

DEEP

INSIGHT

MONTHLY GAZETTE



I pledge to use my words carefully to comfort, advise, inspire and encourage those around me. Always uplifting others as I go throughout my day. So help me, God.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The rope broke for the fifth time,
and a soft voice from a few trees away said,
“They always break in this forest.”

“Why do you say that?” he asked.

She appeared from the undergrowth wearing hers like
a necklace with bloody wrists for bracelets.

“Because I’ve tried many times. That’s why I come
back. To know I’ve tried. It takes the guilt of suffering away.”

— Sincerely Craig

I have seen people who complain about how movies adapted from books turn out to be different and do not give the same vibe as the book. Whilst reading, they would have created and directed their own movies in their imagination. When the adaptation comes out, they are left with chunks of disappointment. Given the chance, I would choose the book over the movie simply because I love giving a face to the characters, coming up with a script and visuals. It’s such a thrill. Now that’s the same effect that the Ballroom of Words is evoking in you. The aesthetics in your imagination are made colorful and a scene to behold as you go through each article.

Isn’t it amazing how we all
can read the same thing

and come up with different perspectives. Recently, I read an amazing piece by Craig. I am constantly amazed at his articulation and ability to cast the reader into a set of emotions. He posted it on his WhatsApp status and I couldn’t help but comment. We began chatting and along the way, we discovered that we all had different perspectives on the piece. I was baffled how our views were so contradicting and yet they

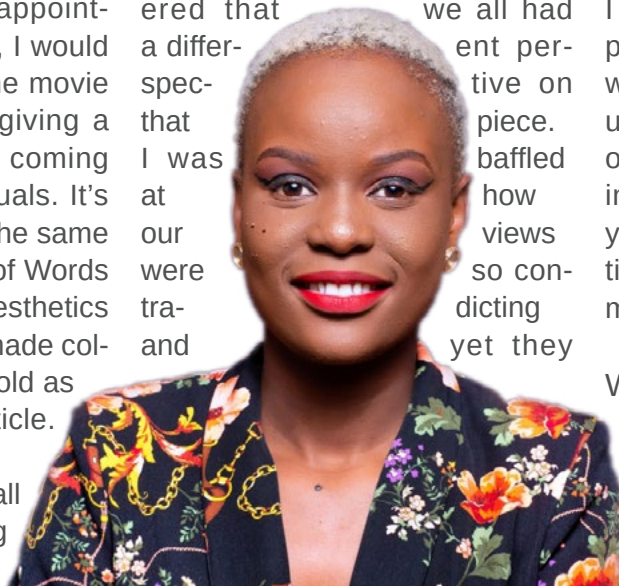
made sense. I am convinced you are wondering what it is that we were analyzing. It wouldn’t be so fair for me to tell you about this without showing you the subject of our bantering. See that piece at the top of this note, that’s what we were mulling over.

I thought of sharing with you our perspectives but then I figured it would be great for you to come up with your own without knowing ours. With that and all the pieces in this month’s edition, I hope your perception and imagination is as vivid as it can be and may you have a blast on this one.

With love



Millicent R. Sibanda



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WHAT WAS SAID! [WORDS]

By Tanatswa M. Kujeke

In the beginning, was a word
A word set forth into motion in an atmosphere jammed with disaster and commotion
And behold, the construction and formation of a whole universe laid in the utterance of simple
but powerful words

See, words tend to remind us of how much power we possess as far as our worlds are concerned
They are the most powerful instrument and tool we have and could ever possess
To me, words sound like a whirlwind of energy encapsulated in phrases that carry the magni-
tude to kill or heal

As simple as they may seem, a single atom in a word can penetrate past insecurities and fears
and in the same way crush through the walls of self-esteem and confidence
Words sound to me like an encyclopedia of perceptions.

They are clouds and a fleeting shadow cast upon the landscape of a life.
Have you ever thought of the weight of a word?

That falls in the heart like a melody from birds singing on a sunny day,
That gladdens the springtime of memory
Colors do fade, temples crumble, empires fall, but wise words endure

Words are containers that ooze out energies in diverse dimensions
In our thoughts and words, we create our weaknesses and as well as our strengths.
They make whole even to those hearts once broken
They bring hope and restoration to destinies once forsaken
To shame or to liberate lies in words spoken
To shatter dreams or to energize and revive them lies in them

Words can light fires in the minds of men as well as wring tears from the hardest hearts
Once spit out into the universe they can never be reversed
They carry the capacity to take you, prisoner, wind themselves around your limbs like spider silk, pierce your entire being, and keep numb your thoughts
They submerge us in our feelings and give us the power to self-destruct

Our lives are the reflection of the words we express which equates to us living in the shadow of what we hear and say, for they sure do manifest and come to life
All our words are but crumbs that fall from the feast of the mind and meditations of the heart
They are an expression of our thoughts and what we consistently dwell on and digest
This takes us to the famous Bible quote, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"
Our thoughts can be so seductive and hypnotic to the very extent that they absorb our attention and we ultimately become what we think
They are a galaxy of endless possibilities as well as negativity if permitted
When we know the power, they protect the soul, guard the heart, and revive our spirits.

Words are considered to be a mystery
They are a gateway of expressing feelings, emotions, and tension
But the human tongue is an enigma that few can master
It constantly strains to break out of its cage and if it is not tamed, it runs wild and causes regrets alongside depression and grief.
A lot can be said unintentionally but even so, immediately they cut deep, forming scars that could take a lifetime to heal
Words are seeds that do more than just blow around,
They land in our hearts and sprout into bitterness or gladness right from the root.

