did not know I was the one to warm Pope John XII Jnr's bed. After the meals, which were served on a naked nun lying in front of each *crème de la crème*

of the Roman Curia officials like an offering, the Pope gave an awkward short speech with his hand around my waist. When he was done, he pulled me to follow him through the adjoining doors after telling the guests they could leave at their own pleasure. For the rest of the night, I was the high-class call girl nun I was supposed to be, the warmth of the Holy Father's bed.

Growing up in the capital of Kenya, my parents tried to raise us in the best way they knew: baptism immediately after the umbilical cord was cut, Sunday school, catechism and first Holy Communion at the age of eight, Church schools, confession every Sunday, the rosary, and the Crucifix which hung over our beds like a talisman. They did not see the contradictions in Catholicism. The priests were celibate but were caught in bed with married women, impregnated schoolgirls, sodomised altar boys, or had secret families. The nuns dressed like the Virgin Mary, yet they ran bordellos in the name of convents. Adultery was punishable by stoning to death, but my mother visited her toy boy every Wednesday afternoon. And then there was the confession—you hadn't sinned unless you had committed a mortal sin of which, many a time, I had to fabricate sins when I went for confession so that, when I recited the Hail Marys and

Our Fathers I was told to for my absolution, I felt like God had really forgiven me.

I, who was touted to be the Great Prostitute of Babylon right from Sunday school, became a nun, while my sister, who everyone knew was to bring salvation to our family when she became a nun, surprised everyone when her butt-naked photos surfaced on the Internet. Within no time, she pumped her breasts and buttocks with silicon and, with all her LLMs, became the perfect definition of a socialite according to the Nairobi urban dictionary—a beautiful young woman with tantalising titties (anterior), big ass (posterior), and no brains.

During my candidacy and novitiate, I was counselled out of it because there was still time not to take the bold step. Still, when I took my temporary vows against my confessor's advice, whom I was screwing, even Mother Superior was convinced that I was truly called and chosen to be a nun. Then I took perpetual vows, and instead of giving myself to God, I offered myself like a burnt offering to the lusty, ordained men of the Roman Catholic Church.

I did not know what the Church in Kenya saw in me to choose me to join Santa Chiara nunnery in San Severino, Italy. I knew I would serve the church in the Order of the Poor Clares, like Saint Clare of Assisi, the

founder, only to be initiated into a closely guarded secret church escort service.

This night, Pope John XII Jnr shagged me rhythmically as if having sex with an African was a mystical ecstasy. When he looked into my eyes, I wondered what it actually felt to listen to people's sins, and no one listened to yours. When he emptied his holy seed in me, he rolled onto his side, panting. I almost called his doctor, afraid his heart was attacking him.

In the silence that followed, when he began to breathe heavily, I asked him, "Why John XII Jnr?"

After a long silence, he spoke.

"Story goes that Pope John XII, who ruled from 937-964 AD, gave church land to a mistress, murdered several people, and was killed by a man who caught him in bed with his wife," the Holy Father said. "He was not pretentious, hypocritical. He was just human. No one in the world lives without sin."

Forgive Me, Father

“FORGIVE ME, FATHER, I HAVE *not* sinned as you expected. I even wouldn’t have been caught dead here were it not for Pope Francis saying that ‘we’ could come to confession. My last true confession was 15 years ago. My *sins* are like the litany of saints or the beads of the rosary you’ll tell me to roll as an act of contrition.

“Since then, I have committed these sins: during confession, I have fabricated sins so I look like the sinner who deserves God’s mercy; I’ve pretended to be the Catholic husband my wife wanted, a God-fearing father to my children, the beloved son to my parents, and the model citizen to my neighbours.

“I have not forgiven those who have wronged me;

I've bottled the pain inside me. I wonder whether God will be merciful enough to forgive me for forgiving Father John for threatening me with death if I said what he did to me when I was an altar boy.

