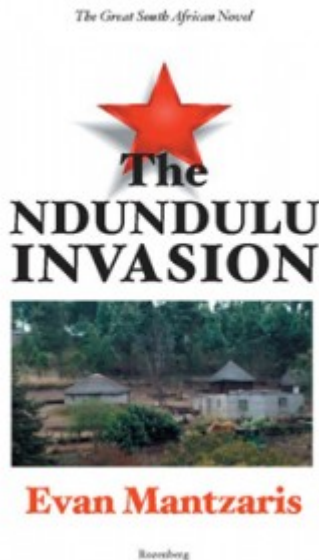


# The Ndundulu Invasion - Chapter 14 - When I Was Young



When Gapon entered the room Bongi felt the tension. His handler was always in a rush for answers and activities and he was always meticulous in his questions, monitoring and assessment routine. This was one of the things that Bongi could not argue against.

Gapon was thorough in his job and followed the Manuals to their finer detail. The problem that Bongi found in this type of approach was that the handler did not go deep enough, and this was one of the issues he felt obliged to raise with Gapon. However, he was reluctant to do that because he knew there will be a backlash, and this was the last thing he needed in his life, that was very complicated at the moment, to say the least. If he raised issues of detail, he was sure Gapon would go into a tirade bordering on the hysterical, accusatory and authority-laden attitude that had become his trademark in their conversations. This was the reason Bongi felt that he should have used more strategic and pious attitude in the feed back sessions.

Tonight Gapon seemed to be bothered about something that troubled him greatly and after he pulled the bottle and stashed it in the mini-bar without opening it, he sat on his usual place in the couch. He did not pose for a minute as he seemed absorbed in looking at the painting on the wall.

He turned towards Bongi, his eyes searching his employee's inner feelings.

"Why did my father call me Gapon? What name is this, Prof?"

"How old are you chief?"

"Why do you ask?"

"It took you over 50 year to ask such a question, *Nkosi*."

"I was busy all these years, Prof."

"I understand, so you're telling me that after so many years in Moscow, Dresden, Sofia, Harare, no one explained."

"No one, Prof."

“Now you are telling me, a soldier, a decorated soldier who spent time with a bunch of educated Commies does not know why his name is Gapon. You were in the same camps with Ronnie Kasrils, Joe Slovo, Chris Hani, Thabo Mbeki, Siphwe Nyanda, Joe Modise, and you are telling you don't know what your middle name means?”

“Prof, now let's be straight and brief. First you never patronise me, not now, not ever. Secondly I never met these Commies, I was a bloody cook, and don't forget the one and a half years in Quatro, boss. Thirdly when I was in these places you mentioned I was taught the A and B of Marxism Leninism, I did not have time to have sex nor relieve myself, let alone ask historical questions, is that clear?”

“So you started with the A of Marxism and you reached B, right? Did you reach C?”

“You see, Prof, one thing I must tell you about Marxism and Marxism Leninism, so you know where I stand. Marxism, Prof, is not a religion, like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and these things. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin all these were people, this is why you have all the reformists, revisionists, pseudo Marxists, anarchists, etcetera. Their writings have been distorted, misrepresented, alienated from the masses, because these masters were humans, like every Tom, Dick and Khumalo. These people never claimed to be prophets, gods, representatives of Gods and all that. On the other hand Marxism is so deep, so much, so rich, that you can never reach the end of it. Marxism is endless, like the ocean, not like the Zambezi, you understand? The Zambezi after a heavy drought loses a lot of water, but drought cannot have an effect on the Atlantic Ocean, you know what I mean?”

“I'm trying, Gapon.”

“It's a long story, Prof; I don't want to go into that, OK. Now tell me, Prof, who is this Gapon guy, you must know, you got a Ph.D. right?”

“So you think Ph.D. guys know everything?”

“Ph.D. from Chicago, Prof.”

“OK, now correct me if I'm wrong, right. Your father was in the leather industry, right?”

“Yes.”

“He must have been in the unions then.”

“I suppose so.”

“He could have been in the Party, then?”

“What party?”

“The Communist Party.”

“I doubt it, Prof. Come on Prof, my old man was a Shembe.”

"Don't tell me."

"Why, what's wrong with the Shembes, Prof?"

"Nothing, but it is puzzling then, why he called you Gapon?"

"Let's leave the why out of the equation, *Mfundisi*, let's go into the meat of the story. For you, what does Gapon mean? Be brief, clear and concise."

"It's difficult."

"What is difficult?"

"To be brief, clear and concise when you talk about Father Gapon."

"What does you means Father Gapon? Was he a priest?"

"Father Georgi Gapon was a priest, the leader of possibly the biggest strike and the largest demonstration in the history of the world on Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 1905. He was also given permission by the Russian Ministry of the Interior to form the Assembly of Russian Factory Workers at Saint Petersburg."

"Permission from the Ministry of Interior, what does it mean?"

"While he was leading the workers he was also a paid agent of the *Okhrana*, the Russian secret police."

"Hold it there, *Mfundisi*. This story does not hold water. You're telling me that Gapon was the leader of the biggest strike and demonstration and with the same breath you're accusing him of being an *impimpi*. It does not make sense."

"It does. Here is a man of Christ who is God to the workers and peasants, who leads a march of over 250 000 people on Bloody Sunday next to the legendary leader of the Socialist Revolutionaries, Pinhas Rutenberg, yet he gambles in Monte Carlo with money earned from spying and writing juicy stories for newspapers, has breakfast with Vladimir Lenin in Geneva, is the convenor of the Conference of Revolutionary Parties in Russia. This priest was a man of all seasons and all professions, Gapon."

"He had breakfast with Lenin?"

"In Geneva."

"When?"

"I have no dates, Gapon."

"OK what happened in 1905 then, January you said?"

"That demonstration by hundreds of thousands of people marched to the Tsar's Palace with a declaration of demands, written by Gapon. It was snowing."

"What was in the declaration?"

"Come on Gapon, you're asking too much, how am I suppose to know these things?"

"I'm sure you know the executive summary of the declaration, *Mfundisi*."

"OK I think the executive summary is in the final words of the declaration that *"there are only two paths for us; either freedom and happiness, or the grave. Let our live be a sacrifice to agonising Russia. We will not grudge this sacrifice, we gladly give it"*.

He looked at Gapon, his old friend and present employer's eyes, closed instead of glued to the blonde beauty on his tall glass.

Bongi felt the tension.

"It's beautiful, Prof. That's similar to what Madiba said in the Treason trial, right?"

"Similar, but almost 60 years earlier."

"It doesn't matter, Prof, its similar and powerful, right?"

"Right, Gapon."

"So this Gapon guy was a double agent."

"Meaning?"

"He was an agent of popular insurrection while at the same time he was an agent of the secret police, right?"

"Right and he had breakfast with Lenin."

"So Gapon was the man, right?"

"He was the man, right."

"So let's improvise, like Charlie Bird, right?"

"Improvise on what?"

"Why my late father gave me the name, he was not a Commie, if he was he would call me Lenin or Stalin like tens of others those days, right?"

"Right."

"Are you following my line of thought, *Mfundisi*? Is it dialectical enough?"

"It's rational I would say."

"Don't go there, *mfundisi*, it's dialectical, now let's improvise and guess, why the choice?"

"I would improvise by guessing that your father attended some of the union meetings at the night school and there was some talk about the Russian revolution and Gapon's name was mentioned. Your father liked the leadership qualities of this priest, your father was religious he liked priests, he liked workers , he was one of them himself, he communicated with the ancestors he got the go ahead. He decided to call you Gapon, sounds rational right?"

"Yes, it sounds pretty dialectical. I remember when I was a *laaitie* he used to

come late and said he went to these classes, you might be right.”

“We don’t improvise here, Gapon, we just speculate or guess, make your own choice.”

“Whatever, Prof. Now to cut the long story short and go back into business what happened to this Gapon priest?”

“While he was trying to recruit some revolutionaries for *Okhrana* his enemies planned correctly .They trapped him and used a cord to hang him.”

“So he was murdered. Did they hang him from the roof?”

“I don’t know the exact details, Gapon.”

“That’s a terrible death, right?”

“Well, to paraphrase the workers’ declaration, there were only two paths for him to choose, Gapon, the workers or *Okhrana*. His death tells us that he chose the secret police. In a hindsight it was a very wrong decision.”

“But we are not sure, are we?”

“I don’t know Gapon, I’m telling you what I read.”

“Are your sources reliable?”