We all are a summation of those words heard and even those left unspoken
The unspoken can activate and deactivate energies within
In us lies the ultimate change we desire to walk into
The alterations of life rest on the weight of what we release into the atmosphere
And so, just maybe,
Your whole life could take its biggest twist by just declaring positivity and wholeness
The potential lies right before you
Inscribed on paper
Drafted in your thoughts and through the hedges of our hearts
But probably even closer,
Right on our lips.




Profit and Loss

By Tanaka M. Chigomba

Sometimes I forget who I am, and I find myself entangled in things that I never dreamt I would do. I lose direction and vision and the sight of things that matter the most to me. I follow trends, money, deals and worthless relationships, and so many things for fun or calculated profit. One thing I know is that there are many others like me. In today's generation, we let things that do not matter take precedence in our lives. We have a fine way of neglecting important issues of our lives

in pursuit of profit or gain. The rule of profit and loss guides everything in this generation. Our moral values are just a piece of heritage and something of the past, certainly not considered in this age. We do anything for social media and acceptance among other people of this generation. We are not ashamed to strip in front of the camera because we want more followers. Obscenity is the new order, and we do not find anything bad in that. We do not have any regard for the

family because everyone has a right to make his or her own independent decision. I can talk rudely to my parents and feel no remorse about it. I do not mind not greeting my neighbors or elders around. I know everything, and if there is anything I need to know, Google will help, why I should take advice from a stranger. Doing house chores is not my concern; that is the maid's job; she gets paid for that. Everything is fair in love and war; of course, I can date this person today, break up the



next day and move on with another person the following morning. It's normal. Dating a married person "a blesser" or being a ben 10 for an old rich lady is no big deal as long as it pays bills. Cheating someone in a business deal is normal because someone has to bear the loss in business for someone to gain.

Wait! Not everything should be about profit and loss; what about values? Not every gain can be calculated mathematically. We cannot always assign value by quantity. The so-called civilization has destroyed our humanness, and social media has decayed and washed away our morals. We are blinded by the desire to benefit, and everything is perfect when we are winning. It is all a huge loss when we look back later on. We always regret our actions later and wish we could change the clock, but it will be too late in most cases. The truth is that it is not a loss to greet your neighbor, neither is it a loss to take advice from a stranger. There is much more honor in sobriety than in drunkenness. It has no calculated quantified value in being

respectful but is self-fulfilling at the end of the day. There may be no monetary gain in doing house chores at home, but it equips one with the necessary skills for life. Sometimes hard work may not bring a lot of wealth overnight, but it gives one inner joy knowing that it is their sweat and blood. It is not as diminishing in character as dating married people for money or cheating people for personal gain.

Take-home advice; stop always looking for profit or monetary or calculated or quantified gain. Sometimes quality matters more than quantity, and it is not always sensible to make calculations for the subject of value.

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." Philippians 4:8-9



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BACON AND EGG S

By Kelvin T. Tsoka



Growing up in Zimbabwe, whenever we tuned in to watch TV, especially during the holidays, we would come across songs of the liberation struggle. As a Zimbabwean, I can conclude we have grown to understand our grandfathers' struggles during the war. All this was done to program us in such a way that we won't trivialize the importance of the struggle. Whether we like it or not, that knowledge of the war is a part of us that we will carry for years, if not the rest of our lives, and if we are not careful, we may end up passing it to our children.

There is absolutely nothing that we know and do that we weren't taught. We either learnt it consciously or subconsciously. A famous Zimbabwean idiom, "Kuziva mbuya huudzwa," loosely translated, 'for one to know their grandmother they have to be informed' tells us that our lifestyle, amongst other things, is all based on the knowledge we carry. We all have the capacity and ability to be absolutely anything in this world. To be a considered a doctor, it all

has to do with the knowledge that one has. Take away all that knowledge, they cease to be a doctor and becomes a normal being. I once had a very interesting conversation with one of my friends; she had gone through a couple of articles and research videos that showed that the idea of bacon and eggs as the perfect breakfast was sold to people through a great marketing strategy. Years later we are all screaming for bacon because a company that had a product successfully marinated us. Think about the way we buy phones a year in and out without any big improvements. These companies have succeeded in selling dreams to us, and we have fallen for them.

Back at school, in my first semester, while studying digital media, my advertising design lecturer posed several questions for us to ponder on. He once asked, "Are we buying something because we need it or because everyone has it and it looks cool to have one?" That cool factor is what most companies are selling off, and

this is the process of marinating the masses. Think about Hitler; he was able to sway off many men and women to war due to a process that took years. He carefully programmed the people to think the way he thought, and the result was a terrible war. The media these days is pushing an agenda that may be very harmful to us. They are selling a product, and they want to profit, so whatever it takes, they will always try to get the maximum result.

When you scroll all over Facebook, Instagram and Youtube, you will come across many influencers. The big question is, what are they influencing? Slowly we are catching up to the trend and life presented before us, and just before you know it, it's the same scenario of the bacon and eggs. We need to evaluate what is presented before us and make wise decisions. One should look at their goals and ensure they stick to them, or else they will tick off another man's bucket list.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, holding a large, dense cluster of white cherry blossoms. The blossoms are in various stages of bloom, with some showing yellow stamens. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with a path and more blossoms.

WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?

