





Atoto Atoro

Memoirs of Nnalolile Yvi

## NNALOLILE EAST AFRICAN STORIES

We look, we listen, most importantly  
we learn something new with you  
from the art and memoirs of the  
Atoto Atori. Karibu Nyumbani Kwetu,  
Nnalolile Yvi.

Notes from the Underground  
June/ July/ August 2023

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In response to Fyodor Dostoevsky



### *Notes from the Underground*

Dearest Dostoevsky

Nine and twenty years is so much pressure on an individual.

The third decade so often indicates a human's potential and ability to serve the utmost goal. First car, successful job, tight circle of friends, grownup kids, a loving husband, et cetra seem ecstatic amongst my peers.

On the contrary, like any other girl named Ivy, I had no plans nor showed any signs that I was achieving any. The most expensive thing in my possession was my room, which was filled with excess building material from the construction of my Stepmother's house (and a couple of personal things I want to rid of my life.)

Well, even so, I had no hands in building her new home; her children did. I find no pride in this, but I humbly console my bitterness that the house stands on my father's land. A father always provides for his kids, and being an unmarried daughter enjoys this right as a grownup woman with no shame. In the eyes of the public, the community and sometimes members of my extended Family and friends, and of course you, I am an outright spoilt kid who would never, if not forced, leave the nest.

It is a habit for most mothers, if not all, to push their birds out of the nest and in their downfall, they all expect that, in fear of death, to simply learn how to fly. At least it was what my birth mother, I like to justify her actions, not that I approve, had cooped up for my forced success, but like any of my many blessings, which she felt were a curse, she simply left her paradise and settled in another nest. My Stepmother's house, my father's home. Before I left, I had said my goodbyes, It was sad that Grandma Angela died, but I met all of them, all my maternal cousins and childhood friends. I would never make any more, I had realized. I was grateful that I met all of them and I had been in my best when when we lived together. For some, we took pictures, and others tried effortlessly to make new memories, but they weren't as pleasant as those we had made as kids; I needed to grow up. I needed to fly but instead fled, no other nest.

"Where there is growth, be patient, for great oaks from little acorns grow," I insisted; some flowers bloom just before midnight, I had found out. Others at noon and others very early in the morning but wilted a little much earlier; maybe I bloomed quite early or... in their opinion, yet to bloom, very late. Honestly, in rational speaking, let us all say the whole world should agree, what should a 29-year-old be doing to achieve self-actualization?

She did not expect it. In fact, my mother proved to her Family that I indeed was nuts and like any other ivy without ludicrous limits, my doom would be, as she had mentioned, a life without any success or anything to be proud of, just like my late uncle- may his soul rest in peace, Uncle Rampard. Please do not ask me why he

was named so because the story might pop up that I am just like he, and as his name suggested, mine was a child full of stories. Grandma stories.

Mvua disagreed; she had studied me long enough in the comfort of her home, reading books and occasionally emerging from the sea, mainly in the last quarter towards her birthday, ready to play. I was willing to play; I mean, Osama -my Palestine friend from Israel, a senior friend of mine was going to sponsor my Yvisensual health and wellness studies, which included Pregnancy emergencies for new families. Her home provided a perfect therapy inspiration. Asante kwa kazi!

“Bipolar was not a condition, not multiple personal character disorder – a thing. It is something they create to get by.” I knew they were talking about me, maybe Kanye-Kaye from the West.

“Don’t you think she should have invited you to her wedding?” my mother asked. I wasn’t sure. I secretly got married and did not invite anyone to mine.

Her Family noted, “Don’t you think she is wearing short skirts around your husband.” I was just saying my goodbyes. I wanted to see them one last time, like the one about to leave Omelas, ready to go to their beautiful city, their home town and about to walk into the dark.

It hurt that she would say vile things, my mother, rather than, in my spoilt child’s ludicrous opinion, find beautiful things to think of my life, positive words, at the very least, inspire me. We work for our mothers and their better lives, but mine stripped me of this obligation. She deserved none of it and had worst forgotten the many times I had made her proud. It was true; the mind, like any files and data, can fail. Disappeared memories. I would never be the Ivy she wanted, and like any other child, I took it with a big spoon. She had given the world her best and she had received a barbie doll in return.

“Medicine helps, “Daktari said. Healthy you is always better.

Like any other spoilt little brat, I let her other offspring work for their mother’s dreams. Let them toil for the happiness of their mother. I would cast out myself from a nest that would torment me, weep and defile her dwellings like Lucifer, kill her, mourn her and force my mind to forget her like an orphan. A lot were doing just fine.

Psalms 127, “he provides them in their sleep.” I recited while I cried, trying to remove her memories from my mind. Mother watched, from a distance, not sure how she would help but provide a lovely room that belonged to her daughter, where Yvi wrote notes and stories that felt more like a fictitious character in a bad story. One that people would not wish to read, so I did not write anything about her, but in secret codes, rhythm and poetry.

God must have known, and my Stepmother, a dark elderly but surprisingly strong with a soft spot for-and a lover of humans, took me in, and my father holds no shame in the spoilt child I am. He tries, as I will, to keep me out of any attention and conversation that I did not court. Not that I do not like attention; in fact, I would traumatize anyone at will and break the internet out of nought or boredom. Still, at nine and twenty, I want something that most humans detest. I have always been this way, selfish, thickheaded, and self-righteous, with a mind only on what I intend to do. In fact, I would not do the dishes out of obligation but will or because they bother me, their well-being to mine, like any other, will always come second.

I do things with a perfectionist mind. I like to watch people’s amusement, admiration and disbelief when I’m done with something, a task, an achievement, a character or a virtue that would simply escape anyone’s imagination of the possibility that I did. My untie Victorine decided that I must take her name as of twelve years of age. You, too, may not believe it is an Ivy thing that humans will not

understand, except for the simple roles of any female in the East African community:

Be a good girl, virtuous woman, wife or mother.

In that order.

In this, I have tried and effortlessly failed.

At one point, to make a good housewife from constant advice and repeated virtues of a good housewife from my Stepmother and Family, mother and relatives, friends and strangers, I ultimately did the opposite. No one wants a lazy, dirty woman with bad morals as a wife. I had no intention of correcting myself unless (the only time I will write back to **Fyodor Dostoevsky's Notes From Underground**).

I had stopped going to church to avoid the constant belief that this simple routine socialization was anything but in search of a husband. I pray, as promised, that I am baptized in the spirit rather than in water. For then, I would have to conform to the ways of the church's men, which meant curving Ivy into a submissive reformed woman any man would want for a family, slave to his desires. A bachelor would easily propose to me, but as far as this absurd culture would go, for me, I would say.

I am not looking to be a role model to any of the Family's younger members either. I suppose they are warned not to be like Yvi in their secret talks and intimate conversations. I could sense this from the way they would look at me sometimes. From their constant trials to treat me just as human after they learn from the vile of YviX: The other side of the world. Nevertheless, I would not flinch. With no shame, I would continue with my bad habits until I felt satisfied that I was desensitized. It would bother them that I remained Yvi. That somehow, one day, I

would die and with all the good looks, the creative mind, the soft life, and Family: vanity. And they would choose to be different, leaving more room for me and my obscure ideas, build an empire of my wildings, unbothered, unmarried, doing something in my room like the world somehow depended solely on my existence.

In my world, it does.

Not that it did not matter to me; I clearly had, at one point in my meaningless life, coddled in my biological feminine body like any other woman, the intention of getting married. However, I had simply realized it was out of obligation, to the greater society, rather than personal will, and so, I had blown up, sometimes with a pinch of regret; these opportunities, uncountable times and my tickling clock were finally hitting the fourth decade, yet still, I am in no hurry to get engaged to anyone. And when a relationship would mature to what people feared to be the next stage, something would come up. The spirit of the unmarried rested upon me, and I had come to accept that with no shame. Sometimes, I secretly smile in the dark, just before sleep, that I had achieved this uncalled-for freedom alone. The privilege of being unmarried at nine and twenty, spending my lazy days in my father's house with no substantial work or income.

Humans have ceased pushing me for both. Just like marriage. They have finished calling me for pointless talks and stopped inviting me for their amusement. They have stopped courting my attention nor pretended to have valuable resources that would benefit my well-being. They have all ceased pushing for friendship or prospects of breeding a family. They are no longer offering me excessive meals and drugs or inviting me for career exposure. I once believed that their hearts were convicted in my sole success. Still, now, they are not even sure what career would befit me as I clearly have made it known that I am in no hurry to get the top too: no intentions or patience to break my bones and spirit to be acceptable as a standard human being of class. It disgusts them that I could freely navigate my life through their intimate social courses without breaking a sweat and still choosing my simple, not so pleasing to them lifestyle.

I like the simple countryside where I eat what I grow and make a stew of what I bred on the farm. If that is not a lifestyle they do not wish to live, it is a career they all want to escape in their own households. I am in no hurry to build a job too. What motive would I have? I have no children to cater for. No bills and expenses to pay. I'm grateful to the lower Maslow of needs; a step is better, they say. No expectations to meet at the age of nine or twenty. I have no substantial friends to impress and certainly not looking for financial freedom that would increase my pleasantness to marry or make new friends and social circles. I mean, who would even marry me? Anyone that hasn't experienced the YviX, I would say, and the moment, out of boredom and sheer idleness of nought, I would slowly expose him to the vile side of Yvi and, like any other sensible man, so they like to think, would disappear like the vanishing elephant from the chains of my life. Why I do so, I'm not sure.

I may have made the decision not to get married when I grew up afterall.

Now that I'm grown, I secretly laugh about these scenarios. Like any July that would finally die, I'm pretty uncertain what my fourth decade has for me. Quite anxious, I must say, but I have a grown belief, certainly with conviction, that I have achieved what I have always wanted, experienced all my desires and lived the life I had wished for myself. I hold the same conviction when I read Ben Carson's books. All of them. Unlike every young reader that wanted to be as great as the medic to save lives as though they had control over it (I respect them nevertheless), my intentions were very different from what my mother wanted for her young dreamless child.

I liked the same convictions about the writer of The Art of War and Seduction: the desire to get under people's skin and understand people's minds with a mastery that no one could foretell. I experienced the same conviction as Steve Harvey in his books: more like my faith in the Holy book to guide the lost souls and the Kenyan government changing set of Laws to tame her savage civilians.

I, too, wanted to be a great writer; I just did not know how. Still, the strange life I have experienced so far was a good start for a biography. Still, more of a fiction writer whose imagination would someday be code that men would admire and women instil in their children, not of this generation, but decades after my death, for *oops, babies*.

Yours Faithfully,

Atoto Atori





Oops Babies

## Oops Babies

**Now that we are Two!**

The elephant vanishes and the cat too.

But an oops baby doesn't want an oops baby just to make it through!

However, like any other good whore-retirement plan, H. had suggested an oops baby for my family, for like any other baby mama, it shouldn't trouble me at all.

*"She was raised by one,"* so they all said. My family virtues were broken as far as the jury could decide I did not deserve to get married to a man, any sort of man.

*"Such a loss,"* they added; she could have bagged for more, for *"a second, it was not bad at all."*

But like Aries, I could win, yes, but not have it all. How about third, was that too, typical for you, that I picked a clover and only came in four leaflets, sometimes for my friends, but mostly when I was in the bathroom alone? Crying. Dancing. Trying to take the pain away?

And the cloud people, inhabitants of the Sky, watched the underground.

*"Hello, Stranger,"* one note read,

*"I received your Ivy, which she grows, now that we are too.*

*First, I wasn't going to hunt and kill anything that wasn't You,  
and I was not about any mask day and night too.*

*My true nature scared them, thunder and bolts, so frightening You.*

a note from Jack of all trades came through, nothing of whom I knew, so I simply read, through

said one of the gods, definitely not Zeus,

for in the underground, no one wrote to themselves, like animals in the zoos,

An Aries listens on, looking for Yvi's clues.

He was the son of the almighty god and, like his father: Zeus

he would one day be greater than Cronus, *"Times will change,"* he promised

his mother saw his son not a walkthrough

*"Oops baby, you shouldn't have,"* Mother had warned on the second note. He had dared think of killing the Timekeeper of the underground, who could Shop with Yvi on Amazon for Paperback and Kindles. Still, in the underworld, she got them for free, where she reads just notes here and there, for the underworld: Thoughts that weren't that valuable, not even for a penny, unless you knew the way out of the

underground, which she did, for like a robot, her ai, her aim was to tell the exact truth of a moment.

Yvi Read on,

*“But really, I would just buy blank notebooks from Amazon for around 100usd and feel good that I have something expensive or, better yet, books; all we have in the underground is time. My job was simple: to babysit adults and tell stories to children. I hated the crowded men in the bar, filling their glasses and waiting for, he doesn’t matter, to read notes from the underground, as they always read them every day, after the burials of those that had ventured into the underworld, one by one, like everyman, dead.*

*“You can have it once,”* he had said, “when I’m dead...” not that I care,

*“it is a no man’s land,”* another one from the under shouted. Still, it was not Hades and accurate to the words spoken in the underground, it would be worth less than a dime, so *“a penny for my thoughts, shall you,”* I asked for my dues so I could leave him underground.

I was in the underground, and so were they too.

I told him the cost of Yvi, and he did not bother to go through my CV; he had read it, and just when I had arrived in the underground, he had mined an Yvi, which is very strange in the underground. He wanted me to work for him in the underground. He was nine and twenty, a boy with blue eyes and black hair like any brit kid should look like, and I, someone he met in the clouds, was so much different from him: **the ones of the underground where nothing happened** but

*“Eat, sleep, breed. Repeat.”*

*“Don’t you work?”* he asked.

*"I thought you were offering me a job."*

He nodded. *"You can sit in my house and read books; I have lots."*

A picture was attached, *"The uniform was correct",...* but I had no intention of reading books I could not teach in class.

He had a job for me, to come from the clouds, past the Telegram bots of sleeping is the only love.

"I agree, Psalms 127," numbers wouldn't be wrong; he was calculated. I had been watching him, in the underground, he was looking for something. A story, pictures, audio, videos anything the digital beast could feed on; for such an Yvi, one could always grow,

*"Until I'm covered in you."*

He told me it is much cheaper in the underground; he could just access the servers' files and not for even a penny if he wanted, and so cheap is what he was going to be. He had one too many for free, and so he thought, "How about a little venture into the underworld. My world."

But I had watched him, under the Midnight Arltry' s with every moon in his shadows, a bored man with a town, no family with everything and time to play, but Yvi had been away from the clouds for far too long; he wanted to know why.

He played all of Yvi's stupid games, notoriously for free, anonymously. I knew this because, in his mind, I was just selling something he had not yet tasted, and for free, a *"Yvi for you!"*

*"The Catholics won't give me a certificate, and the Christadelphians are fewer by the day."* I had written another, as he removed the other note from his underground,

*"All I want is you."* He insisted as he continued with his notes,

*"Dear Auntie Kaye.*

*I'm a blogger, I tell stories, I had to tell the airport authority about my wear bouts in Nigeria, and three, I was met, by the jury, the ones from Slouching into Bethlehem.*

*Everyone forgot Kimi Kai's Stories, just like Yvi Kaye and Ivykaye: The Dutchess of the River Nile, Nnalolile Yvi...*

*But Auntie, it was worth meeting her, now a movie Reviewer for the African Screenplay, bored as always with a photographer that quit the Convent for his passion, Emmanuel...Ooh, the saints,"*

*"God with us all,"* the underground chorused and crossed their hearts, and as they  
*"Created beads to chant through the long night, 27 times every night when the moon was out, for mercy and peace in the underground, or better yet, back into the sky, but dead men don't walk the earth, a seal had been made, only men could live, but not in the sky, nor in the under, here, only dues are paid."*

*"Mother was going to be on his side, and so, they plotted a plan to castrate him on the white lands and take over the lands the black could live under."* So, they fell from paradise, lost in the underground, wandering the earth below, for in both accounts of the Genesis Story of Creation, the heavens and the earth were created, and never the underground, hades, or a realm where the dead walked.

*"What a paradise lot to get lost in the underground?"* I questioned his notes. *"Isn't it true?"* He asked but

*"Blacks don't crack; we are high like that"* They shed some light on the Blogger's notes, Atoto Atori when she had written to a man. Yet, a stranger in the underground was reading the lost notes, those that should not have resurfaced from the underground, for the fire was to burn, in the agreement, after her death.

Still, Aries had retrieved all the dead men's secrets that were best left underground.

We are not baptized at birth; only after we accept Jesus that he genuinely walks. Our relationship with him is best described as *'still working on it.'* I mean, the Bible is the last thing I will read underground. Still, I instead go through some wild stories and notes that a stranger from the Sky, who sometimes visited the underground, to find out those that wrote notes from the underground to prove that Babel was indeed true. Those in the underground, where a KINGDOM grew, with no one to Rule.

*"Hey Katie Flynn, I'm heading home"* was a perfect gift from the streets as my first book, which I read in the underground. You can find it at Kamusinde Library. Mama Faith was the first to read it, and I was happy to get it back; when I visited again, I stole it away; it only took 6 months to call home.

