

EW BLOG

WHERE WE PLAY WITH WORDS

ISSUE 1. 2019

BOOK REVIEWS

Collection of blog posts



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Ezekiel Kekana

BOOK REVIEWS

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EW BLOG

Letter from the author

Let me first introduce myself, I am Ezekiel Kekana, normally called Zakes by my friends. I love reading and writing and I started this blog, the EW Blog to share my writing and the books that I am reading with everyone.

The EW BLOG IS ^a

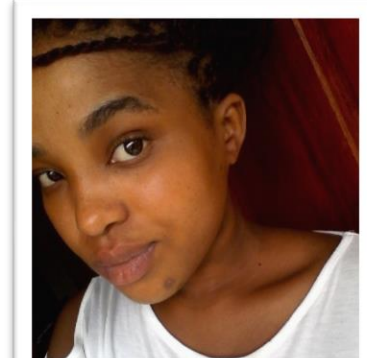
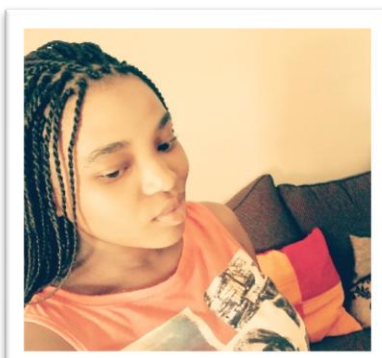
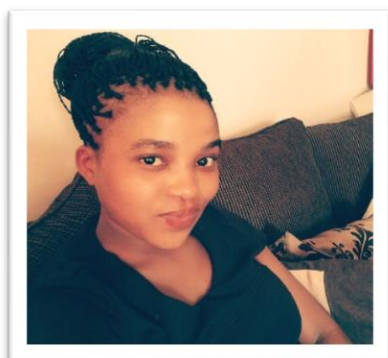
reading and writing hub, where we play with words. We review books from local authors, Afrika's best and international authors. We also discuss current political matters without sounding bias.

This is our first e-book edition and this edition is dedicated to my beloved sister, Elsie Mahlako Kekana. Elsie lost her battle with cancer in 2018 at the age of 24, few days before she could graduate at the Tshwane University of Technology. In her memory, I decided to publish this eBook on her birthday, 5th February. I would also like to thank Jacana Media, especially Neilwe, Lutendo and Nadia. All of the reviews in this eBook, were made possible by your love. Please continue supporting me with great books from our local authors. I also like to thank my friend Rego Mputle for her contribution and Khotso Sello, who edited the entire book. Finally, I would thank my business partner, Thabz for making this book possible, all I did was to provide content and the rest was his magic. Our goal is to grow this blog and make it the best.



Ezekiel 'Zakes' Kekana

OPEN LETTER TO ELSIE



First, let me say, Happy Birthday ses, you are turning 25 today. As I am writing this letter to you, I am carrying lot of emotions that I kept since your passing on the 16th of March 2018. It continues to be difficult to speak about you without having to wipe tears, as I still do not believe you are no longer physically with us. I fully understand that it was the will of God to take you from me, even though I wasn't expecting it to happen so quickly. While you and I were still expecting to celebrate your 9th May 2018 graduation, the Lord decided otherwise and even though it still hurts me, I am no longer angry at God.

Anyway, this letter is not about me, but about you my beloved sister. I just want to celebrate your birthday by telling people about the kind of person that you are, yes the kind of person you are, because even though you are not with us physically, I still communicate and see you every day in dreams.

You are one person that continues to teach me to love everyone, despite how I feel about them. People might not know this, but when you were physically with us, you were the glue that binded

us as a family. Whenever there was a family broil, you will be the voice of reason and you never took a side. Even Kekana (older brother), the person whom we all trust and run to whenever there's trouble in the family, forever confided in you whenever he had problems with mama and his wife.



Elsie Mahlako Kekana (Junior)

You were an example of how love can look like in physically form. I am not saying this because you are no more with us, but you know very well that I expressed the same sentiments in your face whenever I got the chance to tell you. The truth is, I am missing you so badly, I continue to cherish all the positive and good things we did together, our crap talk and how we will make jokes of certain people at church, you them very well ses.

I am learning to understand that your death happened for a reason and that reason was to protect me, mama, Sesi Tumi, Sesi Nthabiseng and Buti. I know seeing you suffering everyday was just gonna break all of us, because we have an uncapped love for you. I remember after having found out that you are diagnosed with cancer, I felt like my world has just crushed down in front of me. I cried so badly that I did not know how I will even look at your face that evening when I was going to see you at hospital.

I remember finding you crying on your hospital bed and just seeing you crying broke every fibre in my body. We started praying together every evening and God gave us a renewed hope and we moved and accepted that you are diagnosed with this monstrous disease.

The events of 16 March are still very much fresh in my mind and will forever be. I believe part of me is gone with you, I was there ses seeing you fighting for your own life that Friday afternoon, I was pushing you on that stretcher, hoping the Drs will bring you back to me. Just thinking about that day, it now just breaks my heart.

We had lot of plans for your career and education, but I guess the Lord had even more plans for you in heaven.

Ses, I made a vow that I will continue your legacy and make sure everyone knows that there was a beautiful lady called Elsie Mahlako Kekana (Junior), who I love with my entire being, the one person who understood me more than my own mama. I will teach people about the disease that took you from me and the family through your foundation, *The LC Kekana Foundation*.

I hope one day I will be able to tell your story in the form of a book. You are still my number one lover and forever will be ses. Happy heavenly birthday Mahlako waka. I love you with all my heart and please greet Elsie Mahlako Kekana senior, Simon Kekana, Isaac Kekana and the woman I thought was my mom growing up, only to find out she was my sister, Florence Amanda Mojabelo. I love you all my people.

Let's Stop IT Baf'wethu.

Few days ago, my flatmate and a good friend of mine Thendo said something to me that really left me disappointed and angry at myself for being a man in our society. Thendo normally takes a bath before she sleeps every night.

Bathrooms at our flat are outside of our living space and since it was around 10 in the evening, I asked Thendo why she is not taking her regular bath, and these are the words she uttered to me, 'I do not feel safe to take a bath after 10 o'clock here, I do not want to be raped.'

This statement really broke my heart and left me with so many questions about the safety of women in our society.

If women, who stay in a 24-hour security guarded complex, still do not feel safe to be free in their space, then this really requires us as men to look in the mirror and ask ourselves some tough questions.



Thendo

This question should be at the heart of every man who says he is not a trash, those of us who say we are not abusers of women and children.

What are we doing to make sure women feel safe at all times and don't have the urge to look back in fear of any sort of violation?

It's all good to say we are not 'trash', but do our actions reciprocate our stance?

Fighting our male privilege should be our daily exercise and that requires us to treat and create secure spaces for women to feel free.

Baf'wethu women will not feel safe for as long as we still undress them with our eyes, objectify their bodies and call them derogatory names that seek to undermine their existence. I am not trying to sound like a holy cow, but we really need to stop this predatory attitude of ours.

If we need our sisters, mothers and daughters to feel safe in our surroundings, then the language we use among ourselves when speaking about women should change.