By Tapiwanashe Matorevhu

If you are waiting for the perfect moment, the perfect resources, or the perfect environment for you to start acting on your dreams or goals, the sad news is; that moment will never come. Life won't give you the perfect everything, but you can work with what you've got and started where you are to walk the journey to get where you want to be.

Before you start wishing for things to change so you can begin acting, first, take a look at where you are and see what God has placed within and around you. The things you tend to overlook and belittle may be your way out. Moses' rod was the one that God used to make the

Red Sea part for the children of Israel to cross over. Before that, it was just a stick he used to tend his father-in-law's sheep, and I bet never at one point did Moses think it would be of any great importance. This was the same rod that he used to do miracles and wonders in Pharaoh's sight when God had sent him to convince Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. So, use what you have and create an environment that's conducive for you to succeed. The things you require to start are never far away from you; look closely and find out how you can begin working towards achieving your dream.

Jacob thrived in Laban's

household in a foreign land very far away from home. Even though at some point Laban tricked him, God made it work out in his favor. He worked hard and used the opportunities that were available to him at that moment. He didn't wait to be somewhere or to have some things so that he could begin to build his wealth. You have to start somewhere...start where you are now.

Joseph had a great future, and God had even told him about it through dreams. Just because he knew the outcome of his future did not mean that the journey was an easy one for him to get there. He was thrown into a pit by his brothers, who later sold



him to some Ishmaelite traders as a slave. He was placed in Potiphar's household, where he was accused of rape by Potiphar's wife and was thrown into prison. After spending some time in prison, he managed to get out when the King's butler finally remembered that Joseph could interpret dreams. In all the situations he was in, Joseph mastered the art of thriving wherever he was placed. Do the same for yourself and work on your own story. Don't blame the environment, the resources, and don't blame the people either. Look for a way past all those things and use what you've got to make it work. Grow and thrive where God has placed you.

If you are expecting someone to come and change your life story, then you're in for a disappointment because you are in charge of your own life, your destiny. Therefore no one will come and do your work for you. God has placed you where you are right now and has also equipped you with whatever you may need for you to rise in that particular place. It's now up to you to work and make those dreams become a reality. Make the necessary moves for you to get to where you want to be.

There are times when you question yourself concerning the situations or places you are in, thinking if you will ever make it or if things will ever change—wondering if you can reach your

goal or if anything will move at all. Well, my answer to you lies in this question similar to the one that God asked Moses in the wilderness. What do you have in your hand? What do you have within you or around you? Use it because it's there for a certain purpose. Work on the ground you've been planted on; don't say anything good will come out of where you are. If that had been the case, God wouldn't have placed you in a barren land if He knew it would not produce any yield. Clear the land, till the land and plant some seed; when the rains come, you will surely get a harvest out of it. Just take the initiative and decide to do the work. Work on the land you've been given. Bloom where you are planted.



Adventure

Tips on blending in with the locals

I have had the privilege to travel outside my native country. The experience is both exciting and terrifying. It brought the fear of the new environment and the excitement of meeting new people. You might also testify to this if you have travelled. This experience has happened to you at least once or twice in your life. It might not be leaving the country, but maybe visiting another city or town. Now, let me help you blend in with the locals to not be terrified but rather enjoy your stay. This is all based on my personal experience in a different country.

1: Learn their language and etiquette

There is nothing frustrating like a language barrier. I remember at one point we lost our bags at the airport. We spent hours trying to explain the situation, but they kept directing us to the exit doors. Learning a language doesn't mean knowing every word but just enough to get by, like greetings and asking for directions. Whenever you speak the natives' language, there are high chances that they see you as one of them. Again, body language plays a huge part in communication. Sometimes body language can

be misinterpreted, especially if you assume that all signs are universal; unfortunately, it's not like that.

2: Move counter to the crowds

We always tend to gather and socialize with people that are like us. We often classify ourselves using language, gender or age. When you travel to a different city, the instinct is to look for someone who speaks the same language as you. We tend to hang around together. Now that I am thinking about it, this is the reason why I do not speak the Turkish language yet. It's mostly because I associate myself with 'my people.' So, when everyone is gathering according to their nationality, choose to be different. Otherwise, what would be the point of visiting?

3: Buy stuff at local stores

The best place to know more about the locals is using their market places. Not only will you know what they eat, but come to think of it, that's where everyone goes. Personally, I learnt more about the Turkish culture in restaurants and markets. Online buying reduces human interactions, which is not what we are up for.

4: Pack appropriately

This is one of the most important things that most people ignore. Your first impression is always communicated by the way you look, not your words. Avoid packing things that will scream, 'tourist' especially if they scream, 'wealthy tourist.' You need to understand that the local people are just interested in visitors as visitors are in the locals. The way you dress either attracts or shun them away from you.

5: Look for local events

In history classes, we learn about different cultures and traditions from all over the world. However, most people always end there and never take their time to experience those things they would have learnt. What will be the point of visiting India and not participating in the Diwali festival? Or going to Kenya and not enjoying the Mombasa Carnival? Participating in the locals' events will make you understand more about them. In a way, you show them that, although we might be from a different part of the world, we are still one.