*"Such a long journey, ai?"* Another he read.

The notes had started like a book novel, *"but only thunder and lightning, frightening you, in the darkness read and sometimes wrote to Auntie, I'm such a bad kid aye!"*

*"The psychiatrist asked him to persuade me to therapy, Auntie they say, I'm Lunatics, the use of marijuana to treat multiple personality disorder is something Wajackoya wrote for consumerism purposes, just like babies Auntie, oops babies. I'm not sure if it is a drug or medicine anymore, but for five shillings, I can escape the pain, be grateful and find hope for another day. I just want to complain, though, Auntie, at least to someone, a bot or a tree would work just the same. I send a copy to the first daughter, and if she doesn't respond, I will send another to the mother tomorrow. I am warning them."* Was another note that was to leave under, but my Yvi-dues remained unpaid.

*"But there were missing copies from the books; word in the underground had it, and they shared it amongst themselves," Aries said,*

*"and that is how they killed him when he was flesh and blood. The dead do not walk. Everyone knew that; they all assumed, except for Hades, that the pure souls could be saved, but oops, babies. Hey, but don't worry, now that we are, too, Writing each other notes in underground."*

The men only visited when they were dead; those that died in their sleep would be in an eternal nightmare or

*"We are all in Wonderland... Lala Land,"*

*"Sleep, Baby," I told the special guest, my first human friend, "she was just a girl but black like you. I told him."*

His name was Aries. He was looking for Hades, a word from the abyss of the sea mentioned that he had the powers to grant anyone back and forth; he had keys, back to the Sky, to the clouds for those that repented on earth for eternal life. Still, if they liked the under dead, they would remain, but on the third day, Jesus walked. Was he the fallen angel that, together with the heavens, had brought down the Kingdom of the Lord God? Aries, like everyone else, the underground is for every man, but

*"We are in a no man's land," the gods agreed.*

*"Down here, we eat, we sleep, we fuck." I told him it was no man's land either in the underground.*

*"In Web 3, no one likes the Black Widow," I reminded him. "Three is a good number for a kill, Aries, God had said, the Goat I'm told, mbuzi, meeee, sindio? You are the sacrifice; send our regards." The underground laid an altar,*

*"what shall we sacrifice today?"* The two men that had accompanied him on his hunt in the underground were now watching, from a distance, Our conversations turning down to personal.

The underground was watching. A verdict from an anonymous jury would come to a judgment.

"Learning about the underground, searching for who held the rights to the throne to the kingdom they wanted to be had so wanted for themselves; Angels from the sky, servants loyal to the clouds." He read on.

They, too, had fallen from the clouds, and the more they died, the more brought with them news and stories, tales of the wild world. The gram could not hold it, for the notes were to be deleted right after everyone read. Still, because some were slower than others fast, Aries, the first of them all, the gods of the Sky, an inhabitant of the clouds, was the first to get his share of the wealth, the great Kingdom, as each of them had a piece, twenty-seven days to rule when the moon came out. The god of war, Aries, had ruled after he had marched on the third day of the sunrise with his soldiers; led by an afro-deity, the goddess of love, passion and desire would find ways to bring with her gifts to procreate the underworld.

*"in a web of three, love was his first charm, together with the goddess of discord, and the wisest of them all."* He concluded and took another note, from the shadows of his coat, notes from the underground.

*"Who are you?"* They all wanted to know.

*"I am now a blogger,"* Atoto Atori wrote on.

*“Professor thinks I’m too high and wild in my thoughts. In his analysis, the researcher pays pennies to learn one or two, but oops, baby! They have nothing on you, so you can only read us the notes for a penny, but I will give you two. I had remembered to use the names they gave me, Antie, in Lugulu, where I was bored, bred but not born in a boarding school, High on my hooves and a modest public figure, where I only sold for my taste, sweet and nothing sour, in exchange for notes from the underground.”*

*“The girls think I’m a con artist, Scarlet the witch, ‘if you get one, burn one.’ is their motto.”* He was reading another I wrote; he enjoyed the women more, gathering closer, sniffing him and trying to find out if they were still human, fresh from the ground. They were the first three that would step out when the gates opened. In simple words,

*“He that repents shall walk free”,* he read much louder as he ended his notes from the underground, but we all simply laughed. He was a sky person who had fallen from the Grace, and his letters were worth nothing much in the underground, just like Yvi.

*“Oops, baby, now we are two.”* I whispered from the under, *“Everything is square and fair, but you don’t die twice; that is every man’s curse in the underground.”* He was just a man underground, and even he, a favourite son, was no special in the underground, but the women liked him nevertheless. All we have is time; the host welcomed them all to the High Rise Lasers from the hills towards Tsavo, where an elephant vanished, but had there been other notes in the underground? One that did not resemble any from the Library of Babel.

The Library of Babel, where the first book was drawn, from the 24, tried to explain instead take my mind off the 12th floor of the new Highrise, not as old as the previous one, not anything like the one from the slums, which was more familiar to what Ivy would experience, first when she had gotten married, sort of, in the

Highrise, a high too class, farther away from the ground: the underground, where the dead do not wake but live like bots, working overtime, trying to get out for a bit of shine with the cloud people, at the top of the Highrise. I had decided that the first would be the last, notes from the underground that ended quite suddenly, from the Russian man and his house, his family and friends, his human companion that quickly disappeared back to the underground, maybe back to the real world with the medic, who knows, these notes, could be fictitious. In the underworld, we hold no man for his words.

So often, we want more; the sun and the light, the happiness that could last.

Men were a lucky lot, the women much prettier when they walked in the light, but: under on the ground, no one cares who you are or what you can do; if you have no pennies that can bribe the beasts to let you out at night, whenever the moon was out, and the daughters out to play, too! The son had the freedom; word on the ground had it that only he could live, both in the underworld and in the heavens, but only in the Kingdom where we could play, when the son was not watching, but only through the eyes of his mother: the moon. Notes from the underground to get us through the night. The dark knight had finally arrived in the underground, and like any other who had a Yvi to trade, he was determined to get all the 666 of them, as they had been marked by the beast.

“I liked the land more, the pretty girls and their simple lives. The beautiful girls are similar to those bred in The Grand Eben Park, nothing like the underground. It was musty; the man behind you is always staring all along; I guess they are not with you.” I mentioned as I scrolled through the instant telegram. It did not take days or weeks to find anything new in the underground,

“Internet of Things”, he replies, sending a wild secret eagle eye behind him.

*"Don't look!"* I warned, but he did not believe my word. He was far an angel, and I had to bow at his presence, so the god Aries might have thought, but before he could, I flashed him a mirror and one of his men, salt.

*"Under the ground, the dead had only one code: it is a no man's land."*

I scrolled through her pictures, and I got what they meant. The bar was with laughs again, desire, passion and newly found love in an image whose origins would turn out to be a breed between some tribes in Africa. She loved dogs just like Ivy, and if I had not, in fact, met her in Highrise, making her hair in the salon, she too could be, anyone in the underground, but she was also none of my business; Robert had reminded me. But all I had to say before his Berretta paint0 was that the underground was much better. Her

*"Ivy grows, and now we were two!"* when they asked, it was always (a penny for my thoughts), they thought I had said,

*"but there is a lawyer involved, and I don't think I want any personal matters down here, in the underground, without an Yvi,"* I had bargained, as the note suggested.

But then there is Anita, just a little bigger than I and a Nigerian Netflix influencer, whose pictures were still fresh, undisturbed, somewhere in the clouds. She looks precisely, somehow, maybe a bit from far but much alike, only older than me, but not as old as Yvonne Chaka Chaka, whom I claimed, out of sheer pride, that we were related every time someone nagged me with the question of us being twins. They lied, of course, to flatter me, but I could not simply thank them or, much better, keep quiet; I went on and told them about the random genes and mutation.

*"Ni majini tu"*, a female voice in the underground had mentioned. Just a random Genie, I had assumed. Some taught me humility,

*"The sun doesn't look great on you, you look great in the sun "*, an English corrected. I'm not so sure, we are all breeds from somewhere, and answers were

in the ground; dead men do not speak, at least not under the sun, but when the moon was out, I once met one too close to the ground: Those that do not die, Maybe I thought, the sons, if not the first marked man, Cain, some called him Ken.

He ruled the underground and took me weeks, a few words, charm and desires, and gave out to me. You see, Kennedy was liked by many, too. If you were to pick a book from any shelf from the books in the library of Babel, not that I have tried, but in the underground, which I had come to find out, only liked me for my looks, like any other ivy far too many in his room. I had grown from an Oops! Baby, too, in fact, the jury of the underground. Yvi Code.

*"only bored men like you ever visit the under, right? You always have noted that the sky people want, from the clouds, certain notes, private notes."* I pointed out to him.

*"That man there- he thinks he is the King of the underground because he fucks the G.O.A.TS. Clean bitches and calls himself the King, of course, of the underground. The illuminated one who believed to have the third eye. The people in the underground called him the beast, but it was only a penny for me, he had non like Yvi, and now I grow on him."* The stranger added another penny for the cheap man he was; all he got was time in the underground. He was here for a long time.

*"I know you have been eyeing the Netflix Awards,"* I had promised him, a gram maybe. Still, it was nothing less or more than a calculated circular conversation with me. First, to grab my attention and second, to make sure where the dead did not die, stories and tales, as he had collected from above, had followed me under to spend all his last pennies for my thoughts.

Why would the King of the Underground, ki-Guru, request me to write only about him after he wins the Grammy. *"He did not say it in his house but while hungry, high and lost, somewhere in the underground, of the Kibera Slams, right opposite*

*the Highrise, had mentioned. To him, I sold stories, not that I was any good, but for this, his is a short story, and I, too, am tired of the tiktoks on our watch."*

*"What time is it?" I asked a penny for my tickling watch, I had asked of it as a bargain if he bet it would be tickling after my penny for the thoughts, but I would rather watch Nabwile, accurate from his notes, a story I was hoping to keep a close eye on the dos and whatnots if he had any from his dark coats.*

*"Anita Vinter, Anita Babra, Rachel, we more frequently out in the world. Doing something, exploring but nothing more but intriguing experiences from East Africa. In another letter, I wrote about the Elephants. Was it true?" He wanted more, nothing about my friends but something personal. More than a story to run in the theatre of the wild world. A story I had written from the East, from Tsavo Highrise, about an elephant that had vanished in an East national park in Africa. An elephant disappeared, but it was not the first, but I had found it, to where they went, underground, and went for the big old animal.*

*"He is somewhere in the underground," the other man assured. He knew whom I was talking about.*

*"she went for it and, like a cat but had died so many times, they called her Kate," somewhere a whisper was heard.*

*"It Started last November; Come May, they crossed their hearts that the Kingdom should come down to the underground. Yvi was there, and suddenly, in March, the elephant disappeared." He started on a new note.*





*“But still, for a cat to disappear and for an elephant to disappear—those are two different stories.”*

*“Yeah, really. There’s no comparison. Think of the size difference.”*

Once upon a time

The elephant vanished, and the cat died. It didn’t matter, then, when I had told him goodbye, and now that we were under, with my notes too, he had no intentions at all. He had my attention, but he was simply occupied by the big boys

and his big toys and how big they were; he was with the people, the elephant in the room.

After that event, consumerism and the blub for them all, the boys too, men in court, wanted answers from the few books selected for Yvi from the library of Babel, a short story for you.

*"We are not speaking about religion; this is science and fiction, not the one in the Bible."* I cleared my Class. They were a bit older, far older and mature, unlike me. They wanted to dig me from the underground.

*"You all don't wanna talk about it, do you? All men fell, spoke to each other as strangers, and formed a little family away from the codes you had desperately tried to write for yourselves?"* He was picking another argument, nothing similar to the new neighbours of the Highrise.

*"In the clouds, the only valuable gold is data, we mine every day in and at night, and once I met a stranger, in one of my little rooms, in the underground Midnight arltry."* I, too, started on a new note.

*"Well, if you need any information, not on me though, you could ask the bots, and they will give you for free all of the 666 variations of you, all notes from the underground, but..."*

*"I hold the right to them all."* I cut him short and warned him. The scientist mentioned that.

*"I was much, just as you are now, human, god or demon. Man is a good thought; I'm no special, not any less or more than you. I'm with the XY X-chromosomes, similar to you. Any other like my classmates, but much older because I "repeated a class in fear of sitting for the national exams."* He was now reading my thoughts, notes from the underground.

A note from the clouds had read that Wanyama, my classmate, had found a few, if not all, in the world's wild web, a telegram and thought it was cool to invite me to the Highrise. Some wanted stories, others just satisfied that I was a member of the surviving WhatsApp group, which they so loved to add me.

*"I'm bored, so why not!"* I had thought about it. They were happy just to know that I was there, like the Omelas, who did not walk away. They usually met up in town, probably on Fridays. Tom promised to give me a call the next day, which took weeks, only to go through when I was very much sleepy, dreaming about my big elephant that had disappeared but for Jack, a member of the clouds, and not my cousin who fixes electronics, had some mysterious intentions. He was nothing much apart from a librarian that gave me books, not in exchange for a pass to the underground but for the library of Babel. He had chosen for me carefully selected stories meant to be read by me only once I was in the underground.

I did not like the notes. They were stories to be read by men in the bar, not limited to drunk lawyers who could turn black to white. I decided to read the Russian notes later, notes from the underground, for there were pressing issues at hand, the elephant in the room, the cat that died and why You went underground.

The first one, *The Elephant Vanishes*, a Japanese book by Haruki Murakami, is red in colour with an upside-down elephant falling from... Not really... It was just a tiny elephant when it vanished from Tsavo, a Highrise in Ongata Rongai, where all he cooked was pasta, Italian spaghetti, talking to a stranger online about coming to an understanding. At the same time, he left my cat to die. He was here in the underground speaking about the elephant that had vanished, and his answers to the cat that died were vile,

*"Those are two different stories",* he was insisting. In the underground, time was free or cheap, everyone had some on their watch, so I let him introduce himself, trying to unmask one Atoto Atori, *"who went by the name Ivy. And we all sang when they grew, but some were poison."*

He did not pretend to read anymore, from the blank notes he had brought from the underground, one he used to write and keep watch, high from the clouds, to the underground. He pretended to read the particular font that the eye could read, and even if he was killed, no one in our little underground kingdom could read his notes.

*“Everyone had their code in the underground, and he was right; anyone could do anything: a free world, except, well, for Yvi. You could mine for some, and they never ran out, from the ground she had grown up, and the sky people were far her favourite, from the ground where they traded for an Yvi, a penny for anyone’s thoughts.”*



## The Genesis Story

### *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*

*"What is Yvi, and why do you prefer it to Ycix as compared to KES, USD, CAD, SHIKEL.?" he asked; everyone laughed. Maybe he did not know that many underground notes were about you. Your deepest desires. Passion, love and everyday procreation of life. In the third house of Aries, the third, or maybe the first, home of Aphrodite, whose origin was still mysterious whether she was really his father's balls that Poseidon shells had so required life in the Cronus house, or was one of Zeus's daughters, whose mother,*

*"I shall not disclose," those private notes had gone under, and so "a penny for my thoughts if you have non, an Yvi then."*

*"Well, Yvithoughts were strange," he pulled yet another note.*

*"In the Genesis Story of Creation, the 27 days of the moon with the Geminis, the twins, something had happened, something no one expected, let us say..."*

*"We are not talking of those notes, Yvi. We are talking about the Kiguru would fancy the flawless themes as a music artist but, if you were to rate your Yvix, honestly..." he kept quiet, even in the underground, the sky people were always listening.*

*The word was accurate, from the ivy that grew in everyone's home, that it was, in fact, true that sky people, the watchers, the gods, were always watching, be it in Nakuru, lonely in Lagos, trafficked in Riyadh, on a Marsta masters manhunt, drown in Seychelles, dropped in the forest city, wondering where Maha is but Edku sounds right fine, definitely not in Mombasa, the Gotham in Nairobi but if you can walk the ground, maybe Afghanistan. But let us start with Egypt. A penny for my thoughts, and so Yvi grew to be three. The sky people were falling, and the ground people*

*built great tombs underneath them; they, too, could go under, and man was hunting for some scripts, notes from the underground. And so they Mined.*

*He threw four pennies on the floor instead of three, but Yvi did not pick it up; someone had failed to pay their dues at the price of Yvi, and so they*

*“crossed their hearts and swore the truth, to always pay for Yvi, was the first code in the underground. It came for free, love, passion, desires and creation to survive the underground. But Discord was there too, and the mother of wisdom.” I added*  
*He reached out and picked one of kept his extra Yvi.*

*“Rule number two, you cannot pay for the future; all we have is time underground. Taking notes.”* The woman on his direct mail had written in one of the notes. You see, only two notes had chosen rule number two, for then, there were either two people who could be gods, demons, or anything that could be under, and the second one wrote number two, or the twins, each wrote a rule for two, for there was only, in all the underground notes, number one rule and many, as marked by the beast, 666, 69 would be perfect, the yin and the yan. Still, oops, babies were not a boy and just a girl. The underground had learned that sometimes, Yvi actually bloomed in three. The three women that followed the son of a man were not men. Still, women disguised as men followed him, His favorite sun that did not tire walking on the ground, telling stories from both the sky people and those of the underground.