"I am a wolf in a sheep's body. I put on appearances to please others, and my life is a mask. When the end of us was nigh, I dreaded being there for my children and getting into bed with my wife: Despair and Revulsion. Despite the teachings of the Bible she so loves to read, she denied herself to me. When it was too much, I sought comfort women from the house of ill-refute. Then I had mistresses. The problem was I found no peace, no satisfaction that I was seeking. They, too, walked down my wife's path, making demands, attaching strings to the whole shenanigans, bitching around. It shattered me.

"I didn't realise just how oppressive a woman's bosom could be until I met him. I was attracted to him with the kind of heady trance that brings a butterfly to nectar. He was the right blend of shy, sweet, kindest and most loving person I had ever met. He had the face that stopped you in your tracks: strong and defined, his features moulded from granite. He had dark eyebrows, which sloped downwards in a serious expression. He had perfect lips ripe for kissing. His strong hands, slightly rough from working, held

me more warmly than I could remember any woman wrapping me even in heated passion. His lips brushed my ear as he told me, 'I really do love you'.

"Now, there it is. He loves me. He is kind, loving, caring, and understanding. He tells me he loves me daily. He calls me babe, sweetie, and honey—words I've not heard from my wife for a decade.

"Forgive me, Father, I am gay. I am not confessing to seek your God's forgiveness. I am confessing because I was hoping you could set me free. Every year I have to celebrate anniversaries for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, and every week I fabricate sins right here in this confessional, so I remain a practising Catholic. I come to church and recite the Apostles Creed like any other congregant. I partake in the Holy Communion, a confirmation that it is a hoax that if you take the Eucharist while in sin, you will be struck dead.

"Father, I will take care of my family, my children. They don't need to know. At least they deserve that. For my wife ... well, women no longer arouse me.

"Forgive me, Father, the beads of the rosary you were planning to tell me to roll as I recite Hail Marys will keep my soulmate, my love, waiting. Be sure I will be coming back with my love. Pope Francis said we could come for confession, but Jamie and I will

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be coming to testify to you how it feels to fly without wings when you find that someone who makes your heart flutter like a butterfly and soul levitate like a dervish, even if that person is a fellow man.

“Pope Francis asks, ‘If a person is gay and seeks out the Lord and is willing, who am I to judge that person?’ Who are you to demand I crawl on bended knees for salvation? Father, no one is born gay”

How Did the Dead Escape?

33 AD

3 Days after crucifixion,

"I WANT THOSE SOLDIERS' HEADS on a pike," Pontius Pilate roared.

"Dominus," Legion Legate Prescennius acknowledged.

There was a commotion at the entrance. The doors flung open, and the Praetorian Guard sprang to attention and parted their *hastati*.

"To what do I owe this pleasure, Caiaphas," Pontius Pilate said.

"A court-martial?" the High Priest boomed.

"Those soldiers' dereliction of duty is glaring," the

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Governor of Judea said.

"It will spark mutiny from the legions," Caiaphas countered.

"The legions know the punishment for such acts. I doubt one of them would dare."

The High Priest stood before the man who had ruled Judea with an iron fist. "Dominus, all that those soldiers did was obey orders."

"Orders? Who ordered them to sleep on duty?"

"They did not derelict duty, Dominus."

Caiaphas doubted he would convince Pontius Pilate. Perhaps the truth would do. "The resurrection of Yeshua of Galilee is to your advantage. It will earn you another term in office."

Pontius Pilate raised his head.

"The one called Yeshua was not the anointed one. The people wanted salvation from Roman rule. They wanted us to intercede with God to save them. They wanted the prophecies fulfilled. They were not patient enough. Thus, we had to give them hope—Yeshua was born.

"But he became delusional, drank with 'divinity'. He differed with us and became heretical. We had to kill him, but he had already convinced his followers that he was Christ, the Anointed One. If he failed to resurrect, there would have been civil unrest."

Pontius Pilate shifted in his seat.

"We have his body." Caiaphas continued. "It will never be found. The people will support your re-election and believe you if you say Yeshua resurrected"

Meanwhile, at the Castra

"CENTURION," the prosecuting officer, Praefectus Castrorum Vibius Helvius, said. "You know the punishment is *Fustuarium* for you, and the soldiers who derelictly performed their duty under your command will be put in a sack of snakes and thrown into River—"

"But I received an edict with the seal of the governor directing—"

The Consul raised his head and asked, "Are you insinuating His Majesty, the Dominus Praefectus of Judea, directed you to derelict duty?"

