

Dominic Albinski – Biographical note

Dominique Christopher Albinski was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1975. He was the son of Polish immigrant parents, Wojciech Wacław Albinski, a land surveyor, and writer, and Wanda Helena Albinski, who was a chemist and Foundation worker. He started sculpting as a young boy, at the Art classes of Mercia Desmond. From the start, his expressive work, reflected the African themes; that would inspire him, his whole life.

In high school, he developed an interest in literature, and the classics. He devoured books in his free time. He started to write, and was Editor of the school creative writing magazine, 'The Scribbler'. After finishing St John's College, he left for Paris, where he studied Political Science, and later Literature, at the Sorbonne. In Warsaw, he studied sculpture, at the Academy of Fine Arts. He was Professor of English, at the "Ecole Française d'Attache's de Presse" in Paris.

His sculptural debut began, in Normandy, France, and at the Canadian, and South African Embassies, in Warsaw. Later, he exhibited in the Trocadero Centre in Paris, and in Le Mans, Tours, La Rochelle, and Bordeaux, in France. He had an exhibition on Mandela Square in 2004, in Sandton, South Africa. After that, he multiplied his exhibits internationally: in France, Poland, South Africa, and the USA. His most recent shows were in: the Amsterdam Whitney Gallery, and the Grimandi Galleries, in New York, at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, and at SculptX in Johannesburg. Dominic's sculpture 'Madness' was presented, in Italy, at the Biennale in Florence, in October 2023. He received many international awards, including: the ATIM top 60 Award, Artya Award, and Artist of the Decade Award, by Art Tour Interna-

tional Magazine in New York in 2019 /2020; as well as Artist of the Future Award by Art Curator Magazine.

Dominic's first autobiographical novel "Stories my Father Never Told Me" Volume 1 was published by Editions St Honore, in 2021, in France. It retraces Dominic's journey as an artist, in Europe, Africa, and America. It is a tale of crime, passion, love and betrayal. Volume 2 is the sequel, to the first book, and combines romance, crime, suspense, and art, in a hypnotizing mixture.

Introduction

Conrad W., a talented, but still unfulfilled, and underestimated, sculptor, often appears in the second part of Dominic Albinski's stories, published under the same title: "Stories my Father Never Told me, Volume 2". As a friend of Dominic's – who knew some of the paths of his life – I found myself reading a recurring question: to what extent is Conrad W. the author's alter ego? To what extent does the writer draw the themes and build the plot of the stories directly from the life experiences of relationships with curators, art gallery owners, clients, and finally women? Or maybe they are just inspirations for creating stories that are far from the reality of everyday life? These questions will accompany the readers; and we will remain with this understatement, until the end.

Dominic Albinski was born in 1975, in South Africa, and spent his first 18 years, in that country. But he was shaped by his Polish parents, who rooted him in Polish history, and spirituality. Dominik's father is a well-known, and respected, writer in Poland, Wojciech Albinski (awarded, among others, with the Józef Mackiewicz Literary Award for his collection of stories "Achtung Banditen"). Dominic makes no secret of his fascination, and even love, for South Africa. Its inhabitants, customs, colour, vegetation, national parks, history. However, he remains sensitive to the history, and current political situation of Poland. South Africa has an absolutely special place in his heart, that's probably why, many of his stories are set in Cape Town, Johannesburg, or between these metropolises – in famous reserves, such as the story "Bed Bugs". Conrad is accused of not being the author of the sculptures, he presents in the Parisian galleries. And since he is in Cape Town, he is instructed by a Parisian curator to make and then send to the local museum the work. The originality of the work will then be subjected to strict verification, and the opinion will

be sent to France. This will allow the artist to save his good name, and defend his artistic originality. Conrad fulfills the task conscientiously and the French critics must be silent, but... This is not the end, but the beginning of the artist's problems...

But in the short stories woven by the author, we move not only to South Africa, and France. Together with Conrad, we wander around the suburbs of London, admire the Italian, and Swiss, landscapes, and finally freeze in the dark winter in Poland, and even end up in distant Saudi Arabia. In all these places, the writer and sculptor, Dominic Albinski, has lived, studied, worked or exhibited his sculptures, and organized vernissages. Therefore, he has had the opportunity to observe the customs, and everyday life of the inhabitants, as well as the way foreigners behave. To what extent, does the geographical range under which a person is born, and lives, determine his personality, morality, religiosity, attitude to the world, and professed values? Or maybe we share some universal features, regardless of the country in which we spend our lives? We can look for answers to these questions, by reading Dominic Albinski's prose.