THE LOAD
MAY BE HEAVY

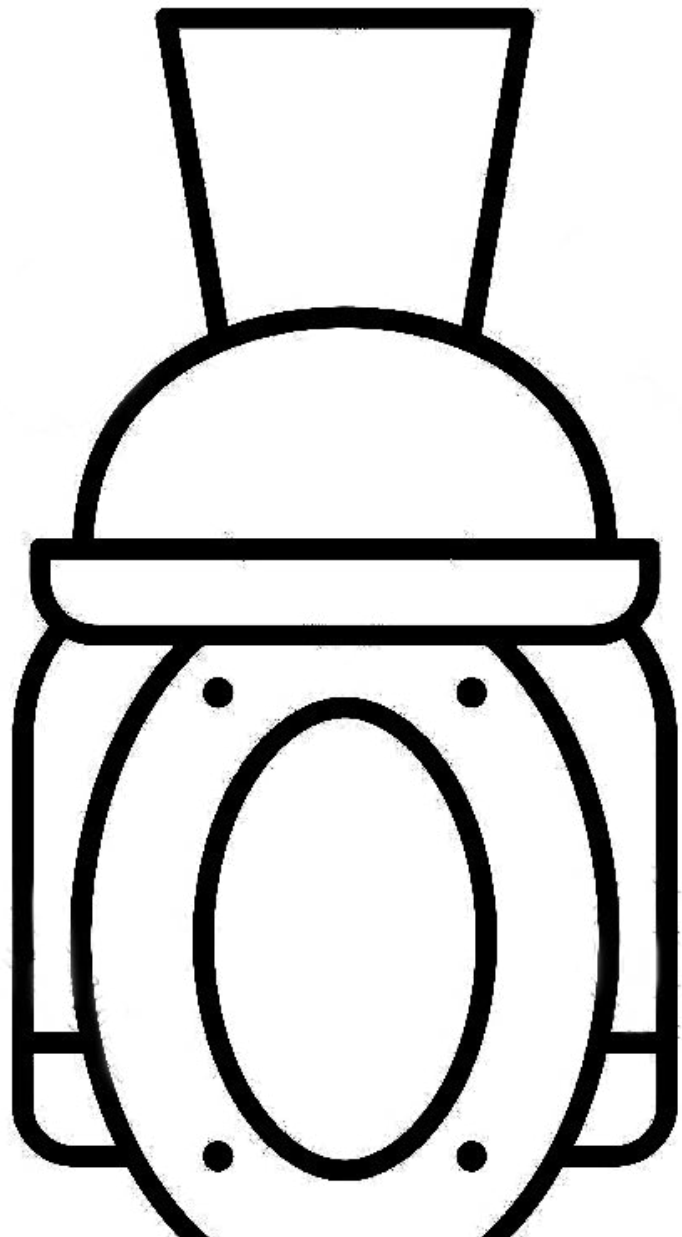
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THE TOILET SEAT

By Ivy S. Chiworeka



What is a toilet seat, one might ask? Well, I will leave you to answer that after reading this.


When you cry, does your pillow wipe the sorrows away? No. Let me not spoil this for you.

Every day I get to meet different ethnicities, black, white and mixed. It's something I have always wanted to be, being a famous person. Well, without me, a lot of people will suffer. They depend on me but in some rural areas, they only hear of me; they only know my ancestors.

Being white-skinned is a privilege to me. I never get pimples or dark spots. My life is not easy at all. I get to carry everyone's burden, and my role is to take it and erase it. It's not everyone who can tolerate me or look after me. Some see me like a QUEEN and a KING, and some as a cleaner itself. I have feelings too, but they are nothing. It's like I am obliged to suffer for other people. No one kisses me, yet I need love too. I don't know if my lips are dirty that much. Why is it some people pretend to love you when they don't mean it? Actions speak louder, some use me when they want to refresh, some when they are sick and need a helper, but there was one who didn't use me; she gave me love differently. She hugged me and kept crying to me. She said, "He used us but am going to look after us, my baby," someone talking from the heart, WOW. Lovely, she is going to look after me.

If you need me, then treat me nice. Stop making me an option when I am the only one. Stop gas lighting me and treat me whole as I deserve. Love me like I want to be. When you come to me, I treat you so nice and let you lead because I respect you. It does matter that I am a toilet seat; please don't use your legs to stand on me; I am designed to be sat on.


The Jewel That Choked Me



*I saw her in
her truth, naked with anklets made
of soft lies and small shards of anger. She
tripped me out of my way and swooped me into the
disaster that was her arms. Her embrace was warm and
her squeeze was just about suffocating. Blind was I to the
effect of a fire that creeps on you in the name of warmth
till it furiously scorches you like a sacrificial offering. I was
another statistic to the mousetrap that was her heart. Who
knew with cheese came the hungry wrath of a spring and the
jaws of the trap? I still wince at my cluelessness, unable
to pick the scent of peril that sat on her clothes.*

Sincerely Craig

Dear Craig



*As I was going through your letter a lot
of things came clear to me. Our love was never
perfect but moreover we were always expecting better.
For the first time after reading this letter I forgave myself
for the pain I put myself through, I feel free at least. I no
longer have to dress good for you anymore, all those clothes
were for you not me, I am goofy not classic. After all this I
realised we were never meant for each other, I now open
my heart to freedom. Within our separate ways I will
always put myself first and forgive myself. From
today onwards I finally found peace from
your letter after all we both felt
the same way.*

Yours only



This Evening - Saved

On this particular evening your name didn't burn through the fabric of words that sheathed my heart. I didn't have the strength to look for you in my gallery nor check if you had put up a new picture on your social media. I felt less of you and less for you. I didn't miss you. I simply was who I had been before you opened the doors of my heart. The shackles of your absence lay on the other side of the bed, but no longer attached to my feet. Our memories hurt less and the residues of your existence felt weightless. After months I had found happiness, without you.