"Apologies, Consul," the Centurion said. "I beg for leniency. If you allow me, I will spell out what the edict directed."

"There was no edict. Tell this court how the dead escaped as the living stood guard!"

“Praefectus Castrorum!” the Consul gavelled.

The Centurion continued. “I was the *tesserarius*, and I stationed a Quarternion outside the tomb as I was ordered. A messenger from the ‘governor’ came and handed me an edict directing me to remove the body from the tomb I was guarding and hand it over to the High Priest. I went to the Temple and met Caiaphas, the High Priest.

“When I returned, I found the harlot from Magdala, Maria, consorting with the guards, drunk. Two of them were asleep, only one at guard. There was an empty bottle of Blue Lotus.

“I confronted her, but then the followers of the dead man emerged from the bushes around and seized me, beat me up, and left me for dead.

“I woke up in the morning when I heard the Cornicen sounding reveille. There were two priests in dazzling white clothes standing at the entrance of the tomb. They told me to go to the Temple and tell Caiaphas it was over.

“At the Temple, I found Maria of Magdala, the harlot, with Caiaphas. Caiaphas said to her, ‘Take a jar of alabaster oil. Go with Mary from Bethany and Mary, sister of James, with you so they will bear witness that truly Christ is risen’.

“When she left, Caiaphas told me that he would

talk to the governor so we won't be punished for dereliction of duty. That we were heroes. The man claiming to be the messiah was one of the heretic temple priests, and getting rid of his body was for the republic."

"And where is the body of Yeshua?" the Consul asked.

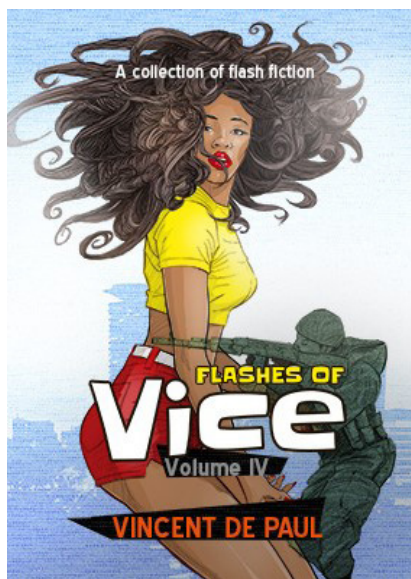
"Caiaphas knows, and the followers of Yeshua," the Centurion said. "I overheard Caiaphas in the temple's inner sanctum telling someone I did not see that Peter the fisherman was waiting for them; Peter knew what to do. They would sail north and never return to Judea"

Glossary

Blue Lotus	Egyptian drug that induced lassitude and blissful sleep when put in drinks
<i>Castra</i>	Roman Army Barracks
Consul	Magistrate
<i>Cornicen</i>	Hornblower (bugler)
Dominus	Lord, Majesty
<i>Fustuarium</i>	a Roman military court-martial sentence for desertion or dereliction of duty, the soldier would be stoned or beaten to death by cudgels
<i>Hastati</i>	front spears
Legion Legate	Commander of a Roman Legion
Praefectus Castrorum	Camp Prefect
Quarternion	Four soldiers
Tesserarius	Guard Commander
Yeshua	Jesus

FLASHES OF VICE

Volume IV



Read an excerpt ...

The Interrogation

*If we destroy human rights and the rule of law in
response to terrorism, they have won.*

Joichi Ito

Location: Classified,

"ALLAH WILL SEE YOU IN hell," Fardousa said.

"I will take my chances with Allah," I said. "He's my *miraa*-chewing buddy."

Fardousa gritted her teeth and growled like an animal. The Smith & Wesson Belly Waist-chain handcuffs restrained her.

"You infidel," she screamed.

I shrugged. She scowled at me.

"If you think I'm going to break," she said. "You're wasting your time."

"I know ..."