Maybe the second part of the stories "Stories my Father Never Told me" is a form – even if done unconsciously or in passing – of the author's settling of accounts with the realization of his creativity and life plans – fulfillment as a son, a sculptor, a man, a citizen? And which of these roles is crucial in self-reflection, on one's own biography? These are the thoughts that accompany the story "The House of Eastwood Road". The tragic finale of Conrad's love for Susan causes the artist's talent to turn into a disease of unknown origin, instead of a diamond. Suffering evokes questions about the wrong, or right, path of life he has taken. What is important for this story is the context between Conrad's father's expectations expressed in his youth – that he should choose stability based on a university, or technical education, obtained at a renowned university, culminating in the position of an engineer, or lawyer, and the search and impulses of Conrad's soul – longing for freedom, artistic fulfillment, recognition in the world of art... A dramatic clash of

ideas about one's own life, artistic path, place on earth, relationship with his beloved, and failure to meet his father's expectations.

The background for the stories are the changes in customs around the world – political correctness spreading its influence, with its affirmation, or even obligatory adoration for LGBT ideology, the rights of sexual minorities, and women's rights in a specific sense. Failure to respect the new canons, and “revealed truths” may become a reason for offense or even a crime. As happens in the case of the protagonist of the story “Across the Border into a Neighboring Country”. The sculptor is to be sentenced to life imprisonment for a “crime against humanity”. What exactly is his fault, and why is he facing such a severe punishment? We don't find out, the author gives us the space for speculation. Will the artist receive a pardon from the President of Poland? Will forced emigration turn out to be the ultimate destiny? Who are Conrad's enemies? And why did his sculptures become an object of interest for the mafia in Italy?

Dominic Albinski's stories often surprise with their punchline. However, the author does not go in the direction of moralizing, his literature is also free from well-known templates, or aestheticizing. The language of the stories is dense, disciplined, devoid of unnecessary embellishments, adjectives, verbal floss, i.e. what in the history of Polish literature has become known as “varnishing”, the use of pure form to produce a specific effect. Despite the choice of an identical form – both Wojciech and Dominic Albinski opted for short stories in prose – their literature differs significantly. While Wojciech Albinski's short stories have a classic character, with a mostly distanced psychological portrait of the protagonists, Dominik Albiński's work clearly enters into the emotions of the presented characters. In the first case, we are dealing with a cold, objectified observation, one could say from a distance, while in the second case, we are dealing with an engaged, subjective approximation of the sensitivity and experiences of both men and women. If we come across descriptions in Dominic Albinski's work, they refer to cities, nature reserves, animals, while the emotions and intimacy of the characters are experienced almost directly.

The plot of Dominic's stories unfolds relatively quickly, which does not mean we always receive answers, and clear solutions, on a platter. As in the case of the short story "Pilanesberg", which opens the collection. Is a serious car breakdown just a coincidence, "the malice of inanimate things", the result of the lover's mishandling of the vehicle, or maybe – as the mechanic claims – an attempted murder? And if the latter is true, then what did Jeff do to the local system? Whom does he hinder?

One of the motifs of Dominic Albinski's stories is the change in family, friendship and men's relationships with women, caused by a significant improvement in the material status of one of the parties. Suffice it to mention the story "Cheap credits" in this context. Komo is taken advantage of by his half-brother Seinveld, a shareholder in an investment fund, to whom he gives two ideas on how to expand the business, and make appropriate use of the shareholders' capital. Investing in affordable housing, for poor families in Soweto, is paying off windfall. Seinveld can not only satisfy its shareholders, but also afford its own luxurious mansion in a prestigious district. How will he treat half-brother Komo, when he shows up unexpectedly, and reminds him of his promise?

Another motif is a sense of danger, traps lurking for sensitive, talented, perhaps gullible, perhaps unsuited, to the brutal, ruthless, world of artists. Known for decades from the history of musicians, and painters, the subject of using their talents to build fortunes by agents, promoters, art dealers – those who – according to declarations – only want to help.

The life of Conrad, who returns in his subsequent stories, is like an artist's studio – full of scattered sketches, unfinished projects, uncast sculptures. Some of these projects are undertaken years later. Just like in the story "First Holy Communion". Conrad reminisces about his lost love, Alice. What happened to this fascinating girl who, after five years of a passionate and devoted relationship, cuts off all contact with him? How will he react when he sees her unexpectedly somewhere on the other side of the world? Will pas-

sion be revived? Or is the lack of love, fulfillment, and the suffering, that comes with it, inherent in the creative process?