Sincerely Craig

Tell the truth!

I initially wanted you to bask in the glory of people's sympathy. I went quiet on your first write-up. Guess why. Because that's so you, you will never change. You were seeking empathy with empty phrases. Empty like the promises you made to me. How dare you accuse me of things I never were? Tell them, Craig, whose warmth did you embrace in your tribulations? How could I not be angry at your foolishness? I sacrificed myself for you! I was told your scent too was dangerous, yet I chose to be hypnotized. Aren't you the mouse trap? Now, don't lie! For once, just be honest!

-Millicent



MEET THE ARTIST

Produced by Grace Murenje and Kelvin T. Tsoka



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LONELINESS

By Grace Murenje

Every day I wake up in my bed with 'loneliness' as my roommate. Every morning there is a great depression hovering in my room. Sometimes I wonder if it's a bespoke situation or if everyone experiences that too. I wish I could discuss this with my friends but with the reputation of being talkative, who would believe me? What they don't know is talking is a way of escaping from the horror in my mind. They say the most talkative person is the most lonely person in the group.

Most people are living like this. If you are one of those people, you need to know that you are not alone. Most people are afraid to talk about it because of different reasons. Statistically, 264 million people are affected by depression, mostly caused by what people call 'loneliness'. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide. Close to 800 000 people die due to suicide every year. Hence, there is a need to address this issue before we lose some of our loved ones, including you.

Loneliness is seen as a state of sadness that is caused by a lack of friends or companions. We were trained to think that you need a company for you to be happy. Of course, a company can contribute to your happiness, but what happens when you don't have one? Are you now entitled to sadness? Of course not. The truth is we are never alone, even those moments when you are in your bed.

Ever heard the phrase, 'I was alone with my thoughts.' Already the person has mentioned two characters, hence my theory that you are never really alone. There is always that invisible person with you. The problem that most people have is that they haven't learnt to interact with him. Your mind can provide you with the best company provided you know how to use it well.

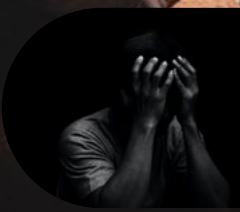
If only you would learn to communicate with your inner self (your mind), you will discover that loneliness is a thing of the past. We are always unconsciously communicating





with it, but it's always a depressing conversation. Negative thoughts will always end up manifesting as depression. The mind cannot differentiate between the past, present and the future. For example, have you ever thought of your close friend or your family member dying? You start imagining their funeral and how your world will be like without them. At that moment, you will be sad. You will even start crying even though it has not happened. Now let's flip the situation. You imagine yourself driving your dream car, working your dream job and living in the best house there is. Since the brain can not know if it's a lie or not, it will make you feel like you are living a luxurious life.

Loneliness mainly happens not because of lack of friends but poor mind management. You are first your friend before you meet another human being. Whenever you don't have anyone to hang around with, your mind is always there to take you through the wildest adventures. The best part is, you can be anywhere in the world and feel like you are already there.



About 800 000 people die due to suicide every year.
Let's address the Issue and Save lives.

Precious JESUS

By Ropafadzo K. Banda

There is not a single soul in whom Christ is not interested in. Each soul cost Him the price of His blood when we couldn't pay the price. He covered for us all—what a marvellous king we have. You are a beautiful, precious, blessed child of God. In your life, is Jesus preeminent or merely prominent?

Jesus was rejected by men but chosen by God. The rejection of men is meaningless if God's favour is upon you. One might ask why I have chosen to give this article the title '**Precious JESUS**', well it's because Jesus loved me when I couldn't love myself. I have never been loved like I am right now; in fact, I couldn't see His love over me up and until He showed me love in different ways I couldn't even imagine. Whenever the Name of Jesus is applied, there is always victory despite what you're going through right now.

Reader, you are worthy of being loved not because of your attributes or traits but because of how precious you are to God, and that is why He gave you His begotten Son to die for you. God has chosen you to make a blessing to men, not a curse. Don't blame your situation, don't be discouraged, wait and hold onto God! Everything has a reason and a season. God has given you the serenity to accept the things you cannot change, the

things you are and the wisdom to know the difference. "For by these, he has granted to us, His precious and magnificent promises, partakers of divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the

world by lust." (2Peter 1:4). All the works of God proceed slowly and in pain, but then, their roots are the studier and their flowering the lovelier.

This whole life that we live is





all about Jesus, and He rejoices whenever you appreciate what He has done for you. Learn to appreciate every single blessing that God has given you in your life because someone out there needs that. Be it small or big, appreciate; that's how He blesses you with

learn to wait on the Lord. He blesses those who wait. Plead the blood of Jesus in every area of your life. His blood never loses its power; to Him, everything we deem impossible is possible. Nothing is too hard or too heavy for Him to handle. Just think of that situation that broke you down. Even now, you still ask yourself how you survived that period; it's an assurance that Jesus loves you no matter what. He stood by you then, and He will not forsake you now, for you are chosen. Out of trials, God brings redemption, so be content in every circumstance.

