

Love

Marry

Kill

PROPERTY OF THE BOOKS

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MASOBE

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For Ndu, who convinced me that there was more to give.  
and Eusebius, dear Euby, who would have given me a parallel  
character in real life to each of these fictional ones had he  
lived to read it. We miss you in so many ways, at the most  
unexpected of times, my babe. Love, always.

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*Somebody call the po-po (po-po),  
I want to report a murder case (murder)  
Somebody call the po-po on my baby o,  
One man down on the love highway  
Adekunle Gold  
(PAMI – DJ Tunez)*

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The woman takes out a one rand coin and spins it, 'Let's toss. You wanna call it?'

He grins and says, 'Heads, he dies first. Tails, she dies first.'

She tosses it in the air and when it lands on the table, they both eagerly look at it and say in unison, 'She goes first.'

'Who goes where first?' A short man wearing a fedora hat and with a prosthetic right arm is standing next to them. They didn't even see or hear him coming. She notices his arm, because he seems to make a point of it. He is wearing short sleeves and the prosthesis starts at the elbow. It's three shades lighter than his other hand.

'Hello,' her male companion says to the "handyman", as she has labelled him in her mind. 'Thank you for coming through. Please meet...'

The handyman waves his non-prosthetic hand and says, 'I am not here for a social call. This is business. Do you have my bag?'

The man nods.

'And do you have the images of the prey and their hooves?'

'Hooves?' the man and woman both ask.

'Yes. Mode of transport.'

'Yes, there in the briefcase with the... the...'

'Bag,' the handyman finishes for the woman.

'Do you want to count it?' she asks.

'No, I trust you two. Because no-one fucks with Sandy's bag and lives to tell the tale. Any questions, last instructions, re-thoughts?'

‘Just one,’ the man says authoritatively. ‘Make it very painful for both of them and make sure she goes first.’

The handyman smiles coldly. ‘Oh so that’s what the coin toss was about?’ He laughs. ‘And everyone thinks I am the bad boy, yet the Devil lives in each and every one of us. Ja neh?’ He turns around and bows to both of them, ‘Nice doing business with you. Good day. Delivery in two weeks.’ Then coldly, ‘And then I want my balance.’

He walks out as quietly as he came in.

The air around them feels somewhat contaminated after his departure. The man asks for the bill and as they wait for it to arrive, they both knock back their wine.

‘Maybe we should have asked for something stronger. And some food,’ she says.

He agrees and calls the waiter back. ‘Trust, a bottle of Glenmorangie Tayne, please? And the menu.’

The waiter arrives with the bottle of whisky and some ice then brings the menu.

‘I have never been here,’ the woman says. ‘What do you recommend?’

He shrugs. ‘Depends. Are you a red meat person or are you one of those people who don’t have enough problems that you are also vegan?’

She laughs, ‘I am not going back there again. I tried that vegan lifestyle when I was in my twenties and I swear every time I would go to family functions, the only food available for me would be steamed bread, spinach, pumpkin and beetroot. And I hate beetroot.’ She does a pretend shiver. ‘Would you believe, all the time everyone would ask me whether the reason I wasn’t eating meat was because of some medical reason?’

‘So? Was it?’ he asks.

‘Of course not. And the moment they found out it wasn’t for health reasons, one of my uncles offered to slaughter for me,’ she says laughing.

‘So you were peer-pressured into eating meat again by the community?’

‘Hey,’ she shakes her head, ‘I am not complaining, I think I wasn’t ever really going to sustain the vegan lifestyle.’ She pauses then continues, ‘So ja. In answer to your question, I eat red meat. What do you recommend?’

‘The lamb chops here are to die for,’ he laughs and adds, ‘pun very intentional. Second only to Zimbabwean beef,’ he says as he pours a double shot of whisky over the rocks in both their glasses. One day when this is all over, maybe you and I should take a trip, as mutually mourning friends, to Kariba. With our kids. My treat. And you can get an idea of what I mean about the beef—in addition to both of us reflecting and relaxing post funerals.’

Her eyes light up as she answers, ‘I think I would like that. I have been meaning to do Kariba for ages but haven’t yet. Who knew my husband’s earnings were probably going towards fine dining and outings with your wife?’

He frowns and then remembers that she is not the enemy here. They are both victims of philandering partners. He says, ‘Oh and as you think about ordering your main course, also consider what you want for dessert. They take some time here.’

She shakes her head, ‘Nuuh. I don’t think I’ll do dessert. I think what’s about to come for our spouses is the only just dessert I want served.’

He laughs, ‘You and I are going to be really good friends even as we mourn. And we will have fun doing it.’

Ever so subtly, she notices that he nods his head and in less than a minute, Trust is at their table. This man must really be a regular, she thinks.

'Sir, what will it be?' Trust asks, pen poised to pad to take the order.

They make their order. Trust writes it down and leaves.

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