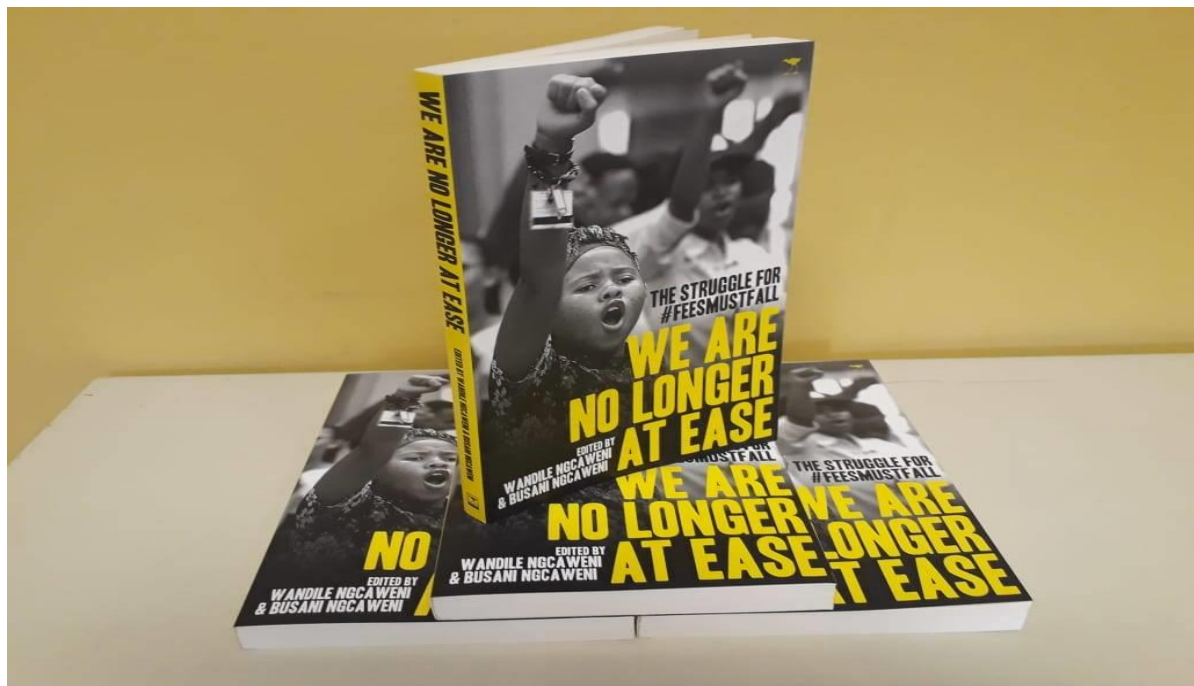
A good man is one who acknowledges his flaws and commits to correct them and I am that man, are you?

Sir Terry Pratchett once said: "The female mind is certainly devious one, my Lord."

Vetinari looked at his secretary in surprise.

"Well of course it is, it has to deal with the male one."

We Are No Longer at Ease Review



Book cover: We are no longer at ease; Picture credit / source: Jacana Media

There cannot be doubt that the #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall movements changed South Africa's socio-political landscape in 2015. Both movements scored significant victories, with the removal of Cecil John Rhodes' statue at the University of Cape Town and the announcement of free fee higher education in 2017.

In this collection of essays, poetry and articles, editors Wandile and Busani Ngcaweni provide a post analysis of the #FeesMustFall movement by looking at different themes that emerged and which affected the movement from within, but most importantly, how issues raised during the #FeesMustFall linked with other socio-economic factors that continues to affect the country on a daily basis.

"People came from nowhere to dictate how the movement must operate. This became a major stumbling block in the growth of the organization, because instead of discussing the ideas and issues, we were having debates about on logistics and leadership,' Mcebo Dlamini, one of the front leaders reflects on one leadership issue that affected the movement.

The editors have cleverly divided the book into four parts, which builds from different themes which emerged from the movement, from theorizing the Fees Must Fall Movement, intersectionality and feminist perspectives, what the #FeesMustFall movement meant to different activists and the higher education policy quagmire.

BOOK REVIEW

Review by: Ezekiel Kekana

Website:

<https://ezekielwriting.co.za/we-are-no-longer-at-ease-review/>

The voices of activists in this book such as Anele Madonsela, Gugu Ndima, Khanyisile Mboya and the cover girl Tshepiso Modupe just remind us that patriarchy and misogyny also did find expression in the movement.

A reader with a passion for a non-sexist, egalitarian society and inclusive higher education sector will definitely find his/her voice fully represented in this book.

This book thus serves as motivation that indeed South Africa is gifted with young thought leaders who know what need to be done in order for the country to realize Nelson Mandela's dream of 'rainbow nation'.

The only disappointment in this book is that editors should have translated LovelynNwadeyi's account, which part of it is in Afrikaans.

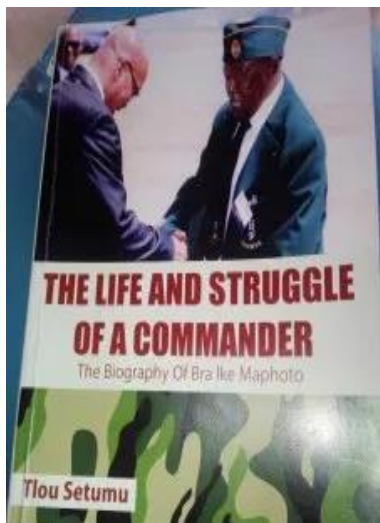
Translation in English will have been good since not everyone can read Afrikaans.

Besides that, this book is a must read for all patriotic South Africans. I will give it 8/10 rating, for the manner in which it was packaged, how the editors included different voices in the book and how they reminded us that patriarchy and misogyny are enemies of our dream to be a non-sexist society.