He who fights with the precious blood of Jesus fights with a weapon that knows no defeat. With Jesus Christ, you are victorious. Cry no more; that situation is just temporary in your life, have faith, and believe that He paid the debt for you on the cross. All you need to do is be grateful for who you are, what you have and everything God has given you. Jesus is forever enough and more than enough for you. Be glad that the freedom that Jesus gave you wasn't based on what you have done, but by His mercy and unconditional love. There are so many things we need to adore Jesus for. Even the gift of life is something that we must always thank him for. He does not resign on your life but resounds it, and the victory is yours because the battle is for Jesus.

more.
Spread
love ev-
erywhere
you go as
Christ does in
our lives. Let Christ
be seen in you.

No matter what you have been through in any aspect of your life,

Let us all fix our eyes on JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our Faith. Jesus replied, "You don't understand it, now what I am doing, but some day You will." John 13;7.



STRANGE LOVE

Release date:

25 March 2021

Genre:

Romance

Produced by:

Sunjoy Waddhwa under Sphere Origins

Airing on:

Star life, 18:00hrs everyday

Cast:

Avinash Sachdev
as Shlok Agnihotri

Shrenu Parikh
as Aastha Agnihotri

Manish Wadhwa
as Niranjan Agnihotri

Geetanjali Tikekar
as Anjali Agnihotri

I'm a huge Indian Drama fan. Recently I've been following up on Starlife, and I'm just so in love with 'Strange love'. It's filled with emotions and real life incidents. As the title says, it's indeed strange how two people fall in love despite the hatred and day to day life happenings.

STRANGE LOVE is about an arrogant businessman (Shlok) riddled with his past experiences and a cheerful, bubbly woman (Aastha). Shlok fakes love for Aastha after he thinks Aastha insulted him and his family publicly when she exposed Shlok's gender inequality during the award occasion when he suspended two boys after cheating but expelled the girl. So he decides to take revenge. Shlok also happens to be Aastha's boss.

On Anjali & Niranjan (Shlok's parents) jubilee anniversary, Shlok announces that he would like to marry Aastha, which leaves everyone astonished, including Aastha. Aastha agrees to the marriage but her mother, Kalindi, is worried. After the pretence wedding, Shlok shows his true intentions to Aastha, but he threatens that should she open her mouth, he would frame his father in law and get him arrested.

A honeymoon is organised for the newlyweds, and their excuses do not work in cancelling it. On their way, Aastha runs away but gets lost in a tropical forest. Shlok goes on a hunt to find his wife, and they spend the honeymoon in the forest trying to get out. Aastha learns that

his father was arrested and gets mad at her husband, but he tries to prove himself innocent. Out of anger and a disheartened heart, Aastha reveals that Shlok married her for his selfish reasons. Kalindi, Aastha's mother, tells her daughter to file for divorce, but the court tells her to stay with Shlok for 24 weeks.

Aastha learns the truth about her husband's past and that Shlok's mother, Anjali, was innocent in the separation of Shlok and Swati. She is also shocked to learn that her father in law is a demon in God's skin. Mr Niranjan was the root cause of Swati and his son's breakup, hence Shlok's heartbreak, arrogance and hatred he has for women.

Aastha decides to bring back the old Shlok who valued relationships more than business, but during the course, she falls in love with him and confesses her love to him. Aditi, Swati's sister, comes into the Agnihotri house as an imposter with the motive of killing Aastha so that Shlok suffers as she believed he was the reason for her sister's health deterioration. Her plans did not work as the good and love always triumphs. Shlok gets to see Swati after so many years and is surprised, but she suddenly dies.

Shlok realises he is genuinely in love with Aastha and makes his feelings known. In the 6th month, they renew their vows instead of divorcing. Shlok's sister, Jyoti, finally elopes from her anti-feminist inlaws, who want her to abort her 3rd pregnancy



of a female child. On her way home, she meets Siddhart, Aastha's cousin. Sidd falls for Jyoti.

Aastha gets Abhay, Jyoti's husband, arrested. Aastha's investigative nature helps her find out that her father in law has been using his wife Anjali to fulfil his evil desires. She promises her mother-in-law that she'll clear the reputation of her being bad people, which is not true and expose Mr Agnihotri. Jyoti realises her mother's sweet loving side. Siddhart and Jyoti get married.

As Aastha tries to expose her father inlaw's evil intentions, Shlok does not buy it. Niranjana creates misunderstandings between the couple so that his truth isn't revealed. Later Shlok learns the truth, and he apologises to his mother for disowning her. Shlok, Aastha and Anjali leave the mansion to live a simple life. They start earning through a food truck. Niranjana loses all his property and regrets as he goes trying to locate his family. They reunite in a small house as they work together to get all their assets back from Indrajeet Sakar.

In the process, Anjali, Shlok and Aastha get involved in an accident. Shlok is in a coma, Aastha loses her memory, but Anjali loses her life.

Shlok wakes up from the coma and learns that Aastha is missing. He desperately looks for the love of his life only to find out that Mr Indrajeet took advantage of Aastha's condition and made her believe he was her husband before she lost her memory. Kalindi and Shlok help Aastha regain her memory. Indrajeet Sakar is arrested. Shlok and Aastha adopt Sakar's children and live happily.

A gloved hand holding a pipette tip over a multi-well plate. The background is dark and out of focus, showing laboratory equipment.

TODAY ON THE NEXT PANDEMIC

By MaliQ Honesty Quallaz Nyasha

We are one failed experiment away from extinction, hypothetical: survival is entirely dependent on the magnitude of the experiment, at least scientifically speaking.