“What does it mean, Gapon? Were the sources that made you an *impimpi* at Quatro reliable?”

Gapon’s eyes escaped from the bottom of the tall glass. He did not look out of the window for a change; instead he looked straight into Bongi’s eyes.

“ *Mfundisi*, the truth will prevail, not now or in those sell out Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where the heroes of the peoples’ revolution shared a table and their honest memories with killers, *impimpis*, Mensheviks and counter-revolutionaries. Nkosinathi Gapon Khumalo was imprisoned and tortured in Quatro because of one reason, because he was a descendant of King Shaka, and because his ancestor’s holy remains are scattered in Mbumbulu, KwaMbonambi and as far as Nongoma, where for a brief moment Death has fallen asleep and dreams of life . You know what I mean?”

He looked at him and preferred to keep silent.

“*Mfundisi*, this is the first time since I met you when we were five that you are mute . You are mute, my friend, say something, *Mfundisi*.”

“It’s difficult, Gapon.”

“Why, *mfundisi*?”

“Because I feel that the main problem here is that for a moment you became unwillingly the spectator of the play in which you were acting.”

“You are wrong again *mfundisi*, it was not one moment, it was one and a half years.”

“In such a situation, Gapon, one cannot distinguish a moment from a year because the coherence of history has vanished into thin air, it becomes a ghost, it cannot be found.”

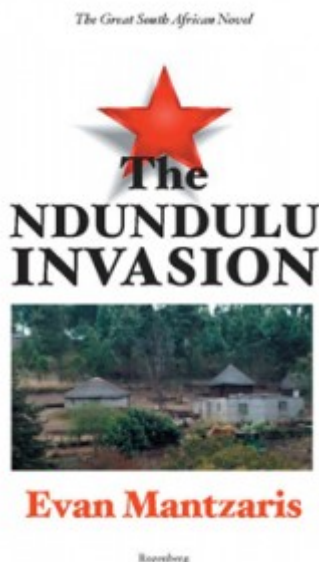
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Next chapter: [Chapter 15](#)

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# The Ndundulu Invasion - Chapter 15 - Amagents



Sometimes knowing people in a city that is your hide and seek destination for a period of time does not help. People, especially in middle of the road cities become viciously inquisitive when they see a new face they do not recognise. They ask all sorts of questions. This could be the result of a number of reasons, friendliness, warmth, hospitality, even boredom. Some people, possibly equally bored, get enmeshed in such conversations and open themselves to possible dangers, as Gapon officiously declared, time and again. In fact he sounded exactly like a vinyl record stuck on a gramophone.

Bongi realised that it was easier to relate and talk to rural people, because although they were also gossipers, the potential danger to the job at hand was much more limited when compared to opening yourself to urban inquirers. Urban gossipers tended to be slier and more cunning in their approach. They also had a

more demeaning attitude towards people doing menial, yet highly useful and productive jobs, like cleaners, petrol attendants and the like. Urban people looked down on such workers, but this was one thing that only well skilled anthropologists would detect. The newspapers would not deal with such touchy human subjects, the Sheik brothers and Julius Malema were much more juicy subjects for first page stories. The shooting of a petrol attendant was only covered in the DAILY SUN, that paper amongst papers.

However , it was always useful for a newcomer to explore some interesting places and happenings in his new destination , observing and absorbing aspects of life that seem insignificant to those rushing to earn a living or madams sipping red wine at the existing malls , if any.

This is one of the reasons Bongi always parked his car in safe places and walked around observing things and movements, carrying a few rands in his pocket and, without his credit card, which was overdrawn anyway and only his debit card with R400 in it. Just in case.

While absorbed to this kind of thought he did not realise he had already walked into the *EMPANGENI TOURISM PROMOTION* office. He moved towards the blond beauty at the reception.

“Good morning”, he greeted her seriously.

“Good morning, Sir. My name is Charlize, how may I assist you?”

“I want to know where I can find a branch of *CHICAGO MEATS*, please.”

“I beg your pardon, Sir?”

“I repeat, where may I find a branch of *CHICAGO MEATS*, please?”

“I have never heard of that store, Sir.”

“You haven’t heard of *CHICAGO MEATS*?”

“No, Sir, I have not.”

“So I take it there is no *CHICAGO MEATS* in Empangeni.”

“I am afraid not, Sir. Thank you, Sir. I hope you enjoy your stay in our beautiful town.”

“I do. Bye now.”

“Enjoy the rest of your day, Sir.”

“Thank you, same to you.”

He walked out of the office towards the car. He felt like having a home cooked stew spiced with GORIMA’s extra hot curry powder which he carried in his bag all

the time.

He drove downtown. He stopped outside the first butchery he noticed on the left. The street was packed, hundreds of people walking with laden heavy CHECKERS and PICK N PAY plastic packets. He felt his wallet, he cursed himself, empty. He walked towards the ATM when he saw this young man kicking and swearing loudly at the machine. The crowd around him laughed and ululated. He knew he was not a prankster or a joker. The ATM was out of order.

He walked inside the bank and joined the queue to off load some hundreds. He was starving, his blood pressure going over his head.

I should have gone to a WIMPY, he thought to himself, now I'll have a stroke waiting in this queue.

The twenty something girl in front of him tried to make conversation. He was not interested and he showed it. She kept quiet.

There was a commotion in the front. He saw at least ten people in front of the cashiers going on their knees. He swore inside himself, discreetly.

In a few seconds the whole crowd was on its knees, their hands behind their heads. He stood in the middle like an idiot. He felt half dead when he felt the cold nose of the Kolashnikov on his forehead.

"On your knees, *Mkhulu*", the short boy with the red balaclava whispered.

There was nothing intimidating in the order.

In most cases Gapon was ten times more demanding when ordering him around and accused him of perceived procrastination. He kneeled slowly, his eyes moving around, trying to avoid the eyes behind the red balaclava.

There were four of them. The short boy visibly the leader, whispering orders to the other three, pointing directions and dictating movements towards the manager's office. They moved swiftly into the Manager's office. Bongsi saw the Manager panicking, his dark face shivering, his wrinkles multiplying by the second. The tall manager, most likely the descendant of Tamil South Indian indentured workers, did not say much. He just followed the instructions, while his North Indian counterpart with the Manning Rangers tie tried to pull out something out of his pocket. The second medium height balaclava whispered something to the manager's ear and the ex Chatsworth teller shook his head in agreement before he fell on his knees.



The short boy stood on the table where the security guard was previously distributing queue numbers. His voice was soft and assured.

*“Ladies and gentlemen, if you didn’t notice, this is a robbery. You see this is what we are good at. This is our chosen profession, but we did not choose it, you and the banks and the Government chose it for us. Society chose it for us. You see, ladies and gentlemen, life is a casino game, a gamble; you can never win in a casino, the LOTTO or the horses. If we get caught, which will not happen, I promise you, the state will bring a lot of witnesses, most likely we’ll get a life sentence. We will only bring one witness. Her name is Hunger. Nevertheless we will not plead in mitigation, because there are a lot of laws, but there is no justice. You see, ladies and gentlemen, justice is for the few who can afford it. I tell you the truth, so you know. My desperation turns into an AK 47, my needs turn into bullets. You don’t move for ten minutes after we split, you, your families, your money and your cell phones are safe, at least from us. I can’t guarantee your things or your own safety outside this building. I promise you when you move out of this building we will be far away. You make a wrong move, my need and desperation will sing a very sad song for you. Understood?”*

His voice was as smooth as Pastor Dube’s, pain mixed with decisiveness. His small eyes moved around the people on their knees. There was silence, most praying that God make the short boy abide by his plea. He shook his head, the flock was under control.

Outside the other flock was going around shopping, whistling, flirting and going about their Saturday routine, oblivious.

The boys moved in the same mathematical precision that led Einstein exposing the simplicity of the then unknown theory of relativity and the bravery that the Cuban heroes showed when they destroyed the Boere myth of military superiority in Cuito Cuanevale.

While the taller balaclava held his AK 47 facing the floor and his eyes searched intensively and with precision the faces that dared not look only at the shining floor, the other two, guided by the short leader moved from office to office, filling the bags with coins, crisp and dirty bank notes. When it comes to money, dirt is good, almost always. While the operation moved efficiently, the short leader ensured that there was no visible movement in the banking hall, monitoring the tall guard. His eyes moved in circles ensuring compliance to the planned instructions in their minute detail. Then they moved to the ATMs, unlocked them

and filled the bags silently and with the utmost professionalism.