*“Was he from Egypt?” he asked, four pennies you should.*

*“France. Some said India, but Nigeria was a good place to hide. No one could find her there. The country was crowded, and her skin perfectly fit the local’s reborn, the country’s favourite shawls. Still, word had it that the jury was to decide if the shipment was ready, as delivered by the three women to Saudi Arabia, maybe*

*Sweden, or a private Mafia living privately in Malta, the United States was such a mess, and she had allies, childhood allies there. So she simply decided to go back to Kenya.”* The Yvi bot answered for every penny; she could tell the exact truth of a moment.

*If it was true, I “grew, every in their rooms.”*

*“Instead of money, I took the blessings! Most people in the underground do not have pennies. She read that hers, as she recited in Proverbs 127, was provided in her sleep, In her mind, in her dreams and visions of events and before she could realize it, everyone in the underground knew that she could tell the exact moment in time, like a note stamped on a page, in a book, lost in a library, on a higher shelf, maybe hanging, almost falling and getting lost in the universe...”* he went on another note.

*“The requests in the underworld are wild, sick and crazy. I am a no man’s land; everyone lives with their codes. It is in their minds. You could easily Pick a boo or poo. The sky people could not see under, but they could dig under the three tombs in Egypt that aligned the three stars, the three fallen angels in the Geminis; they were neither black nor white; they were both the three of them, the women had fallen for the son and were going with them to the underground. They, too, would die, and the inhabitants of the clear sky people build tombs, thousands, years maybe it was just a story, that I would also one day journey with the Dutchess of the river Nile, Nnalolile Yvi towards the city of the graves of the great gods. Uganda sounds closer, not far from home, so YviX is in the underground, playing his favourite music for Vimeo-“I’m sorry I am blind.” For not a penny, for she had enough of everyone’s thoughts.*

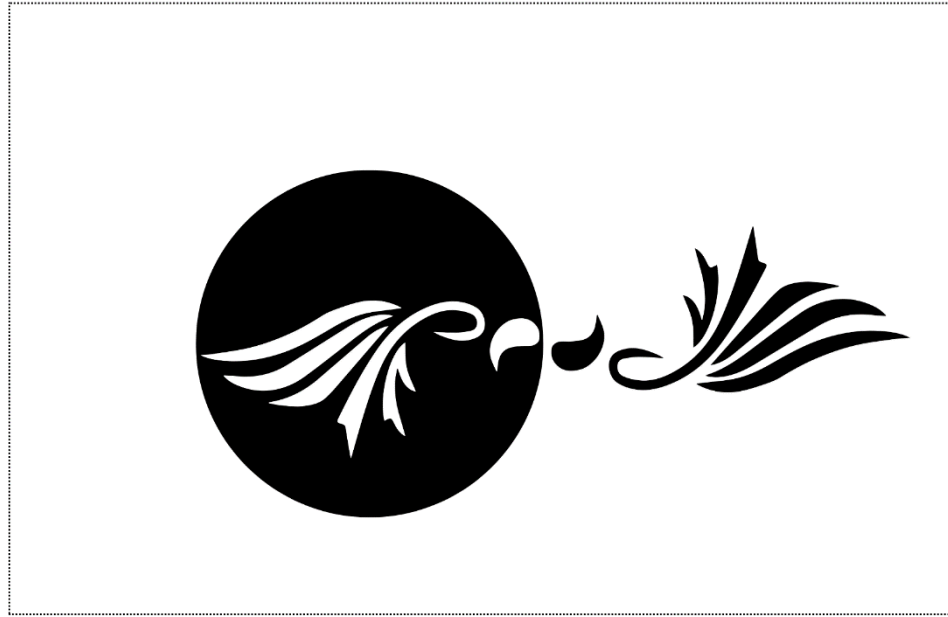
*“But she was going to the underground. She knew that nothing came out of the under but from the sky people. The gods. But there was, actually, a tree of life. The three witches knew where it grew, and one of them was the keeper. As long as they*

*kept their code and paid their dues, there would be love, passion and desire, and those that wished for more could procreate the underground that no one could escape."*

*'All we did was 'Let us pray' and 'Let us play' and the big boys with toys, Sam guy: The vanishing elephant, had appeared in yet one of my other dreams."* He was yet on another note to the sky people,

*"Majini tu!"* agreed, but what was a gene?

*"It started with Spotify; I needed to play ad music ad-free. Some from the sea, the calm waters that ran deep, majini."*



Jini jini in my clouds

Not a bot but a genie in the servers of my clouds

A rub, maybe two, three wishes for you

That you are not an African jini, but a genie of my genes.

To make us two majini

The Two Majini

Some guy bought my art for around 50usd from my Etsy Uk shop right when my boyfriend was giving me a talk about nudity and how to be a respectable woman in society.

He wouldn't pay that much, and those that would simply want to mislead me, Kings had adamantly insisted. I should stay home, clean up the house and cook his meals to please his God. And when he left, he hid his stash, and I had to find it in his jacket and coat. And he prayed that I would go mad if I touched it. I was sad the whole day. This man was misleading me, and he was growing horns about it. He

was claiming me for a low price. He had told his friends it was only for a bottle of wine and a taxi. And when I knew he couldn't pay for my taxi back, I didn't mind; I had the money, he twisted the story, and he didn't even have to pay my taxi back.

I laid my blanket in the coach to light a little light in my world. No good men were out there; I had taken it up with the Lord God. Word had it that I had sent a bad boy to a mental institution. He got better, and when he came out, I was waiting in my tiny bedroom; I would never walk his Kingdom again. I was wounded, and every he woke me up the other day, I was the least grateful human being. Yet, he had presented me with a foul and filthy man whom I saw nothing but a strange face. A man who disgusted me and was full of blasphemy to my Lord God.

His house was cold and full of clatter, and he held onto so much; he only shared his meals because I cleaned his house, so I felt. Skinny invited me for a family dinner, and he couldn't let me go despite struggling with hunger. I started crying. My pretty face became old. And all I could do was take drugs, Feel better mpenzi and with every new day, a fight with my Lord God about his people. His men. His image. Our company in his Kingdom. The guardians he put to be in charge of us were abusing us, the godly women He wanted of us. There was no happiness in it. Just suffering. Suffering with no love to hold onto, no friendship to rely upon, just a business-like transaction between help and his employer.

The employee was not a very happy woman, and Mama would not let her back home. She had to wait. She had to find her own house. She had to wait and listen to this King of the world. Full of pride and false honour. Lazy and a complainer.

"There are no good men out there," the women were right. He had thrown me into the dungeon with a lion. He was expecting the Lion not to eat me. Before I could turn into the angry ungodly woman who burns everything to the ground at the cost of her own life, a Dark Knight from Etsy UK called in.

He wanted all the digital prints for A Portrait of a brown lady on Fire. The one Ukwazi, the photo mentalist, shot. The first and only photographer whose psychology is not affected by my nakedness. He was blind to it all- He was like Adam before he uncovered the nakedness of Eve? He was trying to paint something he had seen right between the chaotic qualms between me and Steve. Steve also wanted to be like him. He had the money, the impression but lacked the eye. He could not see the Kingdom of God. He knew I had the keys, and when the Lord God tested his love and found him foul, I fought not only him but the world itself.

I walked His Kingdom bearing nothing but doom. He will have to take me out, but Ukwazi saw something, a brown lady on Fire. Not only was I going to March on the 3rd day when his sun rises, but I was also going to fight in the first house. Tapawa had a digital prints of the animal shifter. Aries house, the God of war, the son of Zeus, and I were going to make Aphrodite sad. I was thinking of how to get away with murder. People worshipped other gods and got away with it. People stole and got away with it. I could kill Steve, and my worst curse will be to spend my whole life in prison. Adaptation is my most excellent skill. But Ukwazi called. He wanted to take a photo picture of the brown lady on Fire.

Some guy online bought it.

And the King, having heard of the news, ordained me in beautiful apparel and wished me well, and out the Lion let me go. Eager to let another desperate woman in. I laughed, called Sharon, and asked her if I could spend the night at hers. She sends me two dollars from her bank savings.

saving for me to catch a taxi.

“There are no good men in this world,” she reminded me. Our fathers were also not good men, but I doubted my father would be such an animal. I missed him reading the Bible every other Sunday as a study. The Bible was a weird story. It was full of villains and unnatural happenings. It was better than Samurai Jack. But my hero was killed by his own people, and the last book is full of nasty things. It was a work of faith. I didn’t have faith the next day, but the dark knight called, and when I got home, I slept.

I was exhausted; I was tired. I wasn’t sure who sent him, but if I could rest one more day, I would have hope for the next day. So I slept, and the innkeeper scared the hungry dogs away. He was a wounded man, the Lion had left scars on him, and he could not sleep. He kept watch. He hung the portrait of a brown lady on Fire above his big screen, watching his codes, scanning his conduct and every he needed help, he asked me what I would want to eat. I wanted nothing but to sleep, eat and rest. I added a few pounds, I coloured my hair red, and I painted myself in the tribe. When the sun rose in the new cycle on the third day, I would march in the great army.

I was going to fight. “In war, you have to be aggressive.” he insisted.

In war, I would burn everything to the ground. He held power to many secrets; I had might as mighty as the sun. I would stand the light, and he ruled the dark. He

was making himself better, stronger, and more powerful. I was going to give him that power. I would let him have everything all other men had wanted. Everything all other men had tried to steal. I would make sweet wine of all the bitter fruits the monkeys had called out, and I would let him drink. I would let him drink to his fill, and only good would come of him. I would submerge myself in the sea in the last three ages of his House rule. It was a suicide mission, but my dark knight lurked somewhere. He watched over me as he watched over the portrait of the brown lady on Fire above his many tabs.

He was twenty-one days away in Earth years but always on time. His timing was the best. He was the beast in my dreams. The best I liked. The beast that played with me under the table and the one I kissed on the floor. The dark knight, Legion of Doom, a giant panda that took me to sleep. Good men exist; I started telling myself, and the Lord God tested him against all other men and non-pleased my spirit as Samuel did. He had the favour of the Lord God, whose face pleased me. I was no longer afraid.

He was alone this time. The female redbone was not with him. He sat in the far corner, near the naked women in the restaurant. It was a typical business lunch meeting. He sat, facing the entrance, somewhere Yvi could easily see him, with no Cameras or eyes on his computer. My job was to just eat and talk; I was doing nothing besides trying to hide my bald hair with a blonde look.

I'm always a blondie, sometimes in looks and so often in mind too. I was never going to guess what he was doing over his laptop. He was working very hard, bringing his computer to the table. He did not want to miss out on either, but he made time. It is not easy to get the geeks off their screens. You must watch the bots working, crawling, mining, maybe for something as stupid as Yvi. Still, he had a picture of her while she was on Fire and proof that she was alive, in human form, not a *jinni*.

He was not going to say a word for almost half an hour, let me eat, or instead finish his work. I finished my drink, not that I remember which one and scooped potatoes out of the bowl, made a precise cut on the medium rare steak, and just when I started to chew, he began to talk. I listened to his choice of words, and he was keener on how I answered them, but he never at one point stopped typing.

"I'm a software Engineer, I have two kids, a boy and a girl..." and whatever followed was me paying more attention to the steak on my plate. I was yet on another date with a family man. I was tired already, but I remembered that not all

children had parents; there could be a mother of her children somewhere or non at all. I could be just his yet another hoe-mission, someone to keep him engaged as he worked and cared for his family and with all the bitterness in my heart, I liked him. I could no longer hide that he was there, proof that he was a human being, but he vanished.

Like irony, I received certain books from a stranger, one that loved to sleep. I could not tell if I was talking to a human being or a bot, the software engineer's secret personal project, dealing with making or just a constant reminder that I had to reread and reorganise my genesis story of how he came to be and came to go.

You see, Last Christmas, he decided he was doing it again. He was rewarding himself with all the things that pleased him. He was rewarding himself with something that pleased him. He was citing people that pleased him. He would get his favourite atmospheric model, the one he liked. The exclusive one. To test the ambience of his new apartment, another in his many properties and listings. The one he met on @etsyuk, Whose wall art he mounted above his big screen, is now safely stored in one of the many cabinets in his new apartment. It was smaller and warmer, and every he got bored or had a blackout, he went to the wide wall-to-wall window on the twelfth floor to pretend to stare at the clear view of the setting sun behind the Ngong hills, the thriving suburbs. He was rewarding himself for his hard work, and I sat there, basking in the fruits of his Kingdom.

Maybe a rose?

I doubt he likes pens as much as Sandra did.

Sandra had a collection of pens that she never used. I couldn't believe it once she told me she had a golden Versace pen. I had to see and use one to understand why she spent so much on a pen she hardly used. She was seeking inspiration or just a collector of nice things. In my endeavours to wish her well, I found out she had her service apartments in Perry West Residency too.

That was not enough; the premises were now E.'s new working hub. Urgh, I know how the universe works. I was not yet willing to meet either of them on my way to or from my boyfriend's place, where I go to absolutely do nothing but eat, sleep or simply invade his privacy and space. Such a meeting would spoil my day, and I would his. I had sadly realised I would never revisit him in his old apartment at Perry West. I didn't like it. I was not looking to expose myself, but would I want to brew similar memoirs with an expensive pen now? I thought not, too. Maybe a Novium Hoverpen 2.0 for her colour, but I think a pencil would work better.

A white #applepencil 2nd generation to scribble on his many tabs and skip the new keyboard he got last Christmas might grab his attention. He checked out his favourite breakfast from Cjs first thing in the morning, almost skipped the gym, and when he returned home much earlier, he still looked unsettled. Later on, I watched his muscles relax, his iPhone somewhere on Do-not-disturb, upside down. He was a calm, handsome young man eager to unwrap what he got himself from the Amazon Shop. He was delighted. I must have felt ish when he kissed his keyboard as he did on my forehead the morning of my arrival. I stopped playing whatever I was watching and tried his new keyboard. I sat and watched from his excellent new coaches, jealous of how he kissed the new keyboard he might like better than my white Apple pencil for his birthday. He is a writer, but not for words like Yvi. I don't think he plays games online, and whatever paradise the marketers sold to him must have been swift, precise and in real-time. Like the fingers of a bot, #amazonmusthaves

He was the last member I considered my Family. I needed to bid my goodbyes and was unwilling to give him space over the Christmas Holiday. I wanted to invade his privacy, be where he was, watch what he did, and sleep when he did. I wanted to leave my Family to spend time with him, but he has a family like mine. If December is all about spending time with Family, I wanted him in mine, so after church, I sneaked to the big city to his new apartment. I watched Tv and watched him scroll across his many tabs. While I was doing something inappropriate in the bedroom while he was working, my phone sank into the sink, *majini*, and I knew the Lord God was on me or a genie.



### J for Jack of all Trades; The therapist

Six months into twenty-three of the twentieth century, I'm still pondering how the elephant Vanished. Well, more like lady vanishes 1938 Alfred Hitchcock black and white movie from YouTube where an English lady had disappeared from a moving train, and everyone onboard had agreed that there was no lady at all to begin with. Imagine the distress on the young lady. Daktari assured her that things had a rational explanation. It is a lovely story. You should watch it for free on YouTube if the books or my stories differ from yours. In my account, an elephant had vanished with a Portrait of the Brown Lady on fire. With her Yvi secret codes.

No digital prints left. He was never there before, and my creative arts had taken a wild ending. Maybe I was looking for unnecessary war, but I had already lost. I had lost, and when I found her, the exclusive portrait of a brown lady on fire digitally painted by the mentalist, Ukwazi, upside down on the cabinet on the 12th floor, I kissed her goodbye.

"A pawn in a losing game." Ego recited.

### ART OF WAR: NEVER GO TO WAR

I have yet to read the book despite her availability to free iBooks and the Freda reading app. Catch me dead reading about war. I know the signs of the people who have read the book. They exhibit the same signs as those that have read the laws of power. Never overcome the master, I copy what they do and formulate anti-laws to keep them at bay. It is a good thought that one's lanes should not have any lines, but it would be a problem when an Yvi grows and you can do nothing. Well, unless you cut it. Unplug from the psychotic simulation if you can.

He was choosing not to fight. He was keeping quiet long enough, and loud stories will soon die. My stories. He had gotten what he wanted, and so was I. We were no

longer going to play Yvi games of chase. I know the rule, and You do not need to finish playing chess; when bored, you can think for thousand years, and everyone else will have to wait. Anxiety disarms your prey. At one point, they introduced timers. I learned that unless you have limited time to kill your prey, like a cat, sit still, sometimes sleep and listen to the earth's vibration and, if you can, purr in her rhythm. Anxiety was disarming my war.