If covid-19 is to be taken seriously as a whistleblower, we are not ready for the next pandemic. How am I certain, as long as we have Head Of States who will prosecute a whistleblower, then we are going nowhere and still on that Head of States mess, you can't be in support of what you don't know. When this novel coronavirus started, Trump was in support of his fellow comrade from the Republic of China, Xi, but then as the situation began to intensify, he distanced himself from how affectionate he was at first, began to panic and the old damage control move, blame his "pal" for not giving enough information, wait what.

To back up my first statement, the reason why I said "scientifically speaking" is because of the talks of end days being near, but I want you, dear reader,

to understand me, science is not the enemy of religion, and the opposite is also true. But as long as we will parade these things as enemies, we will forever find ourselves at loggerheads with each other.

Realistically speaking, the novel coronavirus has quite an impressive run; the way it spreads is remarkable. You can't stop but wonder what would've happened if it didn't die a minute after the host body died and had the endurance that cholera has and the killing power of, say, Ebola. I will give you time to imagine how catastrophic this would've been.

So what I am saying is these pandemics are failed experiments. As long as we will continue having such, we are more at risk of extinction than we thought. Since we are already in the end days, well Armageddon will be that pandemic that will wipe out existence as we know it.

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THE GREAT MAMA

When I received the theme for this month, I was so excited for the theme enables writers to display their creativeness. As much as I can come up with a piece that is most likely to be fictitious, I decided to dedicate this to my grandma.

Dear Grandma

We live with the assumption that we still have more time with our loved ones, and that's what I did with you. From my childhood, I looked up to you and every child in our family passed by your upbringing; some are now married, some well-educated. I can't speak for them, but I am who I am today because of you. I remember me and my cousins had names that you only called for every mistake we made. You taught us to be competitive, and I believe it's the reason for our successes.

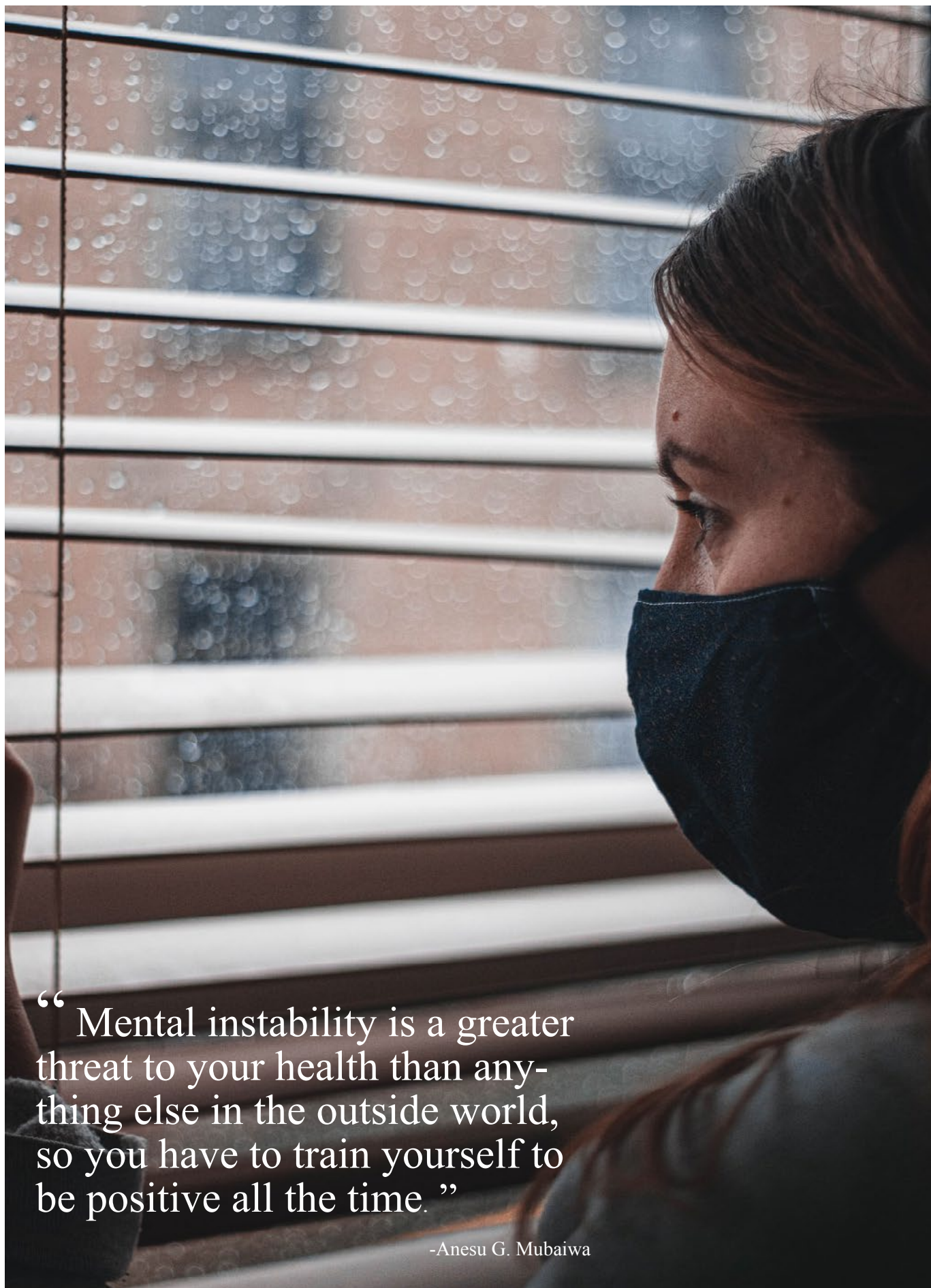
Your teachings to value one another, respect, being humble regardless of the successes will take our family far. Though you are no longer with us, we celebrate your life every day with all the jokes, the guidance and how you consoled us whenever life threw curveballs at us. Your advice on my wedding will keep me going. I know that getting such wise words from a woman we all consider **THE GREAT MAMA** in our family was a blessing that I will hold on to for the rest of my life. You might not have been famous to the world. Still, to us, you were everything and a hero who left behind a legacy of dignity, self-respect and all the teachings that will allow us to be valued.