Christopher Swiątek, 2024
Editor of *Solidarity Weekly*,

Polish Journalist, and TV, and radio Presenter

Part 1

BLACK MAMBA/GREEN MAMBA

PILANESBERG

“How’s my car doing?” Jeff, asked the mechanic.

The garage smelt of gasoline. It was littered with used car parts. Among various vehicles, in different stages of deconstruction, Jeff recognized his jeep.

“Broken gearbox, the battery is flat, engine has overheated, and punctured tires”, replied the mechanic, in a navy blue overall, with dark oil smears.

Jeff sounded surprised, taking off his large safari hat. “The car’s almost brand new. I took her into service just the other week, before our trip to Pilanesberg?”

Jeff thought back to his trip to the fashionable game reserve. Jeff, Conrad; and Conrad’s wife Annie, from England, had gone for a weekend trip in the bush. From the start, Jeff, couldn’t start his car. He had to call his personal assistant, Sandra, to jump-start it, with leads.

It was a comfortable, four-hour drive from Johannesburg. They passed the suburbia, and then agricultural land, and later savannah, and bush. They reached Hartbeespoort Dam, where Jeff stopped to tank up. Around the dam, were houses of people, who, came to fish, and windsurf, on the lake, which supplied water to the surrounding cities, and towns. Conrad bought some bread, and coffee.

“Here’s your drink, Darling”, he said.

Annie took the cup in both her hands, and sipped the dark liquid. She took a bite of the bun, that Conrad supplied her. Jeff started the car with difficulty. The engine choked, smoke billowing, from the front of the engine. Conrad switched on some Mozart, and Callas opera music from La Scala.

After a while, Jeff complained. “This music is getting on my nerves!” he exclaimed. He removed the disc, and played Black

Mapanza. "Black Mapanza is a famous South African musician. He made his career internationally, and is now a millionaire who lives in South Africa."

They passed some rondavels, and African settlements. The round huts, or bungalows, were decorated with colourful designs. Some fruit stalls were selling food on the corners of the road. Little black children were singing hymns, in blue, and white uniforms, in a local school.

"You can see the people are more relaxed than in Gauteng."

"When are we arriving?" Annie inquired impatiently.

They passed a palace built in the Arab style with large arch ways, and grottos, and an artificial beach. The fantasy of a local businessman.

"Sun City boasts a golf course, and tennis courts. It has a bird park. One can walk around the grotto's, and pools of water, where tourists lounge in swimming costumes, and sip exotic cocktails .It's the lost Palace, where sculptures of animals, are surrounded by marble floors, and a huge dining hall. Next door is Sun City, where the famous casinos are, and the Miss World contest was held." Jeff explained casually.

Annie coughed, a sharp cough.

"Be careful, you are going to get sick", Jeff warned.

Annie coughed again, this time a rasping cough.

Once they reached the game reserve, a few kilometres outside the gambling resort, Jeff mused over his laptop, and poured himself a Whiskey. The club house, and pool deck chairs, looked over a waterhole, where wild animals came to drink. A few wart-hog grunted, as the sun cast a long shadow over the scene. Some Vervet Monkeys played with the oranges that the tourists had left near the pool. Jeff enjoyed the cool atmosphere of the tables, facing the bush. He thought back to his personal assistant Sandra. He was having an affair with her at the office. He liked her wavy blond hair, and good figure.

Jeff looked at his laptop, and the intricate graphs that his financial manager, had sent him. The graphs didn't make a lot of sense. Was it true that the company had incurred such big losses?

The figures on the graphs looked strange. They had 250 million dollar investments? 1 % was 2,5 million. He looked carefully, at the sullen figures. Where was all the money going?

Somehow Jeff felt he was being marginalized at the office. At meetings, he no longer took the boardroom by storm, as before. People in the office were turning his back on him. Ever so slightly, he was losing control of the staff. The partners demanded their share of success, although Jeff had done most of the work to build the investment company.

Together with his 2 other partners, they wanted to sell the company. Each partner would receive a third of the shares of the firm, when it was sold. He wondered if the 2 partners were not trying to get rid of him; to get a bigger share of the company.

Jeff debated whether he should marry his personal assistant, Sandra, whom he had been going out with for some time? He asked Annie, who was lying on a deckchair sunbathing, and admiring, the calm sunset, her opinion.

"I think she would be the perfect match for you", she answered, "But, do you love her?"

Jeff left this question unanswered.

"What do you think of Conrad?" asked Jeff.