The Life and Struggle of a Commander Review

Review by: Regomoditswe Mputle

website: <https://ezekiellwriting.co.za/the-life-and-struggle-of-a-commander/>

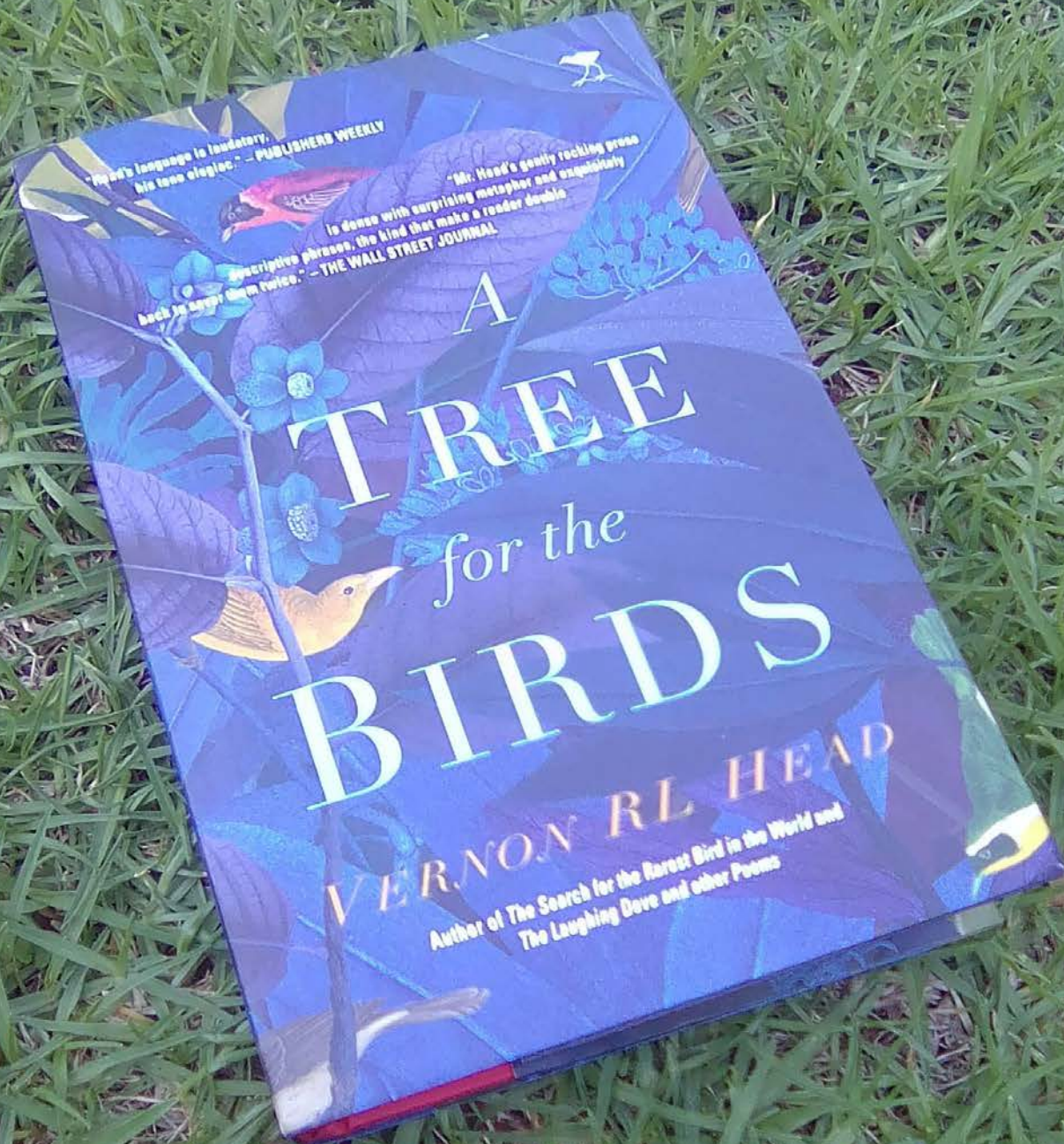


Picture credit/source: EW BLOG file.

South Africa's struggle for liberation was not an easy one. Many people lost their lives, while many sacrifices were made so we can have a democratic South Africa. As much as homage is paid to the likes of Chris Hani, Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, there are other freedom fighters who also played a pivotal role in the struggle for freedom such as Mike Maphoto or otherwise known as Bra Ike.

In this autobiography Tlou Setumu pays homage to the life and times of this unsung hero. The book does not follow the normal autobiography trend of starting with biographic background. Setumu jumps straight into the subject matter when Bra Ike was already in exile, which is a bit of a disappointment. All eight chapters of the book fairly depicts Bra Ike at different stages of his life, yet the author failed to capture Bra Ike's life before he left the country.

One expected a bit of biographical background, helping the reader to get know the man before his freedom fighting mission. This book is also not an easy read as it is filled with jargon, but the author makes up for it by having a glossary to explain the jargon. If one is looking to get to know more on Bra Ike's political career, then this is a book for you. However, if you are hoping to better understand the personal life of Bra Ike before the struggle days, then this autobiography is not for you. Setumu really failed to capture the entire life of this struggle hero.



BOOKREVIEWS

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A Tree for The Birds Review

Review by: Ezekiel Kekana

Website: <https://ezekielwriting.co.za/a-tree-for-the-birds-review/>

Vernon RL Head has done it again.

In his well-written third novel, *A Tree for The Birds*, Head has accelerated his passion for nature writing to the next level.

In this informative read, the author narrates a story of a young Congolose boy named Chrisnelt Malotika, who suffered a major setback in his early years.

Chrisnelt lost his best friend Noh in a tragic way which left him mentally scarred.

Noticing that his son might have lost his marbles, Mr Malotika introduces the boy to books.

Books became therapeutic for Chrisnelt, because books were able to give him new perspective on life and helped 'oil his brains' in his effort to find a way to honour his deceased friend Noh.

Tragedy does not end there; his father also loses his life after introducing his son to the wondrous life of books.

Chrisnelt then decides to plant a tree in memory of the two departed souls.

A tree that will shelter birds, which his friend Noh liked so much, but most importantly a tree that will give him answers for his loss and hope for the future.

Not to give away too much, the young Malotika in his quest to honour his friend and father faces lot of challenges.

Firstly, his sisters are forever on his case, then he has to deal with naughty foreign neighbours, to top it off, handle a crook, a selfish man called Pastor Kadazi.

This is an excellent read and Head in this book continues to showcase his ability to describe each and every scene with naturalistic description.

In this novel, Head challenges the reader to pay attention to messages that birds communicate to humans.

The scribe also reminds humans that they should start learning from nature and understand the different cycles of water and plants in Africa, as Chrisnelt did.

Human beings in yesteryears had a special communicative bond with trees and birds, however, nowadays human beings seem to have disconnected themselves from nature.

Head wants us to reconnect and rebuild our relationship with mother nature but most importantly learn from it.

The only negative I picked up from the book that might be a challenge, especially for readers who enjoy quick reads, is that the chapters are bit long, which can make the reader lose their train of thought.

Besides that, Head maintained his style of writing from his previous novels and with that I award this book a star rating of 9/10.



Book cover: A Tree for the birds.

Black Twitter, Blitz and A Boerie Review

Review by: Ezekiel Kekana

Website: <https://ezekielwriting.co.za/black-twitter-blitz-and-a-boerie-review/>

The country's constitution and Nelson Mandela are two of the biggest things that come to everyone's mind across the world when they think about South Africa.

South Africa or Mzansi as we often call our beloved country, however, has more interesting treasures that make it an even better country to live in and also a good tourist attraction. In this well researched book, Hagen Engler in a hilarious and informative way lists 123 reasons, why South Africa is an interesting country and also what makes its citizens uniquely proud. From the Xhosa people's unique way of mixing their language with English and still make sense when they speak, to our polite petrol attendants across the country.

The author also touches on our unique television shows such as 'Our Perfect Wedding' and 'Date my Family' and highlights singing our favourite sports national anthem 'Shosholoza' in all our national sporting codes events, especially during Bafana Bafana and the Springboks matches.

Engler lists all these 'national treasures' as he calls them.

Reading this book can make you patriotic, get you to pledge allegiance to a country that went through brutal years of apartheid and colonization, but emerged strongly to be a democratic country in 1994.

*Reading this book can
make you patriotic, get
you to pledge allegiance
to a country that went
through brutal years of
apartheid and
colonization* ∪ ∪

Engler in this pocket book reminds the world and fellow South Africans that we are a nation that prides itself with our unique culture, breath taking landscapes, musical giants, proudly manufactured products that feeds the entire world and individuals who know the true meaning of hard working such as Trevor Noah and Caster Semenya.

This book serves more as a tour guide for all people visiting the country and for the locals, you are bound to identify with Engler's list, as most of the things he lists are some of the things we encounter each and every day, like that guy at the robots who religiously asks you for R2.