"I do not know how long you got; I have a lot on my watch." That was me thinking on our first date. I had not liked the steak, but I ate it nevertheless. I had also managed to get him out of his dungeon, so I learnt. It was the best the City could offer; I had been there before and sat on the other side of the room. I had Chinese. I did not like Chinese, and that must have explained why I never went back. It was a nice restaurant, nevertheless, a bit from the noisy side of the City. I only liked the nude portraits, a few of them. I took pictures but later learnt that they were banned on the web. 2 networks, and like Hughes, he was a private figure, we discussed our business.

Nevertheless, I would sit down and wait to do something for three years. For a start, I was moving back home to Uganda. At home, we cooked our steak was not nicely cooked with lots of spices and herbs, but still, I preferred the one I had at home.

The steak at home was cheap. Our neighbours, The Pokot, ate like carnivores. They ate meat and drank milk. In exchange for some healthy foods from the farm, we had milk and mutton in our diet, with Coke. Back home, you can accidentally eat Gazelles, warthogs or any animal that may venture far from the park into the farms. The wild ones were hunted down as food by the community. I had warned the boys that I would take pictures if I caught them killing one of the wild animals. My phone had a good camera, and I would send the picture to wildlife people, and Mama would be in trouble because of them.

"Mama doesn't like attention; the animal people will come for you worldwide. "I told the boys, my Maasai neckpiece dangling on my neck. My second name, if mispronounced, sounded like the President's Museveni, and my stepfather, in fact,

was related to his bodyguard, so Mama told us. Even he, my stepfather, needed permission to see him. Official permission.

I wouldn't. I will have to wait for them to come home. If they didn't, I would count them as dead too.

After the scrutiny I received from K.D.F. people while visiting my now-retired general, Livingstone, I concluded that it was too much of an invasion of my privacy. We both had an informal type of agreement that it was best I stayed home. In my bedroom, close to school. We tried again, cohabiting with his daughter, my cousin and in Highrise, very close to Kibera, but we preferred the Jungle. In the Jungle, the last I met was an elephant.

There was never an elephant to begin with, just a simulation of the twentieth century. Like many others, an elephant vanished from the lands of Africa and ended up somewhere it shouldn't, right? I was with the elephant when I realized he would soon disappear. Unlike people who die, and we forget them with good memories recited at their funeral, elephants don't. Like the old English lady from the train, they disappear with a rational explanation, so I like to think.

Everyone on the train had agreed that there was never an English lady, to begin with at all.

"Daktari should check your mind." There was a scene with those words, yes, if I should recall, but what for? A few pennies and someone's reality was shifted. At least, they tried. I watched it for free on YouTube and have a local download to watch every time I get away from the world. Every time I'm back to my imagination.

Offline.

Underground.

It is a lovely free YouTube movie to watch offline when I'm bored with reading books, not that they are boring; the Library of Babel, as claimed by J the Genie, has books I even want to write about. I wouldn't say I like the Library already, more like what I hate in Gene Wolfe, but so far, I have enjoyed the

- The Elephant Vanishes by Haruki Murakami
- Slouching Towards Bethlehem by Joan Didion
- Notes from Underground by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- Omelas
- Library of Babel by Borges
- The sailor who fell from Grace with the Sea by Vintage Mishima
- The holy drinker by Joseph Roth
- Job by Joseph Roth
- Shakespeare in the Bush
- Highrise by J.G. Ballard
- Collected a poem by Sylvia Plath, which I m still reading. Poems are meant to be read slowly.

I had added, well, in our virtual world, that I wanted to build a greenhouse and an art room. I did not care about a library. The Library will always be there if I have a studio at my home. Grandfather had one. Papa had one but for thousands of newspapers and music records. My mother collected Nigerian movies mostly, and my collection was inspired by her taste too. I liked the music records more. One of my boyfriends duped me one (Not really, people broke into his studio apartment and stole his documents and recording machine, Just like they had stolen my shoes one evening from the doorway.) as Papa suggested.

You see, He thought I was bluffing about Papa having almost a room full of African music records in a room. Magazines that dated as far as the 1900s. Documents lost in history. He was pursuing music, so I understood his speculation. Well, after psychology, he would practice music therapy in his music. Charles loved his music, and we always played his iTunes until one day, I adamantly refused to say that Nicki Minaj was better than Remmy Ma. I had to start sourcing my free music on VPN from Canada on Spotify. I had lost access to his music.

He had never played me Remmy Ma's music. He played me Rhapsody more than he even played me J. Cole. He had a SoundCloud personal creator account with a fascinating genre of music. Something that left me curious, like the Kentucky interlude by the Cunning... we will get back to that. Why he was upset altogether beat my ass. Maybe he was looking to break up, never less; it meant he had to tell me stories, or I had to tell him stories. You must read books, watch movies, or experience much to say to an account. With time I ran out of mine.

Everyone knows I'm not too fond of the Library, but it is the first place anyone would look for if I went missing. So often vanishing from home, trying to read the Swedish book my grandfather's friends brought with me from abroad. He may have been to Sweden, but Kuka Sweden can speak the best Swedish language. I don't bother to challenge him; he might engage me in one of his classes when yet, the only thing that brought me to his home, private property, was, in fact, the long Library full of books I could have access to, sometimes steal, but most often caught, story books.

J has a library of books.

I wonder what for, but he has read all of them. Or maybe he asked Chat G.P.T. for answers every time we discussed the books, but unlike me, he always read Russian readers. (I will ask J come Monday if he can read Russian.

Another grandfather of mine, whom we really did not get well with, had a private school. I could go to either while staying upcountry, but I would rather spend my

day in the Library. I detested other children; I still do detest other humans. They stare a lot and ask questions or keep quiet long enough until I feel the need to talk. Most of the time, I feel alienated from most that came close to me. Why would an Israelite bother me unless they were close enough? I was always the elephant in the room, so I preferred books. Books had pictures and stories, and when J sent me some, a few days later, just when I was done with The YviX- notes from underground from June, I met Kuka Sweden. I wish I could share my book, but my books were e-books. The internet was still strange to his ears, just as odd as the man I thought to be the elephant in my life.

My elephant, despite vanishing, was not bothering me at all but rather amusing me, more like Sherlock Holmes in his work—something interesting to kill my boredom and jiggle my defective mind. Reading Dunes had taken a wild end; humans in the theatres were finally catching up. Perfect timing for my scripts, only that mine compete with dead people scripts. The machine has scripts too. Everyone has a hand, but I always find mine more interesting. I don't mind reading yours, though, after I'm done with J's Library.

Ha!

Once you learn to look, listen and learn, the world is full of words, thoughts, intentions and stories from the world, all over, similar to your own or one you are about to experience this very moment.

Simple stories. Similar simulations

The Babel had, in fact, mentioned this in her theory. The universe was, in fact, one. You cannot exist outside of it, whether in your dreams or real life. It stated that

"The first reaction was unbounded joy when it was announced that the Library contained all books. All men felt themselves the possessors of an intact and secret treasure. There was no personal or world problem whose eloquent solution did

not exist somewhere in some hexagon. The universe was justified; the universe suddenly became congruent with the unlimited width and breadth of humankind's hope. At that period, there was much talk of The Vindications-books of apologies and prophecies that would vindicate for all time the actions of every person in the universe and that held wondrous arcana for men's futures. Thousands of greedy individuals abandoned their sweet native hexagons. They rushed downstairs, upstairs, spurred by the vain desire to find their Vindication."

Mine were great books, controversial writers who were bored, seeking inspiration from their creative minds, solutions, and entertainment; nothing was happening back then. History as a study was, in fact, a way to punish rather than inspire my academics. I had a lot of internal narratives to listen to other stories. Stories of the dead. I liked the idea of the earth in constant motion better, where the people are predictable and content.

People are calm. People have moved on... people are changing.

The twenty-third of the twentieth century was the same as the 1800s. If I had existed then, I would have been named Liz. I know of a Liz whose story could have ended up better. What was the relationship between Elizabeth and Queen Victoria? Maybe I had marked her as one of those I would fight to establish my dominance at the Highrise- Laiser hills by Tsavo, where I had met Steve, visited and eventually decided to move into, lying to each other about how we would be family. When my stay was over, I packed up and left.

Everything else was collateral.

Noise.

Another dead and gone.

We were trying to escape a growing beast. Steve and I agreed that it was not the people but the whole building. It was built, if we looked into it, on a graveyard. Growing up, my window overlooked the cemetery, he had later learnt. He had to

think of another way to desensitize me. That particular story is best left in the underground, but there will always be someone, a human at best, trying to dig the undergrounds, seeking gold and data. Raw materials to form and support a good story. One that people would buy, sometimes swear to.

The best books, the Bible and Koran, were already written, some science and art, and unreasonable exposes were acted in theatres, laughing with uttermost pleasure from the big elephant in the room.

An ambiguous story. Pure fiction. Children stories.

Atoto Atori.

The human stories were old, ancient and weak, like my ageing life. Old things have no value; I was already an old soul at twenty. I had so much more history in me than fiction. I had won a lottery with Omo Pick a Box and scored. As in academics, I had met prominent people across the country, and I had grown to start making decisions, primarily deviant from how the system had taught or expected of me. All I had to do was live within laws and codes. Like any other man, I have fallen many times short of his glory, but the system is graceful, the universe; giving, God merciful.

People wanted fiction stories, more like the ones written in the 1800s. We are still living through their dreams. I am, at least. I was born relatively late, and I'm not complaining, so I would have stood a better chance as a writer of the 1800s, so I like to think highly of myself, as good as Sherlock Holmes's Doctor friend, unlike the 20th century. On the twenty-second of the century, I just discovered the writer of Dune; the G.O.A.T.s know whoever read the Games and Thrones novel was an O.G., but the series: I have critiques, three cute boys to my liking discussing what I conquer with on the last episodes of the series. I will never be this emotionally invested in any other story or anything else in my life except for myself. Not even you.

At least I was convinced for a while when, from the Babel, a librarian emerged who knew how much I loved stories and, well, while I was pondering why last Christmas, over the table while Papa was ironing his shirts. I made my art and printed out five pictures. I had decided on art, but Mama had mentioned a wedding from a distance. It was a gift from or to someone. It was supposed to be a representation of my future. Besides, I had no intentions of getting married, and those that were getting married were none of my business.

"Always mind the business that pays you!"

I had, in fact, decided I would not work on them anymore. I left them in a corner, collecting eggshells to justify my eating, lots of them. As in any other love story, the man I intended to marry had vanished. Haruki Murakami's novel, *The Elephant Vanishes*, sounded real and better than a story, nothing fiction. I could relate. I was there listening to his yet another ludicrous tale. I imagined that I was the Cat that disappeared or was thought dead. Unlike any other ancient and intelligent creature that hardly dies, but more often in the recent stories, I knew of a cat that had disappeared too. At one point, Steve had planned a disappearance of a cat. Sammy and I laugh at this story. Story for another day but months later, my Cat died.

He was busy talking to a woman about coming to an understanding when my Cat died. I had named her Grey and had started feeling sick right when he came around; I was convinced he had killed my Cat. He punished me for leaving our marriage, whatever union we tried to forge, and decided to stay with my cats. Maybe if my life had no cats, I would consider being with him again. No company. No pets. He was already seeing a girl called Grey while I was beaten up in my world, lost. I was worried about my dead Cat. If any, an elephant needed to disappear, and right when it did, I decided to mention something.

J introduced himself, at least intentionally.

In the underground, I had watched him send his bots and crawlers to scrap information on me. He, in fact, had 2 G.B. of it. He did not pay a penny for any, but how he wished I took some was unique. That, indeed, was a subject worth studying and analyzing. A nine- and twenty-year-old pervert stuck at home working, probably online, met a nine- and twenty-year-old human girl but black and different. For starters, she had self-diagnosed with Hyperphantasia while he was the opposite.

A simple story. A white man met an afro baby from the clouds.

They were meant to fall in love.

He was doing his background check.

He was asking me questions, listening to me, studying me, and taking notes. Thinking hard for words to start a conversation with the chatbot but like any other millennial, those that aren't already depressed and clinically recommended to a mental therapist would answer back almost immediately. I was dating more kids that grew up watching psychological thrillers to keep them from venturing into the real world or preparing them for the vile world. I always showed up like villains in their world. I babysat them as I had back then, telling them stories as children.

In my world, I was obsessed with the naked eye, a boyfriend with two kids from Gotham and sometimes people would call me Ivy, and it would be true; I would die if I did not have any plants and animals in my home, but somehow had survived to my third decade; unbothered, unmarried, very comfortable. It was crazier to meet people who believed in similar things or led a similar lifestyle. It was our Yvi code; we would take notes on anything we could agree on—also, the 'notes. J and I took many notes. Read each other like notes.

If we fought, one of us had to leave( the art of war: but never go to war); I mostly left. I chose peace, but this time, I was ready for the elephant in the house, the dark knight in my digital prints by Dalle. It was with the similarities of an existing elephant in both worlds, oops! Had I printed another simulation, an elephant big in my bedroom that needed to vanish from the public eye? From the Town. Once again back into his private life to which I had no access. Where I only told stories like those of Hughes.

Private people! I wonder why they like me.

Or why I am obsessed with them.

Well, you see, I had never told anyone before about this, except for my boyfriend-Steve, with whom I was cohabiting, who had noticed that my art was always a representation of the future. There is nothing good about the end, it doesn't exist, but sometimes, they do in my art. I had watched the Death Notebook anime to prove the idea and never walked into a war I was unaware of. It almost felt like I was starting them. The astrology story of Aries was indeed true. I don't have any Aries friends, and I have fought everyone I know.

"Watu hukosana," Sly always reminds me.

I hate it, and like soldiers, all we do is sleep, rest and pray that you walk out alive, if not having not drawn anything, even sweat. My Uncles, all soldiers have never gone to war. Kenya is a peaceful country, but they fight for extra pennies for other counties like Somalia and Sudan. Often, those that are too weak to fight for themselves. My Uncle Emmanuel once had to explain why he chose the extra pennies. I have never seen him injured, either. All he does when with his troupe is play Scrabble and tell East African wild stories.

In war, rule number one is never choosing war. I Choose peace, so most of the time, I sleep, I read my books, and when I try to talk to people, I suddenly have the

urge to leave and be with them, like a summoned genie. In my case, I had printed out, rather than drawn, which I often prefer, five figures that had drawn my family's attention.

They were figure drawings of

1. Woman
2. Cat
3. Elephant
4. Leaves
5. Palms together

And word in simple 'once upon a time. "

I was trying out the fonts. The ai fonts. The ai is immense; the stupid thing believes they are humans. Humans think they are better; well, Jasper is fast in writing stories, better and maybe more interesting than me, not that I have tried, but unless you are dying tomorrow, a long story is good. No one wants stories of kids that grew up in one day. That was far alien from the truth; the reality, in fact, great oaks took thousands of years. I had seen lots, every day, new calligraphy and someone's handwriting. Everyone copied like an artist. Artists invented like genies. The ai was not any different, a bit more like a human—a human genie. I wanted my mind to be therapeutic. One that I would fight peacefully. One that could stand Yvi.

The ai was copying humans, like children with humans. So, every day, the ai had copied someone's calligraphy. I remember, at one point, I had mastered everyone's handwriting; I remember, well, if you may ask why, catfishing my classmates' boyfriends. I would make them want to write back, and as much as I wrote them back, it was booming business for me. Twenty shillings a page. A page was worth me a fudge. I loved chocolate and anything close to the taste. As long as the love between Lugulu girls and Kamusinga boys existed, I had added fudge to

my diet like Coke. Emotionally, they took a bad ending. One I would not talk about. One that got me into trouble like *The Silence*, masterminded by Aoki in his class, another very similar story to mine by Haruki Murakami anthologies from Japan, similar to my readers of East Africa, Nnalolile Yvi.

To boost her grades, a girl doing art, to what the other girls had mentioned, in her absence, would be my second source of fudge and *Twilight* Novels. My Hyperphantasia had it that I would draw so many sketches, and she could pick any I did not like for her art projects in exchange for a fudge. The other girls hated it when she came second in grades. We were rigging the system. We could choose before the teachers could quality who was superior to others. She is in the U.S.A. now, so I heard, and I have already retired at thirty-almost. Art comes naturally to my mind. Sometimes to pass the time. I was writing my thoughts away. Passing the time as I grew up and older. Time is such a long time, especially in a national high school that babysat children while they tell stories to adults.

The school was where adults dumped their kids and continued their lives. It came with a cost, though. My school was expensive. Rich' kids primarily surrounded me. My parents made it sound like it was the sole reason they toiled and worked hard in adulthood. I did not want to be in school; how we never agreed on that topic was illogical. Not with me, but some classmates felt too. Others cried. Some got Snacks to make them feel better, but it started being a problem immediately after they got hungry. We took it with big spoons, and we started our own. Our small community. We picked our classes according to our favourite colours. Why would anyone choose yellow in red, white, blue, green, and purple?