"I think he's in love with his childhood, and that's dangerous for a man."

Jeff answered, "Sometimes everything has to change, so that everything can stay the same." mused Jeff philosophically.

Annie nodded in agreement.

Jeff prior to his departure, had lent his Jeep to Sandra, his girlfriend for a few days. He trusted her blindly. Suddenly, a wasp appeared. Jeff tried to beat it off with his towel. The wasp buzzed in the air angrily. It was as if someone was directing, a nest of wasps in his direction.

"Come, let's go back to our hut!" he called to Annie, seeing Conrad arriving from the other entrance of the pool.

The next morning, at 6 am, Conrad was brutally awoken by Jeff.

"Game Drive!"

“What? At this hour of the morning?”

“You can sleep later.” Jeff insisted.

The group jumped into Jeff’s jeep. The car failed to start. He turned the key in the starter again. The car wheezed dismally. Suddenly, there was a puff of smoke, and the car moved into first gear. Jeff looked at the lights on the dashboard – no overheating. But then, why was there dense smoke coming out of the engine? Suddenly, there was a puncture, the car refused to move. After repairing the tire, they drove through the entrance gate, into the game reserve. Annie coughed again, a rasping cough.

“Stop!” shouted Conrad, “There’s a rhino, and some wildebeest.”

“Where I can’t see?” his wife complained.

“There, under the bushes.” Annie took in the peaceful scene.

The area was demarcated by low Koppies, which had once been a violent volcano, that had subsided millions of years ago. They were driving in what had once been the crater, and the sides rose around them in a circular form.

“There’s a Kingfisher and a Raptor Eagle”

Some eagles soared, and circled, above them in the sky. The gear box gave off a loud sound, when Jeff changed into 4-wheel drive. He accelerated over the potholes of the dirt road. Smoke was coming out of the engine. Looking at the flashlights, he saw no difference in their readings. He pressed the brakes but they didn’t respond

Back in Johannesburg, Jeff returned to the large mansion, where his girlfriend, Sandra was living. In a bikini, betraying her lissom figure; she stroked her blond billowing hair, with a brush; and sipped a Martini, by the side of the swimming pool.

“Finally, you’ve arrived. I was worried about you darling!”

“How was your trip?” Sandra continued.

“So. So!” Jeff replied. “You could’ve better prepared the car for the trip.”

Sandra swallowed, “It’s not my job!”

Jeff returned to the garage, where he had left his car
“Sorry, we took so long”, the mechanic apologized, “Your car is in a bad way”, he continued.

“But it’s brand new”, Jeff replied.

The specialist looked at his notes, “The engine has overheated. There has been some tampering with the brakes. Someone has been driving with the handbrake on. The battery has been exhausted. The water pipe has been severed, and the wheels have been punctured. You were lucky to come back from Pilanesberg alive.”

“So what’s the verdict?” Jeff inquired in disbelief.

“Attempted murder!” the mechanic answered plainly.

CAFÉ INDIGO

The business partners, sat round the crooked table, that gave way on the busy thoroughfare, and the old harbour. Jeff rudely threw his large safari hat, in the middle of the table. His sunburnt, intellectual, features, contrasted with the bland faces, of the investors. They overlooked Table Mountain, and Chapman's Peak on the other side. It was warm, but a cool South-Easterly wind, made the heat bearable. A ferry passed, transporting tourists, to Seal Island. The seals frolicked, in the water, giving off an unpleasant odour.

A waitress poured coffee for Jeff, Conrad, and partners.

"Now let's get down to business. Each of you will invest 20 000\$, and Conrad will be responsible for running the Café. Our company will supply the site, franchise, logo, and knowhow. We have a special recipe for our coffees, that we share with no-one. After one coffee, the client is addicted, he won't go anywhere else."

The men nodded in approval. Jeff passed a copy of the contract to each of the investors, and gave them a pen. Conrad briefly scanned the document. Seems alright, he thought.

Aloud, he said, "Awesome" and signed the document.

The other investors followed suit.

The Café was decorated with exotic artwork. Green ivy, and garlands, hung from the ceiling. Multi coloured chairs, and sofas were spread around the wooden floors. A verandah gave onto the shoreline.

Café Indigo made a stir on the Waterfront. From the start, it was popular with young office workers, pensioners, students, and tourists, who came to appreciate the atmosphere of the wharf, fashion shops, and art galleries; that the neighbourhood was famous for. Men bent over laptops, teenagers, flirting girls, and grannies walking their dogs, all flocked to Café Indigo, to taste the

remarkable Cappuccinos that the shop sold. Conrad was busy as a bee, supervising the staff, and sometimes even carrying heavy crates of beverages, from the cellar to the counter.