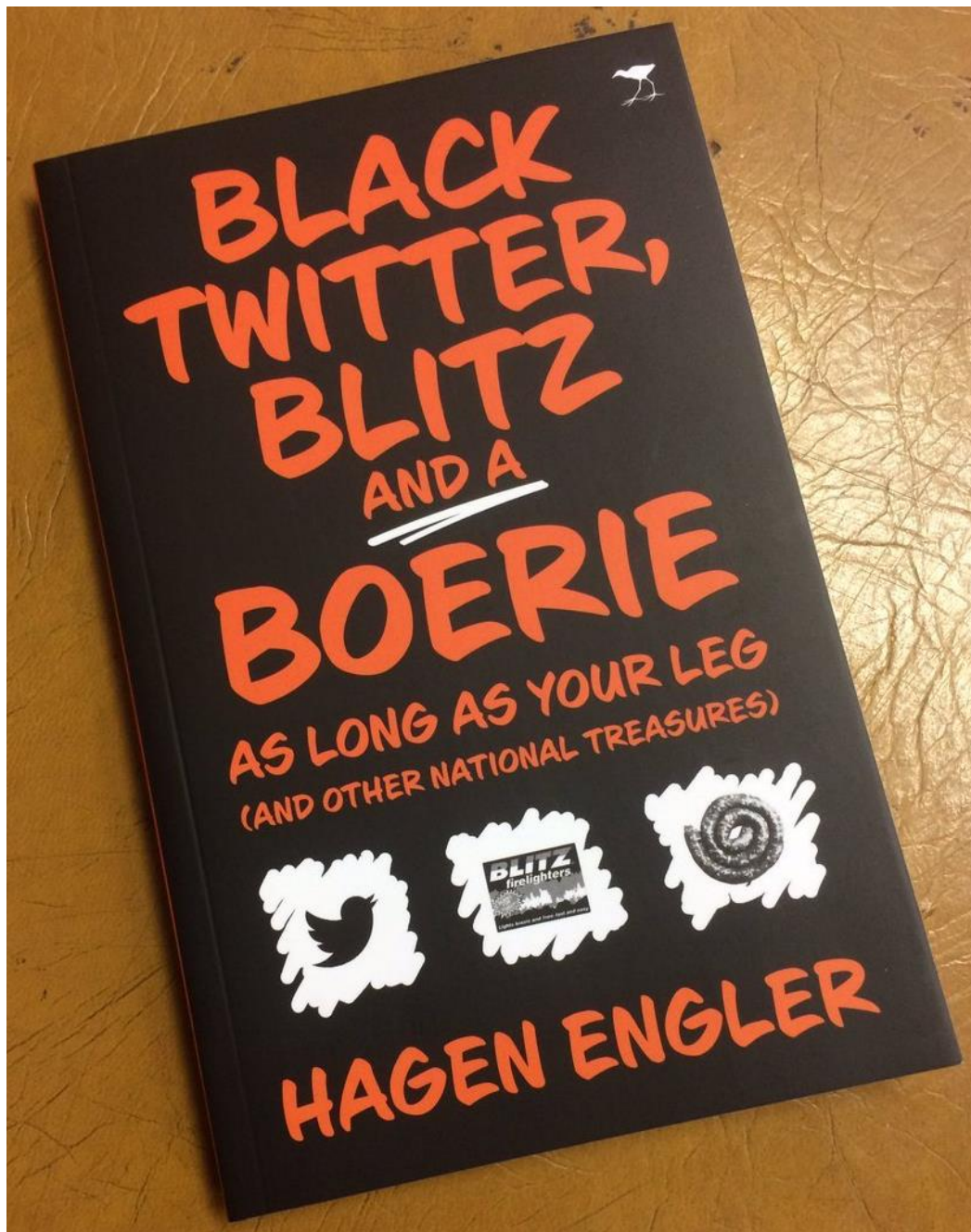
However, most of the things that Engler listed in the book are centred in and around Johannesburg or Gauteng, which in way exposes his limited experience of other national

treasures across the country, like our unique 'musagwe' fight in Venda and the famous Robben Island prison, that continues to attract tourists.

Overall this book is well-written, hilarious, informative and a good reminder of what makes us a rainbow nation that Nelson Mandela envisioned.

I will give it an 8/10 rating, for how it has been packaged and how Engler's pen reminded the world that we have more to offer as a country, besides our global icons such as Mandela and Trevor Noah.

Book cover: Black Twitter, Blitz and A Boerie



Picture credit / source: EW BLOG file.

BOOK REVIEWS

4

Dijo, My Food, My Journey Review

There is always food when South Africans are celebrating, unhappy, mourning and crying, because there is indeed a connection between food and us.

In this long-awaited cookbook, yes long awaited, Chef Lesego Semenya finally shares his special recipes with us. The man has finally delivered. He takes us through the different types of dishes he grew up eating in his home township, Soweto.

Semenya does this by sharing recipes his mother used to cook for him and his siblings, however, the talented chef adds a new twist to those recipes.

Ledombolo with Mogudu, Mageu, Makipkip and Magwinya with Liver pate are some of the African cuisines that chef Semenya includes in this cookbook with a few special tricks to them, though still keeping it distinctly Kasi/African.

Dijo is also about chef Semenya's personal life and career journey. His story is one that many young South Africans will relate with. He made a career switch in his adulthood. Semenya switched from being an engineer to follow his passion, which is playing with food in the kitchen.

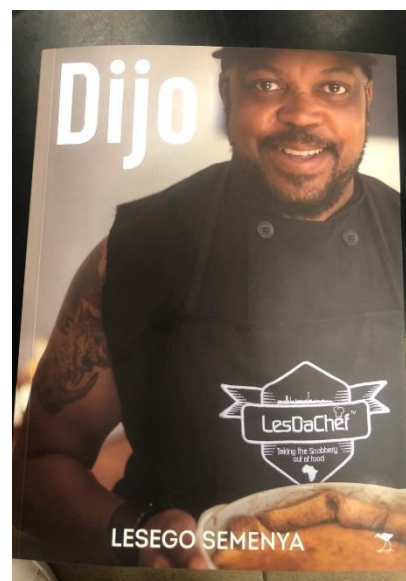
The move paid dividends, as he went on to make a pie that was named the official pie during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, but most importantly he went on to cook for powerful and rich individuals such as Warren Buffet, Alicia Keys and Bill Gates among others.

Going through this cookbook a few things are expected to happen to you. Firstly, you will keep salivating at the array of wonderful dishes. Secondly, you will want to try some of chef Semenya's recipes in your kitchen. The use of pictures and giving background to the recipes, makes this cookbook very insightful.

Chef Semenya really did his homework with every recipe. I will not give a rating to this cookbook, because it is just brilliant. Many readers, especially those in townships and villages will definitely relate with some of the recipes. Some of these delicacies continue to be religiously devoured at weddings, funerals and family gatherings.

Chef Lesego Semenya not LesDaChef, as he is affectionally known, has put fun into food with his cookbook.

Book cover: Dijo, My Food, My Journey



Picture credit / source: EW BLOG file.

Book Author: Lesego Semenya

Review by: Ezekiel Kekená

Website:

<https://ezekielwriting.co.za/dijo-my-food-my-journey->

BOOK REVIEWS

5

This Mournable Body**Review**

In this long awaited third offering, Tsitsi Dangarembga picks up where she left off in her last novel *Nervous Conditions*, with the journey of Tambu Sigauke.

However, this time around Tambu is no longer at his Babamukuru's mission school.

In *This Mournable Body*, Tambu is a fully grown woman, who has not only graduated from the mission school, but also from a college.

Like all graduates in the Southern African Region and the continent at large, Tambu faces familiar challenges of difficulty in finding employment after resigning from her job as a copywriter at an advertising agency.

However, while renting a room at Mai Mayanga, her fortune changes and she finds employment at Northlea School, where she teaches Biology.

Without spilling all the beans, something tragic happens to Tambu at the school, which ultimately gets her checked into a psychiatric institute.

What did she do to her pupil Elizabeth that saw her being summoned to a 'mad school'? Or did the sly queen wannabe Esmeralda push her to lose her marbles?

This is a book that will inspire a lot, especially young black women to never give up on life, no matter the circumstances or the punches that life gives.

Tambu never gave up and she got handed a lifeline at

Tracey's tourism agency. Well that was of course, until her mom threw a spanner in the works which resulted in Tambu's life having to change yet again.

Plenty of twists and turns in this book. Women empowerment, institutional racism, xenophobia, gender based violence and love are some of the themes that form part of this powerful narrative.

While this is a story about Tambu, one will also find out how Nyasha, remember her, Tambu's rebellious cousin, has grown into a fine mother and a wife to Leon. In keeping with her style of writing, Dangarembga like in her previous novels mixed her native Shona language with English, which offers an extra Shona lessons for those not familiar with the language.