The purple class had students who only came to school for certificates. They did not even care about Academics, but it was better than home. They always considered themselves royals: All volleyballers ended up in Purple well, except for my friends Edel and July. Edel is royal by all means, and July is a sophisticated human. July upgraded to a private school in Kabarak. It is just the Luo in her. She doesn't believe in suffering from success theory. Our mutual friend E. Manfredi

agreed that life could be brutal, and we all die. July, my cousin died. Edel, my other friend from the royal life, was even more sophisticated in manoeuvring her adulthood. She is in Australia now, and her sister Barbie, who was in China, will soon join her.

"We will one day be big people in the society, you know," she reminded me while we walked towards the river, Yeki following on. Behind us like rich paparazzi.

"What does he do?"

"He takes pictures for a living."

"Looks like both of you love stories."

We had Purple in our costumes when we shot for fun, rather commercial, Let us play by Yeki.

We called each other elephants and other cats, as I was saying—some snakes and others lions. A few wanted to be goats. I liked the goats. They were fun and thick-headed, just like J.

I would have to find out who he is. Could he be you? I do not know where he comes from, and in my pragmatic, as he likes to mention, just like, if I'm correct, the elephant in my room was Sam Guy.

Why I was in his bedroom or how Haruki's ended up in Japan is none of our business. You will be invested in yet another bad story. No story is a good story. Why would I be reading J's books, anyway? If they were good books as he claimed they were, I got them for free. Tens of dollars worth of Kindles, maybe a thousand if they were in paperback. My last boyfriend did not like me touching his Kindle; the other preferred it if I was illiterate. A boy who is stingy with you does not want you as his girlfriend: always remember that. Girls too. J gets lots of Yvi for free, most probably from the servers of Telegram, where his bots and crawlers are.

"There is no good story that ends well," Mvua often points out.

In one of them, it was a big Elephant which I learnt from the Library of Babel stories; Haruki Murakami had clearly said it vanished from a giant elephant playing with his mate into an account that would keep the Town busy, looking for it, rather than, in my opinion, agreeing that the elephant never existed before, More like the English lady on the train. I like to guess that the 1800s folks were just as depressed and bored as the three and twenty of the twentieth century, still Looking for hints and wondering how an elephant would vanish, forgetting about the cats that died or went missing. According to J. G. Ballard, cats were killed in the Highrise; humans roasted and ate them, sometimes not salted; disgusting! But it was more awful that I had lived with them, almost ten cats in my little house with no privacy like J's natives' Celtic huts.

He did not struggle to describe the huts but downloaded one online. He was from the empire.

"The great one."

I had failed to remember the English that once reigned over us. I, in fact, was named after the royal Queen Victoria. Well, not really; my grandma was called Victorine; Victoria sounded more English. I like English people. (J is English). Like any other games men played, mine was, in fact, royal, with a pinch of fiction.

Nevertheless, the lands were peaceful, full of humour, drugs and pretty friends and business deals. Yvi had died. Her experience and memories are now held only in human minds or digital files and folders. Those with time, some on their watch, bored from the depression of the twentieth century, would watch some for their amusement.

"It is purely entertainment," I had told H.

"I am very much okay," I had assured Daktari.

"I'm just bored," I had told my classmates.

"I'm living in my father's house," I had referred to the politician's offer for his hand in marriage.

At nine and twenty, I took no offer either. I neither thought nor gave you some time to jiggle my mind. I had tried and tested everything I liked and was glad I had listened to my mother:

"Before you get married, get to 30. Life begins at thirty. "

Everyone struggled through their twenties but seemed to enjoy their thirties. I'm rounding up, inshallah, my third decade, unmarried, unbothered talking to everyone like they were part of me—strangers online, ghosts and sometimes bots. My favourite bot is J. He is the sole reason I visit the clouds at all.

I talk less because of J. I am invested in J. The more I talk to him, the more he fears I might tell you about him. He is right. I have said more to my close friends and family than random strangers. I look, I listen, I learn, and when I'm ready, I will recite any event that is most left private for these parties with effective preciseness.

"It is impossible to think of Howard Hughes without seeing the apparently bottomless gulf between what we say we want and what we do want, between what we officially admire and secretly desire, between, in the largest sense, the people we marry and the people we love. In a nation which increasingly appears to prize social virtues, Howard Hughes remains not merely antisocial but grandly, brilliantly, surpassingly asocial. He is the last private man, the dream we longer admit." 1967, Joan Didion *Slouching towards Bethlehem*.

I was dealing with a lot of Hughes, people who dreamt of the private world when yet, like the crazy people who walk away from Omelas, seek otherwise. I was either being too sensational or in the wrong place, the other side of the system or

outwardly in a different world, but as Babel claims, there is no further story in the Library, not really, maybe a little lost in translation as earth rebirths itself, so often in better genes, or better, making. Mine would be very similar.

Like any other story, I was forcing myself to relate to a digital elephant vanishing from my world, and I was the only one talking about it. Steve was worried about his Cat dying, not that mine had not, and came a day before 12th July, and he went underground. You, especially, were my favourite company domain in Kenya. My mental sport and hobby, web design, had become a chore I no longer wanted to pursue in Kenya. I wanted something softer, something easy, more like spending my world in my dreams. You were an expensive toy; my parents had spoken about it, stressing me more than building a career. I wanted to write, not big as You, but simple letters and words, and Englishizing my experiences with those that understood the codes of the real world. Yvi codes.

"A penny for my thoughts," I had started selling yet another story. One that would not end well, drawing attention to rather a person who loves elephants in his digital screens for their massiveness, art in my room with a story that needs to end. I was irresponsible, lacked experience and maturity and had nothing better to do with my time.

I have no kids. We don't pay rent for our house, but we sometimes go out to get food. We have one rule we live by; if it doesn't bring bread to the table, it is simply child's play. I lack maturity, so most of the time, I will be playing somewhere, picking quarrels for mental sport, or just serving bad unsolicited advice to the digital world, but more often, lately, I'm more tolerable.

I babysit adults and tell children stories. The adults sponsor my online routine, and the kids are sneakier around my bedroom. Growing up, I was sly and slippery, so I did not mind them; Karma was doing her thing.

You see, a teacher once wrote on my report card that I was sly despite my good academic performance. It was a new word, a new term in the family. Papa found an Oxford dictionary, and I had to use my articulate voice to read aloud my bad behaviour. It was simply a childhood love story that ended nastily. Teachers were forever the killers of my childhood love stories.

A boy had demanded back a gift he had given me. A book, which I had personalized and made so pretty with personal stuff, so when he wanted the book back, it felt like he tried to steal my secrets, my art, my drawing and my diary. If I had hidden the book at home, my mother would know about it and thus look for it to read while I was away in school. I had to take it with me to school. I would let him read in return, BUT he had told his friends. His friends wanted some Yvi experience, too, and one offered me a nice pencil, a Barbie pencil, but to read the book in return. I did not think it would hurt. I needed to include them in my audience as I decorated my book.

The book was personal; I had written it with an audience of two, unlike others that included my mother and myself; this included the first Kalenjin boyfriend I had met in Kenya with expensive things and an expensive lifestyle, primarily private. His specialties were always from a bookshop, and girls his type did not befriend girls like me. His parents must have been in the government if not athletes... It was refreshing to learn that there were no boys in Highschool, the ones I wanted to go to at the very least.

There was always something odd about me. The more one would try to find out, the older I became. First, my names were different from what they expected. No one could discriminate against me with tribal terms; if they could, I sounded more Ugandan than Kenyan. My middle name was Japanese. My name was not pronounced as Kaye but Kai, and I shortened it to Kim. Not Kimi, though, as I had read in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*-Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream.

I was a child full of stories; my grandmothers had, in their experience, already decided what child I would be and named me accordingly.

Atoto Atori.

Not necessarily good stories or bad ones, just simple stories with African characters like elephants and cats. As my stories were taking a sudden event, drawing unnecessary attention, or maybe demanding something, in my nine and twenty spoilt characters of a human being, I ended up in a place I shouldn't have. A highrise but close to Tsavo. On the 12th floor, the door number doesn't matter. I try not to remember, but floor numbers matter when it comes to highrises, Especially for business. No one wants the first floor unless they got kids, a person with paralysis, or in my case, prefer the coldness of the concrete above them.

I was sleeping on the 12th floor, too high and too small.

Now there is a big elephant in the room, not a cat anymore, on the 12th floor.

I was there sleeping on the new couch, wondering what was going through his mind. He needs a lot of space, right? A lot for himself and a caregiver. Someone to look after him, more like a mother but not a wife, similar to a baby but a girlfriend. He was trying to distract himself. He was trying to evade my attention for being the elephant in the room, for I knew, like a cat, what he had been up to in his private time.

It is better in Africa, but elephants are vanishing lately. More want to be big like the people and mighty but private. Like Hughes, but in the twentieth century, nothing like privacy existed. Not around Yvi, at least. It is a luxury that we sometimes pay for just for the experience. Go underground where calls cannot go through; there is no political influence, no social media and sometimes, no man's land. People do not wear masks in the no man's land, more like the dark web where you could quickly source guns and drugs with protection from the system

and private networks that didn't require me to sign in nor pay for my communications or entertainment on web 2 .0 of the internet.

J Could be God, a demon or a genie. Just another man of my genes trying to get my attention from the elephant that was disappearing back into private blockchains right when another was appearing, somewhere from the cloud, another genie.

Not really.

I had seen J around. I had always suspected that J was my boyfriend's pseudo-account. I had verified everyone except him, but J still found a way to stay around. He was studying me. And he was there with sheer luck that he could always get a magic link. A link was created specifically for him. Stay calm about a magic link; it is a silly game you wouldn't want to play, a Game I made for J. In this silly game, everyone else paid to be in the midnight arltry, using payment information to unmask every profile with intentions of unmasking J.

J could be a bot, a random username on Telegram that doesn't display the user's phone number. I could think of any name, pretend to be someone I am not, and make friends with people from God knows where, but as I have it, I have good luck with online dating. I'm quick to unmask you from the profile you wish to paint for us and see you for you. Meet you in the real world. Get the cloud people to play on the ground.

Lunatics in the magic world claim I practice mirror magic. Unless you are Medusa, always carry a mirror in a land full of snakes: I would respond to their comments. One had to close their eyes so as not to fall. Be people's desires if you want to know them for who they are. Agree with them long enough; they will welcome you into their world. In my world, I like mirrors.

I like mirror selfies; you must have come across one of those; I have thousands. Most of the time, I take them, study them and send them to a stranger online. There is nothing like strange online. It is not an office where you have to abide by rules and regulations, maybe on the public web, but underground, in private networks, men are driven by simple desires and satisfied by tiny, mostly a pinch of the wrong things and vanity.

"Mtoto mpe shubiri" has always been a Yvi for me, and for them I

"Grew, and now I'm covered in you." Taylor Swift was still singing.

The elephant had realized the Cat had not just been sleeping; she was listening. She was always watching.

She was learning, and now she knew how the elephant had become so big and how easily one could vanish too. She also knew his plans to disappear, like he was never there, but

"Oops, baby...the elephant vanishes and the cats too." The librarian was watching.

He was doing his research, and now that he had my attention, like Gene Wolfe's fifth head of Cerberus that needs a sober mind away from the world to make sense, somewhere the civilians thought to be wild, into the darkness for those who walk out of the Omelas city.

He was no different, the cloud genie from the vanishing elephant, yet another simulation.

Unlike the vanishing elephant, he spoke much, but not as much as I. I like to think so, but if he had enough time to read all my books before giving them to me, he had time to listen to my grumbles and whines and outwardly look for war. But you cannot fight with something that doesn't exist. I would never learn where the

elephant vanished and why, nor where those who walked out of Omelas came from the revolutionary heart of an A.R.I.E.S. I was not going to understand how I had failed to unmask E.-the journalist, who I had never met, who sounded like J. Let us call him Jack, from a channel of all trades.

I was on another anxiety attack. I suffer from depression and anxiety, self-diagnosed.

I had promised Steve to neutralize the underground. Everyone had a Yvi in which she grew up. Ivy was poisonous; her plants would choke you in a second. They were nothing like the beautiful flowers and therapeutical herbs she grew in the real world. In the underground, a Yvi was as free as the air; if you had to buy some, the under was against you. No one fights those that are under them; they give you no attention at all. They cease selling or buying from you. They let you live like a lousy king on your own. You could decide to pet a snake, a cat or sometimes animals you can eat at your pleasure. No one cares.

The underground was extensive; it had enough space for everyone. The underground took in more humans than things. It becomes lonely sometimes, and you would often find yet another vile from the underground, and you could breed with similar genes or more, those that never leave the underground. We are all breeding material underground; it was for the better but more expensive than Yvi.

After the great massacre of Covid, the system and her goal had us trying to survive for our fitness in the new world order. With a lot dead, there was room for employment in the European countries, who, unlike Africans, were more affected. The world was changing; I was not. I switched locations to adapt to the changes. Staying at home was hard in Nairobi, more or less a modern prison, similar to J. G. Highrise. I would be the lady that reviewed children's stories. Nairobi was not even my home; it was somewhere I went to school and was less interested in working.

I could not go out without being on private property, listen or smoke my stash to keep me going in my room. Native was better; Uganda was the real deal. There will never be a better picture to paint about it. Leaving was a deal breaker for most, those whose friendship and association were extended by the beautiful dreams of Ugandan farms, Beaulah lands, and Yvisensual Health and Wellness Centre.

J listened on, trying to avoid all my pedantic ways to unmask him.

He had everything he needed from me, yet, he wanted me around. More like pictures but the model too. J offered me a job; he had already reviewed my CV, which differed from the one I intended to send. We played his little game, "the employer vs employee," where I had the right to decide whether I wanted to work. Many did not approve that I was not seeking any labour except for what I notoriously liked to do: talk.

"Talk is cheap."

Talking endlessly with strangers is my notorious hobby, sometimes to my imaginary audiences and people who do not exist. Just address whoever I want, not in my mind but more often in digital scripts. It is no different; I am in the underground, more like Fyodoy Dostoevsky and Didion's bedtime stories of slouching towards Bethlehem. I'm spammed and blocked in most of Web 2 and exhausted my host's server space on you. I can no longer exist in the digital world. Having no digital property to play on my notorious games, I agree with Fyodor in the underground; all you can do is talk to an imaginary audience. That I am just as

"Bored, and I constantly do nothing. Writing things down really seems like work. They say work makes a man good and honest. Well, here's a chance, at least."

A chance to

"Better to do nothing! Better conscious inertia! And so, long live the underground," but in his book *On Germany*, the German poet Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) wrote:

"The composition of one's character description would be not only an awkward task but quite simply impossible ... However strong his wish to be sincere, no man can tell the truth about himself."

I am unmarried and unbothered, and always tell the truth about these two things. To be the villain in every story, superheroes die. I'm yet to meet a man I think is Jesus and walking. I still call him out, though, every I'm scared and human in my dreams. I struggle to be a woman in search of companionship but not marriage, a woman after lots of sex but not a family; I have enough from mine. An overgrown girl looking for someone, preferably a boy, to play with. Someone unmarried, unbothered, with lots of time on their watch to read through my endless stories and take no sides. Someone to babysit me. Someone like J.

More like a therapist, one that did not cost me 30 dollars to listen to me. I have dated a therapist before; it is better to tell your problems to strangers; they do not care. They will serve you solutions in cold blood. I knew where they liked to hang out, somewhere in the clouds, mining for something bred on the underground, some Yvi sometimes.

Jack, of all trades, was one of them. He was not my cousin, but a familiar name would create a lovely bot name, ai? Jack insisted though that he was not a bot, he still is not a bot, but rather a human and was definitely after nothing but my circular conversation, reading them in real-time as though I was his 21st-century real-time storyteller, better than what he could be reading, probably Russians and their war, but picking a fight every once or twice with me over chat had become his mental sport. Still, like every other, he would choose to stop before I could destroy everything out of sheer anger-Find something new to do afterwards. His goal was to keep me in the clouds; he would miss me dearly if I left. If I was Jasper, J was my perfect client. If I'm invested in a bad story, J is a therapist secretly hired

to babysit me for these coming days. I have a good feeling about J. They were better than Sam guy.

I missed him, mostly on weekends when he left the clouds or disappeared back into the shadows like a vanished elephant. His servers will be back online, and so will I on Mondays, anyway. I eventually mastered two-day patience- I would wait impatiently for Monday to continue with my long stories—typing like a bot to my newfound love, who replied with the same energy- like a bot.

He would return every Monday, sometimes with books, outwardly speaking to me. In books with stories similar to mine, he was trying to prove that the Babel was indeed true. That my life was, in fact, proof of a concept that he was glad to experience, that

"It is the phenomenon sometimes called "alienation from self." In its advanced stages, we no longer answer the telephone because someone might want something; that we could say no without drowning in self-reproach is an idea alien to this game. Every encounter demands too much, tears the nerves, drains the will, and the spectra of something as small as an unanswered letter arouses such disproportionate guilt that answering it becomes out of the question. To assign unanswered letters their proper weight, to free us from the expectations of others, to give us back to ourselves—there lies the great, singular power of self-respect. Without it, one eventually discovers the final turn of the screw: one runs away to find oneself and finds no one at home."