"Then I will see you in court. As far as I know, torture is illegal in this country"

"Who said I will torture you?" I said. "But I know what will torture you more."

A tic ran down her face. For an instant, anxiety clouded her expression, but she recovered immediately.

"I thought by now you knew that waterboarding, sleep and food deprivation, and pain don't work on me," she smirked.

"When you and Moulid left the University of Nairobi, you went to Mombasa. Someone who believed in your cause took you in ..." I started.

Her face turned pale. She looked at me with frightened eyes.

"They took in your children ... oh, you didn't think we'd know about them? Dear me." I paused to let that sink in, then continued, "Despite what those human rights activists and their greedy organisations tell you, Fardousa, they don't rattle the snake that is the government. Why? Because the government registers their organisations, waives taxes on them, gives them grants, and finances them to yell about human rights violations to keep the opposition relevant. So, those NGOs who claim to expose human rights violations

by the security agencies don't like being linked with terrorism."

She looked at me, stony-faced.

"Fardousa, no Muslim for Human Rights lawyer is coming to defend you. Same as Kenya Human Rights Commission. As far as MUHURI is concerned, you are a terrorist. They have distanced themselves from you. The Prevention of Torture Bill has never been signed into law. Know what that means? I am the law now"

"So what? Will you kill me? The better. Allah will hold a party for me in Jannah—"

"As I told you, no one will torture or kill you."

I snapped my fingers, and they were marched in. They were handcuffed and gagged. When she saw them, she was like a demon, possessed. She lunged at me, but that was as far as she went.

"Don't you hurt them," she screamed. "Don't you hurt them, you heathen, infidel—"

When they saw her, the children started crying.

"You cannot do this. They are children—"

"What about the thousands of children you will be killing? Are they not children?"

I signalled for the oldest, the boy, eight years old, to be put on the table at the far end of the interrogation room and strapped, facing up. I was ready to do

anything to stop a bioterror attack in Nairobi, even if it meant torturing children.

I placed a towel over the boy's face and took a jar of water. I let the water trickle slowly, but when that did not move her, I poured the whole jar. And another one. And another one. Four, five ... seven jars. The boy jerked up and began to spasm.

"Stop! Stop!" she screamed. "Stop! I will tell you what the target is."

FARDOUSA was a nursing student at the University of Nairobi when she was arrested for conspiracy to commit a bioterrorism attack in Kenya. She was found with weaponised botulinum toxin when the National Intelligence Service intercepted communication linking her to a planned attack in the country that year. Investigations established that her husband, Doctor Moulid, a medical lecturer at the university, was the leader of the bioterrorism cell that was planning the attack.

Fardousa, her husband, and five other medical students from different universities and colleges were arraigned in court, but they had no case to answer. Lack of evidence. The other students went back to

school, but Fardousa and Dr Moulid went underground until yesterday when someone fitting Fardousa's description was spotted at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi.

"PROMISE, please, that nothing will happen to my children," she said.

"I can't promise because I don't know how your children will turn out to be; they could be terrorist*lets* for all I know."

"They don't have to suffer because of me"

"Don't worry about that. We are not all savages as your radicalised jihadi mind thinks," I told Fardousa. "Believe me, when your son thinks of this day, and what he felt when I waterboarded him, he'll think twice about becoming a terrorist. Now, what's the target?"

Fardousa stared at me. She took a deep breath, then said, "It's Ngethu. Ngethu Water Treatment Plant—"

"When? How?"

"Today, that's when," she wet her lips. "And for how, what do you think? It's the botulinum your corrupt justice system took money to release me with—"

I did not wait for her to finish. Over six million

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people in Nairobi could die by just turning on their water taps.

Spyolution

IN THOSE YEARS PRECEDING THE evolution of spying in Kenya, intelligence gathering was a Herculean task. Human rights activists had field days pitting the government against its citizens for infringement on the right to privacy and human rights violations. Terrorists committed attacks in the country every other day and walked free. Security forces were accused of arbitrary arrests and torture of suspects. Prevention of Terrorism and Security Act (POTSA), which gave security agencies discretionary powers, was shot down like an enemy plane in court. War on terror was lost before it even began.