*"These young people are thorough professionals"*, thought Bongi, as the tip of his eye followed the careful itinerary followed by the group. When one of them with the short man disappeared behind a closed door, perhaps the store room, the third guarded the bags filled with the cash. It was done in a matter of minutes, for many of those kneeling perhaps aeons.

On their return from the back room the short boy moved slowly towards the side door behind the cashiers, followed by the others. They carried the packets in *GIORGIO ARMANI* suitcases.

I never knew *ARMANI* produced suitcases, Bongi thought. Ah! Learning is an uninterrupted process, even in a bank robbery in Empangeni.

There was silence for a couple of minutes, people still praying, many with their eyes closed. They were visibly aware of the short boy's needs and desperation, but they cared mostly about theirs.

After the few minutes passed there were the first moves, some *gogos*, already visibly tired, took their hands back to the normal position and started massaging their knees. Some young women subconsciously moved their free hand towards their hand bags, to ensure that their cell phones were still there. All of them sighted with relief.

After ten minutes the manager moved towards the front of the Banking Hall and apologised on behalf of the bank.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the management and staff of our bank want to sincerely apologise for today's events. In two minutes I will activate the alarm system that is connected to the Empangeni Central Police Station. We sincerely hope that the robbers will be apprehended. In order to thank you for your exemplary behaviour and to show you how much we appreciate your commitment to our bank, we will keep the branch open until each and every one of you completes his transactions. We will also provide cool drinks and home made biscuits courtesy of *JIMMY'S CONTINENTAL BAKERY*. Thank you for your patronage."

A loud applause followed and the queues went back to normal. A short bold man with a hilarious moustache, just having escaped from the *BIG TIME* SABC 3 soap opera oversaw the equal redistribution of plastic cups of *COCA COLA* and two biscuits for each customer.

Some SECURICOR staff obviously notified by the management reloaded the ATMS and the safes with R200 and smaller notes before they disappeared through door behind the cashiers, exactly like the short, medium and tall men with the balaclavas.

Bongi was sixth in the queue. He noticed the young girl in front of him. Her eyes were glued on the exit door. She whispered something.

Bongi was baffled with what he heard, or thought he had heard. It was the first time he saw a young African woman talking to herself, he thought such things only happened in New York. He turned to her.

“What did you say?”

“Good luck, *amagents* (gentlemen).”

“You mean the security guards?”

“No, the robbers.”

He shook his head, baffled. He greeted her and left her behind, her eyes still glued on the exit door. He looked at his watch. 11.25. He decided he did not need money anymore, he could make another plan.

It's never too early for a double, he thought, the invasion can wait. It's Saturday, after all.

He stepped out of the bank and started mixing aimlessly with the crowd.

He had a lot to think about.

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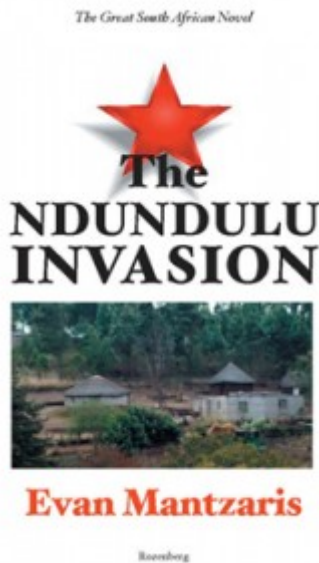
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# The Ndundulu Invasion - Chapter

# 16 - Teach Your Children Well



Gapon filled the tall glass to the top.

“Take it easy, Nkosi”, Bongi begged.

“Mind your business, Bongi, it’s my money my J and B green label, my day off, right?”

“OK, Chief.”

“Don’t call me Chief, there is only one chief in the country, *Mfundisi*.”

“OK, sorry.”

“Now, tell me, *Mfundisi*, I need to ask you something but off the record, right? This means it remains only between the two of us.”

“So it won’t be taped, right?”

“Never, it’s too sensitive to be taped, Prof.”

“So sensitive?”

“Too sensitive, Prof. If my Chief knows I talked about it I would be in deep shit. Prof, you know all these things bosses tell you and do when they want you bombed, breaking of trust between employer and employee, bringing the Agency into disrepute, opening yourself to insubordination by talking and discussing things with a paid informer under your command and mentorship, you know what I mean? I don’t know these things, Nkosi.”

“OK, *Mfundisi*, tell me honestly what do you think of Julius?”

“Julius who?”

“Julius the *maal* (*mad*).”

“I haven’t heard of him, Gapon.”

“That Julius, *Mfundisi*.”

“Oh, OK, the young one.”

“That one, *Mfundisi*.”

“What about him?”

“What do you think?”

“What do you think, Gapon?”

“I can’t talk, *Mfundisi*.”

“Why is he a state secret? No, as far as I know.”

“No, not really, but we in the Agency have strict rules about these things. We cannot pass opinions to subordinate paid informers like you.”

"OK, I understand the point, now if I am a subordinate why do you ask for my opinion?"

"You have a Ph.D. from Chicago, the city of John Lee Hooker, Booker T Washington, Buddy Guy, the home of the Chicago Blues."

"So?"

"I don't want this newspaper rubbish, Prof. I want a calculated, well thought out dialectical anthropo-psychological analysis of Julius the Maal, that's what I want."

"OK , for what its worth , I'll tell you now, and it's no secret. It's on the record, and I have no problem if you pass it as your opinion to the chiefs in Pretoria , because it's the correct opinion."

"Dialectical, right?"

"Whatever you want to call it."

"I call it dialectical."

"Now Julius has been accused of failing woodwork at high school, right?"

"Yes."

"Now the question is, "Is he the rule or the exception amongst the young people of his generation?""

"I don't know, I came back in 1992 from exile."

"I'm telling you, Gapon, Julius is not the exception in his generation, and he is the rule."

"What does it mean?"

"He carries the scars, Nkosi."

"I carry enough scars I, mfundisi, what scars does he carry that I don't?"

As he spoke Bongi could see him moving towards the whisky bottle, Gapon's eyes fondling it with the tenderness of a one year baby and the greed of a Senior Advocate of the High Court. As his eyes hugged it, his hands moved decisively towards it, touched it and poured a triple into the tall glass. He moved it into his mouth and finished it with one gulp. He filled again, only this time he poured a double, filled the glass with water and three ice cubes and took a single sip. His eyes turned to Bongi, demanding an answer, fast.

"What were you saying, boss..."

"The scars of a failure that turned into a success, Gapon, from G in woodwork to a leader of a powerful youth organisation, a nice double storey house, a Merc, powerful friends, the best yet, Gapon, the scars of the past are there , haunting him in his luxuries, like a tokoloshe that pisses blood in his kitchen. They are

mixing with the scars of the present, drunk unruly youth imprisoned into the mindless noise of deep house music, distant from the inner beauty of Mama Africa, Jonas Gwangwa, Leta Mbuli, Dorothy Masuku, Busi Mhlongo, Hugh Masekela. Young people prefer DJ Cleo to the African Jazz Pioneers and Trompies to John Mahlatini and the Mohatella Queens. He carries the scars of his aggressive generation, no career prospects, no guidance, no career counselling, drawn into big acronyms invented by pseudo intellectual dwarfs, GIPSA, ASGISA, KHULA, SAA, VODACOM, MTN, broad band, SMMES. I can tell you, nkosi, Julius the Maal given his upbringing and history is really a careful, disciplined young man, uttering carefully weighted words, steeped in mature wisdom beyond his years, his words devoid of frustration, the so called frustration aggression hypothesis of these mindless creatures baptised as psychologists. Julius the maal is the spokesman of his own generation, Nkosi. He was correct when he said that the youth do not need maths and physics but need to learn their history, because if they digest history they will realise why they have to learn Maths and Physics. So what do you think of my analysis?"

"I got you on tape, *mfundisi*, now I know you're one of us, you'll never betray the uninterrupted revolutionary process. I love you, *Mfundisi*, I love you to bits."

Looking out of the window casually, he poured another triple into his glass, which he finished in a second and then re-filled. He was calm and collected, or so it seemed. He shook his head knowingly, poured another double with water and ice cubes. He turned towards Bongi and triumphantly switched on his cell phone. He put it over his head.

"You see, *Mfundisi*, I promised I'll never tape you. I switched off the cell phone. You believed me, you trusted me. You see, *Mfundisi*, you forgot the words in page 39, paragraph 6, footnote 125 of our Bible, "By way of deception". It says "*never trust your handler*". You did not follow the Bible, *Mfundisi*, you trusted me. You never inspected my new devise NOKIA XX 32456, it tapes even when switched off. You never beat NOKIA, *Mfundisi*."