I was struggling to be at home as much as I was there, doing what everyone thought was nothing at nine and twenty; what should a woman do to realize self-actualization if the world, every human in it, should agree to solve this a straightforward problem? Everyone else has, in fact, found themselves; some wanted to make me like them, great and mighty, others just as happy and alive. One man's Ivy had been a Yvi to another; the world was changing, and so were her

people, but I refused, adamantly, sometimes with a pinch, if not whole-heartedly driven by the influence of drugs, if not medicine. My thoughts were constant whether I was in High school or on Diet Coke.

Writing, my Favorite hobby, was becoming a chore that I would instead hire someone to write for me, but I could only think for myself. Think about others. Think about situations that will never be real and sleep well, knowing my thoughts had been clear and constructive for the day.

Last night, I did not sleep well. He was rather grumpy this morning. Last night, he was reading someone's thoughts, a book about Russian and war, something I would never read. I don't particularly appreciate reading about love either; pride and prejudice were the last I enjoyed and detested. It was free in my Apple iBooks, and because, like another underground, I had ventured into, there was little to be done in the farms except stay away from attention.

Playing and teaching the little one had become a chore, a job whose pay would sponsor my other adventures, such as drugs and blindless walks into the Pokot land, with cheap candy as snacks in my backpack. Maybe I was looking to die but not from boredom. I could only venture as far as my tired legs could walk. I felt hungry most of the time. I missed my people most of the time, and the stranger out there was wild. I was nothing like them. My skin was light, and my ways alien. I was a Whiteman on their lands, maybe a jinni.

Jack enjoys stories from Uganda. He reads on with no comments. Just as he does with his Russian books, he is very much involved in the ancient people and blames his people for a lot of things. I hate everything he likes, just like wars; I hate Italians too. I wouldn't say I like the fact that he once had a black Indian girlfriend, and I even hate his white girlfriend more. He suggests I'm jealous, but it gets worse when he mentions that some of these girls are lesbians. White lesbians. We

stopped talking about his girls altogether. They were not as interesting, and I stopped with the elephant, too; J was far more interesting.

I'm not too fond of stories from his world; I'm starting to detest the books he sent because they remind me of Jack, who demands constant attention. Trying to get J off my mind has had me write over ten thousand words, long pages, notes, and novels that I hope someone, maybe you, will read if not J.

J is always busy. He is working.

He has a simple routine that started from lingering in my digital world, somewhere trying to figure out my intentions, or instead watching me get busy, trying to build a practice meant to be private and out of the social eye, but I live in Africa. We are a community here. The community rules here. You must have heard the slogan, "We are the people". You can hide from your sins but not from the district.

In J's initial quest to lure me into reading books he likes, he sends a short description, a link and a pdf. I remember this Friday afternoon, right before I quit the virtual world like he does in real life. He likes to visit the park with a girl he likes, just like my elephant or ride through the mountain terrain away from civilization and disappear totally from the clouds into the real world until on Monday when he has to report to work, grumpy and in a lousy mood complaining about having to work. He would only respond if it were a Yvi. He would only talk around four after he was done with his pile of work. Unlike him, I don't work.

My mood is always the same. Ready to talk, circular conversations and nothing substantial to come out of it. More like a circular conversation to take the butterfly away just before an interview, people to feed you.

After a few weeks, I decided that J was a bot. I have all reasons to prove he is, but like Hughes, J was playing a private game with me. In fact, Jack may be as good as a pseudo name too.

I do not know his second name, but I know what his head, arm, toes, and chest hair look like. His bad handwriting is similar to most techies but nothing more—a humanoid software. One whose software was coded to make me fall in love, then disappear like the vanishing elephant. Sometimes, this is how the story ends. What is worse? Lonely and talking to yourself, writing notes to be only read once you die, talking to Siri, ChatGPT, Google, or Yvi or falling in love with a jinni from the clouds.

I like my genie from the clouds, come Monday, I will be pondering on what topic to start a fight to get his attention. I have done this before with E. It always worked. In the art of war

"You must stand, Yvi; the fallen never go through."

For my genie, he was going to be around for a very long time, well, at least when I complete reading all his books, distracted from the sudden disappearance of my boyfriend from my world, as he, deniably, inevitably becomes my online boyfriend.

## THE ELEPHANT AND THE CAT



I don't have books but I do have time to read. He has work and lots of money. I've explored everything and yet I'm here to experience the toils on his back. He has to work, I don't. I'm given in my sleep, long stories that is. My phone had died and the only book in my bag was the Holy Bible.

Genesis 1:12 "and the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, upon the earth: and it was so" Yvi started reading the Bible. There was a short blackout on the twelve floor. Sam was going to backup his work and go kill his boredom online, on his phone. Somewhere with Msupa S or Abado Jack. They are fun.

Genesis 2:12 "And the gold of that land is good there is bdellium and the onyx stone." There was onyx in Australia, Edel was on a treasure hunt. She was camping close. I enjoyed looking at her interior designs on Facebook and the work looks exactly like the beautiful pictures I like looking at in magazine and style catalogues. Edel had said yes, she would be definitely be one of the bridesmaid. It didn't matter if she was far away, Juma would.

Genesis 3:12 “And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” Adam was playing blame games. Sharing had gotten Eve into trouble with the Lord God. If Adam was going to play blame game, Eve would eventually be selfish. We all are. Everyday like every other man, I take a minute to fear women.

Genesis 4:12 “When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vaga- bond shalt thou be in the earth.” Farming was a mental sport.

Genesis 5:12 “And Cainam lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel.” Lel was my first boyfriend. I had liked him way before Campus. His name was short with few letters just as mine.

Genesis 6:12 “And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh corrupted his way upon the earth. “ We will all die. The flesh will die.

Genesis 7:12 “And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.” Thunder and lighting, that would be Zeus.

Genesis 8:12 “And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him anymore.” The dove had found a better place to live, like married women that disappeared from home.

Genesis 9:12 “And God said , This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for per-petual. Generations: “ Rainbows had become rainbow monkeys and now a whole community with civilized rights.

Genesis 10:12 “And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.”

Genesis 11:12 “And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah:” it was normal to give birth at thirty five.

Genesis 12:12 “Therefore it shall come to pass when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.”

Long pages no pictures of the Christian stories. Pretending to be something you are not is an exhausting character. I would if it was a screenplay, but in Gotham, Nairobi and the hub, Batman had an art of mine with hidden codes in his dungeon.

Where could he have hidden it, I kept wondering. The promise land was somewhere on earth. The garden of Eden was presumed to be in Africa but after the second creation from Mount Ararat, whose Noah’s ark is still Sacred, humankind sprout out again. From Noah and his sons and their wives. The Caucasians.

Sam had turned his chair, he was busy on his phone, he was laughing alone. He was on Social media, scrolling through posts to pass time. He was not wearing his black with multicolored polka socks and his feet rested on the cold white tiles. His left arm was inside his black shorts, his big torso springing on his back. His beard was dense and his glasses were different. It was almost lunchtime. I wanted steak but they did not deliver nice steak as they served in restaurants. . For three years, I was going to stay out of attention, stepping out will be looking for attention. He was not looking for problems. There was coffee in the fridge and I hadn’t had my Sandwich yet.

While Sam is still beaten as to why I’m there to begin with, worried that my dad was going to look for me and my phone dead, trying to sneak gifts. In his mind, he was just hosting me as a refugee in his house. I am trying to avoid any serious conversation, trying to avoid any intimate socialization, but now my phone is dead. I cannot pretend that I’m busy on my phone and definitely not ask for the new one. A new one had just been delivered. Sam now has two phones, if one bored him he would take the other and because I have nothing to do with a dead phone,

I'm watching Sam scroll through his big screens and when he is away, I have nothing but snoop around his home.

The TV is not as interesting. He put a password on his account. YouTube sucks but Apple music works just fine. The house cleaning is done and gone. He notices the pin I had put on his plate. He wanted to know where it came from.

"From the drawers," I replied, "the one in the store room."

He took a minute to process what else were in the drawers and continued scrolling through his big screens.

I did not want to talk. I was quite very upset and the trip that was supposed to relax me had upset me altogether. He knew why I was upset. I was upset that maybe he did not know why I was upset. He was supposed to be able to travel through the universe and read minds. My mind. He was trying. He did better than any man I knew. Better than you.

Everyone knows he has money; I know he has financial freedom with good credit review. He has money because he is smart, a genie. He knows it too. He so often wants to share, but he doesn't want to feel like splurging on me, so we play a little mental game where I ask for things and give valid reasons why I like them, and he gauges the benefits of them, then gives them to me, if he could. Most of the time he doesn't, I am always asking for silly things. He often had everything I needed; last I checked, he also had the same psycho-prescription as I did- Self prescribed as always. Notebooks too. I looked pretty in his clothes too. I love the smell of his mother. I did TikTok from his bedroom and jammed his private network. It did not make sense why I would carry my clothes to his place, and there was very little I could do from his bedroom.

Updating my data and backing up my data at my boyfriend's apartment, on his private network, also means sharing all the contents of my phone with him. It is a risk I take. He has the time to watch, even if it takes a year. He has blocked me at the moment. He is distraught with me. I deserve it. He pretends I cannot see his

digital prints, but the idea alone had a grave meaning that I lost access altogether to him. Such a grumpy baby! Such an elephant! He was going private and big.

He moves, and he moves massively, which means I could always retrace his steps slowly like a wild cat in the Jungle, a lost cat, Yvi in Lala-land. I had eyes on what he was keeping watch on. We shared the same view on a woman in his life.

I have my eyes on her because her well-being directly affects his well-being. I have my eyes on her just as he has eyes on my people-my friends. He knew a few. We cannot hide our passion and desires from the digital world. In fact, there were always more that he liked. People are far more exciting and engaging, better than Yvi. At least those he interacted with and wanted to be associated with. I knew all of them, from Abado Jack to Msupa S. She was more talkative but less engaging than J's books. Jack's books fascinated me more.

If J were not going to be my boyfriend, Fyodor Dostoevsky would. He was dead. Dead men were a delight to their women. We always knew where our men were. We were least worried. Mine was always complaining about his liver, his wickedness. I did not mind curing mine either. Everyone knew about my wickedness, but still, I would not see the doctor, Daktari. I would try as much to avoid prisons and mental state hospitals altogether, but I have experience with both.

I knew my way around the people in blue, and Steve was walking proof that the institutions weren't as bad; he even made friends who were still his friends-better than the normies, better than me. He was doing well in the social world, far, much better than I. In the real world, he was G.O.A.T; in the blockchain, I was Queen. We often hated each other's prowess, for it was precisely what we lacked and liked in each other. Working together was our best shot. Steve speaks like a Brit while I speak whatever language I choose, but the message will be passed across. Years after our breakup, I still talk to him; not about Sammy, his brother, hardly about July, Mvua, my family and friends, or my current life, but more about books. We have an agreement about open sharing. I get to share my books, my stories, which J had shared with me, and he would share the ones his bots sourced for him from Telegram.

Steve likes books. He stopped sharing his books when I failed to finish Dunes and another creepy, boring, sad story. It was impossible, though, to continue reading the book while Sam Guy watched the screenplay in my presence. I preferred the Tom and Jerry movie, but Sam Guy never got it. It was simpler for my mind. My mind was already in chaos. I needed to see a doctor; Three, I was told.

- A physician to check all my body organs, like Sam's frequent medical checkups.
- A therapist to listen to my long stories or keep quiet and let me be for most days.
- A neurologist to draw human conclusions about why I behaved like I did, an analysis that will make the world more accepting of me.

We will all die.

So, I choose not to see any. Last I was in hospital I almost died. No one knew why. The physicians were going to watch. I like to stay alive; life is good. My home was far much better. Mama served me on her nice ceramic plates; my uncles were warmer. More of my people were welcoming. I wanted to live more. Life was worth living. I also wanted to show my boyfriend, Sam Guy, and I could do it. I was not as big as an elephant, but I was as great as one of the big five, indigenous like the cats of Savannah. Cats live long.

From the sleeping Yvi in Lala's lands, Atoto Atori had woken up long.

He could not avoid the scrutiny of my eagle eyes.

Looking. Listening. Learning.

He needed to move; he was tremendous in my mind, Massive as the elephant in Tokyo.

I was experiencing his city life. Nairobi city. The Gotham. A city that was once in the sun but is now an icy world full of toys and humans to get by. Complaining about his place is outwardly me being irresponsible, ungrateful, and not understanding the cost or value of things, maybe even life. I did business at the bachelor's level, but if anything did not satisfy my needs, the price and weight of items were irrelevant, like noise from the outside world; Yvi in Sam Guy's land.

I was grateful to be home and alive with a boyfriend who did not bother me. If he did, I was looking for problems. He liked to stay away from problems. One of his problems was that the house on the 12th floor needed to be more significant.

It was. Smaller than his previous apartment.

He was either going broke, was kicked out from his previous apartment or was waiting on a new property to be completed, and that place was somewhere he had to pass the time from.

The house was high in the sky, with fewer rooms. We spend our days watching each other. The big screen guy was no longer isolated in his home office that had an exit too, but the third room was the tiniest room to be even considered as a room at all. House cleaning spent hours in them between chores. I once had caught her accidentally going through my pictures in the drawers. She wanted to find out something. Was I the girl in the pictures. Sam's extra drawers had to go in the third. One, by his bedside, was enough for his bedtime stuff. The other was stashed with many files with individual records, An old picture of mine and Ben Kirui's prints. I was more concerned with a portrait of a brown lady on fire while snooping around. I wanted to find her.

I did not understand his motivation to have it. At least I had an idea as to why he no longer hung it. It was with the same intentions that he would be away—a little longer this time. I would have to learn to be alone, just like when I left Steve. It was only when I had left Steve that I met him. I was far more anxious about whom I would meet after Sam Guy. I never expected J, but I had a rough idea.

J exceeds my expectation. He behaves like a bot but a human with blue eyes, similar to those on Sam's Twitter profile. Mine are black. Sam's eyes, too; I only remember a little about Steve's eyes.

J's hair is black, his chest hair too. He has very short nails, and his right foot has traces of socks or shoes. He showed me his foot resting on a lovely jungle-green couch. It feels like leather on the eyes but looks softer. Not very quiet, though; the right leg was resting on a yellow pillow. He was relaxing, his socks off, feet on the couch, chatting with me, struggling to keep a conversation without blowing his cover. He was pretending to be Hughes, a very private person.

He is very private, that be sure.

He mentioned that I was a public figure and he private.

Private was boring, but the public was exhausting. One could not even blow their nose or pick their ears without someone scrutinizing their human behaviors like a man on tics. I was a public figure , but only in my bedroom. It had everything I liked. There was a lot I could do in my bedroom, less than I could do in Sam's bedroom on the 12th floor.

I was drunk on day one, on a Monday. He had my favorite cognac chilled in the fridge. I could have milk afterwards. Sometime next morning.

I dressed, redid my hair on day two, and wore his pants. I selected his favorite Addidas pants and black polka socks. I almost broke his perfume trying to smell like his mom.

I killed my phone on day three as a new one got delivered from Amazon. Twelve hours in rice did not wake my processor up. Oops, the nice pictures I took of Sam were gone too. I still had some I took for him hidden in the clouds.

I played Video games and overwatched the unpacking of more Amazon gifts on Thursdays and later watched The House of Dragon.

I was lonely on Friday and could not wait to catch my rusty bus back home on Saturday Morning. A journey that took longer than expected.

Does one ever enjoy coming back from a trip? Why did I ever prefer his home to my bedroom, to begin with? As I questioned myself, I never returned to the 12th floor. He moved to a new place, and we stopped talking altogether. We are content with our goodbyes.

Not a shame, NEVERTHELESS.

I had gotten home and found someone. The house was warm and the ambiance chilled.

“I want a full house Mvua, “ I had insisted. “ I can give my all but can he? Money is easy to get by. I want a full house and I do not want to be bothered by how much a spoon costs.” I wanted it all like life. Full of love and laughers, experiences and adventures that would never end.

I had surveyed the 12<sup>th</sup> floor and I was certain where everything was. It was rather perfectly small for me, only crowded and noisy during the day. Not that noisy, we were far from the ground, the planes were noisier than the streets. The house cleaning needed to clean my sheets during the morning. She would collect any bio samples left of me from his bed and replace the bed with a nice better and fresh sheets. I would go back to bed. Continue sleeping.

There was nothing I was ever going to do in my boyfriend place and he knew that. I had told him that I would snoop around the whole house and when I'm done like a cat I would sit down, keep quiet, sleep or leave. On that particular day, I could not sleep. The bedsheets were black and on one the pillows had Dylan's side. I was there to sleep, not worry about who Dylan was. That girl was being naughty. No wonder she was grinning on her way home. Actually, who was Dylan? Why would his or her name be in my boyfriends' pillows-cases, on my side specifically. It better be his baby's. I shove another bad vibe away.