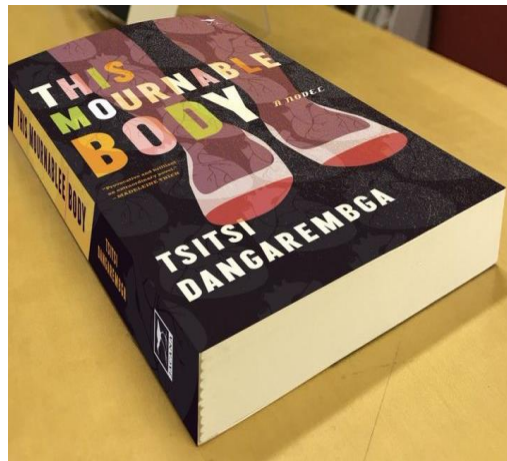
I give this book an 8/10 rating, for the manner in which Dangarembga managed to deliver the story-line with precision.

One hopes though that the next novel will not be as much of a cliff hanger. Other than that, a must read book in the ever growing African literature movement.

Review by: Ezekiel Kekana

Website: <https://ezekielwriting.co.za/255-2/>

Book cover: *This Mournable Body*



Picture credit/source: EW BLOG file.

The List Review

Review by: Ezekiel Kekana | **Website:** <https://ezekielwriting.co.za/the-list-review/>

At a time when the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC) is divided into two groups, those who are preaching and pushing for Radical Economic Transformation (RET) and those who are seen to be against that push and who have been labelled White Monopoly Capital (WMC) agents.

The fight between the two groups has created a debate among the party members, about who are the real ANC members and who are agents of WMC in the party. The List looks at the rumoured list of apartheid spies that was given to former president Nelson Mandela by apartheid leaders after the fall of one of the greatest crimes against humanity. This book in this way add to the current debate in the ANC about certain individuals in the party, who are handlers and spies of 'old order' and 'regime change' agents, who want to be in charge of the party and automatically the government.

Barry Gilder, the author of the book, in his descriptive style of writing, uses fictional characters in detailing how the rumoured spies were first planted into the ANC by apartheid security police and National Intelligence Service (NIS) covert collection directorate officials led by Otto Bester.

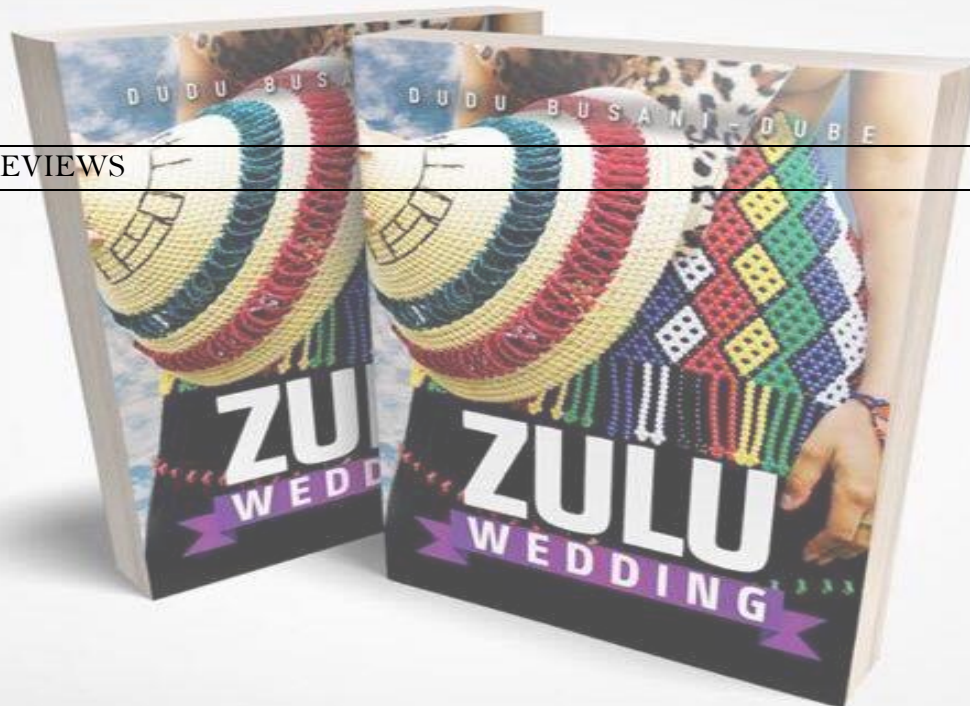
When President Moloi realises that there are still people in the ANC and also in government, who want to sabotage and remove him from his position. He asked his Intelligence minister Sandile Ndaba to run a secret investigation. Minister Ndaba obliged and asked his former MK comrade and intelligence/spy veteran Vladimir Masilela to set up a task team to investigate the 'old order agents' and their spies in the 'new order'.

Not to give it away, however, after reading this book one will be left a bit sad with how Masilela and minister Ndaba, despite having discovered the truth, ended up not having an opportunity to expose the culprits. Is the country going to be led by 'captured' individuals or not?

While the book is a 'fiction' as the author wants us to believe, one wonders if Gilder, a former senior government official and an ANC MK veteran himself, is already pre-empting what will happen to the ANC post 2019 national elections. Gilder in this book is forcing us to ask ourselves these questions, are we going to see a state president being killed in the near future and is the country going to be led by a president who is in the pockets of 'old order' and 'regime change' agents?

This book is a must-read, as depicts what many are already seeing happening in the ANC. Reports of certain group within the party wanting to remove the current ANC and state president Cyril Ramaphosa out of office continues to appear now and then.

It's descriptive style, the past/ future story telling format Gilder used, is exactly what the doctor ordered. I will give this book an 8/10 rating, it's relevant.



Book Cover: Zulu Wedding, Picture credit/source: EW BLOG file.

Zulu Wedding Review

When one hears the words 'Zulu wedding' immediately your mind is filled with colour, music, feasting and an array of cultural ceremonies that join two families.

So naturally, when you read Zulu Wedding there's a level of expectation of a wedding that is filled with many twists and turn.

The book, written by Dudu Busani-Dube, is more daunting than it is a page turner. Well it is not to mean the book is absolute hogwash, but it's not something to want to sink your claws in.

Largely based on a promise that was between families that their children would marry each other. Lungile (the main character) goes to live in New York after finding out that she is to marry Zweli, a young, handsome and smart king from KZN.

Most of the book dwells on Lungile's stay in the city that never sleeps and conflict with herself and her family.

Meanwhile Zweli doesn't really want to be king or does he?

Zulu Wedding is the kind of book one should read when you've been put on bed rest and you have to read every other book that was on your list of books to read.

The better option is to wait for the movie.

Review by: Tshimo Leeuw

Website: <https://ezekielwriting.co.za/zulu-wedding-review/>

These Bones Will Rise Again Review

Review by: Ezekiel Kekana | **Website:** <https://ezekielwriting.co.za/these-bones-will-rise-again/>

Panashe Chigumadzi in this second offering of her book list provides us with a well-researched history of Zimbabwe's four revolutions or Chimurengas as she calls them in her native Shona language. Chigumadzi does this through in-depth one on one interviews with people who were close to some of the aides of one of the leaders who played a huge and influential role in the Chimurengas and the most celebrated spirit medium in the history of Zimbabwe, Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana or Mbuya Nehanda as she was called.

Chigumadzi paints a clear picture of the role that Mbuya Nehanda together with other ordinary women played in the Chimurengas, who defied an old nationalist fear about African women and their place in time.

However, in acknowledging the role that Mbuya Nehanda and other women played in the Chimurenga. This Zimbabwean native is asking valid questions as to whether the current 'new democratic government' under the leadership of President Emmerson Mnangagwa has fully managed to accept responsibility in the Gukurahundi massacre. Whether Mnagwagwa's ascendancy to the seat of power, was also as a result of 'the rise of bones' from Zimbabwe's spirit mediums, as Mbuya Nehanda once proclaimed that her 'bones will rise again'.