He passed out, and started snoring.

Bongi picked up the NOKIA, he checked the MENU. The tape recording was empty.

He shook his head.

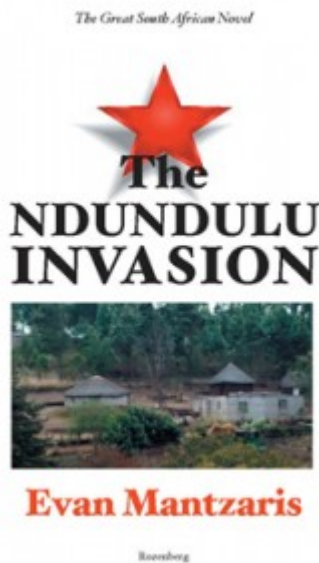
He really loved Gapon's inner innocence.

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# The Ndundulu Invasion - Chapter 17 - In The Middle Of The Night I Call Your Name



She is a really dangerous woman, and she looks it. When God punishes the poor and the homeless with ruinous water cataclysms she runs around 34<sup>th</sup> and Second Street touching with her eyes the tattered poster on the wall “JOHN LEE HOOKER, TUESDAY 31 MARCH 1985, CHICAGO EAST COMMUNITY CENTER, 7.30. PLUS GUEST ARTISTS, FREE”.

She walks around shoeless, licking the vomit outside Irish bars, flirts with the hobos whistling at them some forgotten Chicago blues tunes of Otis Spann and throws stones at police cars, disappearing into the side streets, her home for years. No one can catch her. When she’s in the mood she opens her black blouse exposing her breasts full of a mother’s milk, free of charge to the hobos.

When the cop’s net around her becomes claustrophobic, she enters the dark zoo, climbs a tree like a squirrel and lights her last cigarette from the thunder, because she forgot her matches only God knows where.

She moves around the corners undetected, like a tokolosh, and the Chicago detectives are flabbergasted with her disappearance, last time she was seen in three different locations, throwing dynamite at the Central Police Headquarters, negotiating the selling of cheap bazookas to the Tupamaros and performing illegal sex acts beneath the Chicago Bridge with a darkie under the guard of the moonlight.

She was seen wearing different cloths the only similarity the big red star on her forehead and a Star of David attached to her right arm with the words "TO BEAUTIFUL LEVIN . YOUR GRANDFATHER HYMIE WITH ETERNAL LOVE 3-2-1953".

PLACE OF BIRTH: UNKNOWN

DATE OF BIRTH: UNKNOWN

SEX :UNKNOWN

RESIDENCE: UNKNOWN

OCCUPATION: UNKNOWN

RELIGION: UNKNOWN

EYE COLOUR: UNKNOWN

FATHER: UNKNOWN

MOTHER: UNKNOWN

NEXT OF KIN: UNKNOWN

NAME: BEAUTIFUL

The police sirens are silent. Detective Josh White whispers on his control radio. *"Attention all, attention all. The wanted unknown female as described above is highly dangerous, I repeat, highly dangerous. She carries an AK 47, illegally procured by the Vietnamese Communist insurgents. I repeat, she is dangerous. Alert, alert. Over"*

Bongi woke up.

"Not this dream again. Not this dream again. Why Bee? Why?"

The flood of sweat was building a small lake on the newly washed floor. He stepped into it and tried to switch on the light. Nothing.

Load shedding, he murmured, less than 350 days before the World Cup Final.

He stepped outside. It was hot, very hot and Bee was present in her eternal absence.

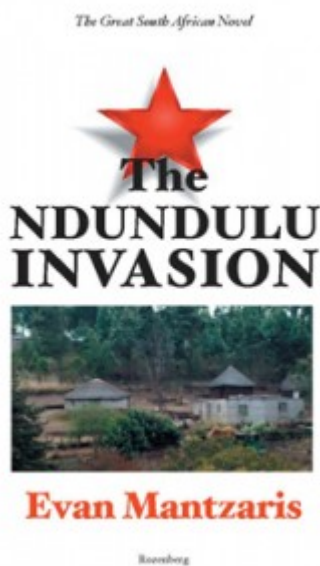


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# The Ndundule Invasion - Chapter 18 - I Life Yiskorokoro (Life Is A Tattered Taxi)



Bongi walked out of the shower feeling good, in fact he had not felt so good for weeks now, and his new vocation was strenuous. He looked through his clothes. He took out his Malawian flowery shirt and black pants. He meticulously ironed them, the vagaries of a womanless life. He took them in front of the mirror and he was satisfied he had done a decent job.

He walked to the Ndundulu Civic Center and joined the queue of around 30 people. He looked around, young and old wearing an assortment of cloths, the young men their FUBU attires and multi-coloured takkies and the girls their well ironed dresses, fresh and beautiful, chatting happily. He greeted a number of them who came to shake hands and made small talk with them. He could see the excitement and anticipation in their eyes. A young man he spoke to in the shebeen a few times pushed through the crowd and shook his hand in anticipation.

“Hola, Prof”, he greeted enthusiastically.

"Hola, *mfewethu* (my friend), how's things?"

"Lekker, my Prof, how are you feeling?"

"I'm in anticipation. You look good my boy."

"Always, Prof. What we say here is if you look good you feel good. I know I look good, I feel good, I forget about poverty and find pleasure in the things that I have. I love this competition, it's a part of our culture. I read somewhere that Shaka's warriors themselves had a competition about whose spear shined the most."

"It sounds interesting."

Their deep conversation was interrupted when a YARIS parked on the side blasting a deep house anthem. A young girl wearing a skimpy mini dress stepped out and started gyrating frantically. The crowd in the queue ululated wildly, the young ones starting moving their own bodies to the rhythm. The young man joined. He pointed his right hand to the sky.

*"Hola amagents IWEWE DJ Siyanda, KZN house rocks!!!"*

Bongi escaped the young man's attention, he did not have to try hard as he had joined the young crowd dancing and ululating to the music of DJ Cleo, DJ Tira and L Volvo coming from three different cars parked outside the community hall. Bongi took a closer look at the boys and he felt that the cat walk mentality was not only in Mashu or KwaNdengezi but it had invaded Ndundulu big time. Pointy formal shoes, tight fitting jeans, bright shirts, the works.

Suddenly Bongi realized he was in the front of the queue and asked what the entrance fee was.

"Four rand, Sir", the young girl smiled.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Four rands, Sir", she repeated.

He gave her a twenty rands note and started counting the change in ones and twos.

"Don't worry my girl, keep the change for community development, OK?"

"Thank you, Sir", she smiled shyly.

He entered the center, already packed to capacity. The MC moved around like a busy bee trying to pacify the young people moving their bodies to the music blasting relentlessly, the sweat tormenting his red, yellow and black long velvet

garment reminiscent of a kaftan.

When the time arrived the MC picked up the microphone and instructed the young DJ to cease.

“Ladies and gentlemen, elders, youth and differently able of Ndundulu and surrounding areas, I salute you and I welcome you with all my heart to this major social, cultural and community event, the MISS NDUNDULU COMPETITION. Firstly let me introduce to you our panel of judges, all three of them. On my left is Mr. Hu, a very respected member of our community and a prominent Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment businessman, in the center, Mrs. Esther Dlamini, BA Honours in Nursing from the University of Natal, Chief Matron at our clinic, on the right Mr. Bongani Cele, *Chief Induna* (Headman). Let’s give them a round of applause, please. The crowd responded, not very heartily though. The MC seemed slightly embarrassed with the response. He kept quiet. He scratched his head, trying to think of something, looked backstage nervously. His eyes flushed naughtily, as he realized that two of the contestants were late. This ought to be a fair and square competition.

“Ladies and gentlemen, as some of you may be aware in the last few weeks our community has been honoured by the presence of a very great African intellectual and author, an anthropological giant of a man, Professor Bongi Khumalo who is performing some research in our area. I think it will be a great honour for us if the Good Prof could give us something to think about, for example African beauty. Ladies and gentlemen, Professor Bongi Khumalo.”

He felt thousands of eyes turning towards him, his newly freshened Afro splashed in sweat .If he was White he would be very embarrassed as his flesh would have turned to a beetroot red embarrassment. He looked around and felt the anticipation. He walked calmly to the stage.