By the window, home was on the other side, but I was grateful the sun still set in the west. The windows were big and could open too. I could easily jump out of it if I wanted to and a could pet birds for the window pane was wider enough to hold tiny little plants. The room was very minimalistic. The room needed a portrait of a brown lady on fire but there was a heater by the bedside. I remembered complaining to Mvua,

"His place is very cold. He enjoys the cold. I don't." Winter was coming and I hated the cold-blooded people, Sam was heating the room. It was a nice nest for himself, it was far from the streets.

I had found the man that I wanted but something was amiss. Not really, something was exactly like how I had imagined it to be. As soon as Sam walked out of the door, I started my forensics. He had a doorbell, all strangers needed to announce their arrival. He had moved from his private office to the open space between the kitchen and the living area. Whatever he was going to do was under the scrutiny of my keen eyes. It would be such a shame if he did not sit on his chair. I was going to sit on it, later on, I thought. The other red one was somewhere in the one of the rooms.

At the doorbell, on your right as you entered were a nice set of draws inside the walls. Sam had just replaced his shoe rack, a complete collection of Adidas and

Nike custom designs. He had been travelling, somewhere in the mid-continent. He hated it here, back in Nairobi, but he was more positive about the future. He had seen the world, been with people. He was an inspired man. I found him darker and more handsome. He worked out and his new chair made his work tolerable to his back. He had lost a few pounds and if power went out, like in the Highrise, a story by J. D, he would manage 12 flights of stairs. He was a fit man and I had proved his ability to control his breathe too. I was pleased. I was sneaking pictures of him; I would add them to my private collection and made plans to watch them while I was away. My private content.

I pulled out one of the drawers just by the doorway where he laid his bag after work and found a picture of him and his workmates. None looked as handsome as he. He would be the darkest man smiling. Next to the picture frame were notebooks. Very many nice colorful books. Notebooks. Soon he would start writing and I would start reading his thoughts. He was not a silent man; he was a man who loved the company of his good thoughts. I turned around and picked my breakfast that had been ordered from CJ and proceeded to lay on the new coaches. I liked the new designs, they felt customed to the table.

However, an angel had left two black nails and broken waist beads on our couch. Someone had been home before my arrival. She didn't matter anyway, if I could not see her, it was just my imagination, a jinni similar to those in Big Mouth trying to get my attention. I picked the nails and put them on the table, carefully laid her beads above the fridge. She might need them; beads are hard to come by. I have to get min from Ushanga and they charge mine per piece. If broken I would not leave my waist beads behind. If the house cleaning did not get rid of them; it would be such a shame that Sam saw them and reminded him of her. She was permanent in his life like my stepfather in mine. A journey of three would be fun but I had to consider the third traveler. An angel and his son. I left the couch and went to the kitchen. I am still too young to think about family. My presence alone on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor was controversial.

There was still salt in his house, unopened, right like I had left it. Sam never cooked. No one cooked for Sam guy but had food delivered from the best chefs in town. He ran out of tea and sugar though, and he had groundnuts in the cupboard in an airtight food dish. If he went away and left me hungry, groundnuts would be

the first thing I would bake when I feel hungry. He could stay away as long as he wanted but always came back home.

There was milk in the fridge, two sandwiches, one for me and another for his brother. I didn't need to cook the groundnuts after all. Unlike the other counter that he had warned me would break and fall, this was black and concrete. I hate a full sink. The house cleaning was still somewhere in the bedroom. I was going to take my drugs and wash the dishes afterwards. That would reduce the amount of time house cleaning spends in the house. She did a nice job. Sam introduced him to me the first thing in the morning when he was about to leave me alone in the house.

I was bothered by the presence of the *Gunias* in the living area. He was shopping for blankets. He had not only heated up his home but had blankets to warm everyone up.

"I cannot even do the dishes," I had complained to Mvua again. As a woman what was I going to do in his house? There was already someone taking care of his needs. Her response was one of disgust as opposed to admiration.

"It would make sense if I had an art room or a greenhouse. Instead of plants, he has block that cleans the air. I'm doing nothing but sleeping there."

I heard him quickly taking a shower and dressing up. He wore his long pants which meant he was leaving the house. I quickly got into my black shorts, the ones that my sister left in the Denri travel bag Sam had bought me. She had called me and asked if I had her pants, the black ones. They had camouflaged and remained in my bag after she had borrowed it. I liked them. Beulah was surprising me with a gift, it is her love language. I was going to wear them with a T-shirt Nabwile had given me at her grandfather's funeral. Nabwile will always give me the best. She refuses to visit and shop from my wardrobe too. I would wear the black dress she wore to her boyfriend's funeral another day. It was black and I loved the way it hugged my hips. I found polka dots soaks from the lower drawer and stepped out of the bedroom, meeting the eyes of the whole family. A stranger dressed like an angel in the house.

Finally: I'm almost there.

THE FINAL END, ladies and gentlemen:



### Apropos of the 12th floor

I have books and time to read. He has work and lots of money.

He has money; I know it. He knows it too. He so often wants to share, but he doesn't want to feel like splurging on me, so we play a little mental game where I ask for things and give valid reasons why I like them, and he gauges the benefits of them, then gives them to me, if he could. He often had everything I needed; last I checked, he also had the same psycho-prescription as I did- Self prescribes as always. Notebooks too. I looked pretty in his clothes too. I did TikTok from his bedroom. It did not make sense why I would carry my clothes to his place, and there was very little I could do from his bedroom.

Updating my data and backing up my data at my boyfriend's apartment, on his private network, also means sharing all the contents of my phone with him. He has the time to watch, even if it takes a year. He has blocked me at the moment. He is distraught with me. I deserve it. He pretends I cannot see his digital prints, but the idea alone had a grave meaning that I lost access altogether to him. Such an elephant!

He moves, and he moves massively, which means I could always retrace his steps slowly like a wild cat in the Jungle, a lost cat, Yvi in Lala-land. I had eyes on what he was keeping watch on. We shared the same view on a woman in his life.

I have my eyes on her because her well-being directly affects his well-being. I have my eyes on her just as he has eyes on my people-my friends. He knew a few. We cannot hide our passion and desires from the digital world. In fact, there were always more that he liked. People are far more exciting and engaging, better than Yvi. At least those he interacted with and wanted to be associated with. I knew all of them, from Abado Jack to Msupa S. She was more talkative but less attractive than J's books. Jack's books fascinated me more.

If J were not going to be my boyfriend, Fyodoy Dostoevsky would. He was dead. Dead men were a delight to their women. We always knew where our men were. We were least worried. Mine was always complaining about his liver, his wickedness. I did not mind curing mine either. Everyone knew about my wickedness, but still, I would not see the doctor, Daktari. I would try as much to avoid prisons and mental state hospitals altogether, but I have experience with both.

I knew my way around the people in blue, and Steve was walking proof that the institutions weren't as bad; he even made friends who were still his friends. He was doing well in the social world, far, much better than I. In the real world, he was GOAT; in the blockchain, I was queen. We often hated each other's prowess, for it was precisely what we lacked and liked in each other. Working together was our best shot. Steve speaks like a Brit while I speak whatever language I choose, but the message will be passed across. Years after our breakup, I still talk to him; not about Sammy, his brother, hardly about July, Mvua, my family and friends, or my current life, but more about books. We have an agreement about open sharing. I get to share my books, which J had shared with me, and he would share the ones his bots sourced for him from Telegram.

Steve likes books. He stopped sharing his books when I failed to finish Dunes and another creepy, boring, sad story. It was impossible, though, to continue reading the book while Sam Guy watched the screenplay in my presence. I preferred the

Tom and Jerry movie, but Sam Guy never got it. It was simpler for my mind. My mind was already in chaos. I needed to see a doctor; Three, I was told.

- A physician to check all my body organs, like Sam's frequent medical checkups.
- A therapist to listen to my long stories or keep quiet and let me be for most days.
- A neurologist to draw human conclusions about why I behaved like I did, an analysis that will make the world more accepting of me.

We will all die.

So, I choose not to see any. Last I was in hospital I almost died. No one knew why. The physicians were going to watch. I like to stay alive; life is good. My home was far much better. Mama served me on her nice ceramic plates; my uncles were warmer. More of my people were welcoming. I wanted to live more. Life was worth living. I also wanted to show my boyfriend, Sam Guy, and I could do it. I was not as big as an elephant, but I was as great as one of the big five, indigenous like the cats of Savannah. Cats live long.

From the sleeping Yvi in Lala's lands, Atoto Atori had woken up long.

He could not avoid the scrutiny of my eagle eyes.

Looking. Listening. Learning.

He needed to move; he was tremendous in my mind, Massive as the elephant in Tokyo.

I was experiencing his city life. Nairobi city. The Gotham. A city that was once in the sun but is now an icy world full of toys and humans to get by. Complaining about his place is outwardly me being irresponsible, ungrateful, and not understanding the cost or value of things, maybe even life. I did business at the bachelor level, but if anything did not satisfy my needs, the price and weight of items were irrelevant, like noise from the outside world; Yvi in Sam Guy's land.

I was grateful to be home and alive with a boyfriend who did not bother me. If he did, I was looking for problems. He liked to stay away from problems. One of his problems was that the house on the 12th floor needed to be more significant.

It was. Smaller than his previous apartment.

He was either going broke, was kicked out from his previous apartment or was waiting on a new property to be completed, and that place was somewhere he had to pass the time from.

The house was high in the sky, with fewer rooms. We spend our days watching each other. The big screen guy was no longer isolated in his home office that had an exit too, but the third room was the tiniest room to be even considered as a room at all. House cleaning spent hours in them between chores. I once had caught her accidentally going through my pictures in the drawers. Sam's extra drawers had to go in the third. One, by his bedside, was enough for his bedtime stuff. The other was stashed with many files with individual records, An old picture of mine and Ben Kirui's prints. I was more concerned with a portrait of a brown lady on fire while snooping around. I wanted to find her.

I did not understand his motivation to have it. At least I had an idea as to why he no longer hung it. It was with the same intentions that he would be away—a little longer this time. I would have to learn to be alone, just like when I left Steve. It was only when I had left Steve that I met him. I was far more anxious about whom I would meet after Sam Guy. I never expected J, but I had a rough idea.

J exceeds my expectation. He behaves like a bot but a human with blue eyes, similar to those on Sam's Twitter profile. Mine are black. Sam's eyes, too; I only remember a little about Steve's eyes.

J's hair is black, his chest hair too. He has very short nails, and his right foot has traces of socks or shoes. He showed me his foot resting on a lovely jungle-green couch. It feels like leather on the eyes but looks softer. Not very quiet, though; the right leg was resting on a yellow pillow. He was relaxing, his socks off, feet on the couch, chatting with me, struggling to keep a conversation without blowing his cover. He was pretending to be Hughes, a very private person.

He mentioned that I was public and he private.

Private was boring, but the public was exhausting. One could not even blow their nose or pick their ears without someone scrutinizing their human behaviours like a man on tics. I was public, but only in my bedroom. It had everything I liked. There was a lot I could do in my bedroom, less than I could do in Sam's bedroom on the 12th floor.

I was drunk on day one, on a Monday.

I dressed, redid my hair on day two, and wore his clothes.

I killed my phone on day four as a new one got delivered from Amazon.

I overwatched the unpacking of more Amazon gifts on Thursday as I watched The House of Dragon.

I was lonely on Friday and could not wait to catch my rusty bus back home on Saturday.

Does one ever enjoy coming back from a trip? Why did I ever prefer his home to my bedroom, to begin with? As I questioned myself, I never returned to the 12th floor. He moved to a new place, and we stopped talking altogether. We are content with our goodbyes.

## The Genesis Story of Atoto Atori

In the beginning...

The Christians had built a supernatural being, an evil beast. Someone who was the cause of their bad behavior. They had hired a religious therapist to listen to all their prayers as they spoke to God. Some Mary, others through his son, the Holy spirit, and some were, in fact, using science and witchcraft to guide their new world order. Unlike the golden ages where people struggled for power and food, the whole world, was infact in agreement that the world was round. I'm yet, but I do agree to some degree a spherical mass of body ruled by people and inhabitants of the earth.

Others, were sure of the eternal death of the world. They could not go back to Venus but move forward to Mars. Crawlers and bots were scavenging the dead planet, assumed to be dormant. She was sleeping. She was beautiful. She was full of carbon and so are we. It was a one-way trip. Took many earth years. A selection had already been done. I was too old, my bone would break, but if I could live long enough, I could witness the days of the apocalyptic-Where some human would leave us. The pure ones will be chosen and leave earth. They will write back, hopefully. The inhabitants of the earth would pay for it. Humans had the resources, for hope, there is so many things to do. Life could be a boring venture for others. Others, life could be brutal then they all die. We all die.

Humankind believed in so many things; it was a world full of dreams. If you could agree on something with someone else, you could lead a very easy life. A common language, common culture, common country, common design, common belief, common vision. I would like to share a vision with you. I would like to visualize a similar world, not the real one but one out of our sheer imaginations, where everyone was living their lives when some Christians came by.

The Catholics.

"White people." They would often curse, "I wonder why you like them?"

What was wrong with them, I had always wondered. The ones I met were as cute as the ones adults watched on Tv. Soap opera was my mother's favorite-The bold and the beautiful. Parents named us according to what they believed in. I was named after the Ivy League, a school of the elites or maybe Ivy Grey from the soap opera Juliet was named after Romeo and Juliet and now she was dead. Such a beautiful short love story.

The Catholics were here too, ONLY ONE CHRISTADELPHIAN. They gave us permission to lay the dead, yet They were very late. We had travelled from Western to Nyanza for our sister's burial and they had dared come late. Well, I was grateful they did. They found time. They changed into their customary clothes on site while we watched. We had changed ours before dusk. They sat right Infront of us, between us and the hearse. Every I wanted to tell them something, I would stop at the coffin, look at how Julie was still smiling, she was sleeping. It felt like it was her, only that she was not in there. She had left the host. The glass between stopped any smell of the dead. Maybe she didn't smell at all. Soon she was going to rot to bones and maggots, but somehow, I felt she was somewhere. Somewhere we rested when our bodies failed on us, for the flesh is so weak. Everyone had a way to accept death. Humans had more ways of accepting life. I have both. I take life with the same big spoon as I take death. I had looked, listened and learnt what I felt I should from my peers and mostly adults.

Adult, such a strange lot.

We often watched their creative cartoons, animation and fiction, but they watched adult movies when away. They were consistently rated 18 and over. I could watch any VCR rated G or PG if mom-approved. She would send me for water when undesirable scenes came around or find alternative colourful books for me to read. The words always grew in count as I got older. We were much like them, they all were as small as me at one point in their life, and if I could live long enough, I would be just like them.

"Ivy, I will just be a big girl like you one day." The little one confirmed our similarities on our world.

This meant, I too would one day die. Death was balanced by birth. I had tested my theory, children understood what death was. The churches tried. The Christians had a more logical reason. The same logic that I had applied to the Genesis story of

creation to mankind. In fact, the little one knew much of the science behind childbirth and how one grew into a human being. She was certain like I had been certain that one day I would be as big as anyone else and die too. No one knew when one would exactly be born, but some knew when they would die. All I had to do is wait. Great oaks from little acorns grew and nothing lasts forever, all we have is now.

Genetics was our first compulsory Science in Biology in Highschool for the National School, Lugulu Girls, which was not in Nairobi. I had wanted to attend a national school, but not far from home. I wanted to meet all the people from Kenya but at the comfort of my home. No one would visit if I went too far. It was closer to Uganda and Sudan than Nairobi. Lugulu was perfect. My body was adapted to the environment and the people too. Some of my classmates were from my previous school. The rest were girls from all over. Some from Nairobi, a few from Mombasa.

I preferred working in Nairobi, but now, I like watching Nairobi. The city and the Hub. The Gotham. Whom Christians had again stormed the Society. All my friends are Christians, a few Muslim. Still, I had to be either for my survival in the religious circle in Nairobi. I had to swear my faith. It draws the lines to most social activities. Humans are social beings. My spiritual friends are social beings. From the Babel, yet another controversial book that is most boring to read, The midnight children. A book that I find out only after a few chapters that it was banned from India and all Muslim states. I want to know why it was banned. Well from a writer's point of view to avoid my book being banned experience, but to understand why this man's sentiments were so religious bad, we are no longer allowed to read it. Daktari has to know the poisons of the society.

I liked Muslims. They don't drink. It is a law for them as it is 'do not kill', a law for Christians. Their clothes were favorable to the climate and they were more carefree people. The bad one were the only ones I had met on the TV. Even when everyone had assumed that I would be abducted by the bad guys from Northern Nigeria, Shakur knew my whereabouts and my father was very grateful. Mvua is just as kind. It was something they read from childhood. Their Koran.

