

Over Coffee

‘Some of these things you will understand when you’re older, but what I can tell you is we were never meant to live like slaves in our own country.’

David ‘Bombshell’ Garikayi was a very imposing man, standing at 1.88 metres, he was a towering dark figure. Whoever said it was darkest before dawn had never met this man. He had joined the Liberation Struggle at the age of 25 in 1964. This year, if the Rhodies didn’t get him, he would be turning 40 on the 29th of December.

Noticing how his cigarette was making his younger brother uncomfortable, Bombshell pressed it against the ashtray, but not before taking one last pull and blowing the smoke out of his nose like that Rhodesia Railways train.

‘Like I was saying, we are fighting for freedom. Now, everyone has a role to play, including you Vickela,’ finished Bombshell. In 1979, the Second Chimurenga, also known as the Rhodesian Bush War was at its peak and the Guerillas could not move freely and therefore getting resupplies and vital information was becoming more and more difficult. Deployed in the Gaza Province (Masvingo), Bombshell had been part of the elite pioneering group to leave for training in China and Tanzania led by R.G Mugabe and Edgar Tekere. On his return, he had inspired others to join the struggle.

Victor, on the other hand, was an 18-year-old boy who had, years ago, decided to crossover to Mozambique and join the ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army) forces like his brother, Bombshell. However, Bombshell had impressed upon his younger brother that he had to learn the Whiteman’s system and prepare to be an academic in the New Zimbabwe. That is why Bombshell’s request on this windy night came to him as a surprise.

‘I need someone I can trust. My Province is starved of information and some comrades have organized for me to get a special communication radio from Salisbury. That’s where you come in Vickela. This will just be a simple exfiltration, to use Military terms,’ Bombshell paused, looking to get an impressed facial reaction from Victor. After a few seconds he accepted that such a response was far from Victor’s mind.

‘You will board the farm truck headed for Salisbury. A space will be reserved for you underneath the crates of farm produce, the driver is in on the deal. I have written down all the other information you need. Now, rest. Tomorrow you leave for Salisbury. Not a word to anyone, and not a word from you.’

The trip to Salisbury was very unpleasant for Victor, he had no knowledge of how long it would take. At every stop he was tempted to stick his head out but then he would remember that he had been instructed to be dead until the driver said otherwise. He didn’t even know if the driver could be trusted.

Getting the radio was very easy. The waiting, not so much. The driver had left him a wrist watch and told him he would pick him up in two hours. Victor heard some voices and remembered what he

had been told to do upon hearing white people voices. He retreated backwards slowly, avoiding all but one twig, which snapped like it was on loudspeaker.

'Hey you, bloody kaffir!' screamed one of the people.

'Get that monkey!' yelled another.

Victor ran as fast as he could, he had no choice. His life now depended on that Physical Education he used to dodge in favour of climbing mango trees and swinging on the branches. 'Bad choice,' he thought to himself as he was losing his breath. He took a sharp turn with the hope of evading full view of his chasers. However, he sprained his ankle, fell down and started rolling down a steep slope. Radio still in hand, he hit his head against a rock and that was it.

Was this heaven? It had to be. Clean white sheets, blankets soft as the word itself. 'So, people carry their injuries to Heaven?' Victor thought to himself when he felt sharp pains on his temple. And then another thought. The radio! The war! Had he just chosen Heaven over the struggle? Before Victor could give all these thoughts more time someone walked into the room. An angel. he noticed her almond-shaped eyes, bright and expressive with long lashes. Her lips, plump and inviting, curled into a gentle smile. She was Caucasian, barely 17, they were supposed to be Colonialist Devils, yet her demeanor suggested nothing of the sort. She opened her mouth to speak.

'Hey there! I'm Margareth. You gave me quite a scare there. You seem fine now. Are you alright?'

No response.

'I've been keeping you hidden here for the past few days. Lord knows what my people would have done to you.' She let out a sigh and went on to explain to Victor how she had found him lying unconscious in a ditch close to her family's farm. How she had parted ways with her cents to get two farm workers to carry him into her England-based sister's bedroom. His eyes were searching the room for the radio and she knew.

'The radio is safe, but it won't be necessary. You see, a ceasefire was declared, no more fighting. I know it's a lot to take in so I made you a cup of hot coffee, I figured we could process all this together over coffee.'

Vickela was in love. However, he knew that despite the ceasefire, Bombshell would never be a friend of the Rhodies. That meant that Bombshell would never accept this relationship. It wasn't his to accept though. Victor had to fight his own battle. He somehow knew Margareth was also in love with him. They were in a relationship. The first sip of the hot coffee seemed to awaken something in Victor and Margareth, a reason to fight for each other. A reason to be together.

The End.