” I’m completely unprepared for this, ladies and gentlemen, and I can promise you the honourable MC will pay for what he has done to me. Nevertheless as we are waiting to applaud, admire and treasure our young beauties, I do not want to take much of your time. A woman’s beauty must be respected, harnessed, caressed, and protected. I wish to tell you an ancient African ode to beauty, celebrated thousands of years ago in Egypt, the tip of our continent. It is a celebration of woman’s and a girl’s beauty.

*She, the long-necked one of the radiant bust,*

*has hairs of true lapis.  
The lustre of her skin surpasses gold.  
Her fingers are like lotus petals.  
She of the delicate waist and slender hips,  
she whose limbs affirm her beauty,  
who's every step, is full of dignity.  
My heart is afire with desire for her embrace.  
She makes every man's head turn to see her.  
Whoever she greets is filled with joy,  
feeling him first among youth.  
When she steps out of her house,  
one dreams he sees the lone star."*

He looked at the hundreds of faces in front of him, silent.

Seconds passed and he decided to step down, almost defeated. Suddenly two young well built boys stepped into the stage and grabbed him triumphantly and pushed him over their shoulders while the crowd ululated *HALALA MFUNDISI HALALA, HALALA MFUNDISI HALALA*. The crowded hall erupted in ululation, visibly moved by the beauty of the poem. Instantly, humiliation turned into pride, defeat into victory all in a matter of some mute seconds. Mr Hu and the judges led the standing ovation followed by the stamping of feet, some young men attacking the air with their clenched fists. Amid the celebration the MC was trying visibly annoyed to locate the two missing girls. He spoke on his phone continuously until a smile was painted on his face. He jumped into the stage visibly relieved.

*"Halala, Mfundisi, halala"*, he exclaimed as he attempted to pacify the ululating crowd.

"Ladies and gentlemen", his voice crackling with visible emotion, "today we are here to celebrate African beauty, Ndundulu beauty, in all its colours, shapes and sizes. It is fine, let us treasure this competition, where we celebrate the African youth, African beauty and African spirit, the African way, not according to the Western notion of beauty we are using as our goalpost."

The crowd loved it.

Their applause made the MC more talkative as the last two contestants were not there yet.

"Ladies and gentlemen, before we start the main proceedings let us welcome the future of peoples' music, Sbusiso Dlamini and the NDUNDULU PIMPERNELS."

The young boy, 16 or 17 picked up the guitar and looked at the drummer and the keyboard player, winked at them. He turned to the audience:

“Ladies and gentlemen we wish to dedicated this song to the late great giant of our music, Mpatheni Khumalo, also known as Mfaz Omnyama. His music is where the soul of Africa resides.”

The crowd ululated wildly.

*Ohulumeni bangakithi angeke siphinde sibavotela*

*Ohulumeni bamakhansela angeke siphinde sibavotele*

*Intuthuko ayikho kulendawo, angeke siphinde sibavotele,*

*Ohulumeni bezifundazwe angeke siphinde sibavotele, intuthuko ayikho*

*Ohulumeni basekhaya angeke siphinde sibavotele*

*“Nathi nizokwakha izibhedlela, nakhe namaClinics,*

*Nemigwaqo ayikho, benzani abantu bakithi eSouth Africa”.*

*We will never vote for the same local government again.*

*They aren't useful*

*there is still no development in our area.*

*You said that you'll build hospitals and clinics, but that has not been done*

*You also promised to do road construction but we still have to walk long distances on bad roads*

Something is wrong with this boy, thought Bongi amid the wild celebration. He dedicates a Phuzekhemisi song to Mfaz Omnyama.

After the ululation ceased the boy moved to the microphone:

“ *Maskandi* is life, ladies and gentlemen, *maskandi* is struggle, *maskandi* is the Truth, *maskandi* is peace. I was not even born when the great heroes of our music the greats, Phuzekhemisi, Mfaz Omnyama and lhashi Elimhlope formed *Izingqungqulu Zomhlaba*. They traveled all over our Province to preach the message of peace and tolerance when our people killed each other. Let's celebrate their lives, let's mourn and celebrate their deaths.”

There was initially silence, in a second the crowd went wild, stamping their feet, ululating and clapping, young and old in a rupture of exuberance and respect. The young boy on stage seemed overwhelmed, his eyes searching the crowd, puzzled.

When the noise subsided the band moved into a vibrant version of *Khula Tshitshi Lami*, Mfaz Omnyama's eternal anthem. The crowd, men and women constantly

detested by state and gods, yet possessing an immense wealth of rich rhyme and rhythm, intoxicated by the beauty of the boy's voice mocked the inglorious poets of decadence and greed, the living death and stinking odour of easy made millions, granted immortality to African poetry written against the councillor's contempt, protesting against the tragic fraudulence of fake institutions of power.

The ululation reached its crescendo. The MC grabbed the microphone. He looked up to the skies for a second. He turned to the audience.

" *Niyabasaba Na?* (Are you afraid of them?)"

" *Hhayi Asibasabi Siyabafuna*" (No, we aren't ... bring them on!)", the crowd howled before they went into a rampage of cacophony again.

The MC hugged the boy visibly moved.

" Another round of applause to the future of our music, ladies and gentlemen", he screamed on the top of his voice, "Sbusiso Dlamini and the NDUNDULU PIMPERNELS."

After the applause died out, the anticipation was so high that the MC realized that the time was ripe.

"Ladies and gentlemen", he announced, "the moment of truth is upon us. Let me introduce the first contestant, Nobuhle Khumalo."

The young woman walked onto the stage, wearing a traditional black long dress, her long eyelashes searching the floor instead of the audience. She looked no younger than seventeen, cheeky little breasts and slightly inward turned knees, seemingly lacking a good dose of Vitamin D. Finally she took all the courage in the world to turn to the audience, who were silent in awe, mixed with envy at the eyes of some young women. Her lips a song to unknown and hidden gods, her eyes as wide open deep-set gardens of wild flowers. She struggled to smile as her eyes now braver encircled the crowd. She stood in the middle of the stage before she turned to the judges, their eyes glued to hers with such intensity that resembled statues, forgetting that they had a job to do, put a number on their PICK AND PAY notebooks.

The silence was broken by the crafty voice of the MC.

"Ladies and gentlemen, let's give a round of applause to Contestant No 1, Nobuhle Khumalo."

The applause was deafening. The young girl's lips were struggling to a shy smile as she walked behind the old tablecloth masquerading as a curtain.

As the other five girls were announced, some of them lithe and slippery like snakes showing off the beauty of their sparkly smiles and their pretentious throaty laugh at the sneaky remarks of the young stallions in the audience. Some of the boys turned naughty when they imitated hugging gestures to the contestants, made in a dignified, mild, not rude manner. Some of the girls smiled, clearly enjoying the adulation but their eyes clearly indicating a slippery escape from them. Their smiles, however, were not mocking, just understanding the gestures of admiration. Their smiles a mixture of innocence and provocation, but never lusty, their breasts far removed from the crowd, but not their imagination, the desire hidden underneath their pants but steadily rising before they turned back to normality, anxiously awaiting the next contestant.

It was manna from heaven when the MC, now sweating rain announced that there will be a brief musical interval. Bonggi was ready to walk out for a smoke before he realized his mistake. The crowd had swelled so much that exit was just an impossible dream. He tried to breath, it took a lot of effort as the MC, now visibly feeling the weight of expectation on his brains and body, announced the next attraction.

“Ladies and gentlemen please welcome the AMADODA SONGBIRDS.”

Seven young men wearing traditional attire walked onto the stage. Their leader, a tall, beautiful boy self-assured and cocky, looked around the hall. He stared at the roof before he turned towards his troupes. He raised his hands and closed his eyes, visibly in pray before his voice touched the first note.

“Ladies and gentlemen, we will start our performance with a song taught to me by my late father, who learnt it from his late father who in turn learnt from his late father. I was told it is an *imbongi* (praise) song sung in the beautiful way of *Isicathamiya*.

*Amaqhawe ethu awalahlekanga*

*Babeholwa iqhawe uShaka*

*Inkosi yamakkhosi*

*(Our great dead are not lost*

*Led by Shaka the Warrior of Warriors*

*The King of Kings)*

As the troupe repeated the verses Bonggi opened his note book and started scribbling on the first available page.