One day, Jeff and Conrad, had a tennis match at the club. Conrad was a bad winner; and a good loser. After the match, they both panted after their physical effort, and ordered beers in the clubhouse, as refreshments. Jeff was pleased with Indigo's performance.

"At the rate were going we'll make millions," Conrad boasted.

Jeff replied, "Yes, but we need more capital to expand, have professional entertainers-musicians, who will draw the crowds. I need you to find me some new input of capital?"

Conrad searched the web for his old boy network of friends, from Cambridge. A few of them were interested in investing medium sized funds in the café. Together, they raised a good amount. Jeff was happy with the new money, that was flowing into the joint venture.

Back at the Waterfront, Conrad continued to run the café with great energy. Musicians were hired to sing old Bob Marley songs, to the crowds on the wharf. Slowly, the clientele increased. People with dishevelled hair, wrinkled faces, sunken eye-lids, worn clothes, and bad breath, started to frequent the café.

The café continued to prosper.

One day, Conrad was serving a group of rough men, coffee, when a loud feud erupted. The Italian with the red, Volkswagen, Jetta started swearing, Pierrot, the Frenchman, sat calmly by gambling, when some confusion erupted. A heavy argument ensued. The Italian, suddenly stood up, and threw away his chair. He took out a pistol, and fired two shots at the bald Ukrainian. The victim stumbled from his chair, and fell down dead. The Italian youth leapt over the tables, and sprinted across the gangway, followed by two security guards, in hot pursuit. The guards soon caught the youth, and pinned him down to the floor-face down. They handcuffed him, while the culprit spat on the ground, grovelling in the dust. A crowd had gathered, to witness the event. Soon sirens sounded, and police cars, and ambulances

arrived. A commissioner questioned the witnesses. The next day, Café Indigo, was headlines in the papers.

Murder at the waterfront, one of the papers read.

Jeff met Conrad at the tennis club. As usual, Conrad beat him in his game. Afterwards, at the clubhouse, he motioned to Conrad.

“Our franchise can no longer support Café Indigo, due to the commotion, and bad publicity, it is getting. We will declare bankruptcy of the company. Conrad was disappointed.

“After all that work, for nothing! What about all the money, and effort, we put into building the company?” he complained.

Jeff continued, in his curt manner, “Naturally, all the money, the shareholders invested, will go to lawyers’ fees, and bankruptcy payments.”

“Yes, naturally” Conrad conceded that he was beaten.

A few months later, Conrad was walking on the waterfront, when he heard Bob Marley music, wafting in the background. A new café, not far from where Café Indigo had previously been, had opened.

“How’s business?” he asked the foreman, who was passing by with a calculator. “Oh, can’t complain”, he joked.

Conrad ordered a Cappuccino. It tasted familiar.

BLACK MAMBA/GREEN MAMBA

Pusa Moya, the elegant, whitewashed house, was perched, on a hillside, with a tower, overlooking the Umgeni beach. It's patio had a view of the sea. A stiff warm, humid, breeze swept through the rooms. Some bamboo furniture, and a glass table, held peanuts for the group of holiday makers. From the kitchen window, small waves of white froth on the sea, could be seen, thrown up by the wind. A group of dolphin, with their grey fins, made their way across the vast expanse of deep, blue, ocean.

The water broke in strong waves on the shore, and smashed against the black stone boulders, throwing foam, before sweeping on the warm yellow sand. Rock pools, emerged, from the froth, carved out of the stone, borne by centuries of battering by the waves. Multicolored seaweed, and algae, grew out of the mesmerizing rock pools. Sea urchins, with long, black, poisonous, needles lined the caves, hollowed out, by the incessant seething of the surf.

The children played badminton, with racquets, on the beach. Then they made sand castles, and swam, and snorkeled in the rock pools. They saw small colorful Yellow Fish, and a Sea Horse, among the seaweed. They dived under the big umbrella, perched in the sand, the adults were sitting under. Soon, it would be, time for lunch.

They would have to make the trip up the stairs, to the house on the embankment. As they made their way up the stairs, they heard a rustling in the leaves. Tommy, the small boy, took the lead. Suddenly, a long, green, snake, left the bushes and slid along the path. Tommy just managed to jump over it, to the safety of the path.

Jenny, managed to avoid the snake, too. She leapt up close to Tommy, and they sprinted up the remaining stairs, to the safety of Pusa Moya.