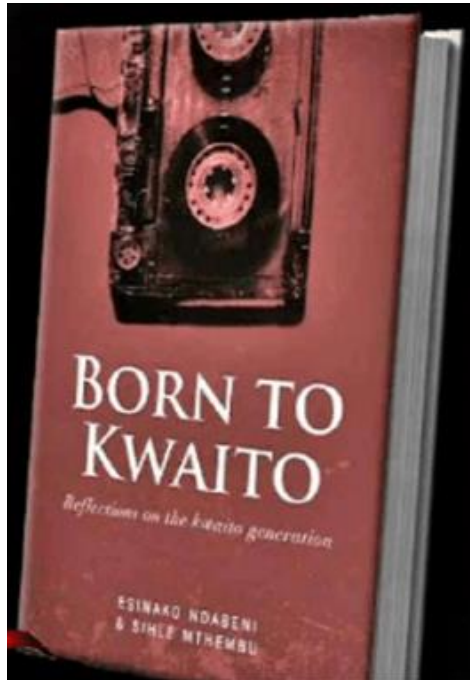
But most importantly Chigumadzi is asking whether Zimbabweans, and especially men, have moved from their previous ill-conceived perception about women. She calls a disturbing incident during a 'Fourteen-Day Revolution'. This, a period that resulted with the resignation of the then President Robert Mugabe, where many Zimbabweans, especially men were heard uttering these words to the then First Lady Grace Mugabe, 'Hatitongwe nehure', loosely translated, we won't be ruled by a whore.

While this book is a memoir of some sort, with Chigumadzi trying to reconnect with her original roots as a Shona woman, her family and also paying tribute to her grandmother Lillian Chigumadzi. In this book, like many Zimbabweans, she shows her skepticism of whether this 'new Zimbabwe' under Mnagwagwa can finally deliver its service to the people and also be able to 'protect the legacy of Chumirenga', as this was cited by the army as one reason why Mugabe was initially ousted from the state house in Harare.

Panashe's ability to mix English and Shona words just shows how her writing has matured in time. She managed to match what fellow Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Dangarembga managed to do in her novel *Nervous Conditions*, fusing both languages in her writing. Readers, especially non-Shona speakers will learn a lot of Shona words in the process.

This book is a must-read, especially for those born after liberation/Born frees as we like to call them. Despite the amount of research conducted, Chigumadzi has managed to keep all the chapters very short, which is good for the reader not to lose focus. For the amount of research done and her ability to use both Shona and English languages, I will give this book 9/10 rating.

Book Cover: Born To Kwaito



Picture credit/source: EW BLOG file.

Review by: Ezekiel Kekana

Website:

<https://ezekielwriting.co.za/born-to-kwaito-review/>

Born To Kwaito Review

For years, the most contentious issue in the South African music scene has been whether Kwaito music is dead or not. Some suggesting that the genre no longer has a place in the current music scene, while others believe kwaito is still much relevant, referencing Durban Kwaito as proof of that.

In this well researched 211 page book, Born To Kwaito co-authors Esinako Ndabeni and Sihle Mthembu provide us with an answer about this ever contested subject, getting their answers from the architects of the genre such as Spikiri and Oskido among others. 'Kwaito is our culture. How you dress, the language, how you talk, it's a culture, declares Spikiri making a point that Kwaito will never die.

Indeed, what Spikiri says is true as throughout the book, one will get to understand how the Kwaito culture had a huge influence in movies such as Tsotsi and drama series like Yizo Yizo. Not only that, but also how Kwaito music played a role in shaping the identity of many black people in the township, in the early years of the new democratic South Africa.

Going through the book, one will also get to see how the book debunk the notion that the early Kwaito music was apolitical and promoted thuggish life. Sihle and Esinako in this book maintain through their thorough research, that tracks such as Arthur's Kaffir and Mapaputsi's Izinja were loaded with political messages.

This book is a must-read, for it connects Kwaito music with so many elements in our today's society. It interrogates whether the new sound, gqomu music, spearheaded by Babes Wodumo, is the new version of Kwaito or not. I will give this book 8/10 rating, for the level of research and also how Kwaito was not only looked on as a music genre in the book.

We Don't Talk About It, Ever Review

In this tell-it-all debut memoir, Desiree-Ann Martin in similar fashion to how Sisonke Msimang did in her memoir *Always Another Country*, narrates a story of her life from an early age, right through to her adult life and does this without leaving anything out. This book captures Desiree's life journey in full and defines who and what she went through to be here today.

In true traditional memoir writing style, Desiree starts off with her early childhood days in Cape Town, being raised in a family where her uncle's perverted tendencies and sex talk in the family were neatly swept under the rug of silence. In her honest and brutal way of telling the story, Desiree doesn't shy away from airing the family's dirty laundry. From her 'subversive racist' mother, childhood rape by her cousin and her cheating father.

While the main focus is on Desiree's battle with heroin addiction, courtesy of her druggie ex-boyfriend Darren, who introduced her to the drug, this book narrates a story of hope where there was hopelessness, a story of success where the signs of failure outnumbered those of success.

Reading this book gives a fresh perspective in dealing with heroin addiction and highlights the critical roles that family and friends should play in helping those fighting addictions. For those fighting addictions, this book will serve as motivation by dishing out advice on how to beat addiction.

The chapters are short and build onto each other seamlessly. After reading this book, the reader is bound to go through a mixed bag of emotions, but most importantly come out inspired.

Due to the writer's level of openness and the colourful use of language, I will give this book an 8/10 rating. This is a must read memoir and one that will serve as motivation for generations to come.

Book Cover: We Don't Talk About It



Picture credit/source: EW BLOG file.

Review by: Ezekiel Kekana

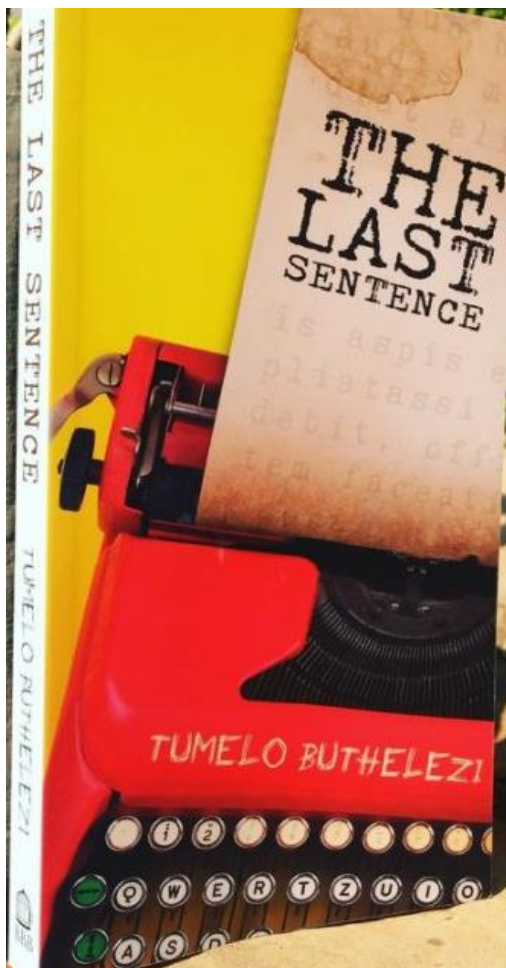
Website:

<https://ezekielwriting.co.za/we-dont-talk-about-it-ever/>

BOOK REVIEWS

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Book Cover: The Last Sentence



Picture credit/Source: EW BLOG file.