*Esigodini saseNgolweni  
Babeqhamuka endaweni ebenzi  
Babeqhamuka amabutho  
Ngapansi KweNtaba ephakemenyo  
Intaba yokukhonza ngcwele  
Babebheke phezulu  
Amabutho ayimbumba  
Lapho kuzula amange  
Phezu kwezitha ezafayo  
Amabutho abhodla kwanyakaza umhlabathi  
Babehlehla ngobunyonico eNqolweni  
Phakathi nendawo  
Kwezihlahla ezinhlanu  
Ozinakunyakaza  
Izihlahla ezinomuzwa  
Nenkumbulo*

*(In the valleys of Nqoklweni  
Coming out from the Deep Well  
Surrounded by warriors  
Below the highest Mountain of All  
The Mountain of Glory  
Facing the Skies  
Warriors as One  
While the vultures fly  
Over the dead enemies  
Attacking their dead corpses  
Amabutho's roars shake the soil  
As they retreat to the Well at Nqoklweni  
In between the circle of  
The five trees  
That do not Travel  
The Trees that only feel  
And Remember)*

Bongi felt his brain twisted from the beauty of the lyrics and the sound of *cothoza mfana* (tip toe boys) he first witnessed in the early 1970's when he listened to



LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO's *Amabutho* (Warriors) record, the spiritual anthems of *isicathamiya*, the mixing of history with the future, people saying that the mission from the ancestors and God was now accomplished. Deep inside him he knew he was almost there, but then, he has said that before many times in his life, mostly in vain, defeated by fate, history, ancestors, but in most cases by his own careless mistakes and actions.

He folded his notebook, he was sure he would not need it anymore for the night. All these thoughts cruised through his mind as the young group prepared for their next rendition of "*Isikifil' Inkululeko*" ("Freedom Has Arrived"), *Wemadoda*, and *Ngingenwe Emoyeni*, accompanying their vocal harmonies with a variety of hand and foot combinations reminiscent of capoeira and break-dancing, but far more advanced than either of these dance styles. These boys could be MAMBAZO's grand children, but they had almost perfected the master's act so much so that their move from the quick footing to the customary quiet stepping oozed of maturity and deep discipline, a discipline of ancient warriors rather than young boys who most likely wasted the best part of their lives in a shady rural tavern. This is a difficult dance, the leg kicking a combination of mastery, perseverance and discipline, legs up touching the ceiling and as far beyond as possible, adding to the difficulty of the dance.

When the second round of contestants began parading, Bonggi thought that the attention span of the crowd would have evaporated significantly. A careful glance of the mood told him otherwise. The traces of beauty parading on the tiny stage resembled forgotten dreams, sometimes dimly, sometimes as shapely as the sunbeams, some of the contestants as brisk as Kate Moss and others as rough and stern looking as that coloured British model who loves being photographed with Nelson Mandela, Naomi Campbell. Beauty and harmony mixed with the coming darkness, African Sirens disguised as African Aphrodites despising the pale golden sickle of the endearing moon. No Coppolas, no Cohen Brothers, no Oliver Stone present to masterly direct their gazelle-like movements, only thousands pairs of eyes glued on the young souls the same way a stock thief examines a cattle, carefully and with care, interest and expertise. The silent admiration, mixed with male greed and hidden passions and dreams filled the sweaty hall.

The girls' faces are beautiful, most of them having avoided *fongkong* (cheap imported) dresses, obviously they and their families had made sacrifices by visiting EDGARS in Empangeni, hoping that their loved one will repay them by

winning the grand first price of R1000 and a free entry to USHAKA MARINE for a week for two people. Their presence and movement made the existence of only two VP toilets in the hall a tiny inconvenience as the anticipation for the final phase of the competition, question and answer time was looming. Now it was not the glitz or the traditionalism of the gown that counted, because if it were, contestant No 8 had no chance with a peach curtain mini decorated like bridesmaid regalia, would definitely sink in the eyes of the rigorous and well educated judges.

Question and answer time was in both English and isiZulu. Some people felt that the girls who attended Model C Schools in Melmoth had an unfair advantage, but the rules of the competition were clear and could not be bent only for tonight's glittering event, a rule is a rule. The questions prepared by the panel of judges were really exciting and revealing.

"What would you cook for dinner for his Excellency our President Mr. Kgalema Monthathe, Nondumiso?"

"I'll give him pepperoni pizza from *ROMAN'S PIZZA* in Empangeni", she retorted proudly, as the audience clapped hysterically.

"Do you have a boyfriend?", the MC asked cheekily of an 18 year old, Contestant No 4.

"I will only get a boyfriend when I complete my B. Com degree at UNIZULU (UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND)", she responded, "and I will only have sex on my wedding night."

The hall froze. In fact very few knew the young woman before tonight she was from one of the smaller areas around, but this was not the problem. What froze the crowd was the vehemence and power of her response, which in fact went well beyond the scope of the question. The girl realized her blunder and she possibly realized she squandered her chances for good, but she walked towards the backstage seemingly happy with herself.

"Which is your favourite t-shirt?", the MC asked contestant 3.

"REGISTER TO VOTE FOR THE ELECTIONS 2009", she replied.

"Why?"

"Because it's free", she smiled casually.

The responses with a few exceptions seem to bore the audience as the anticipation for the results seemed to take the driving seat. The MC tried to galvanise the audience to no avail. As a retired DJ at RADIO UKHOSI and a

respected old timer he read the mood accurately and announced an interval of half an hour so that the judges could debate the issues and announce the winner.

“In the meantime I have the new, exciting and revolting new DJ, directly from *CLUB PHAMBILI MSHOLOZI (FORWARD JACOB ZUMA)* in the Melmoth CBD to entertain you now and later, ladies and gentlemen, please welcome DJ VAGOLTA.”

Silence greeted the announcement, which was interrupted by a roar of approval as the young short man with a colourful hoody and deep huge dark glasses encircled by green and blue shadows entered the stage and moved behind the turntables. He picked up the microphone, stuck it into his mouth and his deep, dark and dangerous voice splashed across the hall.

“Good evening ladies and gentlemen, it’s DJ VAGOLTA on the groove and I have this to say: “Whoever has said that *kwaito* is dead should be in Ndundulu tonight, because peoples’ music does not die, it will never die”

He expertly pulled the trigger with Mdu’s *MAZOLA* and the crowd did not need a second reminder, young and old started moving their bodies fast and furiously while the young man continued with Boom Shaka’s *THOBELA* and Brown Dash’s *VOOMVOOM*, Spikiri’s *WIKI-OOOWEEE*, Bongo Maffin’s *THATHI SGUBHU*, TKZEE’s *MAMBOTJIE*, Lebo Mathosa’s *AWUDEDE*, Mawillies’s *YINTWENJANI LE* and Trompies’ *SWEETIE LAVO*. In between he passed some very snide remarks about the new breed like BLACK COFFEE and DJ Cleo calling them some unmentionable names in isiZulu before he made his final announcement.

“Ladies and gentlemen for the rest of the interval let us pay tribute to the prophets of our music DJ Christos Katsaitis and DJ Oskido Oscar Mdlongwa. By the way my name is a mixture of DJ Christos’s father’s name, Vagos and my favour artist John Travolta, hola DJ Christos hola, hola DJ Oskido hola!!!!”

“Hola!!!!”, The crowd responded before they continued their hip moves in the hall.

The MC tried hard to stop the dancing hundreds when he invaded the stage to take over the responsibilities.

““Ladies and gentlemen now the moment we all are waiting for. It took a little bit longer than expected because the choice before the judges was difficult, their responsibilities awesome, but finally they made their decision. Before I call upon them, let me repeat the rules of the announcement. I remind you that in the MISS NDUNDULU COMPETITION there is only one winner with two princesses. As our

selection initially is for ten finalists, first, we call the ten finalists, then the judges announce the two princesses and then the final winner. Now I call on all the winners, all ten of them, because in our eyes they are all winners, to come to the stage.”

The ten young women entered the stage under Vagolta’s rendition of *NKALAKATHA* and the earth shaking ululation of the crowd. The *induna*, followed by the Matron walked up the stage while Mr. Hu remained glued on his judging chair. The two judges shook hands, hugged and kissed each contestant separately accompanied by a mixture of applause and hissing. In the end, the *Induna*, holding a small piece of paper in his hand turned to the audience.

“Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, I have had the honour of being a Judge at this prestigious social and community occasion for the last few years. I promise you from the bottom of my heart that today was the most challenging, rewarding and difficult choice we have make in our lives. If you do not believe me you can confirm the truth by asking my fellow judges. We have in front of us a group of very talented, beautiful and intelligent young girls who make our Ndundulu and surroundings proud. They are the future mothers and grandmothers of our Nation, and the MC is absolutely correct when he says that all of them are winners tonight. Please let us reward them with a warm Ndundulu applause to show our love and appreciation.”