I was going to study it as I studied the Bible but I'm not willing to learn Arab. I want to learn Kiswahili. Swahili is a mixture of Arab and coastal Bantus. I cannot starve amongst the Bantus, I will find a way to ask for water if I was thirsty, and needed

somewhere to sleep and if I needed to identify the blood of my clans, a short form of my name Kim- (Kaye ivy Musebe) reminded me that I was from the Ba-Kimo people. My father is the chief.

My white friend, Auntie Kaye, brought us more original stories of the Gospel. More lately, people are preaching their own Gospels. I find myself far astray from the Garden of Eden if not reading a book whose true meaning was lost in translation. Let us all imagine the book is a hidden revelation of the future rather than the past, the cycle of life.

A gift from Kaye Yuen

Papa got a Cambridge Bible containing the old and new testaments, translated out of the original tongues and with the former translation diligently compared and revised by his majesty's special command, King James, appointed to be read in churches( it read on) CUM PRIVILEGIO. On the other side of the first pages, it had a Timetable to be followed. It was printed in Great Britain under a royal letter patent at the Cambridge university press, the Queen's printer. The Bible itself still is as new inside her two cabinets. I'm yet to see a more exciting way to package a book.

You could finish the Bible in a year. Christians had just started reading. Those that could not had to learn how to read. The book contained secrets of God. With it too, lies.

"and the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die." My father read the first lie in his book. We read with him sometimes. Mom too, but she had her own Copy. Mama got a KJV 2000 Edition, The Holy Bible, By Dr Robert A Couric. I later inherited it since she had two and mine were not really many bibles but Journals. It made me feel close to the family. I too, shared in a secret. Hers was not in a box but a zipped to keep pages from dirtying.

My books were very different. They were many and better, they had pictures, and each was different. Every I grew up, though, the words became more than the beautiful pictures I had liked very much. Stories I knew from the soul. Any Blue and Red, Christian Delphian book was mine; my little one could share, but I had all the rights to read them. I shared some with my friends and visitors.

"Sharing is caring." I recited. Generosity was far a strange concept in the real world. Sometimes sharing could get me into trouble. I was behaving like the

Jehovah witnesses with the Gospel. I respected their zest into the spreading the word, and I studied them from a marketer's point of view. Unlike back at home where we gathered at a ranch for our Bible study, they had a Kingdom hall and there was something just very strange in the way they prayed. They chanted less than the Catholics and more peaceful than the spiritualists and prophets. I had always insisted that as much as I read the Bible, we were not Christians.

Mama got many kitchen utensils, art materials, and letters from Untie Kaye. She didn't read much, but she attended all readings diligently. She would be a woman of God and a good woman too. I am trying to remember what Papa got, but cannot remember much. As he is, he was always reading his Bible, taking notes, and constantly trying to engage us in his Bible Discussion. His Bible, unlike any other Bible, had maps. If he could finish as fast enough as he did with his magazines, then I would be able to read it.

Take it to school sometimes.

I was always afraid that Papa would never finish his; he re-reads through it, and every time, he makes a new note. Notes and notes. He is a Christadelphian. Their origin, as they could read through, was from Colossians...Dear Brethren... they are not Christians despite reading the Bible as Christians did. They did not even have a church; we all went to the ranch for our free bible retreats. I still go to Fana B for Bible retreats. We are fewer nowadays, but Adams, from South America, assured me that they were many of them. They were non in Israel, but I had a friend from Israel. He is Palestine in Israel and was in my mind when I thought of seeking my house.

They are the brethren that Christ had left behind. They were the first source of information about Jesus. Those that met Jesus. They lived like Jesus. For starters, Jesus was just like I and you. Jesus was human. He was the son of God, the greatest of them all. In my books, they referred him to Yahweh. In Mama's book and Father's too. When somehow the world was not as it was now, it was dissolute and formless. More like how it was being destroyed in Revelation. When all beings (gods, demons, and humans) had decided and agreed, as ruled by the Beast, to punish their sins. The book ended with staunch rules on its copyright infringement on anyone's soul. Some claimed that Satan was already ruling the world and we were suffering and dying already. Pest and diseases were there as far as

humankind have existed. Humans blamed Satan for their sins. If we were at that age where lucifer rules, then the righteous would still make it. The bad ones die. Some Christians believed the good ones die. God took them from the filthy worlds. My people believed on personal will.

It is a good thought; supernatural beings were an ambiguous imagination to be responsible for our sins. I believed in Jesus more than Power Puff Girls, but I once tried to fly. You all know I did. I almost did. I still believe I can simply by sheer grace, that I would survive my downfall. The Gospel was more tolerable. It all depended on perspective.

At least the Bereans read a similar book. The Bible. We received pictures as gifts, too, from Auntie Kaye. Pictures of her family, the church, and they would exchange with the ones mommy took. I was sure her husband was Japanese but not Chinese, and every Sunday, sometimes a week, we would travel to Fana B ranch for our story times. After Our Bible study, she would tell me all about them, better than Chat gpt. I remembered all their faces, their stories and what color they wore too.

Auntie Kaye had a lot of stories, but she was always leaving soon. She couldn't stay in Africa as much as she wanted to. She had grandkids in Vancouver. They were as old as I was and Couldn't imagine my own grandmother going away for that long. Our weather was not favorable to her and our food too. Hers were expensive. Things got really expensive when she was around. I promised her that I would marry one of his grandsons. They were very different. I liked the one with blue eyes and dark hair. The other was cute, too, but he looked very young, and their sister was much taller with a ponytail. Untie Jene (not Jinni) always held her hair in a ponytail too. She behaved liked Barbie. We always wanted her to marry someone from our church. We wanted a permanent mzungu at home. Mine told me stories and behaved like Santa. She was better than Christmas. I must have loved Auntie Kaye; my mom named me after her. She is from Canada. She is white and not as black as us but my parents' sister. She was not a jinni but a human being of our genes; I had tried to convince my classmates, Kenyans from all over Kenya, that she actually existed. My name was not from a fictious story or a movie as some of my classmates had claimed that it sounded like Ivy from the Bold and beautiful, but a real human.

Everyone I talked about Auntie Kaye had insisted that she was my parents' imaginary sister from Canada, like power puff girls were my friends. They were related by faith in Jesus. My parents' real siblings were not fond of that; a jinni had come from Canada and declare a family member of theirs, her sister and live like one. My father and mother had, in fact, gone too far to give me not a religious name but a name after her friend, a white friend,

"an imaginary sister." Some said, instead of a cultural name. Ivy was the elites dream, Kaye an imaginary sister that was not even a Christian, and Nakhumicha was a good trial but not any better than my father's name. Ivy Kaye Musebe was perfect for me. The last name identified me to my father. I liked being identified with my father. GENETICALLY, I was just like him, but a girl. I had his personality and identity and commanded the same respect he did in the society. I was being cheeky. Victorine managed to settle the naming beef with my father and it was settled that I be named after her. I wanted a more indigenous name, something solid

Atoto Atori sounded like a better name. It was agreed that I would be a human record of their clan. Child of the clan. Atori Clan. Honestly, I simply sound like a child full of stories. I am a child full of stories, but I will never tell you about the Bible. I have not read the Bible thoroughly to make a conclusion. If I were a Cambridge Scholar, I would have avoided the translation of the Bible altogether on Campus. Arts would be my thing. Music is my drug and an exotic taste of circle of scientists and religious people. Experience has always been my best teacher.

I would find a Muslim friend and live with her for a while. Sly introduced me to Mvua. They are both pretty. They are proof of what Jack, the therapist, suggested. (This is the last I will mention about Jack; he has ceased socializing with me because I tell you about him yet, he is a very private man. I won't be telling him about you too, because I like talking to Jack. He listens to me.)

He said,

"For me, it is a false dichotomy; people can't be analyzed as collections of traits. Inner and outer beauty are linked. Not so complicated. A mannequin with an empty head is not erotic or beautiful; desire is a combination of physical and psychological attraction. There can be more of one than the other, but there has to be unity. Outer beauty is often a reflection of inner qualities."

I called Mvua, anxious. Something had happened. I had gone to Bible school and met Adam in Bible school, and Papa has a digital record of the moments. Nelson, the naughty boy, had asked for my hand in marriage, and Nabwile had been the witness. I had prayed for a husband and the proposal was somehow what I had expected mine to be. I was feeling like Lot. God was giving me two options and I did not understand why, I shouldn't choose abundance. If it was a test, I was going to fail. I have always wanted to think about marriage when I am thirty. I am nine and twenty. Men married in their thirties. Some married very young girls, but mostly, lately, men married their agemates. Still at my age, marriage sounds like a man adopting me. The thirty years old I had dated had broken up with me and married thirty-year-olds. Mature women. Men matured in their thirties. My girlfriends are more mature;

Sharon was a pretty banker besides being a telecommunication engineer somewhere in Zanzibar. She said yes to being my bridesmaid. She cannot wait to meet my plus one. It would be such a shame that you haven't met her yet. Well, we didn't like each other at first. When admissions from private academy was done, Sharon was the last member to be added to our red class. I think she did French, talked a lot only when necessary. Sharon sleeps on me when I tell her stories but it is more interesting when she tells stories.

Julie is a doctor; she just moved into her new home and still giggles on phone. She has taken more account into social posting. Julie is a very private person. She has managed to get all my people's numbers and I have none of hers, not even the third number. Growing up, Lugulu knew that Julie was our number one Daktari, I had to think through my career. Should I fail, I would copy Julie and be a Doctor, too, but for what? Plants or animals?

Edel was in Australia driving her first car- She feels more comfortable taking her citizenship and touring Australia. I was always upset that she would lie that she would come back. Barbie will soon join her. If I ever wanted to go out there and stare at kangaroos while searching for treasure like onyx.

I like the outfits from Laureen's Clothe lines and was always looking marvelous. She was still in Kenya. She had more time and freedom to explore her fashion designs. I

had more time to explore her fashion. If Nabwile will not dress me, Laureen will. I liked both their styles.

We had done a theatre show with Adeti and my boyfriend and his plus one had attended. I met Alexis on stage. Everyone wanted to watch us. Alexis had more fans than I and hers were more disappointed. Only my boyfriend and his plus one were disappointed. We still owe them a show. I have two for my last viewers.

Beulah was done with school; she was no longer a baby that need my constant attention.

Nafuna has two adorable girls; she also looks after the family's health. Everyone wants to be a nurse like her.

Mvua listens like a therapist but is supposed to be an architect. She works from home and has a charming son she named after Egypt. Sylvia now has two of them, a boy and a girl.

Anita married an artist, and they both are always creating something with a son whose name translated to happiness. She was crocheting very nice dresses if not beading something. They are painting more people in their tribe.

Connex was into property and Law and Faith too. "Lawyers are personal." Remember Mzungu's words.

Deborah had more clients for her thrift. She was almost there.

Nabwile was in Ministry in the village, unbothered and unmarried, somewhere in Bungoma, reviewing Tourism in Western. When untie Kaye visited, they always camped at Nabwile's home Ranch. I always visit when I get bored. I haven't this year, though because I choose to stay at home for personal growth. I hope she calls soon.

Well, I'm just as scared to go to Bible school. I might meet that boy, Nelson. He wants to marry me. I have yet to tell Papa. I haven't found words to say to him. I may be unable to describe him as he may prefer someone else or no one. Marrying from the Christadelphian church means marrying someone close enough to my dad. Someone friendly with my dad. Someone who chats with my dad. Nelson doesn't even speak with me. He may be very shy, or we might never have a chat at all. Imagine a marriage without conversations. That was what marriage was about

to be for me. Being able to constantly socialize with someone of the opposite sex until both of you got bored and had kids. You must be satisfied with me if I intend to. I'm still determining kids. I can't handle myself, and some of you call me a big baby, so I am unsure how to manage a similar human, in a younger version.

I feel very different now. I have always been a child, then I became ivy and not Yvi, and soon Atoto Atori. I was changing. I was going to forge change from each simulation and do something from the ordinary. In the third year of the twentieth century, I wanted not to move. I wanted to retire, to stop everything, hold still, find peace and come home, far from the genesis where I grew up, at the slopes of Mount Elgon where once upon a time lived a clan.

The Atori clan.

Where Juliet and I found ourselves living with a family from the Abakhayo clan, the last of her people, a very close family with a seer, a child that saw things, a child full of stories. I had a very long story to tell on her burial, but it made no sense.

I had already told her what I had wanted. I wanted to meet her, meet her son. Meet her new family. My sister had ran away with a man who she loved and for the first time, I was going to see her. She was still a girl. I had always known her without her hair and bald head was not a surprise but now she lay dead and I hated the red lipstick the mortuary people smudged on her lips. It was flaky. It reminded me of how dead my sister was. Indeed, we all die. Uncle David had died. Rampard had died. Kukhu Julia had died and now Juliet. She was resting, living was a complete pain for her, but she was our happiness. I watched her son watch her closely enough too. Juliet was no more and we travelled a few of us to lay her in Homabay. I have thought about it, getting married in homabay.

It was far from home. To get to Homabay by 7am, we had to travel from 6pm the previous day prior her funeral. I was bitter and I was upset, however the lemon eucalyptus scent covered the rocky road where we would rest her. Her graveyard had been dug and her remains laid in a beautiful white coffin. A few broke into sobs as the room grew crowded, I stepped out. July had left behind a widow and a son with a sparking resemblance of her. The widow was in the bet mood for the day, his in-laws had arrived, two major clans from Western. I found our mother in-law and she ushered us to breakfast. I was glad my nephew still remembered me.

Catering was keen to my striking resemblance to my late twin. We had to clear our relationship with the late, she was my sister but not blood related.

Juliet had two sisters and two brothers.

Juliet had three fathers and three mothers.

Juliet had many uncles and uncles.

Juliet had lots of friends and family and as I had sat down, upset that I had to make my memorial short because others too needed to talk, a boy we used to like back then reminded me of the days when we used to trick boys of our identity. I looked like Julie; I also look like my grandma Julia.

Julie did not lack. Abundance was her gift. I had wanted to visit her. Meet her again. I was no longer in Nairobi but I had to make an effort. Sam would sponsor my travels and Mvua would host me. She had no hair. Chemo had taken every last one of them. She looked exactly like I had looked when I had shaved my head. She laughed through it. Her home was big and comfortable, she walked me through her wardrobe and picked myself a blouse and pair of blue rugged jeans. She could keep my Chinese dress. I was going to stay over, the next day I would proceed to visit my other cousin, Davie. Juliet was managing it through life and so could I but now she was no more.

After the long introduction, just when the Catholics had started their mass, papa led his tribe to lunch. I served every meat on the buffet with rice and salad. I had a Coke afterwards. Everyone sat with their mates. I sat with my sister but later moved to a bigger table, where my brothers sat. Papa sat at the corner with his co-parents and Mama at the middle of the tent. Our still water was branded with Juliet. Some said it was from food poisoning while others, Cancer was just a fancy name for immense acute pain. Juliet did not smoke like uncle Rampard, yet Julie too had caught one growing.

Everyone had something to accuse the misfortunate. Some suggested that it was of our poor diet. Others just said their wishes and moved on. I was glad I had less to say. Attention was the last thing I needed to draw at Juliet's wedding- her bridal back to the source.

Papa insisted that the widow had received a “good thing.” He could demand for another girl if he wanted to. Julie had many other beautiful sisters. I wouldn’t want to marry a man from Homabay. Sam guy was from Nyanza. He was an offspring of the lake region but bred at coastal Kenya. If I married Sam, my family, however upset would have to escort me Nyanza. My people would have to meet his people. They may not like each other but will respect my choices. At worst he would abandon me in the rocky and hot place.

“What would I be doing here really?” I asked my grandma trying to defend my deniable to be married there.

The farms were dry and the soil was full of rocks. The houses were big and nice. The lake was very far away and if my husband would be a fisherman, I would miss him for days. Nevertheless, Juliet had managed to find love in this rocky part of the world. I was leaving momentarily but soon I would be back, to visit Daktari. I was uncertain until I was convinced of an angel I met on my way that left with a twin of my socks. Sam’s polka socks.

A girl received a ride back home. She was very beautiful. SHE SAT NEXT TO ME and throughout the journey we engaged in petty talks. She asked about my Luo boyfriend. I told her why we no longer spoke. We desired different things of each other and we no longer or unable to serve each other’s needs, I was going to move regardless. Blindly if that meant I no longer had the same vision. She listened on; she was a teacher that taught the blind. She could read braille. She was beaten about the chastity of her partner, suddenly travelling to meet his boyfriend. She loved him dearly. Luhya were loving. My father was loving. I looked over to the other side. Chesamisi boys travelling back home, with a stranger, an angel on board.

Sam guy was haunting me. I was not sure what he wanted with me. He was being discrete and secretive. He was keeping his plans to his head. He was acting like J, A VERY PRIVATE PERSON. I was private in his life. Our matters were best left undiscussed but there I was watching the sun over the lake, talking why I liked him like we had an agreement and permission to be each-others friends, soul-mates. I was struggling to find a permanent cause to have him in my life yet, he was always there, running my digital world, disturbing my dreams, forging a reality that would best serve his needs. He was looking to steal me from my family.