That's when we decided to use other methods.

I was the head of the secret Defence Action Team

(DAT) tasked to secure the country by all means. First, we hired human rights and political activists to make noise about the city's state-of-the-art surveillance system installed by the country's telecommunications giant, Safaricom. The idea was to get the courts to outlaw it to assuage the public who believed the system was murdering their right to privacy. Once that was achieved, we perfected the plausibly deniable National Intelligence Service (NIS) stealth surveillance system that the whistleblowing website, WikiLeaks, had exposed, giving us unfettered access to people's information, the ability to infect and monitor computers and smartphones, intercept private communication, bring down websites deemed offensive to the government, and monitor people's movements.

We managed to foil many terror attacks, but the terrorists and their facilitators and sympathisers knew this when, for three years, all their attacks were thwarted at the planning stage. They reverted to the time-tested human intelligence techniques: no use of electronic gadgets and use of couriers and cut-outs.

They planned the greatest terror attack in the country in 2020—an attack on the President during Madarak Day celebrations at Uhuru Park. One of the presidential escort cars, laden with explosives, ploughed into the dais while the President was giving

his speech. The First Family was obliterated, and cabinet secretaries, diplomats, dignitaries, military command, and two visiting presidents were killed. The death toll was 713.

That attack awoke the country from its apathy. All security agencies were to make Kenya safe at any cost.

I contacted the US Army Defence Advanced Research and Development Agency (DARPA) director, "We're not winning the war on terror in Kenya because of our constitution; rights activists are using it to undermine our efforts, and the courts let the suspects and perpetrators go free because of constitutional rights. We want another approach."

"How do you want us to help?"

"We want to use your insect drones for intelligence gathering—"

"We're not having this conversation."

"We're on a secure network."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Director, we may not have your level of technological capability to spy on our foreign allies, but this we know. You have been working on micro-drones that mimic insect behaviour for a long time. We are on the same team here, Director, and my country is burning. We cannot have another terror attack."

There was a long pause over the transatlantic

distance before he said, “On one condition—this conversation never took place.”

“Of course.”

“What do you need?”

I spelt out what I wanted.

The Kenya Defence Forces’ Research and Development (R&D) department, together with DAT, embarked on a super-spy programme, *Project Mwewe*. Using the DARPA prototype micro-drone they had been working on for years, we made our own full robotic surveillance insects.

We made mosquitoes, bees, and houseflies. All the insects were enhanced versions of what DARPA had made, with improved aerodynamics, electromagnetic pulse weapons system, miniature cameras, communications systems, energy sources, and microchips to help them navigate on their own and make tactical decisions to take down targets of opportunity.

The insects were dispatched in various regions: mosquitoes in the vast North Eastern Province and Somalia, bees to Eastern and Coast, and houseflies in Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret and Kisumu.

Later on, we made butterflies. We were on top of the game. We were safe. The spy insects photographed, recorded, and even attacked insurgents and terrorists.

This led to the government being accused of secretly developing robotic insect spies when most of the Kenyan public reported that houseflies and mosquitoes were not dying when crashed with the hand or slapped away. Well, as usual, the government denied the existence of anything like that.

The terrorists wanted to re-establish the Caliphate, using every shade of dogma. Their jihadism caused death, the extermination of civilisation. The activists talking of infringement on the right to privacy didn't see the other side of the coin: we had a war to win, terrorists to stop, and the insects—bees and butterflies—helped pollinate crops. Moreover, we had long withdrawn our troops from Somalia, and families were happy together without the battlefield deaths that had been an everyday occurrence since the KDF went to Somalia.

As the DAT pioneer, I wanted to fight for my country and murder the dastard terrorists. I did not have to worry about one of our operatives getting caught and spilling their guts out under torture about our plans.

Author's Note

SOME STORIES CONTAIN news facts reported by different media houses and papers. Such information was used fictitiously (what we call faction—a mixture of fact and fiction—)while others were quoted from *The Standard* paper online edition that allows for quoting news articles up to 75 words without permission.

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