The applause was tired but thunderous. Time had taken its toll and the anticipation was more than evident. The *Induna* opened his tattered piece of paper, pulled his glasses closer to his eyes and announced.

“The second princes is Contestant No 6, Ms. Nkululeko Mthetwa.”

The young girl, visibly happy was kissed on both her cheeks by the two judges and allowed the *Induna* to put the crown on her head.

“The first princess is Contestant No 4, Ms. Duduzile Ngcobo.”

Miss Ngcobo let her tears flow freely before she reluctantly offered her cheek to be kissed by the *Induna*, and her head to be crowned. In fact it was very difficult for one to judge whether her tears were signs of happiness or sheer frustration.

“Contestant No 1, Ms Nobuhle Khumalo is the winner of the MISS NDUNDULU Competition and a winner of great prizes that have been already announced by the MC. Congratulations Miss Khumalo, you will be the representative of our area for the forthcoming year. Now I call upon Miss Sindiwe Naicker, the 2007 winner to crown you.”

A beautiful, tall dark woman at a late stage of pregnancy escaped the arms of a taller, much darker husband who looked lost in the crowd, and kissed the new winner on both her cheeks before she took the microphone almost forcefully from the hands of the *Induna*. She addressed the crowd in English.

“I wish to congratulate Nobuhle on her achievement and all the other girls. All the best for the future. For a year I did my best to make all of you proud and I did many training sessions at the schools. I participated in the abstention dates organised by the Department of Social Development. As you can see I’m expecting my first baby in eight weeks time and I wish to thank all of you, my family and my lovely husband Mr. Selvan Naicker for making me the happiest woman on Earth.”

“Has the *char ou* (Indian man) paid *ilobolo* (dowry), Sindi?”, A *mkhulu* inquired amid the loud laughter of the crowd.

“He paid damages first and *ilobolo* second, and he’s not a *char ou*, he’s one of us now, because he’s my husband.”

No one retaliated, most shaking their heads in agreement. Bongi looked towards the tall *char ou*’s direction. Selvan’s eyes shone of pride mixed with love. When Sindi walked towards him he bent and kissed her hand. She grabbed him and retaliated with a mixture of Zulu and French kiss. The crowd went wild.

The announcement of the winner gave DJ Vagolta an opportunity to show his remixing skills by alternating *kwaito* with traditional mixed with some short *bhangra* bits in between. The extended photo session was endlessly drawn out, on par with clapping required after a ballet, as everyone in the audience wanted to be photographed with the winner, the princesses and the contestants. The young stallions with their *NIKE* and crocodile pointed shoes started flirting with every single young woman present, while others were doing their bit on the dance floor. Group of young people in circles lying on the floor dancing using only one foot rose in the air, celebrating beauty, brains and community spirit.

The crowd kept on cheering the contestants and their families while Vagolta deviates playing of DJ Siyanda’s *Iwewe*, a house anthem song, blasting the speakers. “This is not truly a real rural experience”, Bongi thought, “it was something much more, a celebration of community mixing, a spirited mixture of vibrancy, urban fashion, new born local celebrities and the continuation of a dream”.

His eyes moved around the dancing crowd comparing mental notes on essence

and appearance. The contrasts present on the floor were evident: Sweaty youths with pointy formal shoes, tight-fitting jeans and bright shirts were dancing with *mkhulus* with typical rural traditional attires. Old gogos with freshly ironed, yet worn out dresses were mixing easily with town workers and two policemen who were busier flirting with every female on sight instead of taking care of law and order. Girls showed off their dance moves in the middle of the circle while gyrating their bodies to the beat, while eyeing guys who looked like a good bet fishing for attention.

In this circle attention was the name of the game, and it seemed there were few winners, the girls seemingly dreaming of Gucci clad DJ Sbu types spinning their cars in a circle and leaving tire marks on the road.

But who cares, everybody was here to have fun.

In a dark corner contestant No 4 who claimed she would have only a boyfriend after she completed her B.Com degree at the University of Zululand and loses her virginity on her wedding night was kissing, passionately, a tall boy wearing a Blade Nzimande T-shirt, her tongue .moving furiously into the caves of his mouth.

Bongi exited the hall and entered the tavern. Everyone was celebrating the success of the pageant noisily, even those who were not there. He greeted the regulars, bought them a round of drinks and walked towards the bed and breakfast.

He was almost sure that he was in the right path, he was closing towards the truth.

His sleep was uninterrupted from haunting dreams.

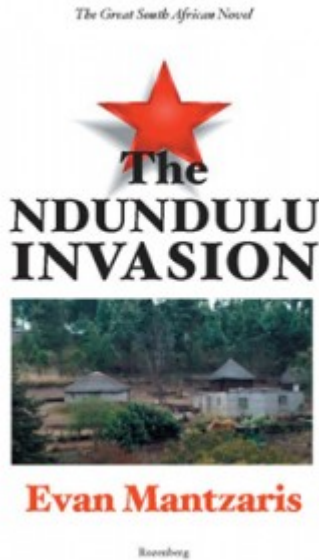
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# The Ndundulu Invasion - Chapter 19 - The Times They Are Changing



They saluted each other with the third high five in a space of two minutes as they celebrated another victory.

“Who would think that we would have a chance for the league, Prof?”, enthused Gapon.

“This Krol guy is not bad. I never thought I’d say that after the first two months pre-season”, retorted Bongi, “the team is shaping up.”

“Yeah, right, last time we won the league with Gordon Igesund we didn’t play, but what’s more important boss, good ball or victory, victory I say. Happy People can move around with their heads high instead of shedding

tears for another defeat, right?”

“Partly right, bru, now we as a team have the reputation of combining the most intelligent and skillful game with victory, the Buccaneers are like this, quality and victory, in that order.”

“No, *bru*, I want the league, quality I leave to Thanda Royal Zulu, I want the Cup, bru, like 1980 when we thrashed Swallows in the Mainstay Cup. I want a victory, bru, our trophy cabinet is empty and Irvin Khosa is pocketing millions from the World Cup commission. Now I want the team to win trophies, because today’s *laaities* cannot play like Jomo, Big Boy Kholoane, Jazzman Dlamini, and Yster Khomane with Banks in the goals. Who are these Modise guys and Monief Josephs and Lucky? I forgot City Late Lichaba, this was a team my bru, I remember Jomo’s second goal, right?”

“Ah, the one with the bicycle kick, who the hell is this Cristiano Ronaldo guy, boss, Jomo is the man, right?”

“Right my bru, but let me tell you something, this team was the best we had, ever, and I remember when Jomo hit that penalty to give us victory, Umlazi erupted my bru. It was like Diwali, first time I saw darkies throwing rockets in the sky, my dog even had a heart attack, so much for our first and only *MAINSTAY CUP*. There was no money for Black and Green Labels, my bru, so we stuck with Mainstay, like *char ous*, it was hot stuff, right?”

"You're telling me, very hot, *bru*."

"But it went well with Lexington, right?"

"Very well *bru*, but now I want to take up something with you, right?"

"What, Prof?"

"I want to take exception with your earlier statement that the 1980 side was the best in the history of the team."

Gapon turned around and it was obvious that his attention moved from the scotch to the man opposite him.

"You are saying?"

"I'm saying that the team that won the 1973 League, the Life Cup, the BP Top 8 and the Champion of Champions Trophies was the best team ever in the history of the Buccaneers."

"Are you doing this to annoy me, boss?"

"No, I just make a historical correction, for the record as we say."

"For the record, boss, and now to repeat what I have said several times during our conversations, our friendship goes back to school days. I say that you have the bad habit, that I must add it started at Standard 1, which is, that you think you are the best thing that happened to humanity since the invention of *nyama* (meat). I say something that is the historical truth, you have to contradict it, why? Because you are full of yourself, you have a Ph.D. in Anthropology, right, now let me tell you something for the record, Nkosinathi Gapon Khumalo dropped from school, but he completed a one year Diploma in Marxist Philosophy at one of the most revered institutions in the history of Higher Learning, Lomonosov University in Moscow. Now Gapon Khumalo can say to you that your argument is shallow because you make a fundamental mistake, a mistake that is the common thread of all bourgeois science. You confuse quality with quantity, the general and the specific, and content and essence. What I'm saying, correctly, is that the team of 1980 did not win four trophies, but one, but the one trophy was won against the best team of the time Moroka Swallows Big 11. You compare this historic win with the 1973 trophy when we beat Mangaung United, Pretoria Bantu Callies and Real Kathlehong City 6-0. The quality of the 1980 triumph is thus significantly different, this is the point, and another thing, real friends do not try to score cheap points with friends who took them out of their financial shit."