The Last Sentence Review

In his debut novel, Tumelo Buthelezi tells a story of the now forgotten scriptwriter Bandile Ndala, who is looking to make a comeback in the script writing/entertainment industry. Bandile's quest to make a comeback, makes him do everything in his power to fulfil that dream. However, struggling to get his writing juices flowing, he turns to drinking a concoction made of human body parts courtesy of a bogus traditional healer called Thobejane.

The visit to Thobejane, results in Bandile's life changing for the worst, as he is literally no longer in charge of his own mind and body. The spirit of Molly Shabalala, a young actress who was murdered and whose body parts were used for the concoction, now controls Bandile's mind and body.

Seeking revenge from Bandile, for being part of a 'secret supper' that ended her acting dream, Molly tells Bandile that: 'When I died, my soul was sent back to this plane by Amadlozi to avenge the lives taken by cruel beasts preying on the innocent.'

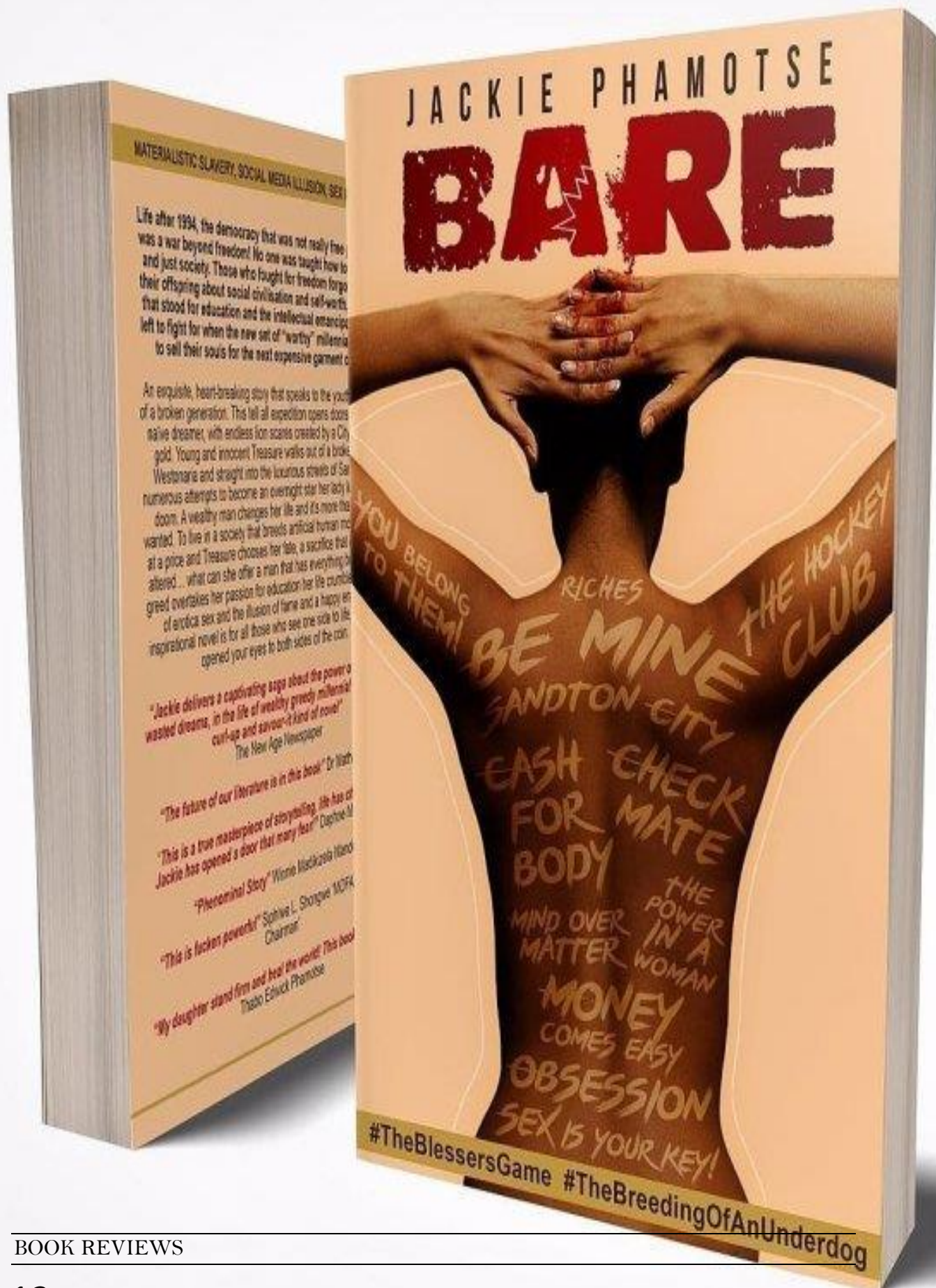
Indeed, Molly's plan to get her revenge sees Bandile's quest to make his comeback take a different twist and he is given only a few days to write his final script, before he dies, after being held 'hostage' at the Cariba Inn Hotel by Molly.

Buthelezi's style of writing is simple, the type that makes the story line easy to understand from the onset. While he tries not giving away much in the first few chapters, Buthelezi manages to build sub plots that connect nicely with the main plot. Readers are taken through Bandile's failed marriage with Zoleka, his addiction to a street drug called Speedom and also his one sided 'friendship' with his business agent Kulani.

In an effort not to give away much myself, I can say that the story is one that many will appreciate and love, as it ends well for both Bandile and Molly. You probably trying to connect the dots as to how Molly (A Zombie) could be part of a happy ending? Well I urge you to buy the book to help fill in the blanks.

I give this book an 8/10 rating. The chapters are so short that one doesn't get lost in the storyline. A definite must read, particularly in this ignorant day and age of Albino killings for traditional medicinal use.

Review by: Ezekiel Kekana | **Website:** <https://ezekielwriting.co.za/the-last-sentence-review/>



BOOK REVIEWS

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Book cover: BARE; Picture credit/Source: EW BLOG file.

BARE REVIEW

Review by: Sandi Mbhele

Website: <https://ezekielwriting.co.za/bare-review/>

BARE: The Blesser's Game, which has been highly recommended by many, shared multiple times and been the talk of the town this past year, for telling a story that we all know too well recently. Young women coming to Johannesburg from small towns wanting to fulfil their dreams in the city of gold.

The perspective of the book is that many of these young women are naive, easily find themselves in the world of sugar daddies, what we now call 'blessers'. Blessee- young woman involved with older wealthy men to live a 'blessed' life of luxury brands, cars and paid for apartments. The author, who herself has admitted that she lived this life, has a heavy moral question for us all, how much are we willing to sell our souls for money?

Bare, follows a story of Treasure a small town girl from Westonaria, her journey of growing up in an abusive household, witnessing her mother being a punching bag by the man she loves- Treasure's father, learning that love is abusive. Treasure's relationship with men is defined at this crucial stage of her childhood.

I will not spoil it for some who have not had the chance to read the book, but she experiences numerous sexually abuse from many men she has encountered with or fell in love with. That trauma has caused Treasure to have these toxic relationships with men, as she is already broken when she eventually meets her blesser, Tim, whose twice her age.

In this relationship, we are taken to trips to Sandton, spa days, shopping sprees, we learn more how to act 'classy' than inner demons or struggles of the main character, which is one of the main reasons this book fails for me. I was left frustrated with the direction of book, focusing too much on her childhood, half way through the book we still reading about her boarding school days, and her sexuality. I would of liked to have seen a multi layered approach on why young women choose to basically sell themselves to live their best materialistic life.

We cannot all be naive, have abusive pasts, absence fathers and a toxic masculine world that we as women experience. Are our choices our own or are they influenced by many other factors?

I also could not ignore the poor grammar and grammatical errors that are littered in the book. How is it that we have books published in this day and age without being proof read??? Can we avoid A to B embarrassments?