As they ate lunch with the group of adults, the children related their adventures with the snake.

“That’s very dangerous”, admonished Sophie, “A green Mamba is even more dangerous, than a black Mamba.”

“Tokoloshe will get you.” Jeremiah teased.

“It will get you too.” The young girl, of about 6 years, replied to the black caretaker.

Jeremiah, busy with the dishes, eaves-dropped as the whites talked about politics.

“The Africans will never be able to rule this country. They need white people, who have the skills to make this country work, so there is running water, and electricity. South Africa will become a banana republic, like the other African countries, like Tanzania, or Angola, or Mozambique.”

“I disagree, there is no reason why the Africans can’t rule like any other nation. It’s not right that there is no democracy, and blacks can’t even vote!”

In the afternoon, they went for a walk on the beach, in the reserve looking for cowrie shells.

“Look! there’s one”, said Jenny.

She picked up a shiny shell, off the beach. Some fisherman, stood on the cliffs, and threw in lines with bait, waiting for a bite.

“How would you like to hang on a hook?” Jenny asked the fisherman loudly.

Some translucent jellyfish, and a blue bottle, were lying sprawled on the beach, among the broken shells, and swept up seaweed.

“Be careful, it doesn’t sting you”, warned Sophie.

Then they passed some sugarcane fields, where the Indians had been brought to work as cheap labor, many centuries ago. The leaves rustled in the breeze, as Tommy, and Jenny, made a treasure hunt. In the evening, they made a braai out of the driftwood, and

twigs, that they found near the house. Jeremiah, put meat on the grill, and the flames hissed like a snake.

Jeremiah helped douse the flames.

“Be careful, the Tokoloshe doesn’t get you”, he joked.

At night, they went to sleep, rocked by the faraway, rhythmic, sound of the waves, and the surf.

The days passed quickly. The weather was good, and Tommy, and Jenny, soon became tanned. The children spent most of their time on the beach, or swimming in the ocean. When the week was over, the children with the adults, were tearfully leaving Pusa Moya. They packed their bags carefully, into the boot of the car.

+++

Twenty years later, Tommy led a group of investors, to the mountaintop, where Pusa Moya was still guarding the beach, and the sugarcane fields.

“This is an ideal place to make an investment”. I have elaborated a 200 million\$ scheme, to build the biggest shopping centre in Southern Africa. It will include department stores, cinemas, supermarkets, restaurants, and a 10-pin bowling alley.

A murmur of approval swept through the foreign investors.

A Chinese investor, interrupted Tommy, “What about the environment? Do you have permission to build in this nature reserve?”

“That’s been taken care of. I have just received a permit from the Minister of Public Works and Housing to that effect.”

Tommy, slipped into third gear, as he negotiated the hilly area of the earthen road, that was full of potholes. As they reached the tar road, they noticed a black man with a long stick. Tommy stopped the car. The black man was playing with a Green Mamba. The Mamba’s coils were wound like a spring, as it spat at the man. The snake, as if made of rubber, was making contortions, on the hot tar, while the man fended it off, skillfully.

THE DIAMOND NECKLACE

Now, what else did he need for his trip in Africa? Suntan lotion, sunglasses, and his filming equipment.

Jeff tossed a few old books, from his shelf in his untidy, Birmingham apartment, into his open suitcase. Their bored, brown, covers, showed that they had not been used, for some time. Some extra literature, to take his mind off his duties at work, during his holiday in Africa.

The filming was going on in Soweto, one of the townships around Johannesburg. During apartheid, it had been a ghetto, where only blacks were allowed to live. The tin shacks of the squatters, contrasted with wealthy mansions, in the better neighborhoods. A beautiful African actress was playing the lead role. Jeff focused his eyes on the lens of the camera. He saw the figure of Nomavenda, on the other side, and her appealing, taught brown skin.

Later, when the coast was clear, he accosted Nomavenda, the actress, and gave her advice about, how he would like to film her. Nomavenda listened carefully, and laughed at his compliments. Jeff brushed off his infatuation with her.

After a few weeks, the film crew had finished the filming, and Jeff, who had grown close to Nomavenda, in the interim, invited her to go on holiday with him to the Beverly Hills hotel, in Jamaica, for a week of relaxation. Nomavenda agreed, and they met at the airport, in Johannesburg.

+++

Once they had arrived in the air-conditioned hotel room, near Kingston, Jeff ruefully looked down at his old books, with the other items in his suitcase, he had packed. That evening, they