"Boss, I think it's not Gapon who talks now, but the amounts of the expensive dope that does the talking. Now in the 1973 team I remind you that there were players like Shakes Mashaba, Blessing Ngidi, Jomo and Rhee Skosana, Shafles



Makopane, Percy Moloi. Let me remind you that in that year we crushed Moroka Swallows, we did not just beat them, we destroyed Lamont Golden Arrows 4-0 in Durban and I remind you the brace that Blessing Ngidi scored to destroy the *Amakosikazi* (Kaiser Chiefs). And for the record, let me tell you that we lost to Mangaung United, one of our few defeats. Let me remind you that we won the Top 8 against Chiefs and crushed Mamelodi Manchester City 9-1 to win the last trophy available. This is history, boss, and quality and quantity cannot change it, clean sweep, and four trophies in 8 months, this is the reality.”

“Bru, the reality is that you think you know it all, you throw names and score sheets to impress me, it’s like telling me that Cristiano Ronaldo is better than Lionel Messi because Manchester wins more than Barcelona, when the reality, as you put it, is that Messi is better than Ronaldo. You confuse yourself, but you cannot confuse me, because dialectics teaches us that there is a great difference between quality and quantity, this is the bottom line.”

“The bottom line is, Gapon, that you are thoroughly confused and contradict yourself. Earlier you said that a victory is a victory irrespective the way you play and now you throw around stupid dialectics learnt in Lemonosov, as for your contribution to my financial well being is about time you stop it. You pay me to do a job, I’m trying, and I will achieve it, that’s the bottom line, for once you must admit that I’m right.”

“You’re not right, and you make me angry, because I can’t take this superiority complex towards me anymore.”

“There is no superiority complex, boss, it’s a superior knowledge of history, that’s all.”

“You see, you’ve done it again, you must stop it, because you annoy me.”

“Tough shit, Gapon.”

“What did you say?”

“Tough shit.”

“Is that your attitude?”

“Tough shit, I said.”

“Take it back, boss.”

“Take back what?”

“Apologise, NOW.”

“Apologise for what.”

“For calling me shit.”

“I never called you shit, I just said you’re talking shit, this is the qualitative difference, didn’t they teach you that at Lemonosov?”

"You see, you're doing it again."

"Doing what?"

"Denigrating me, patronizing me, that's what you do all the time."

"It's all in your mind, Gapon. But now you're on it what must I say about a University that don't teach you about Father Gapon?"

"Are you insinuating something, boss? What Gapon has to do with our talk here?"

"It's dialectics, boss, you throw all these words at me, quality, quantity, essence, content. It's not me who argues, it's you that is making sweeping statements that are untrue, I just correct them with facts, that's the difference."

"There is no difference, I say and I know it's true that the 1980 team was qualitatively and quantitatively better than the 1973 team."

"But that goes against history, the reality, the facts, and the truth."

"Truth is subjective, boss, and truth is always revolutionary as Comrade Vladimir Ulianov Lenin has told us time and again."

"Truth is also based on objective reality, boss, and the objective reality is that in 1980 we won four major trophies, while in 1973 one. We put four trophies in the cabinet not one. To top it all, your argument is flawed and your sense of history is not existent, because in your ignorance you forget the Class of 1995, when Jerry Skhosana danced like a ghost and scored, to win us the African Champions League trophy, the only South African team to do so. Must I remind you the giants of the era, Mark Fish, Williams Okpara, John Moeti, Marc Bachelor, Gavin Lane, Linda Buthelezi, and Brendan Silent? Yah and I can tell you something Jerry "Thunder Legs" Skhosana is right, all these players today are sissies, real sissies, and they must wake up, right?"

"You see, what's the use of arguing with you? I argue dialectically, you throw numbers and names at me, and nicknames to impress me."

"What's wrong with this? Karl Marx used mathematical calculations to prove his theory of value, am I correct?"

Gapon looked puzzled, just for a moment.

"So you think you have an answer for everything, right?"

"Wrong, *YOU* think you have an answer for everything and you are stubborn."

"Bongi, I think I had enough of this. This is the wrong attitude. I organize you a job, I buy you the dopes, and you borrow my cigarettes and my lighter. At least Sbu was better than you in many ways, he gave us a cigarette and sold us the light, you are different, bru, you are hustling, you got nothing, you cannot pay your rent with your salary and when your saviour, because this is who I am, your

saviour, makes true historical statements and teaches you the true dialectics of history, you denigrate, scorn him, spit on the graves of his ancestors. You see my *bru* the difference between the amaZulu people like me and people like you is that we carry the mountains on our shoulders, because we drink water from the fountain of wisdom bestowed upon us by our ancestors. King Shaka and his warriors conquered the fire to reach the sun of freedom, untainted by the whiteness of the snow in the Drakensberg.”

Gapon stopped to take a breath, while sipping his double more relaxed. Bonggi looked at him without touching his beer. He shook his head puzzled.

“I see they gave you some lectures in poetics at Lemonosov too, my *bru*, or you have studied Thabo Mbeki’s State of Addresses since 1999 very carefully, but I forgot, Karl Marx also wrote poems in his youth. Now in your middle age you also indulge in poetry, which possibly you’ll tell me is an extension of dialectics.”

Gapon did not reply, at least immediately. He filled his half full tall glass with whisky and lit a mild cigarette.

“Look at the surroundings, boss. I pay for a four star hotel, I pay for everything, you have produced nothing for me and to top it all you play God. I’ll tell you something I should have the courage to tell you in Standard 2. You are scum, *Mfundisi*, you and your crowd are the scum of the Earth, you know why? Because you think your fart smells like Ester Lauder Superiere, the most expensive French perfume .No, man, I can tell you now, your fart stinks, because you have no money to buy proper *nyama*, you buy *nyama* from CHICAGO MEATS in Grey Street, then you come and you pretend you are masters, you look down at people who are better than you, your envy is as deep as the Umfolozi River, boss.”

Bonggi felt the heat. His employer’s eyes looked calm, but he was aware that Gapon was a careful director; he could hide his true feelings and intentions, especially his aggressive streak. He remembered him as a hard hitting teenage gang leader and powerful, intimidating center back who was not afraid to concede a penalty when needed. In fact no referee worth his salt would dare give a penalty against Gapon, there were no rules for the UMLAZI DESTROYERS, his team.

Nevertheless things were different now, and Bonggi felt obliged to take a chance.

“The Umfolozi River has no water after the drought, boss”, he responded with a crisp voice.

Bongi miraculously escaped the flying half empty bottle of the Johny Walker Green because of his reflective instincts, but it was impossible to avoid the powerful hit on his face. It was a combination of rage and intimate accuracy. He felt the blood flowing to the immaculately fake Persian carpet like the Zambezi after a heavy rainfall. His only alternative was to play dead. He did.

Gapon sat down on his chair. He moved towards Bongi and felt his heart beat. After ensuring that no permanent damage was inflicted on his old school mate he looked for the whisky bottle. He knew that such an expensive bottle would have survived. He was right. He picked it up and poured a double. He filled it with water and ice cubes and switched on the TV. He played around with the remote for half an hour and looked at his watch. "Time to move on" he murmured to himself "mission accomplished, at least for tonight".

He packed up the bottle in his bag, finished the remainder in his glass, took out a pen and paper and wrote a small note. He put it in his right pocket and walked out on his toes, mindful of his friend's sleep.

Bongi woke up in the morning and the first thing he did he checked his face and his teeth. All there. A sight of relief. The second thing he did he checked in the mirror. The blood was dry. Thirdly, he checked his watch, 11.30. Lastly he looked around the room. No sign of Gapon. In the end he checked around the hotel room for something unusual, ensuring everything was in order, following closely Clause 112 Subsections c to e of the Intelligence Manual. Nothing.

He showered for half an hour, had a painful shave and tried to patch up the damage by applying some *VAZELINE*. He inspected the room once more before he picked up his laptop. No visible damage only the stale smell of the light cigarette and very expensive Scotch. He opened the mini bar packed up the remaining *Peronis* in a Checkers plastic bag and walked out the door. It was mid-day, breakfast was over.

He walked towards his car. He picked up the message from his wind-screen. "*When did Bernard Shoes Hartze play Prof? 1973 or 1980? Just for the record*".

He smiled. Thinking of Gapon in Quatro's solitary confinement barracks appealed to him more and more as fun, but not games.

Next chapter: [Chapter 20](#)

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