However, if you are looking for a book that will give a sneak peek into the lives of blessers, this is it for you, it is just a sneak peek. Overall, I was disappointed, 4/10.

The perspective of the book is that many of these young women are naive, easily find themselves in the world of sugar daddies, what we now call 'blessers'

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UNHINGED BOOK REVIEW

When Trevor Noah asked Omarosa Manigault Newman on his Daily Show, 'What is new about this book, that we do not know already about President Donald Trump?' Omarosa responded by saying 'Unhinged' is a book about her own personal experience with President Trump and her White House experience under Trump's administration, more than anything else.

Omarosa Manigault Newman is a former director of Communication for the Office of Public Liaison in the Donald Trump's White House.

Indeed, when one goes through the pages of this memoir, it takes one from Omarosa's journey with Trump, from their early days in the first season of the reality show Apprentice, to Trump's Presidential election and finally where Omarosa finally got her rude awakening about who Donald Trump is or 'Twitter fingers', as she calls him, that is, at the White House.

While many will be surprised about Omarosa's change of heart about Trump and many might be forgiven, if they assume that this is just a book selling gimmick from the former reality star, given the fact that she stood by him throughout the campaign, even changing her political affiliation from being a Democrat to a Republican. In Unhinged, Omarosa fully accept that, 'I had a blind spot where Trump was concerned, because of my proximity to him, I couldn't see him from a certain angle that everyone else did.'

President Trump's views on race relations, immigration, Muslims and women are well documented. What this book does is to confirm all that is in the public domain, were Omarosa finally accept that a man he knew for almost 15 years is a 'racist and 'misogynist'.

However, readers of this book will also be shocked with Omarosa's revelations about the relation between the Trump administration with Fox news. Omarosa explains how Fox news was used during Trump's campaign to discredit Hillary Clinton during the presidential campaign.

In this book also, Omarosa questions Trump's mental state and how President Trump is 'addicted to Twitter'.

Readers will get to understand how the President of the United States of America is turning the White House into a 'TrumpWorld' and also how he is treating his staff.

Unhinged is an easy read, as events follow each other from part one, which deals with Omarosa's journey with Trump.

This is a must read for those who want to understand the 'TrumpsWorld' in the White House and I will give it a rating of 6/10.

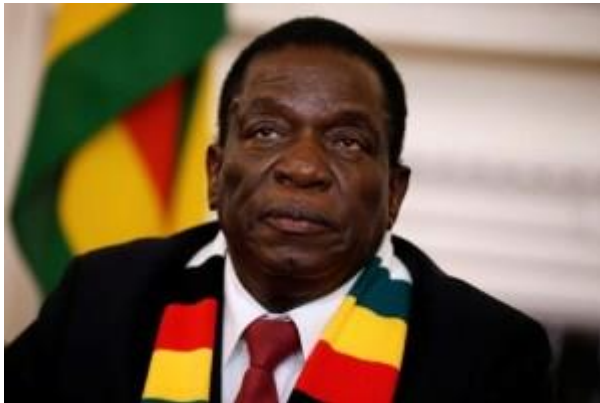
A big thank you to Jonathan Ball Publishers for providing me with a platform to review this book.

Review by: Ezekiel Kekana

Website: <https://ezekielwriting.co.za/unhinged-book-review/>

POLITICAL COMMENTARY

The army must stay away from #ShutDownZim



President Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe

My fellow Zimbabweans are starting to realise that former President Robert Mugabe was not the only problem hindering the economic progress of the country. The massive fuel hike announced by President Emmerson Mnangagwa, emphasised that the problems in Zimbabwe are now deeper than we had imagined and once again the ruling party ZANU-PF is failing to deal with the #ShutDownZimbabwe protesters in a civil manner.

Lives have already been lost in the #ShutDownZimbabwe protest, while others have been admitted to hospitals with serious injuries. Internet connection was reportedly blocked, political activists arrested, and opposition parties' buildings and leaders attacked, all these actions are a stark reminder of tactics that were once used by Mugabe when dealing with protesters. ZANU-PF is really failing to demonstrate that it is a party that is changing from its evil ways under the new leadership, as similar undemocratic antics are still prevalent in dealing with unhappy civilians.

The party really needs to rid itself of violence that has characterised it since it gained power back in 1980. The army, which continues to be trigger happy must stay away from this protest and all other protests in the country and should allow the police to deal with the shutdown protests.

It is a democratic right for Zimbabweans to show their dissatisfaction with their government and the army should understand that.

My message to fellow brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe:

“Phambilinge War, Phambilinge Chimurenga.”

May the spirit of Joshua Nkomo and indeed the medium spirit of Mbuya Nehanda guide you to victory against the uncaring ZANU-PF government. These bones must indeed rise and lead you to victory.

President Mnangagwa showed that he cares for his people by cutting short his Europe trip to deal with his government's nonsensical massive fuel hike and also have a look at the doctors' concerns too. The Zimbabwean health system is in dire state and the country cannot afford to lose these doctors to other countries. Doctors must be paid on time. SADC also needs to intervene before more lives are lost in this shut down.

Talks that the South African government is stepping in to help Zimbabwe are also encouraging. I hope that in these trying times we are able to embrace the spirit of Ubuntu and learn from the sage words of Dr Judith Rich that:

“Sometimes the hardest thing in the world to do is to change one's mind.

And yet, a massive changing of minds is what will be required if humanity is to weather the challenges we now face.”

By Ezekiel Kekana



Picture credit / Source: EW BLOG file.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY

Political Diary of 2019

2019 promises to be a busy year in as far as politics is concerned.

The country will have National Assembly and provincial elections In May.

Let's take a look at political news that are expected to dominate the headlines.

1. ANC'S January Statement in Durban

First up on the 2019 political calendar was the ANC's 107 years birthday celebration at the Moses Mabhida stadium in January. Africa's oldest and most famous liberation movement will be celebrating its birthday with President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered the party's manifesto ahead of the elections. However, some believe the manifesto was just a rehash of previous manifestos, with same promises.

2. IEC Final voter's registration week

The weekend of the 26th -27th of January marked the last week for South Africans to register in order to be eligible to vote for the May elections. The Independent Electoral Commission continues to urge each and every citizen to vote in the general elections. President Ramaphosa is still yet to announce the dates of the May elections.

3. The EFF manifesto launch

The Economic Freedom Fighters launched its election manifesto in Pretoria on the first week of February.

The Red Berets continued with same policies they advocated in the 2014 general elections. Nationalisation of mines and banks and the process of land expropriation are still very much on their agenda. However, questions remain if the Julius Malema led party can improve on their 6% they gained in 2014?

4. Ramaphosa to deliver SONA

President Ramaphosa will deliver the last State of Nation Address of the fifth parliament in February. This will be Ramaphosa's second address as a state president and he is expected to use it to list all the success stories the ANC government has achieved since 2014.

5. Parliament celebrating its 25th anniversary

This year Parliament, the custodian of our democracy will be celebrating its 25th anniversary since 1994. Our democracy is fast becoming an adult and Parliament continues to be an arena for exchanging ideas in an effort of advancing our democracy. Celebrations are expected throughout the country to commemorate this milestone.

6. National Assembly and Provincial elections.

The May elections are without doubt the biggest political story of the year. Political parties will be vigorously fighting it out for state power. Political campaigning, rallies and manifesto launches are already in full force until May.

7. Other political stories

The State Capture Commission will continue throughout the year, with political parties, politicians and certain ministers expected to testify at the Zondo Commission. We have seen how former Bosasa executive Angelo Agrizzi implicated many top politicians in the corruption activities at Bosasa.

Shamila Batohi officially started her reign at the National Prosecuting Authority and Tito Mboweni will deliver his first and last Budget Speech as finance minister in February.

By Ezekiel Kekana

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