I now know that one does not need to be known by everyone to be considered a hero because in my heart you are my number one hero just by looking at everyone that you taught life values.

May your beautiful soul continue to rest in peace. I love you and thank you.

Your granddaughter

HAZEL MASEKO



“Mental instability is a greater threat to your health than anything else in the outside world, so you have to train yourself to be positive all the time.”

-Anesu G. Mubaiwa

MY QUARANTINE EXPERIENCE

By Anesu G. Mubaiwa

Ever stayed alone for a long time till you start talking to yourself. Imagine trying to have a conversation with yourself and also having to maintain social distance. I had to figure out a way to distance myself from myself. As I write this article now, the funny thing is that the symptoms are starting to seem a lot like bipolar syndrome. Those 2 weeks put my mental and physical health at great risk.

Over the past year, statistics have shown that depression has risen by 46% in middle-aged people due to the pandemic. Furthermore, suicidal rates have escalated to an alarming 26% in geriatric patients both at home and in care facilities. In this situation, it is not the virus itself affecting lives but the lockdowns and quarantines. Not only is it frustrating to be locked down and deprived of the freedom you rightly need as a human being, but it is also against human nature. People do not like to be confined in the same space over and over again. Our active minds want to explore, meet people, and have experience as we interact with the outside world. I am telling you all these things so that you can try to understand the state of turmoil that my mind was in during quarantine.

When I got quarantined, I did not get a heads up or anything, I just woke up one Saturday morning, and the main entrance door of my apartment was locked. No message, note, or anything, just a breakfast food package at the door. As somebody raised in Africa, definitely I was not going to eat food that just appeared on my doorstep. My mother clearly explained to me that you might wake up a madman or a leper. As a result of my first day of the quarantine, I was a locked-down hungry man, and I think you know what they say about hungry men. It was only later in the evening after deep introspection and critical thinking that I decided to let myself eat this food. Around that time, there was now break-

fast, lunch, and supper at the door. Honestly, this made me feel a little bit more secure because I figured no witch would love enough to give you all three meals of the day. Unfortunately, this good feeling was short-lived because the food was horrible. I started to feel like I was in prison where you eat to survive.

My second day was worse because, at that time, I now understood that I was quarantined. I figured somebody had tested positive in our student hostel. You know when you hear about the pandemic from a distance, it may be a little difficult for you to comprehend the reality of the situation. When it happens in your vicinity, that's when you begin to think about the situation. Anxiety starts to creep in like a lion ambushing an antelope for the kill. Depressing thoughts would be rampaging your mind, magnifying all the bad news you heard over the media. It is at this time that the walls of your room seem to be drawing closer to you by the day. Your appetite and bowel movements start to fluctuate uncontrollably, and your sleeping circle changes to that of a haunted owl. When you get into situations like this, you have to be strong and positive. Mental instability is a greater threat to your health than anything else in the outside world, so you have to train yourself to be positive all the time.

I am generally a positive person, and I think that helped me a lot when I was quarantined. Sometimes in life, all we need to do is to keep going and not give up. Hold on to that small glimmer of hope you have inside of you, and at the end of the day, you realize that the situation you were in was not that bad. In some states, the covid 19 recovery rate is above 90%, and you can see it's not that bad. After two weeks, everything went back to normal, and everybody was healthy actually. All the people that had tested positive recovered, and that was great news.

PUSHING A PENCIL BY THE SPINE

By Trevor Mukarati

A little chance
around the time
Twelve hours multiplied by two
It takes time to repair a clock
proving that it takes time

Every time I blink
I miss something
I wanted to be devoted
For now I'm dedicated
but I know it takes time

It may rhyme
and you feel like it's fine
You take a glass and pour some wine
every second count
Don't lose yourself at the edge
We still need the young age
to swerve and make
new curves at the end of the road
Boundaries are beginning lines for innovative minds.

I might write some things I never understand
Just like a candle provides light but still have a shadow of
its own
I feel nervous about this
yet they say I'm the man
I have the nerve

It's about pushing a pencil by the spine
on a limited count of time
Two letters joined with one statement
State the mind
Is it meant to be understood?
I stood up to be seen!
That's the understatement of not being above the wave
It's a purge
let's include it on the page
One finger can erase the work of a round clock

yet one finger can't balance the pencil on the page
Common wisdom
to live by the concept of co-operation
I operate slow
with an idle mind
It takes time
and it's only a matter of time
before you hear them saying time is money
yet we have not even a second in the volt
Dead before you are old
Cold before you are told
But you were bold to last for a few
and a couple of times before your time lapsed

Pushing a pencil by the spine
it was easier when I used a finger on the ground
and I found my identity
inscribed on the earth
First lessons to dominate
and claim recognition on the land
it's wisdom driven knowledge
I guess everyone can relate

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